The Religions of Oceania

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More than a quarter of the world's discrete religions are to be found in the regions of Australia, Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia, together called Oceania. This is the first book to bring together up-to-date information on this great variety of traditional religious beliefs and practices, which have been profoundly influential on the theories and understandings of religion in general.

A comprehensive survey of the changing and various religions in the Pacific zone, *The Religions of Oceania* documents traditional cultures and beliefs and examines indigenous Christianity and its wide influence across the region. It covers the backgrounds to and development of traditional religions, and includes analysis of the new religious movements generated by the response of indigenous peoples to colonists and missionaries, the best known of these being the so-called 'cargo-cults' of Melanesia.

The authors present a thorough and accessible survey of the diversity of religious practices in the area, and provide clear interpretative tools and a mine of fascinating information to help the student better understand the world's most complex ethnographic tapestry.

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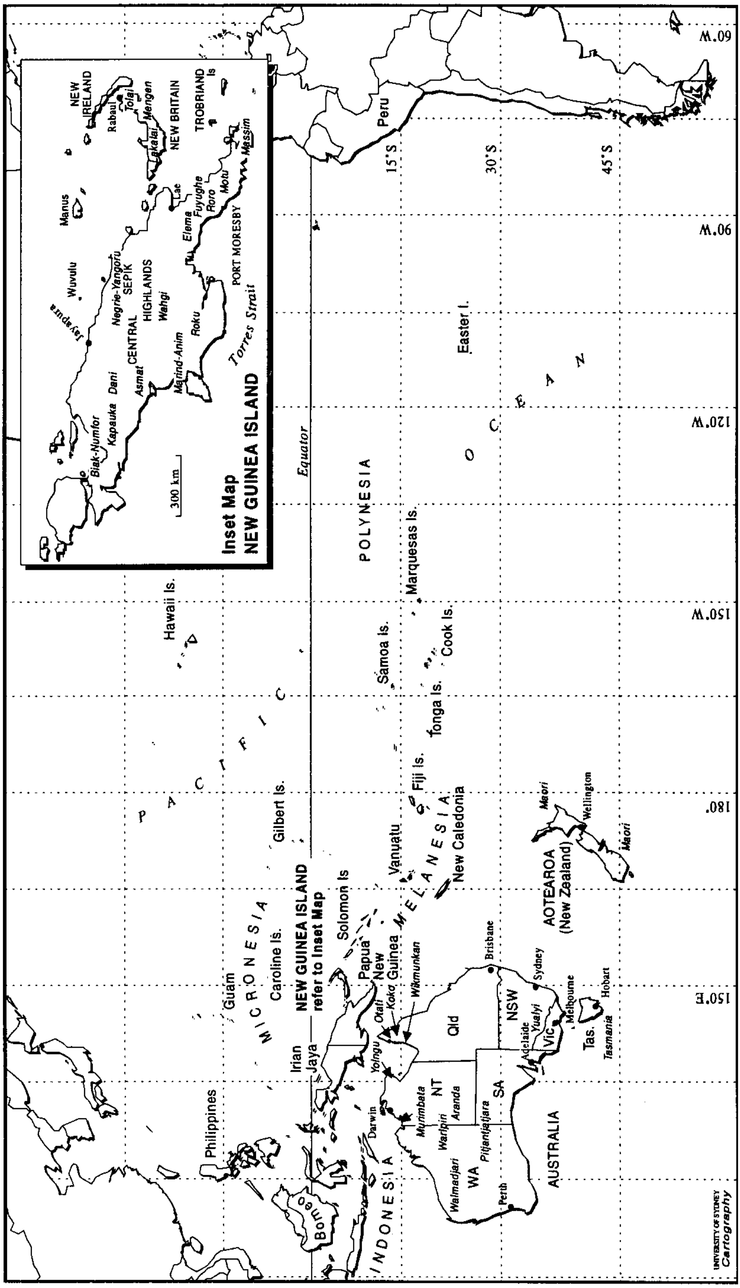
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Introduction

This is the first book ever to be published in English on the religions of the south-west Pacific as a whole. Almost a quarter of a century ago, Hans Nevermann, Ernest Worms and Helmut Petri published *Die Religionen der Südsee und Australiens* (1968), and a French translation was made soon after. Worms and Petri's section on Aboriginal religion, which constituted a little more than half of the original, has only very recently appeared in English, but alas, their material, always disjointed and uneven, is now also thoroughly dated. A new work, such as this volume, is the only answer.

Why, it may be asked, a book on the religions of Oceania at all? We are tempted to reply with those mountaineers determined to scale remote peaks—'because it is there!' The religions of Oceania—Australia, Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia—provide a colourful, informative and rewarding area of study. It is a region, furthermore, which despite having been neglected in its own right has been profoundly influential, perhaps more than any other area, on our theorizing upon and understanding of religion in general.

There remains, however, another angle to the question of why a book on the religions of Oceania. For unlike lofty mountain peaks standing boldly against the horizon, it might be asked to what extent Oceania is really there to be scaled. After all, the south-west Pacific has hundreds of language and cultural groups, not to mention an immense history which will mostly remain forever concealed. In what meaningful sense can all these things be brought together as a reality embraced by the word 'Oceania'?

This query must be squarely faced. Certainly, the traditions of the Pacific islands and Australia are quite distinct; so much so that, like Nevermann *et al.,* we have kept them quite separate in this book, although our chapters correspond and interrelate (as our table of contents indicates) far more than those in our predecessor's book. There

is, furthermore, an undeniable diversity *within* Australian and islander traditions. Since this is so, we are obliged to offer some explanation for the horizon which our book spans. This is the task of our Introduction.

Below, we consider the integrity of 'Oceania' in two ways. First, there is the indigenous *reality* of the south-west Pacific, which we briefly explore in terms of the prehistory of this rather culturally isolated part of the globe. Nonetheless, it is self-evidently true that until lately the original inhabitants of this area did not have anything approaching an identity of themselves as 'Oceanians'.

This brings us to the second part of our Introduction: the arrival of European investigators who created the *idea* of Oceania (or the South Seas, etc.). A major part of the intellectual legitimacy of our domain of enquiry lies in the history of Western thought, our understanding of 'otherness' and of Europe's encounter with world cultures. This is not, of course, just a history of ideas, for ideas take political shape and so Oceania does emerge as a socio-political reality in recent centuries. This in turn has reshaped the identity of the original inhabitants of this region, so that today there is indeed much substance to the notion of religions of Oceania as a whole, for example in the form of Pacific Black liberation theologies. All this forms a part of our story.

To begin, however, we must turn back some hundred thousand years to the peopling of Oceania.

THE PEOPLING OF OCEANIA

Indigenous peoples were present in Australia as early as *ca.* 60,000 BP. It is even possible that 'the modern human type' known now as *Homo sapiens sapiens* first developed on the Australian continent, or more correctly, on the continental shelf called Sahul (including mainland Australia, Tasmania and New Guinea). The renowned Charles Darwin once speculated that such a biological isolation might have been necessary for humanity to evolve, and new evidence about the immense antiquity of the Australian continent has thrown previous, if competing theories about human origins into the balance. The lowest level of a site on the Arnhem Land escarpment in the Northern Territory contains two ochre 'crayons' recently dated to 65,000–60,000 BP, and there are two controversial datings—one of (allegedly) human bone from central Australia put at 120,000 BP, and the other a stone tool from the Nepean River banks near Sydney recalibrated to 120,000–80,000 BP—which are currently under scrutiny.

During the last two decades scholars have differed over whether there was a single or two-stage movement of peoples from the South-East Asian region. Two stages would make the ancient Australian population 'dihybrid', implying that we should be looking for signs of two types of peoples, rather than one so-called 'Australoid' stock. Among the puzzles to be solved is the apparent difference between most mainland Aborigines (with wavier hair and characteristically slender build) and the Tasmanians (who were comparatively stocky, with crinkly hair like the Melanesians). Older theories conflicted as to whether the more numerous mainlanders pushed the Tasmanians southwards, or whether some groups sailed down from the Tropics to reach the southernmost reaches of the eastern Australian seaboard (the earliest occupation date for Tasmania thus far being 30,000 BP, and the date of the severance of a land-bridge across Bass Strait being 7,000–6,500 BCE). While great lacunae in the archaeological evidence still prevent satisfactory answers to many questions, we can be sure now that Australian prehistory is of fundamental importance for understanding the emergence of the human species as a whole.

Upon contact with the outside world, Australia proved to be very diverse ethnologically, with up to 550 culturo-linguistic groupings—some of which were territorially confined, as along parts of the lush eastern seaboard, and some very scattered indeed, as were the desert Aborigines of central and western Australia. The prevailing picture of the Aboriginal socio-economic scene is that of semi-nomadic band societies; lineages or small kin groups engaged in hunting and gathering across land they recognized as shared with bands of the same ancestries or language(s). Bands usually camped and rarely settled permanently in the same location, although there were seasonal and ceremonial places where they came together for feasts, exchanges and rite. Mobility in sensitive eco-systems made for long-term survival, although snippets of archaeological evidence—about the firing of forests for game and the extinction of such a large mammal as the Tasmanian wolf *(thylacinus)*—suggest greater modification of environments during the early human occupancy of Australia than was at first supposed. But here one must remember regional variations and thus different potentialities of Sahul's landscape: on south Australian plains the spread of grass was encouraged to attract kangaroos, while on islands only just off Cape York some desultory steps in horticulture were taken. Along the north coast of Arnhem Land, Aborigines used canoes to negotiate the seas between islands (perhaps being first inspired into such adventuring by

Macassans), and in the centre is the genius of Black wanderers to try to find water when none might seem available.

By comparison with New Guinea, however, Aboriginal populations were much more spread out on European contact (about 1 million over 7,687,000 square kilometres), and the technologies and cultural configurations were relatively more homogeneous. Tool types, instruments, skills, institutions and beliefs tended to diffuse over large regions (occasionally over virtually the whole continent), and when it comes to phenomena of religion it is thus easier to generalize about the major themes of ritual life and the broad features of belief. In contrast, we find that in New Guinea and its outliers, as Sahul's northern component, the ethnographic complexity is sharper than anywhere else on earth; about a quarter of the earth's discrete cultures, languages and thus religions are documented in this region alone.

Some would argue—at least from DNA analysis—that New Guinea was populated as early as 72,000 BP; but archaeology has so far only yielded the firm date of 40,000+ BP (from raised beaches on the Huon Peninsula). New Guinea's greater archaeological fascination lies in its hortico-agricultural prehistory, for there are signs that tuber crops were curated as early as 30,000 BP and impressive evidence that humanity's first 'agricultural revolution' or systematic gardening occurred in the New Guinea highlands from *ca.* 9,000 BCE. The northern coast and the island outliers of New Guinea have been rightly identified as the spine along which the earliest known sea-faring explorers moved further and further eastwards, along the Solomons' chain to San Cristobal and thence across some 200 nautical miles to the next stepping-stone of Melanesia. The oldest known boat, dating to 33,000 BP, hails from a New Guinea coast.

'Melanesia', meaning the 'black islands', was named in 1832 by the French *savant* Dumont d'Urville to classify the occupancy of New Guinea, the Solomons, the New Hebrides, New Caledonia and Fiji by crinkly haired black peoples, who were distinct from mainland Black Australians and from the lighter coloured populations of Micronesia (the 'small islands' or atolls north of Melanesia) and Polynesia (the 'many islands' scattered across the rest of the Pacific). Although the classification is crude, it has, strangely enough, weathered criticisms over the years and will remind one that the peopling of central Oceania can hardly be explained solely in terms of the Black peoples of Sahul.

The human occupancy of the Pacific islands has long been a subject of controversy and competing speculations. The current consensus among scholars, in the light of technological, linguistic, cultural and

genetic evidence, is that the islands were peopled through migrations from the Asian rather than the American side of the Pacific (though with Rapanui/Easter Island experiencing some South American impact). Older theories giving the Americas a much more important role (Thor Heyerdahl's view, for instance) have been discarded, and the debate (generated by Andrew Sharp) about whether voyagers found new islands more by accident or by 'being swept off course' than by deliberately organizing exploratory expeditions has tended to lose its point. A consensus among the present generation of prehistorians has it that the most inaccessible islands were populated by movements out from a regional centre, first from 'frontier Melanesia', east from Vanuatu, New Caledonia and Fiji between 3,000 and 2,000 years ago, and then from western central Polynesia (Tonga and Samoa) during the first millennium AD—fanning out, not just to Aotearoa/New Zealand and wider Polynesia, but also to Micronesia, and even to some extent doubling back into Melanesia.

The key evidence for this prehistoric pattern is the distribution of finely decorated Lapita pottery from northern New Guinea to Samoa, leaving us a vivid record of highly mobile sea-borne colonists and explorers moving steadily through Melanesia and out into Polynesia in the mid to late second millennium BC. It makes sense to believe that these migrants spoke Austronesian languages and were the ancestors of the present-day Polynesians and eastern Micronesians. During their movements through Melanesia they were typically coastal-dwellers who eventually became absorbed into the Black populations preceding them (but with darker-skinned groups getting no further east than Fiji). Some consider the processes to be more complex than this; a slow migratory wave through Micronesia is not to be ruled out, given the early date of 3, 500 BP for the occupancy of the central Marianas (though non-Austronesian) in western Micronesia; while a great many Austronesian traditions speak of diminutive occupants of the islands before the ancestors of the present inhabitants arrived (in Polynesia usually *menehune,* in Fiji *leka,* in Rennell *hitihiti,* etc.). But for the time being the postulate of a single rather than binary or multiple entrance into central Oceania holds good, and squares with common Polynesian and eastern Micronesian traditions of a homeland (often *Hawaiiki*) somewhere in the regional 'spring-board' between Vanuatua and Samoa. This postulate also goes some way towards explaining techno-cultural differences between (relatively older) western and (relatively younger) eastern Polynesian societies.

Islander subsistence was based on fishing, horticulture and the domestication of animals. The newcomers brought with them dogs (as did the early Australians), pigs (reaching New Guinea around 3,000 BP) and fowl; they mildly modified their environments through shifting cultivation and animal domestication. As in Australia, their technology was lithic, yet with more developed techniques for grinding and smoothing stones. Rice-growing was unknown except in western Micronesia (Guam), and iron-forging was introduced only in far western New Guinea—after the Islamic presence at Tidore. Of the new crops introduced to the islands, the sweet potato is of much interest, since it may well have entered the Pacific from South America (in 500–1,000 CE).

What of the prehistory of Oceanic religions? In the chapters which follow we consider religious life from the time of the earliest contacts with 'the outside world' to the present day. We eschew speculation about the prehistoric character of Oceanic religion—there has been too much theorizing, even 'cult-archaeological' imagining about it—here we offer a few basic comments on the reconstruction of religio-cultural life from the distant past.

Australia is of great fascination in that it yields every major method of disposing with the dead: bodies extended or flexed, bones of the dead placed in rock crevices; interred jumbles of bones; platform disposals; grave goods present and goods absent—all these practices are known. From Lake Mungo (in western New South Wales) comes some of the earliest evidence for cremation anywhere in the world (25,000–24,000 BP); at Green Gully Victoria one even finds the corpse of half a woman set beside half a man in a mysterious unity; at Broadbeach, Queensland, there is evidence of cannibalism; at Cooma (near Canberra) a man was buried some 10,000 years ago with a magnificent kangaroo-tooth necklace. Australian art, too, has its extraordinary prehistory; currently cation-ratio dating suggests that the Olary engravings (in a semi-desert area of South Australia) could be as old as 30,000 BP, while stencilled hands in Tasmanian caves studied with Accelerator Mass Spectroscopy appear to have been repainted over 20,000 years of occupancy. All this confirms the likelihood of religion and something of its continuities in Aboriginal life, but it does not prove its existence, nor tell us anything precisely about its nature and mutations over eons of time.

Both Australian and wider Pacific archaeology provide evidence for the diffusing of human groups over wider and wider portions of the earth. The new places encountered were bound to have had an affect on responses to 'the supranormal' or 'spirit-world'—from the blow-holes of the Nullabor Plain to geyser and vapours at New Zealand's Rotorua,

from the great Ayers Rock *(Uluru)* in Australia's very heart to impressive volcanoes on Tanna or Hawaii. Socio-religious institutions for group defence and consolidation grew up in a great multiplicity of small territorial domains, as did procedures for group negotiation to which the widespread use of ceremonial kava-drinking—from the Samoas to the Samo (the Western Province of Papua)—intriguingly testifies. If by 1700 an estimated 1 million persons occupied Australia, twice that number were distributed over the Pacific islands. No significant island groups were uninhabited before European contact; mutineering Mr Christian's arrival on an uninhabited Pitcairn Island may seem an exception, yet trowel and spade have revealed earlier occupation.

