

Chapter 1: Introduction: Placing Biak

History is first of all geography.

Jules Michelet (1885: 161 in Osborne 1995: 13)

Cannibalism, once practised by many New Guinea tribes, is now officially taboo in Irian Jaya. Traditionally, it was tied to a tribal justice system -- punishment for theft or murder -- or served as revenge against an enemy, whose powers were absorbed when the body was eaten. Now tribal warfare is outlawed as well. These are only two of the momentous changes that the Indonesian government has introduced in its forceful quest to modernize its most undeveloped province. The challenge is daunting: How does one make Indonesians out of people emerging only now from the Stone Age?

Thomas O'Neill (1996: 8)

This dissertation examines how the people of Biak, Irian Jaya, Indonesia have managed to deal with "forceful" outsiders over a long history of "momentous changes." It is a study of how Biaks have come to conceive of *Sup Amber*, the threatening and alluring "Land of the Foreigners," as a source of pleasure, identity, and prestige. Attending to the symbolic logic of a range of cultural practices, this dissertation shows how an idiom that recalls the impact of colonial violence has enabled Biaks to subvert the values and perspectives of outsiders. It brings to light an unusual form of "resistance" -- a yearning that prevents the very union desired.

The place I call Biak in this study consists of a string of islands that rises from the Pacific Ocean at the opening of Cendrawasih Bay. (See figures 1.1 and 1.2.) Located roughly 200 kilometers to the east of the Bird's Head

peninsula, and the same distance to the north of Irian Jaya's mainland, the largest islands of the group, Biak, Supiori and Numfor, vary in topography

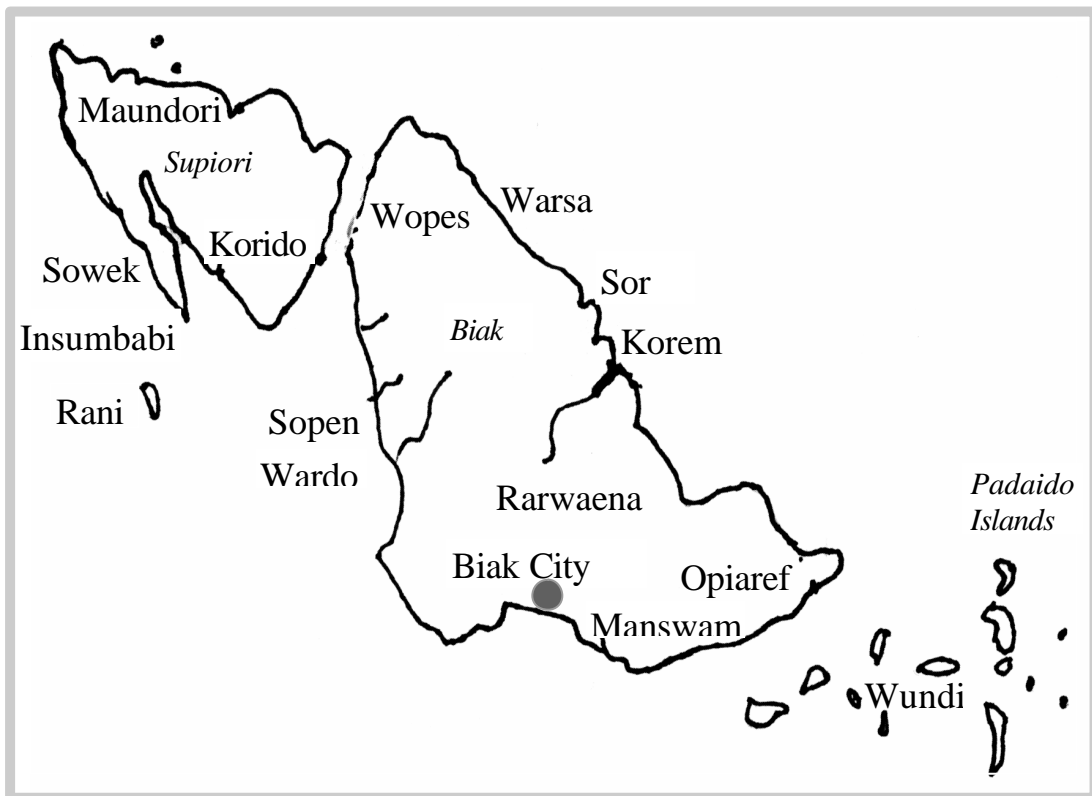


Figure 1.2 Map of Biak, Supiori and the Padaido Islands

from coral cliffs and windswept plains to densely forested hills.¹ Facing the open Pacific in the north, and calmer coastal waters in the south, the islands are enclosed by coral reefs that are in many places impassable to all but the smallest vessels. Biak Island is the largest and most accessible of the group.

The administrative district, or regency, of Biak-Numfor is home to close to one hundred thousand inhabitants, an estimated three quarters of whom speak the local language, Biak, and can be considered indigenous to the islands (Biak Numfor dalam Angka 1992: 66).² The vast majority of the 40,000 odd people who live in the regency's villages are Biak speakers. Non-Biak speakers tend to cluster on the south coast of Biak Island, in Biak City, the regency's capital, which is a government and military center and the site of Indonesia's easternmost international airport. Biak's non-Irianese residents range from Javanese and Balinese civil servants to Batak military commanders to "spontaneous migrants" from the island of Sulawesi, who, over the decades, have come to Irian Jaya in large numbers to seek their

¹Biak-Numfor Regency lies between 134 degrees 47 minutes and 136 degrees longitude and 0 degrees, 55 minutes, 30 seconds and 20 seconds latitude. See Biak Numfor dalam Angka 1992: 2. The group was christened the Schouten Islands by Dutch explorers.

²The Indonesian government does not divide population statistics by ethnicity. I arrived at this figure by examining statistics on religion. Almost without