Now the populating of the islands in itself betokens the preparedness to make new discoveries, and as we shall see below (p. 146) the religious factor looks to be crucial for the spirit of adventure, including the transmitted knowledge to voyagers of 'letting nature be your guide' (as Harold Gatty's famous book suggests). The frequent heroicization of 'vanguard explorers' corroborates this, and occasionally prehistoric investigation points to the sacral and apparently charismatic character of great expeditionary leaders. On Efate (Vanuatu), for example, archaeologists followed up local traditions about Roy Mata, evidently the greatest of the high-ranking individuals who had arrived just before a well-remembered volcanic eruption and who introduced the matrilineal social structuring to Efate, Makura and Tongoa. So significant was Roy Mata that a number of his faithful followers agreed to be buried with him on the islet of Retoka, an oral record substantiated by one of the most startling archaeological discoveries of the Pacific. Closely surrounding the skeletons of a chieftain and his wife lay twenty-two men and women buried as couples, with radiocarbon dating to 1265 CE supporting prior estimates by genealogy.

This remarkable case indicates the importance of group solidarity in both finding and then managing island worlds. Maori traditions set great store by the arrival of a 'fleet' of eleven canoes, which provides the genealogical starting-point for the known tribes, and if the descent lists only take us to the thirteenth century—which, being around 300 years after the earliest known human presence in New Zealand, may possibly mark a second wave of immigrants— they nonetheless reflect the significance of *collective* exploits and possession. At times the Austronesians appeared to have achieved larger unities transcending tribal differences. The Tongans held sway over a kind of inter-island dominion during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for example,

colonizing as far west as the Isle of Pines (New Caledonia) and parts of Fiji, and as far north as Wallis. We can presume that a sense of their own cosmic uniqueness, and that of their sacred king, Tu'i-Tonga, legitimated their activity. Into recent times there also existed the so-called 'Yap Empire' in western Micronesia, in which religious offerings of coconut oil, sennit, pandanus sails and mats were sent as tribute to Yap from islands to the east (Ulithi, Woleai, Ifaluk, etc.), which were themselves locked into an exchange system yet ranked in decreasing importance the further they were from paramount Yap (or Gagil).

We have arrived at modern times; yet before considering recent developments in the indigenous religious history of Australia and Oceania, it will be of value for introductory purposes to assess the manner in which the Western world discovered, or conceptually invented, Oceania, and the way in which the religions of its original inhabitants were envisioned by outsiders.

THE INVENTION OF THE RELIGIONS OF OCEANIA

What we now identify as the south-west Pacific has long fascinated the great cultural and intellectual speculators of the northern world. These imaginings go back long beyond the time of discovering the islands and cultures of the region. The ancient Roman Axiochus, for example, believed the Isles of the Blest, where the dead and the infernal gods dwelt, was in the Antipodes. Similarly, the Chinese novelist Li Ju-chen (b. 1763 BC), in his famous *Ching Hua Yuan,* describes island-hopping navigations until the Land of the Immortals is reached, an island which seems to lie in the direction of Tahiti, Fiji or even New Zealand.

Later, when we read of the early explorers' 'factual' accounts of their experiences in the south-west Pacific, it is clear that such lofty imaginings were still a part of intellectual traditions. We do not, in fact, know who were the first northerners to reach these parts. It is only recently that the sixteenth-century Portuguese presence in Australia has been acknowledged; interestingly, a Portuguese map of that century, believed to represent Australia, contains pictures of all kinds of fantastic humans, having the faces of dogs and monkeys. It is also possible that Chinese vessels had reached the Great South Land at an early date—a notion cherished by eminent historians and prehistorians of both Australia and China, but as yet lacking any definite proof.

For our purposes, however, the advent of non-indigenous reflection upon the region of Oceania properly begins with the records of early

European explorers to the regions. The most ancient work of this kind is the journal of Antonio Pigafetta (1521), who had accompanied the voyages of Magellan. Not surprisingly, his descriptions of the people of the island of Guam are superficial and dwell on the type of obvious physical and cultural features that could be observed, these days, by the casual tourist. This type of report was the norm for this period in accounts by those such as Alvaro de Mendaña de Niera, Francis Drake, Louis-Antoine de Bougainville and William Dampier; the last named, having said that he saw two signs of religion among the Australian Aborigines, added that 'setting aside their Humane shape, they differ but little from Brutes'.[1]

The initial impressions of these explorers were heavily coloured by an emerging intellectual orientation in Europe which increasingly used reason and observation as a means of discovering the true and essential nature of humankind. This was a time of internal strife, which led to a race to establish new colonies and to develop scientific knowledge (e.g. in navigation) to make such expansion possible. The new scientific spirit also shaped the understanding of humanity itself; instead of holy decree or divine monarchical right, reason and nature became the locus of truth. So it was that thinkers like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau became fascinated by 'savages' as evincing what people were truly like in their allegedly 'natural' state.

These thinkers were divided as to whether they believed people to be essentially good (Rousseau and Locke), or, in Hobbes' famous phrase, apparently confirmed by Dampier's views quoted above, that the lot of 'savages' was a life 'solitary, poore, nasty, brutish and short'.[2] The protagonists of the 'Noble Savage' ideology admittedly invited rebuke with their overly romantic imaginings. When Rousseau was confronted by the details of a Maori massacre, he replied: 'Is it possible that the good Children of Nature can really be so wicked?'[3]

The interest in resolving these questions about human nature, and in the parameters of nature more generally, led in 1768 to the Royal Society promoting Captain James Cook's first voyage to the South Seas, the last great ocean region to be explored, yet, following Cook's three expeditions, a region whose indigenous peoples had fully captured Europe's imagination.

Cook himself, while voyaging just after Rousseau's publications exhalting the 'Noble Savage', was not so faint-hearted as the great French philosopher. He certainly praised the Pacific islanders, those people primarily portrayed by earlier primitivists as living in an Eden-like state of bliss and innocence, but, if anything, the harder lifestyle of

the Australians was even closer to Cook's ideal. Unlike his botanist Joseph Banks, who in his journals eulogized the Tahitian lifestyle, Cook saved his best for the Aborigines; a people who, without clothing or houses, were equally without want and, in all, 'far more happier than we Europeans'.[4]

Cook had little to say of Aboriginal religious life, but he was responsible for introducing two profoundly influential words from the Pacific islands. In 1777 he was the first European to comment on the Polynesian term *mana,* to which we will refer again shortly. The other word he introduced us to is *tabu*. He wrote:

> The people of Atooi [Atui]…resemble those of Otaheite [Tahiti] in the slovenly state of their religious places, and in offering vegetables and animals to their gods. The *taboo* also prevails in Atooi… For the people here always asked, with great eagerness and signs of fear to offend, whether any particular thing, which they desired to see, or we were unwilling to show, was taboo.[5]

Mana and *tabu* have been central to our understanding of Oceanian religions, and indeed to theories of religion generally, but before we consider this we need to follow our narrative a little further into the nineteenth century, for Cook was not only observing the South Seas but also claiming large parts of it, such as the continent of Australia, for George III. In succeeding years, waves of colonization began.

The most useful information on Oceanian religion from the early nineteenth century comes from long-term administrators or residents, missionaries and explorers who had encountered more fully the indigenous people of an area. An example is George Grey, who in 1845 was appointed Governor of New Zealand. Much of his time was spent trying to pacify the Maori people, and in this context he learned their language and translated a large body of their myths. His *Polynesian Mythology and Ancient Traditional History of the Maori as Told by Their Priests and Chiefs* (1855) was greatly influential on the rise of the then young discipline of anthropology, and has remained a standard source for students of Oceanian myth ever since. Grey, however, has another claim to fame, for some years earlier, as an explorer of internal Australia, he had discovered the Aboriginal term *kobong,* which he instantly associated with the *totam* (totem) of the Ojibwa Indians. While the term is derived from Native North America, ever since Grey's account 'totemism' has been pre-eminently associated with the Australian Aborigines.

Mana, tabu, totemism: where would the comparative study of religions have been in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries without these concepts? How much, we must ask, have the religions of Oceania shaped our understanding of religion in general? The answer is difficult to overstate.

Were these concepts not enough, we must recall also that the rise of the academic study of religion occurred during the heyday of evolutionary thought, and so eyes turned to the south-west Pacific in search of 'the primitive'. E.B.Tylor, usually considered the founder of anthropology, redefined religion as a belief in spiritual beings primarily so as to embrace the Australian Aborigines within his 'animistic' theory of the origin of religion (animism=a belief in spirits). Sir James Frazer wrote volume upon volume on totems and tabus and none influenced his theories more than the first Australians. Indeed, his theory of magic preceding religion virtually hung on Australian data, as is revealed in his lengthy correspondence with the noted ethnographer of the Aranda of central Australia, Baldwin Spencer.

The 'animists' did not pose their ideas without contest, however. R.R.Marett put forward a most influential 'pre-animistic' theory of the origin of religion in which he drew public attention to the Pacific island concept of *mana* as recorded in missionary anthropologist R.H.Codrington's *The Melanesians* (1891). This, says Codrington:

> is a power or influence, not physical, and in a way supernatural; but it shews itself in physical force, or in any kind of power or excellence which a man possesses. This *mana* is not fixed in any thing; but spirits, whether disembodied souls or supernatural beings, have it and can impart it.[6]

So, concludes Marett, this *mana,* this basic feeling of powerful awe, precedes and underlies any belief in spirits proper. In turn, Marett's ideas were applauded in Rudolf Otto's celebrated *The Ideas of the Holy* (1917) and, even more importantly, were incorporated as an essential part of Emile Durkheim's monumental *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912), in which he takes the *mana* idea as a starting-point in his investigation of Australian totemic systems.

No book in the history of the sociology or anthropology of religion has been more influential than Durkheim's, but the Oceanian connection does not stop there. Consider, for instance, Sigmund Freud's work, published in the following year. Even his title, *Totem and Taboo,* is

unthinkable without the south-west Pacific, and his argument naturally rests on ethnographic data from the region.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when comparative theories of religion were in a period of vigorous growth, Oceania was the region which promised answers to the elusive, if misguided, quest for the origin of religion. Noted theorists read the available ethnographies written by missionaries and amateur fieldworkers, and when they were still unsatisfied they engaged in long correspondences with researchers. It was inevitable, however, that the time would come when the theorists would leave their studies to venture out and actually observe for themselves the people about whom they wrote.

At this point, our attention turns to the formation of the first Chair of Anthropology in the south-west Pacific at the University of Sydney. Plans were already being laid along these lines in 1913, although World War I soon disrupted them. Attending the meeting on that occasion were two young men who were to inspire the next generation of anthropological research world-wide—Bronislaw Malinowski, who had that year published *The Family among the Australian Aborigines,* and A.R.Radcliffe-Brown, who three years earlier had engaged in a turbulent but not profoundly fruitful bout of fieldwork in Western Australia. Soon after this meeting, Malinowski, a Pole and technically an alien, set off for the Trobriand Islands in east Papua New Guinea to see out the war performing the first ever piece of intensive long-term fieldwork. Malinowski's subsequent rich and detailed publications on Trobriand life became an ethnographic benchmark for future field-researchers, although his theories of religion (e.g. *Magic, Science and Religion,* 1948) were not always received with equal enthusiasm.

In 1926, Radcliffe-Brown returned to Australia as Sydney's first Professor of Anthropology, and under his guidance a multitude of researchers took to the field in Australia and the Pacific islands. To publish their findings, he founded the journal *Oceania* in 1929.

The period between the wars is marked by long-term field expeditions and the application of 'functionalist' theory, either that of Malinowski or the more sophisticated, structural-functionalism of Radcliffe-Brown. In Australia, the works of A.P.Elkin (who was soon to take over the Sydney anthropology department), Phyllis Kaberry and W.L.Warner stand out, while in the Pacific islands one should note in particular the publications of Raymond Firth (who briefly succeeded Radcliffe-Brown at Sydney), Reo Fortune, Gregory Bateson, Margaret Mead and F.E.Williams.

This type of research continued until after World War II, but more recently, while the emphasis on fieldwork continues, theoretical fashions have turned to structuralist, Marxist and phenomenological models. The works of Claude Lévi-Strauss, which developed to some extent out of Radcliffe-Brown's later thinking, have drawn heavily upon Australian Aboriginal traditions. His methodology in the study of myth began something of a fad in Oceanian research, as it did elsewhere. More enduring, however, have been some profoundly sensitive studies of symbolic worlds in the Pacific islands and Australia. One which stands out is W.E.H.Stanner's *On Aboriginal Religion* (1959–61), which is an inspired analysis of Murinbata myth and ritual. Another is K.O.L.Burridge's *Mambu: A Melanesian Millennium* (1960), which brilliantly considers cargoism in the Madang region of New Guinea as part of a symbolic quest for the moral European.

Hundreds of works could be mentioned for the period which began with Malinowski's fieldwork and Radcliffe-Brown's professional chair, but our task here is not to provide a detailed inventory but a very general map for the inexperienced student. Something should be said here, however, about the politics of theory in Oceania.

It must never be forgotten that our theories have grown in a colonial environment on the one hand, and with a fascination with exotic cultures on the other. This should be evident from our discussion thus far. The ideas of noble and ignoble 'savages' not only served Western thinkers seeking to define the essence of human nature, they were also used, sometimes brutally, to justify the actions of Europeans in new-found colonies. The evolutionary notion of the 'primitive' was certainly rooted in an ongoing investigation to find the basic defining qualities of humanity, but how many deaths were justified by saying this was the law of 'the survival of the fittest' in operation? Even functionalist theory, seemingly innocuous at first glance as it documented the complex internal balance of 'native' cultures, has been heavily criticized for presenting an image of indigenous cultures as stagnant and inflexible, and hence requiring the guiding hand of colonial social engineering to ensure adaptation to change. One need only read A.P.Elkin, Raymond Firth or Hubert Murray (then Lieutenant-Governor of Papua) in the early volumes of *Oceania* to recognize how tightly anthropology and 'native administration' were interwoven.

One recurring failure in the study of religions of Oceania even today (although, thankfully, the exceptions are increasing) has been the neglect of history. The savage, the primitive, the native—those preconceptions that have accompanied the observations of people in the

south-west Pacific all have overtones of immutability or timelessness. The reality, however, is that our investigations have been carried on well behind a staunch, sometimes bloody, colonial frontier. Research has tried to rediscover or reconstruct what Oceanian societies were like before colonization, and publications so often ignore the fact that the people being investigated no longer practise the traditions described. What does this silence about present realities say? Simply that we will not acknowledge cultures in transition; that if 'primitive' societies become dynamic societies we will ignore their longings, their aspirations and their hopes for the future. Clearly, such a state of scholarship should not be allowed to continue.

If there is a lesson to be learned from looking back over the centuries of investigating religion in Oceania, it is that our fascination and theories tell us as much, if not more, about ourselves as about the people being encountered. This is a stark truth to confront, but dialogue takes time, and we need not therefore throw up our hands in despair. One of the best prescriptions for future study, we feel, is a sensitivity to the changing and shifting notion of religion in Oceania so that we deal not with the pallid relics of past cultures, but with representations of ongoing and vital traditions.

It is thus that our chapters are set within the context of history. Certainly we devote chapters to what seem likely to be the religions of pre-contact times (always remembering *all* our sources were written well after contact), but about two thirds of the book considers the history of religions in the south-west Pacific over the past few centuries. Some readers will ask why we have spent a good deal of time on the impact of Christianity in Oceania. It is because there are in the region fascinating new religious movements—crucial ones for the general study of religion—that cannot be understood without considering Christian missionization, and also because most 'first peoples' of the south-west Pacific have come to embrace Christianity, while expressing their identities through it in distinctively indigenous ways. Hence the sets of parallel chapters on 'cults of invasion'—covering various adjustment movements, including the famous Melanesian 'cargo cults'—and on 'Christianization', which is fast becoming the subject of a new industry among anthropologists, historians, missiologists and sociologists.

This book's methodological orientation is that of the newer discipline of Religious Studies, which lends itself in fact to a polymethodic approach. 'Religion', a term lacking a lexical equivalent in almost all the traditional cultures of Oceania, is employed typologically to cover

the many life-ways and ancestral traditions that preceded the arrival of 'world religions'. Our approach is by and large historico-phenomenological; we present an open-ended and flexible understanding of the religious dimension (avoiding its confinement to belief, for instance, or just to ritual); we are concerned to trace developments from the traditional to the more rapidly changing contemporary scene; and we do not intend to privilege any tradition so much as to report, assess and analyse with critical acumen the social realities we have experienced and researched. Work done on religion by scholars in a variety of social sciences has been utilized, without deferring to the conceits or special methodic protocol of one or another discipline and school. In moving through Aboriginal to wider Pacific materials, it should also be noted that this book has been designed to ease the reader from a more immediately manageable approach to more complex data and analysis.

Returning, then, to our opening question, we have shown that Oceania does indeed have a prehistoric integrity as a somewhat isolated cultural pocket, but, further, we have demonstrated that the religions of Oceania are equally the invention of colonial thought and practice. This makes them no less 'real', but we must be honest enough to acknowledge the context of our understanding and to reveal in our survey the constant fact that the people being observed were in truth being observed in a state of imposed transition. To put this another way, no book can say what the religions of Oceania *are*. What we reveal in the following pages is what, for the last few centuries, the religions of the south-west Pacific were in the process of *becoming*.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

Note the references at the end of chapters in this work are only connected to quotations in the text. For various other (and sometimes more important) publications, readers are advised to consult the Bibliography.

1 W.Dampier, *A New Voyage around the World,* London, 1937 (1697), p. 312.
2 T.Hobbes, *Leviathan,* London, 1975 (1651), p. 65.
3 Quoted in B.Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific 1768–1850,* London, 1960, p. 87.
4 J.C.Beaglehole (ed.), *The Journals of Captain Cook,* London, 1955, vol. 1, p. 508.
5 Quoted in F.Steiner, *Taboo,* Harmondsworth, 1967, p. 22.
6 R.H.Codrington, *The Melanesians,* Oxford, 1891, p. 118 n.

Part II

Pacific Islands

4
Tradition

The dominant motif of traditional Melanesian religions is the maintenance of collective material welfare, while in both Micronesian and Polynesian religious traditions two outstanding features are legitimations of the cosmic order and the concern for personal and group protection. As the general cultural boundaries of the three regions are relatively fluid, however, one should expect some overlapping of religious configurations. Besides, all three themes just mentioned appear basic to smaller-scale traditional societies around the world, or to the so-called 'primal', 'natural' or 'perennial' religions expressed by such societies (Australian Aboriginal groups included). No one could justly contend, in any case, that the rites of the Polynesians leave the spirit-given blessings of fertility and wealth out of focus, or that for their part Melanesian 'pragmatists' are uninterested in cosmic order. But it is as well to begin with some sense of broad tendencies, if we are to manage a brief survey of the most complex ethnographic scene on earth and of the wide scattering of peoples from New Guinea to Hawaii. We can do no more than offer a feel for what one may expect to find in various Pacific regions, and there is no better way to begin our synopsis than by considering how different peoples picture their universes.

COSMOS

It is more characteristic of Melanesian worldviews that a given group's cosmos is spatially confined and somewhat 'horizontally' conceived. A surprising majority of Melanesian cultures were actually land-locked, especially on the great island of New Guinea, and there has been a consequent tendency for the habitations of spirit agencies, along with human settlements, to be located on (and be accessible from) 'ground level'. A sense of receding ambiences, each decreasing in safety away

from one's own hamlet and gardens, is surprisingly common in cultures as far apart as those of the Enga and Wahgi highlanders (5,000–7,000 metres up) and of the hinterland Orokaiva on the northern plains of Papua. If neighbouring tribes and enemies lie beyond this or that point on the horizon—often a prominence or ridge—it is also typical of Melanesian deities, spirits and 'ghost people' that they occupy uncultivated or uncontrollable places and that they come from 'out there' along a broadly horizontal plane.

Traditionally, easy reach of hamlets in one's own clan or tribal area constitutes the 'security circle', where faces are known and unexpected occurrences were minimized. Beyond known territorial boundary markers, yet in the well-tracked or cultivated districts of other tribes, there lies the danger of enemy action, unless a particular inter-tribal alliance is sure; and in the wild of the jungle, swamp or uninhabited tract, hunters or deviating war parties look out for more than savage boars, cassowaries, snakes or (near the coast) crocodiles, for 'the bush' is also a favoured dwelling area of spirit-powers. Knowing that earlier generations took the bodies of the dead into the forested heights of the mountains, for instance, a Wahgi fears ancestral displeasure—from the more powerful, 'distant' dead if a hunt takes him across old 'deposition' grounds—and lucky the fleeing game which in virtually any Melanesian terrain runs into the vicinity of stagnant, eerily still pools ('round water', or *raunwara* as the pidgin has it), because such spots are usually the lairs of dangerous, sick-bearing place-spirits (pidgin *masalai*) and hunters tried to avoid them. In the steep valleys of the Papuan highlands, crossing through mountain forests might seem to be the easiest recourse for any ambush party hoping to surprise an enemy hamlet, but the Fuyughe, among others, accept and fear the protective power of the *sila,* place-spirits which overlook each tribal zone from the heights and which are held to kill trespassers trying any circuitous route. For some peoples, when a man encounters an unknown solitary female outside the inner ambience—traditionally an opportunity for sexual aggression—her straightforward humanness is not to be taken for granted; the Lakalai of New Britain Island actually share the advice that nettles be applied to the woman's skin to ensure she is no dangerous ghost! The central highlands Gimi even 'read' the wild in terms of countervailing genders —trees as penises, the sudden flutter of birds as ejaculations, caves as wombs—the whole making up the fertile source of 'life'.

It would be hasty to conclude, however, that Melanesian religions always lack a sense of 'the vertical'. Patterns of belief about Sky Beings are known, rather significantly, in an almost unbroken arc

from high Enga and Melpa country in New Guinea through the inland Gulf area of the Erave (south Kewa) down to Roku on the flat swamp plains nearest Torres Strait and Cape York. The single god of the Roku, in fact, who is both a Cosmic Serpent (called Kampel) as well as a Sky Deity, might suggest some archaic connections from a time when Sahul was one continent, but inferences of this kind can run up against problems. Although Rainbow Serpents are known all over the Australian continent, dominant sky-dwelling Beings are not important save in the south-east (see chapter 2). Besides, on both sides of the Torres Strait islands notions of spirits high above are typically more than matched by those of spirits of known and visitable locations below.

There are also Melanesian groups who deify sun and moon; to the Huli of the Papuan southern highlands they are a brother and sister, Ni and Hana, who committed incest on earth before ascending to the sky; and for the Mae Enga the sun symbolizes the great God Aitawe, who created the domain of the Sky Beings (with the moon's assistance). Even in these cases, though, it is not so much the great powers in the sky themselves which draw forth invocations or ritual responses, as the effects they bequeath to humans and their local environments. In the Huli repertory of ceremonial songs about the sun, the real reason for celebration is that Ni's movements mark them out as a chosen people:

> Ni does not rise and stay
> Over Abena [Mae Enga territory] at its coming
> Over the Ibili [Ipili Engas] and Suguba [Bosavi groups] at its height
> Or the Sunas [Lake Kopiago people] at its going,
> But over us. We are a people!
> We are the Huli!

For both the Huli and the Mae the sun's offspring are 'black eggs'—select sacred stones—and the latter people expose these objects as the focus of a special ritual *(Yainanda)* when blight or sickness threatens a tribe's very existence. At their great festivals the nearby Mendi still reveal comparable stones, digging them out from beneath the earthen floors of their long cult-houses, the entrances of which are commonly overshadowed by a large clay disc—emblematic of the sun. Such 'down-to-earth' qualities of Melanesian are indicative.

Melanesian sky gods are nonetheless conspicuous by their rare appearances. Deities one might place in the category of great or

'high' gods are conceived to be ever-present, pervasive but characteristically environal, or else they have removed themselves to some other place (beyond the horizon) after fulfilling their primordial labours. A few such deities created the cosmos, advised the first humans and then continued to monitor humanity by rewarding good behaviour and punishing delicts; such is the almost Biblical view of Yabwahine among the southern Massim of eastern Papua, although groups from the same broad culture area saw this all-seeing 'Sky Man' chiefly as a 'war god' who brought 'moments of triumph' and received all cannibal victims. In one unusual case a sky deity, the bisexual Ugatame of the Kapauka, who are highlanders from western Irian Jaya, created everything but punishes no one, for He/She is the 'predetermining scheme' *(ebijata)* or 'compulsory force' behind all human deeds.[1] In contrast, some elevated gods basically specialize in moral supervision and requital; the Huli's Datagaliwabe being a kind of all-seeing Varuna in this respect. Others are beneficient Sustainers, ensuring that the cosmos they created will not collapse, and requiring little worship or reverence, as with the Mae Enga Aitawe.

As for cases approaching *deus absconditus,* the Ngaing of the hinterland Madang speak of Parambik who 'put' the universe—'the land, rivers, wild animals, birds and plants (including totems), gods'—yet who later had no involvement with humans and evokes no ritual from them. He only received recognition as the mythic 'plenum' (thus *parambik*) out of which all objects and events have sprung. Of the god Anut in the nearby Sengam, Som, Yam and Yabob complex of coastal Madang, one learns that he created the cosmos (or all of it which did not pre-exist him) and then produced two 'deity brothers', Kilibob and Manup, whose more interesting activities—comparable to those of various Heroes we discuss later—made Anut of less concern to humans. In these (albeit odd) instances we sense that 'high' and more abstractly conceived deities have lost hold of the imagination and have been replaced by more environmentally real pressures. The old prominence of the Lakalai Sky God Gimugaigai, to take another illustration, was more recently overshadowed by the boisterous volcano spirit Sumua, who punishes misdemeanours 'much like any powerful or benevolent ghost'.[2] This particular shift probably owes something to imported ideas, since nearby societies, such as the Mengen, see themselves as protected by mysteriously powerful volcano gods (in their case, Maglila). Volcano gods are quite common on the smaller Melanesian islands; perhaps the most famous are Karaperamun on Tanna, southern

Vanuatu, and Matshikitshi, the Hero God there, who is supposed to have piled one volcanic island upon another.

Impressive female deities are comparatively rare in Melanesia, and myths about procreativity between gods and goddesses are unusual. Actually brother Ni and sister Hana among the Huli were two of the five offspring of Honabe, the primal female deity, and her husband Timbu. Significantly, the family of gods lived on the land, which preceded their existence, and before Ni and Hana's ascent as sun and moon they engaged in their incestuous union on earth below—a serious lesson to humans because their copulation brought no results. It was only through Ni's later marriage to another female deity that the 'black eggs' were fortunately scattered through the Huli domain. In the highlands this link between stones and fertility is common, and across in Melpa and Kyaka Enga country to the east we find that a great Woman Spirit (or Enda Semangko), the object of a spreading pre-contact fertility cult, is thought to be embodied in a single rounded stone. Outside the highlands, perhaps the most famous traditional great goddess is Ia Kupia ('the Mother'), who, half-human, half-serpentine in form, is one of the dominant volcanoes overlooking Rabaul harbour. Tolai myths tell how she ordered her good son To Kabinana to kill his threatening father (now another dormant volcano), while she herself died after shedding her skin because her bad son, To Purgo, failed to keep her warm. (Myths, we note, sometimes tell how gods can die, at least temporally, and thus how the deities come to have less relevance than their descendants.)

If great female deities are few in Melanesia, however, masculine and rather mundane-looking war gods abound. As we shall soon show more fully, warriorhood was the prized role of almost all Melanesian males, and there is little wonder that spiritual powers were evoked for support against enemies—although such aids were typically lesser gods, pertaining to military activity alone or to an individual clan concerned with such. Perhaps the most successful of warriors in the whole region were the Roviana and Simbo of New Georgia (western Solomons), who had an insatiable appetite for taking heads and slaves from neighbouring islands, especially from Ysabel, the Shortlands and even from Bougainville (260 kilometres away!). A supportive Roviana spirit during raids was Liqomo, who was alleged to reveal both the position of enemies and any of their secret devices. More crucial was Musumusu, the spirit leading the war canoes, whose gruesome effigy—with vacant eyes and pendant earrings—also often stood as a warning to strangers at Roviana tribal boundaries or in glades visited only by priests; given his connection with ancestral lines it was for his benefit as well as for the

dead that men hunted for skulls and made human sacrifices. Only rarely would such powers demanding blood and death become 'great gods' of the tribal cult. For Murik Lakes groups, indicatively, the war deity Karkar actually had to be constituted for each occasion of war, the priest-like Gapar rushing to procure the war clubs from the cult-house and then arranging them in a row to make the god come into effect before battle.

In 'warrior cultures' the fearsome face put upon spiritual forces could be transferred to other spheres of collective concern. A few Tauade tribes in the Papuan highlands, for instance, fed food to an awesome idol bedecked with tufts of straight (rather than Melanesian crinkly) hair, and those approaching it along a narrow ravine would deviate from the set stepping-stones at their peril. Gifts made at the statue were not for victory, however, but to prevent bad harvests. Such a power was an unusually offendable place-spirit or *masalai,* and some well-known *masalai* were indeed the objects of recurrent sacrifices. In the New Guinea highlands both Siane and Chuave tribes slaughtered pigs at the great boundary rock Elam Bari, for example, when there was too little or too much rain, in the belief that the one-armed, one-legged Being who dwelt there controlled the weather. In these cases it was anger, best known for its consequences in inter-tribal conflict but here projected on to an environal force, which was being averted.

In the more widely dispersed island complexes of both Polynesia and Micronesia there are numerous parallels to these notions of deity. In general, however, the emphases are different enough to ponder, and a great commonality of belief across these two broad regions is more obvious. The divinized sky is a major (to-be-expected) factor, for the sense of the heaven's enormity is bound to have been greater among those who sailed long distances under its expanse, and whose tiny, clustered upsprings of land are ringed by the outermost reaches of its dome. Thus among these Austronesian-speakers one must be ready for relatively more 'vertical' or heavenward orientations—in myth, cosmology and cultic focus. The Maori traditions (of Aotearoa/New Zealand in southern Polynesia), convey this distinctiveness most strikingly. In the secret cult of *Whare wananga* (the 'house of sacred learning' open only to the highest priestly adepts), we learn of Io dwelling in the highest of twelve heavens, like the removed, almost inaccessible Supreme Being in various Gnostic systems. Even if it is possible that we have here some early post-contact accommodation to mission teaching, the accentuation of the vertical is characteristic, and is recognizable enough in the mythic motifs and cosmological

representation of the well-known Maori 'departmental' gods, who operate in the realms of sky, earth and underworld.

Rangi (heaven) and Papa (earth) were actually conceived by the Maori as the divine Ancestral pair from whom humans derive, with their seemingly inextricable embrace over 'a vast space of time' having to be undone by the cramped progeny between them. Of their six children, only Tanemahuta, God of Forests, Birds and Insects, can raise his father up to the skies—by using his strong back and limbs, and by being 'firmly planted on his mother the earth'. Only by this *Trennung* can space be made for further divine activity and the eventual generation of humans, whose origins thus ultimately lie both above and below. Far to the north, one finds a comparable, no less famous myth of cosmic separation among the Austronesian-speaking Gilbertese. As an elder of the royal lineage of Karongoa put it, on Makin Meang atoll:

> It was called the Darkness and the Cleaving
> Together;
> The sky and the earth and the sea were within it;
> But the sky and the earth clove together,

and it is not until the young hero Naareau snares the cosmic eel Riiki that the sky is 'uprooted', 'propped' and 'split asunder' from the sinking land and the sea below. Only then can a 'Company of Spirit Fools' haul the First Land out of the depths, Naareau create sun and moon from the eyes of his father (whom he slays), and Riiki become the Milky Way when the hero flings him far overhead.[3]

In both Polynesia and Micronesia, major deities associated with biocosmic forces are usually from above. Creation myths frequently envisage the pulling up of land or island fishing from beneath the sea by sky-dwelling gods or culture heroes (and across Polynesia we find Ta'aroa/Tangaroa, usually a descendant of sky and earth, the most widespread and active of such creator figures, perhaps because of migrations or cultural influences from Tahiti). Micronesian sun cults are common and, as in Polynesia, the greater gods are almost always 'heavenly'. Micronesian cosmic creations are often from above. In the earliest of all Pacific ethnographic reports, a letter by the Jesuit Juan Cantova from the Carolines in 1728, the missionary is struck by 'the Promethean tale of the evil spirit who, after his expulsion from heaven, brought fire down to earth', while in an impressive myth from Yap in particular the habitable world originates from a rock being thrown from the sky.[4] Austronesian mythology is also generally more elaborate than

in Melanesia—Marquesan specialists reeled off up to 159 divine generations!—and the narrating of genealogical relations between the deities possesses clearer implications for the ordering of ranked societies. The vertical orientation is often underscored by conceptions of an underworld. The Maori most commonly conceive the lower realm as the house of the defeated Dark God Whiro, guarded by the fearsome female spirit Hine-nui-te-po, with both beings ensuring that death must befall all. Visiting the nether region will surely bring tragedy, as when Motikitik, the Micronesian culture Hero of Yap, spies on his mother gathering food there and thus causes her death.

The vertical orientation of Austronesian cosmogenies does not have to be at the expense of spatial horizons. On Rarotonga (Cook Islands), to illustrate, the cosmos is envisaged in a major origins myth as an enormous coconut, which grows up from its base (*wadi ma takere*='Ancient Dirt'), rises in its encompassing 'maturity' *(pakari),* so that the wide horizons are included, and is finally and symbolically completed in the heavens (as *aratea*='Cosmic Noon'). Like the perennial Cosmic Egg it contains within it Araiiki, the sphere of life, and in this image we note how the Cosmic Coconut's base, though not clearly represented as a netherworld, suggests the Ancestral foundations, as part of 'the root of existence' *(matung)*.[5]

As in Melanesia, prominent goddesses can be found in both the Polynesian and Micronesian regions, but are never paramount. When the 'Earth Mother' is separated from the 'Sky Father' in Maori cosmogeny, for instance, the former has less to do because the male departmental gods controlling gardening, forests and war take up the foreground in myth and ritual. But sometimes her cult is heightened. Out of the four spirit classes on Mangaia (eastern Cook Islands), Vari 'the Great Mother' is the nearest in distance to the normal world, and important for island fecundity and for descendant gods who bring forth humans. In other cases, as on Tikopia (a Polynesian outlier close to Vanuatu) women possess their own divine patroness and cult, from which men are strictly barred.

As for war gods, they were virtually endemic in Polynesia. Contrary to common conceptions, no island complex was unified at the time of contact with the first European recorders; thus tribes badly needed divine reinforcement in their altercations with proximate enemies, and in some circumstances war deities became objects of a centralized cult. If each Maori tribe had recourse to individual tribal war gods, for example, the heart of the first enemy slain in a battle was usually offered to Tumatauenga, honoured *across* tribes as 'the god and father of fierce

human beings'. On Mangaia, the most victorious tribe and the one with the most temporal power *(mangaia)* was thought to be granted paramountcy through Rongo, a'national God' of War; but Rongo's cult, dominated by two high priests, 'transcended clan borders…and remained neutral during war'.[6] A multitude of other deities can hardly be discussed here; suffice it to say that the full weight of Austronesian polytheism needs to be felt, and, as in Melanesia, many gods were environal—in sacred forests, stones, places of mystery and sometimes volcanoes—such as Hawaii Island's Pele, the volcano goddess of Mount Kilauea, who demanded human victims when angry.

No account of Oceanian cosmologies would be complete without attention to the mythic exploits of 'culture Heroes' and of course the place of 'the Ancestors'. These different classes of beings have comparable roles as supranormal agencies, typically possessing lesser power than deities. In Melanesia, culture Heroes are frequently groups of Beings who pass through the land in mythic times, revealing to each tribe's Ancestors the skills of warfare and food production and the technologies for building, weaving, etc. (as with the transient *tidib* of the Fuyughe), or marking the places of settlement (as did the 'white moon spirits' of Malekula in Vanuatu), before passing on to distant, unknown quarters. In other settings tales are told of individual Heroes rather than collectivities. Manarmakeri, from the Biak-Numfor region of north-western Irian, is a renowned case in point. Uncovering the secret land of Koreri (or Eternal Life) in the depths of a cave, the ordinary villager Yawi Nushado neglects his personal hygiene, becoming a scabeous old man—*Manarmakeri*. He captures the Morning Star from a tree, however, and somehow manages to impregnate a village girl with a magic coconut so as to secure a wife. After both are exiled, he visits and settles important spots in the coastal and island cosmos of the Geelfink Bay or Sorenarwa Strait area, and as a rejuvenated, transformed explorer marks the points of habitation for others to come. If Manarmakeri does not quite become a god, other comparable voyagers elsewhere are deemed to be such—for acting more as creators. Jari, goddess of the female cult among the Murik Lakes groups and other coastal Sepik cultures, was not only a great traveller. She gave form to the many places she visited—in urinating she created rivers, for example, including the great Sepik River itself; she revealed how women can avoid death in childbirth; and she introduced her 'uncultured' husband to cooked food. Narrations of such heroic journeys endow sacred significance to the boundedness of the

cosmos, granting a people its sense of centrality despite the known existence of other groups further away.

Heroic achievements can also lead to tragedy. The giver of benison can be killed for his trouble, and thus become a sacrificial figure—as was the Serpent Spirit Totoima among the hinterland Orokavia; his severance into small pieces brings *ivo* (spirit-power of fertility) to all the tribes implicated in his death (just as *ivo* is transferred from each cannibal victim to the killer). Across Polynesia by far the best known culture Hero is Maui (who has analogues in Micronesia as Motikitik and in southern Vanuatu as Matshikitshi). After first finding the abode of his mother in the spirit world, according to the Maori version of the legend, the winged Maui emerges as a mighty Hero who nets the sun to prevent it from moving too fast, pulls up a great fish to produce a portion of the earth, and by extinguishing the scorching volcanic goddess Mahu'ike he brings back fire after the world had lost it. Too reckless, however, Maui tries to destroy Hinenui-te-po, his Ancestress and goddess of death, but she devours him, and his failure 'introduces' death to all who come after him. In this legend Maui epitomizes the warrior ethos—of courage and daring exploit despite the inevitability of death—and also appears as a saviour who just eludes bringing back his best and final gift to humanity.

In most Pacific cultures the spirits of the departed are readily distinguishable from gods and culture Heroes, although in Micronesia and Polynesia, known for their high chieftainships, genealogies commonly link the chiefly lines back to the early human descendants of the gods. In Melanesia, by contrast, we find more discontinuity; the dead usually have their own separate ambience, with genealogies being preserved for an average of six generations before the name of the oldest in a remembered chain dissolves into a pool of distant Ancestors. Sometimes the deceased can be thought of as mediators between humans and the gods—among the Jaua and other Orokaiva groupings, for instance, one approaches the High God Asisi through the Ancestors—but in most cultures concern for the departed just sits alongside cultic focus on greater powers, with efforts at integration usually being left undeveloped or only symbologically suggestive. The deceased are almost always conceived as remaining part of society—which is a community of both the living and the dead—and therefore they constitute powerful and watchful participators in rites; in that sense they are usually crucial for group support, yet not confused with deities worshipped or other spirits placated.

A New Guinea highland culture will serve as exemplification. Among the Wahgi most tribes accept derivation from the eponymous Hero ancestor Mondo, but he has no cult, and tribes trace their linkage to him via the number of remembered pig-killing festivities they have organized and not by listing Ancestral names. Between Mondo and the remembered deceased lie the *kipem bang* (the 'red spirits', meaning 'distant Ancestors'), who, though an amorphous collectivity, are very powerful in ensuring a given tribe's welfare, while the more recent dead are thought to be still active in immediate human affairs and are known by name. The favour of both these groups of departed ones is cultivated, especially during group ceremonies, because they are expected to be supportive when they witness displays of their clan's wealth. As in various (more typically eastern) highland societies, Ancestral power is specially embodied in sacred flutes at initiations. Fearful ghosts, however, as distinct from the helpful dead, are assumed to cause only harm. Thus for the Wahgi the Ancestors are a very important object of ritual concern in their own right, while focus on the war gods (as among the south-eastern Wahgi) is limited to preparations for conflict, and placation of bush spirits dependent on the magician's identification of types of sickness. Despite variations, with the coastal regions certainly showing up more parity of ritual response shared between deities and Ancestors than in the highlands, this pattern is characteristically Melanesian.

Throughout most of Oceania, interestingly, the helpful deceased are those who have received the proper funerary rites, while troublesome ghosts arise from those not properly disposed of or from those expected to carry their grievances beyond death. What distinguishes various highly ranked Polynesian cultures, though, is the listing of primogenitively legitimated chiefs back to the gods or to the traditional arrival on an island. For what they are worth historically, the longest Maori name lists, which take each tribe back to its original canoe at the landing of the 'Great Fleet', are truly remarkable in this regard, and no known oral history collected from Melanesian societies takes such a form. And in both Micronesia and Polynesia Ancestors other than chiefly ones tend only to be objects of very minor ritual activity. At meals on Tikopia, indeed, do not expect invocations of Ancestors 'in a household of no particular status', but rather their naming and welcoming by those of higher rank. The latter articulates the 'key Ancestral structure' which links all clans back to the generations of the gods, whose ancient and continuing 'Work' is celebrated in a festival involving the whole island, and who once supposedly descended on

Reani peak (a space on tiny Tikopia significantly left uncultivated). On Rapanui/Easter Island, the well-known megaliths were erected for the 'great Ancestors', whose lined effigies sat facing the tribal land that they had secured and defended for the great majority of ordinary mortals coming after them.[7]

To complete our introductory survey, habitants of the cosmos are often said to include all sorts of lesser spirit agencies, though some ethnographers are more thorough in listing them than others. Ralph Bulmer has identified ten classes of Kyaka Enga spirits, ranging from the recently imported fertility goddess, through 'nature demons', Sky Beings and ghosts down to 'cannibal ogres…and minor nature spirits…, including tree spirits, echoes and snails'. For the Hawaiians, Valerio Valeri has been still more exhaustive, and to the great gods, kinship gods and Ancestors he adds manifesting deities, spirit predators and imaginary animals, including '*alde* the "ominous bird"'. For the Maori, James Irwin would even append the 'aborted foetus' (who joins humans as a malicious trickster), 'monsters', 'goblins', 'fairy folk' and any 'visible form' *(aria)*—by way of birds, fish, reptiles, and animals—taken by spirit-beings.[8] Voyagers have to deal with the spirits of winds and waves; hunters and hungry travellers have to avoid taking prey tabued to them—for the 'totems' sometimes lying at the origins of their own ancestry, or sacred to their society or cult, provide a protection very dangerous to flout.

Such a sensitivity for varied environal forces will remind readers that so-called 'primitive' peoples have been called 'animists' (following a usage by E.B.Tylor). Yet if animism means the belief that the whole cosmos is alive with unseen spirit-forces, as if 'all that exists, lives', as the American Chukchee shaman poetically affirmed it,[9] then Oceanian *Weltanschauungen* do not fit the conditions. The Tolai will sense Ancestral presence in birds appearing in an appropriate context; Fuyughe will avoid killing snakes in case they signal the presence of *sila;* and the Micronesian prohibition against eating porpoise is widespread; but only recognizable parts and not the whole of the visible cosmos awaken a sense of awe, ritual obligation or anxious avoidance among Oceanian peoples. In all other respects their pragmatism towards their environment is potent, and an evident 'materialism'—especially in Melanesia—governs their approaches to war and production.

PAYBACK

Oceanian cultures, as we have stated, were warrior cultures. Rare indeed were groups who escaped armed conflict with enemies, and most males had to be trained to propel spears, arrows or clubs for the recurrent round of surprise attacks and field battles. It is no longer plausible to consider traditional warriorhood in the region without contemplating its religious 'face' or its many relationships with more distinctly religious activities. There were shared, commonly enunciated reasons for fighting enemies or for taking up weapons, and such consensus justifications had everything to do with traditional belief-sytems. Most warfare in Oceania centres around revenge; if a community loses one of its number, the death must be 'paid back'. By a cumulative effect, retribution against those threatening a group's survival also built up its own sense of identity, with past victories being celebrated in song and legend, with myths explaining, if not legitimating, the necessity of taking 'life for life', and with daily 'male talk' consolidating the sense of being a people to be reckoned with and feared.

Among the 2,000 or so stateless societies across Oceania, the solidary community—or better still the 'security circle' or 'war group'—was typically small, being a lineage or clan concentrated in one or a few hamlets or a tribe made up of two or more clans bound to be supportive in times of conflict by blood ties. Such social atomization made for quick executive action, but it often meant that people who spoke the same language—tribes within the same culturo-linguistic complex, who might seem to have been ideally suited to make up a cohesive bloc *vis-à-vis* different groups—made war against each other. Even such confined-looking dots on the map as Chuuk or Ponape in Micronesia were islands divided into separate regions by conflict and shifting alliances. And if some people preyed on others further afield—like the Roviana looking for Bougainvillean heads—that is no confirmation that the aggressive culture was politically united. Even the greatest chiefly systems of Polynesia were no proof of such a unity either, at least at the time of European contact. Scanning the traditional scene, then, we are left with the virtual ubiquity of small and separated social units, always under pressure to uphold basic principles of tribal solidarity (while we concede that among some peoples, especially in Polynesia, confederating pressures were not without effect).

In Melanesia connections between war and religion are manifold. The obligation to requite a kinsperson's death usually mixes moral with apotropaic concerns. On the one hand, a death may be paralleled in

community rhetoric to the loss of a hand from the body; on the other, there arises an increasing anxiety that, if nothing is done, the ghost of an unavenged warrior will turn on those who have not fulfilled a basic obligation. *'Pring pangwo'* runs an utterance of the highland Chimbu, when a member of one's lineage has fallen: 'I am guilty' (or 'I am not right in my relations with my fellows and the spirit world until I secure revenge'). Ongoing military exchanges can be found connected to all sorts of rituals—Wahgi magicians marking out lines before a battle and whistling to warn any of their side who cross it that their spiritual protection has been removed; coastal Papua Motuan specialists cracking their fingers as auspices before an ambush; warriors on San Cristobal (in the Solomons) only taking up spears after one of their number shows signs of spirit possession; war-cries and victory songs evoking the support of the dead among the Dugum Dani (in the highlands of Irian Jaya); and more. All such traditional Melanesian phenomena, together with the vigour and excitement of armed clashes themselves, especially when heroic acts are recalled in the male long- or cult-house after a day's exchange or a successful expedition for heads, justify the description 'warrior religion'. For some peoples, as with the Sepik Iatmül or the Arawe of New Britain, men were not fully initiated until they took life; or could not be received into Dalugeli, the celestial resting-place as the Huli envisaged it, unless they had fought or been slain in battle.

All documented Melanesian societies have their repertories of reasons for death (and also for sickness and trouble), and in all we find characteristic actions of response to such adversities. In the conceptual and explanatory connections hamleters draw between events, and in the sets of actions issuing because of their 'assumptive worlds', there lies what we have called elsewhere 'the logic of retribution'.[10] According to this mode of thought and operation, fighting does not stop short when weapons are set aside, for in a world of grating enmities there is also 'spiritual revenge' to contend with—the sorcerer. In the traditional situation, before colonial pacification made them highly ambivalent figures, sorcerers were valued human resources for almost all security circles, hurling 'the spear by night' when it was not in use by day.[11] Conversely, enemy sorcery was typically feared as the source of fatal illness, since deaths and serious sicknesses were almost never ascribed to natural sources, but rather to living agencies and their invisible influences. Thought by the Bena Bena (eastern highlands, New Guinea) to operate nocturnally, sorcerers come close to the hamlets of their hapless victims and blow their evil smoke. When someone dies from

sickness, a renowned response of these people is 'payback running'; the dead person's spirit 'seizes' a relative, who speeds off under this possession to mark the location of the sorcerer culprit's tribe. When the time is opportune, anyone from the pinpointed group is liable to be killed in reprisal, for Melanesian payback applies between collectives and is thus 'indiscriminate'—unless prior marriage linkages with the culpable clan make a selective killing advisable.

Negative retribution is also applied as punition within security circles, the latter then acting as 'jural' units dependent on leaders' effective arbitrations to maintain internal cohesion. Each culture has its own body of prohibitions (pidgin *tambu*) and its demanding principles of loyalty and obligation; the analysis of laws, moral pressures, delicts and requitals remains a major area for study in its own right. Variations abound, though with severity the norm. In east Papua, for example, adulterers were commonly killed, but among the Wedau it was only the woman who was despatched, while for the nearby matrilineal Massim complex it was the male. In some settings, as among the Tolai, there were few misdemeanours which could not be covered by the payment of fines in precious shell money. Torture and incarceration were virtually unknown, but quick corporal punishments could inflict permanent injury, and dreaded 'shame' (or social ostracism) often awaited those violating key tabus or refusing participation in warfare. Readers should be made aware that unsanctioned violence within the community was a 'crime', and if death resulted it was 'murder', whereas violence against unallied outsiders was most often an accepted activity for group survival—unless leaders ruled that hotheads had wrongly taken matters into their own hands.

Anthropologist Donald Tuzin has produced scintillating work on the interrelation between war, religion and the maintenance of cohesion in the largest of the Ilahita Arapesh villages. Nggwal, the Cyclopean god of the Tambaran, or secretive male cult, was understood to demand the victims of revenge wars, but in this quite sizeable community high-grade initiates of the cult maintained 'social control' by deciding which deaths by sorcery derived from Nggwal, or were permitted by him, and which were not. Those from within Ilahita who were 'swallowed by the *tambaran*' as sorcery victims reflected Nggwal's internally punitive power, and such deaths were 'entered in the record [the god's] kills' by adding knots to cordylline ropes.[12] Here a sorcery death is viewed more as a divine sanction; while in other situations, as among the Mekeo (of hinterland Papua), chiefs held the accepted power of deploying 'domestic sorcerers' to remove or warn miscreants. (Students of

Melanesia should be made aware, however, that after unstable pre-contact conditions were affected by colonialism, sorcery became a problem within Melanesian villages, often amalgamated and enlarged by the new administrations, and the resulting cycles of *intra*-community suspicion should be read as a *neo*-tradition. Witchcraft, by comparison, was a pre-contact phenomenon, suspicions against women mainly arising because they married in from other tribes, following exogamous principles, and were potentially 'enemies within' a security circle until proving themselves loyal.)

To labour negativities makes for a lopsided picture. There are very many remarkable acts of concession presenting opposite impressions of Melanesian religious life—such as peacemaking procedures, ceremonial exchanges and extraordinary acts of magnanimity—as well as continuous group interest in the relative balances of socio-economic reciprocations. The other side to retributive logic—motives governing positive 'give and take'—comes into play here, surrounded by a host of assumptions and consensus notions in any given security circle about its dealings with families, lineages and more distant traders.

Inter-tribal alliances in Melanesia were mostly forged through marriages. Whether cultures were patri- or matrilineal, much humdrum and not unexciting exchange came with 'free passage' between affinally related tribes (if and when war did not disrupt relations or travel). As for exchange between whole groups or distant trading partners, this was necessarily more formalized by ritual procedures. The south-west Pacific was renowned for its fascinating cycles of inter-island reciprocation. The Kula Ring—whereby valuables and prized foodstuffs circulated between the Trobriand, d'Entrecastaux and northern Massim islands—was thoroughly fortified by magical rites for safe sailing and success, and the very scene of exchanges was full of protocol—with 'opening', 'solicitory' and 'clinching gifts'.[13] In the New Guinea highland cultures, among the Chimbu and Wahgi to take two examples, a host tribe will expend immense energy to prepare pigs, foodstuffs and dances of hospitality for their allies, whose travelling parties come *en masse* to receive the extraordinary acts of generosity at the great pig-killing festivals. Hundreds of beasts are killed by bashing their heads and then lined up on the *sing-sing* ground, yet the meat is all given away to the guests, who are 'wounded' to replicate the same occasion of magna nimity in their own tribal territories. Such mass slaughters are also sacrifical; the Ancestors are commonly provided with a grandstand in the centre of the dance area, and they are to be pleased and cajoled into a supportive spiritual force by the powerful display of the living.

By mentioning sacrifice, various elements in our discussion of Melanesian payback can be the better drawn together. Offerings and sacrifical rites before supranormal powers are expressions of reciprocity. The basic paradigm is that of exchanging goods, but the human gives visible things, while the spirit is the one who can provide the invisible power to increase the material welfare of the offerer's group (or in the case of apotropaism, can be persuaded not to take adverse action toward human beings). Such rites of reciprocity are thus forms of bargaining, or parallel to the exercises by which humans satisfy themselves that they are fulfilling obligations to each other. If certain sacrifices belong only to occasions of remarkable gift-giving to allies however, others are also enacted to receive succour in enterprises of violence. Wahgi magicians, for example, would spill pig's blood over carved and rounded spirit-stones (the prehistoric left-overs from the world's earliest horticulturists), and invoke the 'Power behind the Stone' as the War God to bring victory; the Roviana, in the heyday of their far-flung raids, placed cannibal victims side-by-side as a sacrifical launching ramp for their canoes. The emphasis, as stated initially, was on visible and material benefits.

These Melanesian patterns of payback find parallels in the Austronesian cultures further out in the Pacific. Before European contact, tribal warfare was well-nigh endemic throughout Oceania. When the great American novelist Henry Melville wrote of the 'Typee' tribe of the Marquesas enjoying a 'prodigious notoreity over all the islands', he was singling out yet another ferocious group who happened to be doing rather well in the kind of recurrent intertribal skirmishing we have just noted for the Melanesians. While there were classic pretexts for war—quarrelling over land, pig-stealing, rape—just as there were in Melanesia, the basic cause lay with the 'system of blood revenge', as it has been put of the Chuukese in the Marianas, groups taking from each other a life for a life (but rarely that of a culpable killer) yet with no one 'being murdered by one of his own clan'.[14] The main differences in the patterns of payback war in these Austronesian regions, especially in Polynesia, lay in the apparently better organized mode of military operations (sometimes under the direction of a noble warrior 'caste'); the greater store set by avenging the deaths (or losses) of high-ranking personages; and the more prevalent practice of taking slaves and using them or slain enemies for cannibal sacrifice. Moreover, if the remarkable social atomization in Melanesia made for constantly shifting balances of power, and few signs of either multi-tribal confederacies or radical territorial expansionism, Polynesia at least possessed the

institutions for making the attainment of 'higher unities'—whether under monarchs or through marriages between chiefly houses—more possible.

Social structures prevailing through Polynesia were ramages and chieftainships. Ramages may be described as descent groups which are ambilineally defined (i.e. sometimes using the father, sometimes the mother to record the lineage), and above all organized primo-genitively. If each ramage had its chief, who was appointed (if fit for office) as the 'first born', one ramage was always ranked higher than others as based on (what was at least claimed to be) Ancestral seniority. The chief whose Ancestor was designated the first chief in the story of a district's settlement, in other words, was typically acknowledged to be the paramount chief over the whole tribe (or cluster of ramages). Now if military activity was affected by this system, since survivalist decisions centred around chiefs or high-ranking warriors acting in their stead, the patterns of both punitive sanction and positive reciprocity also lent towards authoritarianism.

We must be careful of glib generalization about the Polynesian panorama. The Hawaiian, Tongan, Samoan and Tahitian societies are famed for high chiefs who had virtually unlimited power to mete out severe punishments and dipossess those infringing their decrees, yet in other groups this individualized right was severely limited, and in Polynesian enclaves nearer Melanesia—Pukapuka, Ontong Java and Tokelau—punition was carried out with barely any attention to 'status differences', and the leaving of some delicts to 'supernatural sanctions' was more obvious. In both Polynesia and Micronesia, moreover, networks of humdrum and ceremonial reciprocation were not vitiated even by the extremes of social stratification found in Hawaii, Tonga and Tahiti, because there was no one economic apex, and allied tribes were constantly exercising exchanges with each other. In Polynesia most of the everyday exchanges were between ramages within a tribal territory, with some marriages being between ramages and thus endogamous to the tribe (though with chiefs always marrying outside the tribe). Within each ramage there was also an upward flow of goods to satisfy intertribal ceremonial reciprocations and feasts, but only in the most stratified societies does one notice the highly inequitable requirement for lower orders to satisfy the sumptuary needs of the high chiefs or the increased sacrificial needs of the priests.

Offerings and sacrifices in Polynesia vividly illustrate the combination of positive reciprocity and negative retribution in spite of social stratification. High chiefs or kings are often viewed as mediating

the divine to humans in their role as sacrificers (backed up by a priesthood). Hawaii is best documented in this regard. At the New Year festivals (Makahiki) and the Temple Renewal rite immediately following it (Luakini), the role of a king is pivotal. In the former the king must dash a live pig to the ground, killing it without the victim emitting a squeal and in the midst of a solemn prayer; as 'supreme sacrificer' the king is thereby securing 'friendship with the gods'. At the finale of the Luakini, the 'great sacrifice' of hundreds of pigs, fish, bananas, coconuts, *oloa* cloths and 'some human victims' is offered by the king to the gods in the (open air) temple. Following the subsiduary rite by which the priests receive their assigned portion of the sacrifices, the king supervises the distribution of cooked pork and vegetables to all present at this great ceremony, each family representative being given 'a share according to his rank' down to the 'crowd of "very little" people' or the needy. Such generosity towards the gods is deliberately designed to create mutual indebtedness, while the king's distributions symbolize both his mediatorship and the people's dependence on his beneficence. As for the human victims—offered once at the New Year rite and as many as six times at the Temple Renewal—they 'must be guilty', whether as enemies of the tribe or transgressors within it.[15]

Elaborate sacrifices like this before effigies of the gods are only rarely found in traditional Melanesia. Carefully laid out altars, made of stone bricks, with a central one for burnt holocausts, are known from the Toambaita and other cultures on Malaita (Solomons). Cannibal victims of coastal Fiji's Viti Levu were often ritually despatched within rings of large stones that formed a shrine. But the complexity of Polynesia's sacrificial rites, including the dressing of the gods by chiefs and priests (which appeared to early outsiders like 'children playing with dolls and baby-houses'),[16] as well as the case of virtually divinized royal mediators between gods and humans, lent the reciprocity factor a more 'aristocratic' ceremoniousness and solemnity than found elsewhere in Oceania. But we must continue to eschew unqualified generalizations. After all, throughout Samoa religion apparently lacked all pomp and splendid sacrifice; and apart from priestly consultations with the war gods, carried out in small houses next to the *mamrae* (or public meeting places on the village green), Samoan religious observances were performed in the privacy of family dwellings. Furthermore, where hierarchism and centralizing cults did exist in Polynesia, and the special sumptuary needs of royal and priestly orders had to be met by generosity from below, we are not to conclude that reciprocity had thereby been rendered less crucial or less expressive of

island worldviews and religiosity. With or without a pyramidal-looking social structure, redistribution was the hallmark of Oceanic economics in general; even in Melanesia, where many societies were without chiefs, somebody had to get to the 'top' to act as the 'master redistributor'. As we shall see, once old processes of reciprocation became undermined through the impact of the West, the responses to the resulting crises were typically *religious,* because reciprocity—or the common energies put behind the constant 'give and take' of primal societies—epitomized life's wholeness. And this was reinforced by successes against enemies and the preservation of order against malefactors.

POWER

So much of our previous discussion impinges on questions of power. In modern social organization we have become used to the formalized differentiation between sacred and temporal power, and the extremes between unarmed prophets appealing to conscience and naked political force. For all the effects of secularization, however, moderns remain surprisingly aware of the curious extensibility and 'invisible hand' of power. Now primal worldviews almost always foster an image of some general occult power, usually operating for the benefit of the group and its individual members; and Oceania has provided us with the most famous word in this regard—*mana* (generally: 'spirit-power for success'). *Mana* is evoked across the borders of the regions we are discussing, from the western Solomons (among the Roviana) across to the Marquesas. Quite apart from the continuing debate about its meaning (it is not in every context a substantive noun meaning 'spirit-power') or about its pervasive importance (Tahitians and Marquesans evoked it sparingly), the *mana* concept still remains *indicative* of socio-religious preoccupations across the board.

The subject of power naturally conducts us to the issue of social leadership, authority and mobilization. In Polynesia, it goes without saying, positions of monarchs or chiefs were legitimated by appeals to their *mana,* or 'spirit-authority'. Power-holding had to be confirmed by deeds, mind you, and it did not automatically follow that a first-born son, if he did not show himself worthy, would inherit office, or that an incumbent in a chiefly office who failed to fulfil his role with valour or strength of character would face no challenge. One of the important processes entailed by increasing stratification and centralized power, it has been shown, is the transition in Polynesia from a 'traditional' to a

more 'open' society, whereby chiefs emerged because they proved themselves to be supreme in battle, with new 'usurper' lineages replacing or seriously modifying the traditional priority of the senior ramage and new rulers setting up the sorts of 'dynasties' that explorers found on contact in the 'stratified' societies of Hawaii and Tahiti.[17] *Mana* went with the totality of power; victory and continued security were pulled off because a mandate of rule was confirmed by the spirit-world. Mythologies endorsed this understanding; in the reckless career of Maui, indeed, allowance is made for success in the 'struggle for power' despite his questionable parentage.[18] In the actual histories of institutions, though, compromises were often made whereby warrior chiefdoms carried out their contests for hegemony while older embodiments of tradition, such as the Tonga's sacred king or Tu'i Tonga (who held office by much stricter primogenitive principles), remained aloof and isolated from struggles in his own enclave.

The concentration of power at the social apex found in Polynesia and Micronesia, along with high ceremonial and notions of chiefly mediatorship, has reinforced an older view that these regions clearly housed 'religions', while Melanesia only managed the inferior creations of 'magic'. Certainly, the existence of virtually divinized rulers and of priesthoods upholding 'royal cults' were unknown in Melanesia—at least outside Fiji on a regional 'boundary-line'—but one must be cautious about exaggerating socio-religious differences. Melanesia, to begin with, possessed many more chiefly societies than is commonly supposed—across Vanuatu and New Caledonia, through the Solomons to Bougainville and the Trobriands, and along the Papuan coast. Chiefs unexpectedly show up in highland contexts; each Fuyughe tribe, for instance, possessed one special chief known as *utam(e),* who in effect was the tribe's life-essence, and who was debarred from leaving his tribal territory in case the cosmos would collapse—an idea unparalleled in all Oceania. And if Polynesia is noted for 'aristocracies', they are not unknown in Melanesia either. The Roviana created a superior ruling group, for example, by colonizing the Buin in Bougainville; and on Manam Island (New Guinea islands) the *taneopoa* were a privileged 'caste' dominating the ancestral cult, war and distribution processes. Occasionally Melanesian priesthoods are manifest. John Layard has left the extraordinary account of the 'Making of Men' in northern Malekula, where, set among the megaliths left by the 'moon spirits' (or culture heroes), and symbolizing the combined male-female elements in the cult of Creator God Kabat, ten priest-like clan magicians completed the major initiation ceremony. The ten, allegedly descending from Kabat's

children, had to perform an orgiastic rite to safeguard the passage of their own souls to Kabat's realm after death. In a shrine representing Kabat's female side they lay down in ritual intercourse with female representatives of the district's villages—'to make men as Kabat had done'—despite sometimes committing incest in so doing.[19] Even in this unusual case, however, it is not a recognizable social 'caste' or priestly 'order' which is involved so much as a specialist group with ritual privileges—and this limitation applies to most cultic functionaries in the more 'traditional', less hierarchic Polynesian societies as well.

One feature of the Melanesian scene that makes the region look 'less religious', of course, is the wide prevalence of more egalitarian-looking societies led by 'big-men' or 'managers', who achieve status through hard competition rather than by inheritance. The struggles between competing *grands hommes* in the central New Guinea highlands, in fact, led to the premature conclusion that the populous, volatile and more recently contacted mix of tribal complexes in the great high valleys of the world's second largest island were decidedly more 'secular' in ethos than most seaboard cultures. With the dead being less predictable than on the coasts—often being feared as vengeful ghosts—so much appeared left to human effort, as symbolized in the fierce competitiveness and skilful organization of the big-men themselves. The spirit-powers as a whole, however, turned out to be much less capricious than at first believed, and upon closer analysis the impressive exchange systems, which received their astounding summations in ceremonial pig-kills or in the lining up of grown pigs to contest for 'big-manship' (as with the Melpa *Moka* or Enga *Te*), could not be readily disassociated from religious activity. For Melanesia the definition of religon simply has to be broadened to include the practical pursuit of material and 'biocosmic' blessings.[20] In any case, highland big-men co-operate closely with more distinctly religious functionaries, such as the 'tabued man' (or *mapilie*) among the Wahgi, who communicates with the spirits of the warrior dead and watches over the ceremonial ground from one great *Kongar,* or pig-killing, festival to another. Further, recent studies of highland leadership have revealed that, in militarily unstable pre-contact times, a big-man was much more likely to inherit his father's role than post-contact patterns of open competition suggest.

Thus far we have concentrated on the power of leadership, but that often reflects on general and collective attitudes towards power in tribal 'security circles'. To illustrate this, in the ranked Polynesian societies we find commoners or undistinguished families looking to ranked personages and priests to perform the most crucial rituals on their

behalf. A common motif or ritual is for the chiefs or priests to seek divine protection for the whole community. ‘O gods’, runs a prayer set for an Hawaiian king:

> come save the nobles and all the men;
> O all my gods, pay heed…
> Preserve the just man and do him good;
> Have compassion for my land,
> And take care of the commoners.

This theme of protection is admittedly found in prayers right down the social scale—for planting, fishing and the like—and chants for protection are well known in Micronesia as well. But they conform psycho-religiously to a vertico-hierarchical opening of both the social and spiritual orders, reflecting more an attitude of dependence and negotiated *rapprochement* than ‘technologic’ manipulation. In Melanesia one finds more emphasis on direct transactions with the spirits by groups as virtually unranked wholes, or by small groups helped by the incantations or ‘manipulative prayers’ of specialists or heads of households—to make the garden grow, as a Trobriand spell exemplifies, so that it ‘rises like the iron-wood palm/[and]… swells as with a child’.[21]

As far as the reflection of power structures in society is concerned, such ranked societies as those found in Polynesia could reflect immense authority descending from above. Not only were there slaves, or captives waiting to be sacrificial victims, but commoners were very much at the mercy of chiefly decrees. In Melanesia this was less the case. True, among the unusually powerful Roviana and Simbo a pool of slaves was kept for menial tasks and sacrifices, and captive women were set aside for ‘prostitution’, but the chiefs or their lineages did not have autocratic control over these persons. Certainly the chiefs had exclusive access to their own skull-houses, where *mana* was concentrated in the preserved crania of their fore bears, but of greater importance were the village skull-houses, with the piles of heads brought back from raids meant to ensure blessings from the dead for the whole tribe. The blessings were visible material results of ritual and valorous action, and in fact very typical of Melanesian rites was the direct concern with increase, aversion of possible malevolence and ‘concrete results’ (pidgin *kaikai*), rather than a praying above for protective aid.

Much more typical for Melanesia than the Roviana case suggests, indeed, is the mixing of rites with exchange mechanisms so as to

achieve summations of material surfeit and climactic displays of wealth and physical power, thereby showing that the spirits' supportive power is already in evidence. While not disputing Oceania-wide concerns with fertility and festal distributions, Melanesian ritual appropriations of Power (pidgin *paua*) appear comparatively more 'materialistic', and the social configurations matching the religious outlooks relate more to prestige gained by generosity and to degrees of indebtedness. The big-man is usually the one who temporarily borrows most so that he can then put as many people as possible into debt through his prestige-building generosity at a feast. The 'rubbish-man' is at the bottom of this —albeit relatively more egalitarian—scale; he is unimportant because he has ventured virtually nothing in the processes of production and reciprocity which 'make a man'. In Polynesia and Micronesia, by comparison, there is more a sense that ostensibly stable arrangements of power reflect and are legitimated by a tiered cosmic order.

Other dimensions to the subject of power beckon attention, but unfortunately space only allows a cursory glance over questions of custodial power, male-female relationships, specialist appropriation of power (including sorcery) and the dispossession of power. Custodianship takes a variety of forms. It can be expressed in long-term familial and kin relationships, with husbands typically holding authority over their wives (polygamy by big-men being widespread, and polyandry, as among the Melanesian Arapesh and the Polynesian Marquesans, being rare), with parents sometimes having their children adopted into the care of other (often childless) couples, and maternal uncles commonly expected to pay special and generous attention to the development of their nephews. It can also be manifested in specific ritual contexts or repeated rites meant to be dissociated from everyday relations. In highland Melanesia, for example, patriclan leaders with a cluster of pubescent boys ready for initiation will play on their affinally linked alliances to invite in the maternal uncles as stern initiators—to supervise the appropriate ordeals (such as walking on fire and then being beaten by rods while the key tribal prohibitions are uttered, as in the *Tege* intiations of the Huli). In a sprinkling of both highland and coastal cultures boys are virtually sodomized by adults in the 'men's houses' to make them grow into strong warriors (as has been long documented of the Marind Anim headhunters, southern Irian Jaya). In other cultures again, initiation at puberty is but the first in a series of graded initiations within male 'secret societies'.

Male-female relations form a complex subject involving kinship customs as much as notions of power. To generalize about religious

aspects, however, we may say that women rarely achieved leadership status unless chiefly regimes or matrilineally organized societies allowed for it. We learn of only one 'queen-like' figure from Melanesia —Koloka from the Nara of coastal Papua, who was borne about by obsequious attendants on a pallet—even if we find that female chiefs were not unusual among the nearby Roro. Of the kind of influential queens one discovers in Hawaii or Tonga, however, fighting to the death with their husbands in battle, like Manona beside Kekuaokalani on Hawaii Island, we learn nothing from the 'black islands'. Bride-price ceremonies are typical appendages to marriages throughout Oceania, yet whereas some store is set on the idea of 'love gifts' to the in-laws in Austronesian cultures, in the Melanesian highlands women tended to be rated more like 'property' (together with pigs!), and in unstable military situations were often suspected of disloyalty or witchcraft (for having married in from other tribes).

Across the Pacific the great majority of women were subjected to, yet paradoxically feared by, their husbands. Men almost always had the sanction to beat their wives whenever it was deemed necessary, for instance, yet women had their own potentiality for redress. Playing on male anxiety over pollution was one typical recourse; Melpa women angry at their husbands could walk across the food they had cooked, thus exposing a meal to their polluting genitals. That already implies, though, that women's bodies could 'dispossess' power from males, which is why the forced retirement to a secluded hut during menstruation and childbirth was a typical Oceanian phenomenon. Sometimes we find a potential balance of power expressed through countervailing male and female myths, as with New Guinea highland Gimi, but in their case the main rituals consistently resolved matters in men's favour, as also did exchanges, which Gimi women could never formally initiate. Genuine enough personal clout could still be cultivated by wives as the makers of families, though, as has recently been shown of the Irian Jayese highlander Nalum; while in certain costal contexts—especially with the east Papuan Massim—'gender power' was remarkably even.

Specialists in the appropriation of spirit-power abound through Oceania, although not all concerned themselves with positivities. Elders and priests, the latter in Polynesia especially, were the demarcators of tabu, marking the occasions, places and actions which were spiritually dangerous if not approached properly or by appropriate persons. 'Tabu/tapu' is a famous trans-Polynesian notion (often wrongly mistranslated as 'holiness' or 'sacredness'), but it has eminent applicability across the whole region. Removing restrictions of tabu, or the effects of breaking

it, by supervising a return to 'the ordinary' (commonly *noa* in Polynesia), involved legal arbitration and knowledge of placatory and purificatory procedures. Politics could be involved; in any power struggle between a set of village chiefs (as among the Papuan Roro), it might suit power-brokers to delay lifting a ritual ban if an overly influential chief or elder happened to fall under tabu regulations—by accidentally touching a corpse at a funeral, for example. A sense of cosmic order also sometimes affected tabu practices; caution between male and female among the Maori, for instance, often being paralleled to the necessary separation of heaven and earth, although if ritual decisions were male-dominated in Aotearoa, on the Marquesas there were as many powerful priestesses as there were priests.

We are not to forget here the masters of navigation, or owners of canoes, or spiritual sponsors of deep-sea expeditions. Perhaps we can recapture something of the spiritual energy invested in ancient oceanic voyaging by looking at latter-day specialists of the sea. Supervised discipline of recurrent ritual is necessary on Puluwat Atoll (Carolines, Micronesia), for instance, if trading crews are to survive on sea-water. During the Hiri journeys of Papuan Motu, when pot-laden *lakatoi* were sailed to the Gulf to exchange for sago, the most crucial man on board these sturdy vessels was a 'holy man' or *helaga tauna*. He and his wife would be the original sponsors of a given canoe's voyage: they had to prepare for it with as much fasting and ritual observance as organizational skill, and the holy man had to sit centre-deck on the *lakatoi,* shut into a windowless shrine for the entire voyage—meditating for success, praying to quieten spirits of wind and waves, and becoming the last person to die should the vessel fall prey to Nara or other 'pirates'.

Spirit-mediums, diviners and healers (often females) are common enough specialists in spirit-power, and traditional shamanism and prophetism (mainly with male adepts) are also known. In Polynesia, Samoa is famous for its augurers, who inspect animal entrails to assess the advisability of war; the Maori for omen-takers floating 'bird-man' kites; and Tahiti for its women healers alleged to be able to tell what is wrong with their clients at a glance. Because of the older contrast between religion to the east and magic to the south-west, ethnographies leave Melanesia inundated with 'magicians', yet these often turn out to merit alternative epithets. Wahgi specialists who concentrate on spiritual support in warfare, for instance, are perhaps justifiably dubbed 'war magicians' *(obokunjeyi),* yet an ordinary *kunjeyi* is someone to consult if you are sick and is thus more a healer (though finding lost items is also in his repertory).

'Magic' is a word often used to cover the securing of some special 'individuating power' or influence to wield some benefit or harm.[22] A typical benefit in Oceania is to secure a woman's love or perhaps the return of a philandering husband; typical harm-dealing is sorcery (that is, when it is being directed against one's person and group, rather than on behalf of them). Melanesia still has the reputation for being a great regional centre of magic—of specialists who heat up substances in bamboo tubes to master and 'direct the internal power of things'.[23] Regional comparisons do lend some justification for this renown. In Polynesia and Micronesia, the idea of *spiritual beings* acting on behalf of those trying to manipulate events in their favour is virtually endemic. There we are more likely to hear of some husband being 'returned…by the spirits' after (white) love magic, or about 'the despatching of demons' in sorcery, to take Maori cases. Much more common there, too, will be rituals of 'prophylaxis' or prayers for protection by spirits against sorcery—'Sun-e-e…Ancestors-e-e…you know my ill fortune,…turn back the spirits of the death-magic', as a Gilbertise invocation has it.[24] Melanesia reveals a greater diversity of conceptions about the *modi operandi* of 'magicians', yet so much more is now known from the region that there are new demands for case-by-case analyses, for new generalizations and perhaps for a shift in terminology so as to limit the use of magic, which too often denotes something inferior to religion.

'Sorcerer' and 'sorcery' stand as justifiable categories for the whole region (while 'witches' and 'witchcraft' are best reserved for a special class of female harm-dealers rather than these terms substituting for 'sorcery', as in the older usage of such authors as Craighill Handy. Sorcerers, whether conceived as enemies outside the security circle (the typical) or else within it (the unusual), were the classic dispossessors of power. Along the Papuan and Sepik coast barely a death stood unconnected with sorcery—even those in war were explained by its effects on weapons or bodily vulnerability; while in Polynesia, loss of a chief's *mana* and thus his down-fall was often put down to the spells organized by enemies or closer contenders. In some Melanesian situations, such as with the Tangu of hinterland New Guinea, the sorcerer was the despised 'non-reciprocal man', who if found performing his occult deeds would be killed. In stratified Polynesian societies where their role was highly ambivalent—as either useful in war or a potential danger to the group(s) owing allegiance to a ruler—they were the lowest ranking of 'non-commoners'. Sorcerers 'with their fetchers in all their odd costumes', for instance, processed last at the

installation of a Tahitian king.[25] Sorcery is the 'dark side' to cultures fostering biocosmic vitalities or cosmically legitimated social order.

CREATIVE PARTICIPATION

As we have already intimated, artistic creations and the maternal actualization of pre-visualized 'realities' and 'order' can be crucial reflections of religious life. The physical imaging of gods and spirits in effigies, masks and emblems, the building of shrines, cult grounds and platforms, or for that matter the very layout of a village according to Ancestrally legitimated orientations, as well as the preparing of canoes, weapons, instruments, smoking pipes, lime pots, money rings, body ornaments and a host of other minor examples of craftsmanship, have all become objects of aesthetic attention in our time, but their traditional *raisons d'être* lie in the internally religious sensitivities and worldviews of their creators. The current tourist trade in Oceanic artefacts tends to produce the deception that the central preoccupations of traditional artists were decorativeness, beauty and even entertainment, whereas the prevailing traditional incentive was to evoke the relationship between the spiritual and human domains. Museum displays of 'primitive art' also create false impressions because individual items are inevitably isolated from their original context—from within the dark eerie recesses of a cult-house, let us say. With the passing of old cultural forms, careful oral history and a 'trained imagination' are necessary to reconstruct the place of the visual and the sensual in sacred and ordinary affairs. The sensual obviously includes music, and the creation of the weird sounds through such devices as bull-roarers (which outside Aboriginal Australia are prominent in Huon Peninsula cultures, New Guinea); and we are not to forget bodily movement, especially dance, and the acting out of roles which accompany the visual tokens of the preternatural side to the cosmos.

Even just accounting for the myriad relevant objects beckons a vast encyclopaedia of 'material culture'. It is best to deploy a few useful case studies to outline the iconic, sensual and imaginal dimensions of Pacific religious life. The Elema provide some useful indicators. Although none still stand, the enormous cathedral-like *eravos,* towering cult-houses with façades up to 50 metres high which dominated villages of the Papuan Gulf, were among the Elema's greatest achievements. Arranged *in seriatim* on either side of their high apses, which were accessible only to males, lay shield-like representations of environal spirits and the elongated masks which were prepared in the shrine's darkness for

ceremonies in the open. Elliptical discs with designs for each lineage marked the Ancestors' presence, and were placed below the racks of heads hunted in their honour. The whole effect was to gather together the collective spiritual forces vital for group survival. As the very spatial heart of each community, the Motuan Hiri traders who came from the east in their *lakotois* come first to the *eravo,* paying their respects to the Elema spirits, especially to the High Goddess Kaeva Kuku, whom the Motu and the Elema both venerated.

Leading up to and then away from the *eravo,* the Elema enacted their rare and extraordinary ceremonies to receive and at the end send back the Ma-hevehe, or the mythical sea-monsters, to their rightful watery abodes. These enactments combined sight and sound so arrestingly that F.E.William's careful and vivid description bears quoting:

> A moonless night has been purposely chosen, so that no parties of children will be playing on the sands; the village as usual retires early; and the only lights are those of flickering fires inside the houses. Here and there through an open door, an oblong of smoky red against the tropical blackness, you may see the inmates sitting placidly at their betel [nut]; sometimes with desultory conversation, but mostly in sociable silence. Suddenly far down the beach there is heard a noise—a faint one because of the distance, but so meaningful as to electrify every feminine soul in the village, It is weirdly distinctive, a conglomeration of voices, which defies all description. At first the round notes of shell-trumpets seem to predominate, in strangely exciting discord; but we hear also the distant thunder of many drums; and what seems like the shriek of some tremendous, superhuman voice. The shriek gives place to, and alternates with, a deep-toned roar; and the whole volume of mixed sounds swell terrifyingly, drawing momently nearer. We may now distinguish a harsh background of noise, a kind of rhythmical yet continuous rattle; and the whole is punctuated by detonations rapid and irregular like rifle-fire.

When the Ma-hevehe and those wearing its high masks approached the *eravo,* the women and uninitiated fled to their houses and it was only for novices to be initiated in the mystery. By way of controlling the potential malevolence of the sea-spirits, the masks were burnt and their ashes cast in the sea at the ceremony's end, and the owners who inherited their designs had to remember them for the next time around.[26] So much artistry is locked into this sequence of events—

architecture, sculpture, design work in wood-carving and ochres, masks and body decoration, music and sound-making, dance and performance.

Oceanian artistry almost invariably arose out of religious preoccupations. The most impressive buildings were temples or shrines or male club houses in which key rituals were performed. Famous in Melanesia are the *haus tambaran* ('spirit-houses') of various Sepik cultures, rising some 40–50 metres with richly and colourfully painted spirit-figures on their façades. In the darkness of such shrines among the (middle) Angoram people lay the 'stylized effigies of each deceased male of the clan(s), cautiously carved to represent their continuing presence among the living'.[27] In Polynesia, the most renowned architectural achievements are great stone platforms *(marae)* or enclosures marking ceremonial sites. At Mahaiatea, to the south of Tahiti Island, a great stepped pyramidal *marae,* apparently still in use, was sketched at the end of the eighteenth century, and even today the Marquesas carry some comparable examples. Most of the 10-metre-high stone walls ringing the so-called 'City of Refuge' at Howauna, Hawaii Island, also still stand today. Of roofed buildings, those most remarkable were the dwellings of the Maori chiefs and *tohunga* (priests and custodians of sacred lore), and especially the great carved house *(whare whakairo)* which dominated the *marae* or meeting grounds. The complex wooden carvings on their façades, ridges and major posts, sometimes inlaid with shell and greenstone, are high points of Oceanian art in Western aesthetic evaluation. Furthermore, they richly reflect religious insights. The *whare whakairo* was a living embodiment of the tribe, and in front of it the *tohunga* supervised genealogical recitations and other chants. The parts of this house

> were interpreted as the body of the ancestor. At the apex of thefaçade was a mask-head of the ancestor or chief (usually surmounted by a full-body figure, the *teko-teko*); the sloping bargeboards were his arms with carved 'fingers' at the ends; the ridgepole of the roof was his spine and the rafters his ribs (whichcould be used to depict genealogies in the interior). At the porchthe door was the mouth of the ancestor, a window his eye and thewhole interior his bosom. The traditional mode of address usedon the *marae* still expresses this reverence for the meeting-houseas an ancestral person whom one approaches with such words as:'O house! O *marae* of the father! O people gathered!'

Under the central house pillar a block of greenstone was planted as a 'luck offering', and occasionally a sacrificed slave.[28]

An obvious competitor for attention would be the monumental and mysterious Easter Island statues. They do not obviously sit in clearly cultic settings, as did many other megalithic figures and arrangements found across the Pacific, and the remarkable number and size of them on an island so far to the east of the region has given rise to many a theory. Various scholars posit South American as against central Polynesian connections; and some have been asking questions as to whether older and more recent statues serve different purposes. Not only the statues, but also the great walls, bas-reliefs and unusual stone villages could well have been built at the behest of South American Indian leadership—the Incan Empire, after all, relied on a 'maritime foundation'[29]—but the labour and thus the artistry were carried out by Polynesians, at least according to local traditions. The older statues probably represented deceased (Incan or Quechua?) overlords, while more recent erections could have resulted from a feverish response to the first, transitory visit(s) of the (Hispanic) Europeans, taken as returning Ancestors (see chapter 5).

Ranging over non-architectural and monumental artefacts, one notes how cultures have their own special achievements, 'capitalizing' on them as tokens of their identity or perhaps as prized items for trade. Fine work in wooden figurines, and in masks which combine basketry, wood, clays and ochres, have given the Sepik River cultures an international reputation; central New Ireland specialized in smaller wooden masks *(malagan),* Papuan coastal cultures in high ones made with wicker-work. The Papuan highland Fuyughe seemed to the coastalers a wild people lacking technical skills, but they had their perforated bamboo pipes, nonetheless, while their war clubs with pineapple-shafted stone heads were keenly sought for during trade with groups below the mountains. Of more distinctly religious significance were Trobriand canoe prows (those called *lagimu* and *tabiyu*) or indeed Gogodala canoes (from the Western Province of Papua New Guinea) decorated as wholes; finely painted, bone-pointed arrows presented to Samo initiates (Western Province hinterland); Maisin *tapa* cloth used in ceremonies (northern Papua); Mekeo lime pots (such as the *apu* used to signal the inviolable chiefly authority), and so forth.

Dances were almost always 'religious statements'. At ceremonial high points, dance and accompanying song evoked myth, closeness to the animals and birds of the cosmos, love magic and generative power, and mutuality or the handling of tensions between groups. This last facet

is well illustrated by the remarkable compensatory *gisaro* dancers among the Kaluli (under Mount Bosavi, southern central highlands of Papua); spectators often reacted by burning the grass skirt of a good performer who had shamed them into contemplating their own past hostilities. Dancers, of course, carried their own created or well-tended paraphernalia—headdresses, painted bodies, sometimes the most startling costuming—and hardly ever performed without some kind of musical instrument present. Such instruments were typically conceived to evoke the spirits' presence, and sometimes their sounds *were* the spirits (as when the sacred flutes were sounded in Wahgi and Chimbu initiations). The least durable but nonetheless carefully constructed musical object could also be the most sacred. A certain type of bull-roarer from many Huon Gulf cultures provides a fascinating case in point, for

> the 'genuine' and indeed most fragile bull-roarer can only be whirled a few times at the height of important ceremonies in some of these cultures. As the voice of the ancestors, its temporary and successful application by a bigman will bring peace and security to his tribe, but its breakage spells utter disaster. An impressive comment on the delicate matter of presenting right relationships in small-scale, survivalist societies![30]

The configurations and principles found applying in Melanesia fit island Oceania more generally. Survivalism in conflict engendered special features in Polynesia, including variation in the styles of weaponry (such as war clubs) and other artifices of war (including brilliantly decorated war canoes). Among the Maori, successfully shrunken (commonly tattooed) heads of the warrior dead (which were later to enter the European market as prized curios) were the results of a difficult craft and the heads were designed for occasional display in a sacred grove, so that if a visiting relation or friend arrived, he could weep over the saddening object and 'cherish the spirit of revenge against those by whom [the warrior] fell'.[31] Maori kites, too, were rather special, usually in the form of bird-men and with wingspans of up to 15 metres; they were either for omen-telling, or for hovering over enemy territory so as to demoralize and beam forth malignant power. Special garments and headgear throughout Polynesia were made with status and durability in war and ceremony in view. In the Marquesas, tattooing of the whole body was more for rendering the warrior's body formidable than beautiful.

In general, we can see, the traditional artist had 'no idea of art for art's sake', but expressed aesthetic sensibilities in accordance with inherited traditions. To outsiders the exaggerated breasts and genitals of many effigies may seem to reflect the 'instinctive impulses' and 'crude unconsciousness' of 'savages', but in fact they are the typical results of applying stringent rules of the game.[32] Despite the great length of time between each Hevehe—up to twenty-five years—Elema clan designs must be visualized accurately in specialists' memories and passed on before death. The language and techniques for transferring specialization, moreover, sometimes suggest the transformation of one person into another, as with the Trobriand prow-carvers of *lagimu* and *tabuya* (see above). Again, many outsiders may respond to much Oceanian art as ugly or monstrous. The grotesque has its purpose—to warn. Among the Maori, long-tongued carvings of the gods and ancestors remind viewers of aggression and *tapu* (and oversized heads of *mana*), while the iconic identification of each spirit—the beaked bird-spirit *manaia,* the curling merman *marakihau* and so on—is not to be overlooked. Smaller carvings, such as greenstone pendants of Tiki, the first man, were prepared as love-gifts within security-circles or between in-laws and thus not intended for trade (let alone the tourist market to come); the small elliptical wooden plaques on which Easter Island's as yet undeciphered Rongoronga script was cleverly inscribed were for specialists' use only, aiding their set prayers. Crucial for an understanding of Oceanian artistry, on reflection, is the study of the role of the imagination, which is only now beginning to receive the scholarly attention it deserves. In the world of the imagined, art, power, projections of divinity and the retributive impulse all converge.

BECOMING SPIRIT

Maurice Leenhardt, the well-known missionary anthropologist and predecessor to Lévi-Strauss at the Sorbonne, arrived at a profound insight about Houailou people (from north-east New Caledonia). They saw life as a process of 'becoming spirit', and the older one was the more one took on *bao* (the character of spirits) and shed humanness. This is an approach to life which seems to have more parallels in Oceania than less sensitive research has allowed us to see. Elsewhere in Melanesia, for instance, we learn of the Orokaiva notion that men ought to prepare themselves in life to become helpful spirits after death; and on Malekula one of the purposes of the extraordinary orgiastic rite previously described (see p. 142 above) was to safeguard 'the passage

of the souls of the ten clan magicians to the land of the dead, where [the god] Kabat lives under the reef', from whence their spiritual support could be continued.[33] In Polynesia, becoming a disembodied soul could mean taking on the nature of the gods and thus returning, freely incarnating in animals or insects, to support the living. Some chiefs among the northern Maori saw themselves as having taken on the qualities of *atua* (here 'godlike power') even before death, and thus before their left eyes soared up to become as stars the watchers of their people.

Death, certainly, was an ever-present reality in traditional Pacific cultures. Loss in childbirth was hardly uncommon, women and children were very vulnerable to raids, the loss of life in fighting was high, while unhygienic habits and traditional diseases lent themselves to an already low life-expectancy (of about forty to forty-five years). The possibility of death conditioned one's attitude and behaviour. Like present-day footballers in the West. men kept to their cult or 'club' houses and abstained from sex on the night before battle (although in odd cultures, such as on Malekula, the opposite apparently applied and families discussed what had to be done if things went wrong). In Wahgi long-houses, the sharing of waking dreams was important for deciding on the wisdom of opening or continuing hostilities; and a Maori warrior would lose that extra bit of confidence if he did not awaken with an erection. Someone dangerously ill might be subjected to more questions than seemed desirable, but for the Motu it was part of the caring process as kin and elders sat around sick persons and found out where they had been recently, to whom they had spoken and from whom they had received food—to identify likely sources of sorcery or other causes. (Gaining confidence that sickness could be overcome was crucial, since so many people succumbed to a 'psychology of inevitable death' because someone 'had their hair', or nail clippings, or some part of their clothing, to work harm.) Upon the prospect of a specialist's death, naturally, there was a concern that his precious knowledge should be passed down to an elect descendant; while among Polynesians a dying chief could be propped up for the house-hold or even the gathered tribe to hear some 'last instructions'—the *Oohaaki,* as the Maori called it—before the accession of a new ruler.

When death came, especially that of an adult male, it was an event which almost always yielded remarkable activity. Quick burials were only for unworthy or unproductive persons (including those mentally handicapped or crippled for life), and funerals were both occasions for exchange (within the security circle and along marriage links) and

typical pretexts for organizing revenge activity. Simple mortuary procedures among the Dugum Dani (of highland Irian Jaya) illustrate how the two concerns are wrapped together in ritual. What those connected to the deceased person bring to a funeral depends on their moiety membership, one lot bringing pigs and those in the opposite moiety to the dead person bringing shell bands or other less commonly presented items. Small kin groups have to work out what they are to give, but before the rather 'matter of fact normal tones and postures' of exchange get underway, and the presentations are laid out on the ground, close kin enter the hamlet with a dirge and a stylized walk of mourning, by rubbing a deliberately bent leg. In the distribution which follows we see the importance of reciprocal relations among the living cemented by the dead, but 'the most important witnesses to the funeral… are the ghosts', and especially the warrior or big-man who has just died, who is often propped up in a chair to survey the scene before he is properly cremated and his spirit given safe passage along a pre-set trail to the bush. Even in his formalized apartness, however, he will be a worrying factor for the group until his death is requited.[34]

The basic motifs of this scenario show up across the Pacific. A letter by Cantova provides the earliest documentation of a death rite—the burial of a man of high rank in the Carolines. 'The painting of the corpse with tumeric, the women's keening, the funeral eulogy…, the kinsmen's watch over the corpse, the food, offerings left for the spirit of the dead person, and the eventual internment in a marked grave-site were all noted.[35] Chiefs' deaths were often occasions of festal distribution and conspicuous consumption, yet not before performing rites with the utmost caution and decorum. On the Lau Islands, just east of Fiji, mourners even have to restrain themselves from weeping until the chief is buried, and up to that point conch shells are blown continuously both day and night. And the urges of avengement were hardly left unevoked at the deaths of the great ones. The lost clan at a Baled chief's funeral (on north-eastern New Caledonia), for example, allowed in a band of the deceased's maternal relations to ravage trees and gardens so that the hosts felt more sharply the loss and the shame of letting the death happen (especially if it occurred in the middle of hostilities). Such an onslaught on things underscores the most important obligation of all: it gives more incentive to make the enemy suffer for its baleful success. In Maori wars, as colonial commentators reported, chiefs often requested *utu* or 'satisfaction' for their deaths, but danger lay in being made vulnerable to attack after losing a leader (and his

mana!), so that revenge often came through putting up a fierce defence against an enemy raid.

Matters of obvious religious interest to do with death are the various procedures for the disposal of the dead, as well as beliefs about the whereabouts of the departed, and whether they can be summoned or in any sense 'judged' in another world. Disposal fashions in Melanesia are highly varied. It was an older European view that 'burying the dead' was a universal custom, but if such a theoretician as Giambattista Vico —who espoused this view and founded the first 'social science' upon its ubiquity—had looked upon the dripping pits and bone pendants of many New Guinea peoples, he would have been utterly dismayed. The Papuan Motu followed a conspicuously unpleasant-looking practice, for example, which they were quick to abandon once receiving unfavourable reactions from early Polynesian missionaries. After a few days propped up in a house, with the kinsfolk whispering requests for gifts and assistance into its ear, the corpse of a warrior was laid in a shallow, unfilled grave under the family house. The smell was the ready reminder of a needful revenge, and the widow was expected to lie down beside the decaying body in bursts of mourning, smearing decaying flesh upon her breasts as a sign of fidelity. Other people preferred the body out of the way: the Dani, as we have seen, cremated, whereas most New Guinea highlanders buried, and in the Torres Strait we learn of mummification. Common in the Papuan highlands, as with the Fuyughe and neighbouring Koiari, were high platforms on which corpses were left to waste away, the bones being later collected, washed and placed in the rock crevices of mountainsides. In other cultures—the Wam of the Sepik, for example—descendants and the bereaved wear single bones of their close kin as memorials. With the renowned case of the southern Fore in the New Guinea eastern highlands we find endocannibalism, the wife consuming the brains of her dead husband (sometimes contracting the debilitating disease Kuru), the daughter-in-law eating the penis, etc., and in this and other nearby settings feeding on the body of one's father meant acquiring spirit-power for group survival.

In Polynesia and Micronesia, even on coral atolls, burial was common, but with exhumation of the bones and the redepositing of them in crevices or groves. On the other hand, variations require some reckoning. About the Maori we learn of an ordinary man or woman or child being 'thrown into the sea', while warriors were buried in hillocks with spears stuck in the ground as 'trophies'. But there are also accounts of canoe-shaped coffins containing trussed cadavers in trees, and of

open-railed enclosures on stone platforms for persons of distinction. Burial was actually not so much in evidence on contact, even if archaeology attests it, along with grave goods, for the earlier inhabitants of New Zealand. Usually bones were secretly buried in high places, but, as already shown, heads were often shrunk, or else skulls kept in carved rounded 'boxes', as reminders of revenge; although chiefs, for their part, had their bones exhumed and placed in palisaded 'tombs'.[36]

In certain contexts death accompanied death. The equivalents of 'suttee' are rare but of interest. The widows of cremated Lemakot men (New Ireland), to take one unusual case, had to be strangled and thrown on their husbands' pyres (unless suckling a child), while the elderly widows of Maori chiefs (but, interestingly, not of commoners) were often expected to hang themselves. Sacrifices accompanied all Hawaiian funerals, which were aimed first to commemorate the dead and then to transform them into Ancestral 'deities', but humans were only sacrificed at the 'state' mortuary rites of kings or very high-ranking personages, and thus only in state temples (rather than in the domestic temples or village compounds where lesser mortals received their proper respects). In these rituals the bodies of the human victims had to be correctly prepared as offerings in all the great sacrifices; killed beforehand, no blood was to be showing when they were brought to the temple, and paradoxically the victim's death was symbolically denied so that he mediated between heaven and earth and was 'transformed into the slayer's god'. The body was left with the god(s) and decayed, but the bones were then distributed, becoming insignia of power for aristocrats and priests, with the teeth attached to the living king's loin cloth, feather cloaks or personal bowls.[37] Under these circumstances, victims played more of a sacrally significant role than expected, although one finds no hint of post-mortem tasks for them as retainers of rulers, for instance, in the other world (cf. p. 7). As for the earthly memorials of Hawaiian kings, they were given tombs, and stone arrangements also marked the place where they died with their fellows (during battle).

Where the dead are conceived to be after they are fully released from the living usually provides a useful index to a community's cosmic picturing and religious orientation in general. Varied envisionings about the after-life in Oceania also reflect natural tendencies to validate the known order of the living rather than individual exercises in speculation or metaphysics. Melanesia, as usual, holds most variation, yet in fact a few commonalities can be extrapolated for all island Oceania from the plethora of notions. The dead are almost without exception understood

to continue their involvement with the living. Rare indeed is the pre-contact Fuyughe view that the Ancestors departed to the highest mountain (Mount Albert Edward) to cease their concern for human problems. That would help explain the Fuyughes' singular lack of interest in genealogies—some of them cannot even remember the names of their grand-fathers—as well as their anxiety about the continuing living presence of the *utame(e)* (see p. 141), even though the Fuyughe do share the well-nigh ubiquitous fear of ghosts, the haunting of those departed ones whose bodies were not properly deposited and thus could not gain final repose. The distinction between 'Ancestor' (or 'spirit') and 'ghost' is always useful to bear in mind, and if certain ethnographies labour the point about fear of 'unavenged ghosts'—as they do of the Dugum Dani and Mae Enga, for example—remember that avengement is commonly thought to 'exorcize' a spirit of its inimical aspects, turning it into a 'supportive' agent.[38] (Of course much depends on common assumptions about which ghosts to fear, your own circle's or others'; Hube magicians in the Morobe actually used to thrash the corpses of their own dead, for instance, to make the ghostly anger of the dead flare up all the more against enemies.) If one is expecting from the 'vertically oriented' religious of Polynesia and Micronesia, moreover, that the dead proceed heavenward or to the underworld, prepare for the surprise that they are also commonly felt to be rather close—in birds, fish or Triton shells, as Mangaians aver, or as insects with a nocturnal shrill, in Marquesan views.

To be sure, the capacity of the dead to visit and show interest often needs distinguishing from the 'place of the dead'. In more 'horizontal' Melanesian views, such places tend to be at known geographical locations, such as a cape (thus the Roro), or in an unvisitable lake at the end of a major river (thus the New Guinea highland Daribi), or to the west at the setting sun (the Toaripi of the Papuan Gulf), or on an 'Isle of the Blest' (the Tuma of the Trobriands). It may have been very common to distinguish (malevolent) ghosts from the (helpful) dead, as we have argued, but otherwise the abodes of the dead were usually peopled by the 'good and the bad' alike, as spiritual extensions of the living community. The picture of the 'Happy Hunting Ground', without consideration for individual ethics, generally prevailed. Very few are traditional notions of a heaven or hell. The Erave or South Kewa (of the hinterland Gulf) held that all warriors who died in battle, and the womenfolk who supported them, could ascend to 'the red place' in the sky, while the rest were doomed to permanent estrangement in an earthbound 'place of brown'. The highland Chimbu buried malefactors

and unwantables in a separate burial ground, not expecting them to share the post-mortem benefits of the lucky majority. Elsewhere we hear of transmigration—among the highland Siane, Papuan islander Dobu and on South Penecost in Vanuatu, to take three instances—so that some individuals are recognized to have returned to the bosom of their families. Yet all these are exceptions, albeit very interesting and indicative of Melanesian diversity.

From Micronesia and Polynesia we expect more consistency, though we have it more from the latter region than the former. For Polynesians the dead usually descended into an underworld; thus despite above-mentioned notions of their capacity to incarnate in facets of the environment, the common imaging of a 'vertically ordered' cosmos did still pertain. The very gates to the underworld could be indicated on island shores by long-rooted trees or unusual rock formations. In the Hawaiian and Cook Islands and New Zealand there were extreme westward prominences for the leaping of souls at their departure for the Ancestral region. Souls undertook journeys which corresponded archetypally to ancient voyages to their islands from an idealized origin-point, usually eastern and named Hawaiiki, so that spirit journeying was often in a west-ward direction, continuing an earlier process of the living. It is remarkable, though, how these journeys were often pictured as worrying ordeals, the outcome of which sometimes depended more on luck or a kind of fate than on moral or even social virtues. Grave goods were intended to help, and the Marquesan evidence suggests that gifts were thought useful for getting past four pairs of demons barring the World of the Dead; but sometimes one's post-mortem lot, either in 'Light' *(Ao)* or 'Darkness' *(Po),* as the Raiateans of Tahiti put it, simply depended on whether the soul got itself perched on the right rock or not. On Tahiti proper the preferred place of the dead, called Miru, was apparently 'a kind of heaven', while the more typical Polynesian visioning had the places of both the successful and the hapless below sea, land or horizon.[39] In Polynesia's hierarchical societies, of course, one could expect to hear talk of chiefly ascendence to the skies—of the left eyes of Maori chiefs becoming stars, as discussed above. An extreme case of post-mortem stratification comes from Tonga, where royalty and nobles could expect bliss at the idyllic Pulotu (west of Tongatapu), while mere commoners were told they would stay back, turn into vermin and eat the soil.

We have been dealing here not just with the geography of the soul's task in negotiating an entrance to the Other World (or death, but also what we may call the 'sacred bridge' motif in comparative religion,

following Jouco Bleeker). Parallel materials present themselves in traditional Micronesia, where the belief in the soul's journey to the west was very widespread. Even on scattered Melanesian islands the notion of the soul's journey and final ordeal is not absent, old expectations on Muju (or Woodlark Island) having it that one travels precariously on the back of a Great Serpent called Motetutau to paradisal Tum, and is disallowed its endless supplies of foods and intoxicants if 'an inexorable old woman' does not find the requisite 'two lines of tattooing' on one's arm. In the Wuvulu group, moreover, a Micronesian enclave close to New Guinea, what is tantamount to a vertically oriented heaven and hell makes an appearance. Each Wuvulu hamlet was taken to be both protected and ordered by guardian *puala*-spirits, whose actions were interpreted by priests. Over and above 'accidents' and sickness, 'the ultimate sanction of the *puala*-spirit was to deny a person into the wonderful villages of the dead'. Directly below these villages lay Mani Pino Pino, where waste dripped down and the evil dead ate snakes and lizards 'in a constant state of agony' until the *puala* had 'mercy… sooner or later'.[40]

Allusions to this future reprieve raises questions about eschatologies in Oceania—as to whether there are ideas of some collective future judgement, or 'end of all things', or final convening of the living and the dead. Of last judgements one will hear nothing in traditional belief; of ends a few unusual bit and pieces, the Ipili Enga view, for example, being that everybody and every living thing will eventually disappear down a hole in the ground! As for beliefs about 'the return of the dead', a by now famous projection associated with new religious movements in Melanesia, there is no evidence of an eschatological aspect in traditional religions. Certainly there were isolated ideas that, at some unexpected point(s) the Ancestors would return 'sending abundance', as in the case of hopes documented early among the coastal Roro, who understood it to be brought from inland, presumably from their ancestral home and origin-point Isoiso Vapu.[41] A common assumption prevailed in Melanesia that the benevolent dead would return collectively to witness the great feasts, just as the individual deceased would come to eat that small portion of the meal so commonly set aside for them. As for some dramatic return of the dead, conceived to be final-looking or less a part of expected recurrences, this idea comes only under the impact of colonial intrusion. Across Oceania, in fact, notions of a completed future were next to non-existent, though of course the belief that the Ancestral state was without end—or *mo ake tonu atu* (henceforth forever) as the Maori put it—was naturally concomitant to

views about the abundant life of the spirit realm. Confronting the obviously more cyclical outlooks of the islanders there came in time the extraordinary and not-to-be-expected: the denizens of the outside world.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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2 On Madang, esp. P.Lawrence, *Road Belong Cargo,* Manchester, 1964, p. 16 (quotation) and n. 1, cf. pp. 21–4; on Lakalai, A.Chowning, 'Lakalai Religion and World View and the Concept of "Seaboard Religion"', in G.Trompf (ed.), *Melanesian and Judaeo-Christian Religious Traditions,* Port Moresby, 1975, Book 1, p. 89 (quotation), cf. pp. 87–8.

3 On the Maori (without Io), G.Grey, *Polynesian Mythology and Ancient Traditional History of the New Zealanders,* London, 1929 edn. p. 3, cf. pp. 1ff. Concepts of Io are taken seriously by Jack Irwin, yet currently disputed in research by Lyndsay Head, Jean Rosenfeld and Jane Simpson; we await James Veitch's monograph to arbitrate. Io is now being claimed for other islands, e.g. K.Kauraka, 'Thinking about Cook Island's Native Religion', in *Search* (Rarotonga) 3/1 (1991):12. On the Gilberts, we follow the famous version in A.Grimble, *A Pattern of Islands,* London, 1952, pp. 168–71.

4 J.Cantova, in *Lettres édifiantes, etc,* Paris, 1728, vol. 18, pp. 215ff; S. Wallesier, 'Religiöse Anschauungen und Grebräuche der Bewohner von Jap', *Anthropos* 8 (1913):607ff.

5 Following Joel Taime's amplifications of W.Gill, *Cook Island Custom.* London, 1892, pp. 22–3, with personal communication 1991.

6 Grey, *Polynesian Mythology,* p. 3 (first quotation); J.Siikala, *Cult and Conflict in Tropical Polynesia,* (Academia Scientarum Fennica FF Communications 99/2), Helsinki, 1982, p. 116 (second).

7 R.Firth, *We, The Tikopia,* London, 1957 edn., p. 113, cf. pp. 28, 259, 364–5; *Rank and Religion in Tikopia* (London School of Economic Monographs on Social Anthropology 1–2), London, 1967, esp. ch. 3 (Tikopia); P.S.Englert, *La Tierre de Hotu Matu'a,* Santiago de Chile, 1990 edn., pp. 41ff. (our translation) (Rapanui).

8 R.Bulmer, 'The Kyaka of the Western Highlands', in P.Lawrence and M.J.Meggitt (eds), *Gods, Ghosts and Men in Melanesia,* Melbourne, 1965, p. 136 (Kyaka Enga); V.Valeri, *Kingship and Sacrifice: Ritual and Society in Ancient Hawaii* (trans. P.Wissing), Chicago and London,

1985, pp. 12–23 (Hawaii); J.Irwin, *An Introduction to Maori Religion* (Special Studies in Religion 4), Adelaide, 1984, pp. 39–41 (Maori).

9 Quoted in W.Bogoras, 'The Folklore of Northeastern Asia, as Compared with That of Northwestern America', *American Anthropologist,* 414 (1902):582.

10 G.Trompf, *Payback: the Logic of Retribution in Melanesian Religions,* Cambridge, 1994, esp. chs 1, 3.

11 A.Forge, 'Prestige, Influence and Sorcery: a New Guinea example', in M.Douglas (ed.), *Withcraft Confessions and Accusations,* London, 1970, p. 259 quoting Abelam phraseology (Sepik hinterland).

12 D.Tuzin, 'Social Control and the Tambaran in the Sepik', in A.L. Epstein (ed.), *Contention and Dispute,* Canberra, 1974, p. 324, cf. pp. 321, 335; *The Voice of the Tambaran,* Berkeley, 1980, esp. pp. 140–6.

13 B.Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific,* New York, 1922, pp. 98–9.

14 On the Marquesas, Melville (1834) is quoted in C.R.Anderson, *Melville in the South Seas,* New York, 1939, p. 91; and on the Chuukese, Mrs Treiber (1888) and others, see I.I.Oneisum, 'Chuuk Violence: Then and Now', *Micronesian Counselor* 1 (1991):3.

15 Valeri, *Kingship and Sacrifice,* pp. 141, 229, 309–10, 311, 69 (quotations in that order), cf. Part 1, ch. 2; Part 2, ch. 5; Part 3, chs 7–8.

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18 Cf., e.g., *The Kumulipo; a Hawaiian Creation Chant* (trans., ed. and comm., M.W.Beckwith), Honolulu, 1972, p. 130.

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22 See R.Wagner, *The Curse of Souw,* Chicago, 1967, pp. 47–57, cf. G. Trompf, *Melanesian Religion,* Cambridge, 1991, p. 84.

23 P.A.Curti, 'L'isola di Muju o Woodlark', *Politechnico* 14 (1862):38–9 (kind permission of translator D.Affleck).

24 E.Best *et al.,* 'White Magic of the Maori', *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 140 (1926):323 (Maori love charm); Best, 'Ngatori-i-Rangi and Manua', *ibid.,* 139 (1926):214 (Maori sorcery); P.H.Buck, *Regional Diversity in the Elaboration of Sorcery in Polynesia* (Yale University Publications in Anthropology 2), New Haven, Conn., 1936, p. 13 (Polynesia); Grimble, *A Pattern of Islands,* pp. 121–2 (Gilberts).

25 K.O.L.Burridge, 'Tangu, Northern Madang District', in Lawrence and Meggitt (eds), *Gods, Ghosts and Men,* p. 230 (Tangu); T.Henry, *Ancient Tahiti* (Bernice P.Bishop Museum Bulletin 48), Honolulu, 1928, p. 166, cf. pp. 157ff (Tahiti).

26 F.E.Williams, *The Drama of Orokolo,* Oxford, 1940, pp. 210–1. The roar is of a bull-roarer. Please note that at the time Williams wrote his ethnography even the western Elema had given up their raids (against the Arihava and Heuru), cf. *ibid.,* p. 71, although extreme western villages, Aimei and Iria, still retained magnificent *eravo* complexes.

27 Trompf, *Melanesian Religion,* p. 27, cf. plates 4, 6 (on Angoram and western Elema).

28 A.C.Moore, *Iconography of Religions,* London, 1977, pp. 61–2 (long quotation); J.Cowan, *Book of Maori Lore* (rev. J.B.Palmer), Wellington, 1959, p. 51 (short). For a broader study of Maori symbology, E.A. Rout, *Maori Symbolism,* London, 1928.

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33 Layard, 'Making of Men', p. 275, cf. M.Leenhardt, *Do Kamo; la personne et le mythe dans le monde mélanesien,* Paris, 1971, pp. 81–3.

34 K.Heider, *Grand Valley Dani (Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology),* New York, 1979, p. 123, cf. pp. 120–8.

35 Paraphrased in F.X.Hezel, *The First Taint of Civilization* (Pacific Islands Monographs Series 1), Honolulu, 1983, p. 54.

36 J.Crozet quoted in H.L.Roth, *Crozet's Voyage to Tasmania, New Zealand, The Landrone Islands, and the Philippines in the Years 1771–1772,* London, 1891, p. 65 (earlier quotations); R.S.Oppenheim, *Maori Death Customs,* Wellington, 1973, esp. p. 65, cf pp. 60–5.

37 Valeri, *Kingship and Sacrifice,* p. 338, cf. pp. 38, 337–9.

38 A further culture-specific distinction of importance is between 'spirits of the recent dead' and the 'longer departed' (t Ancestors more properly), as previously discussed (see p. 131).

39 P.Huguenin, *Raiatea la sacrée,* Neuchâtel, 1902, pp. 179–80 (on *Ao* and *Po*); W.Ellis, *Polynesian Researches,* London, 1831, vol. 1, p. 397 (on Miru). For discussion over the years about the apparent disjunction between 'morality' and one's state in the after-life in some Austronesian societies, see also A.Bastian, *Einiges aus Samoa und andern Inseln der Südsee,* Berlin, 1889, pp. 38–9; R.W.Williamson, *Religions and Cosmic Beliefs of Central Polynesia,* Cambridge, 1933, vol. 1, pp. 288ff., vol. 2, pp. 1ff.; E.G.Burrows and M.E.Spiro, *An Atoll Culture,* New Haven, Conn., 1957, pp. 207–11.

40 Curti 'L'isola di Muju', pp. 38–9 (Muju); A-C.Lagercerantz, 'The Process of Change in Wuvulu Island' (unpublished typescript, New Guinea Collection, University of Papua New Guinea), 1980, pp. 2–3. In some Melanesian cultures there are ideas about 'spirit villages'—variously placed under lakes (Haliai, New Britain), on treetops in the forest (Samo), or sometimes in the sky (Erave).

41 L.A.Navarre, 'Notes et journal, June 1888–July 1889' (handwritten MS, Catholic Offices, formerly Yule Island, subsequently Bereira), Yule Island Mission, 1889, p. 90 (Tchiria village beliefs, Roro).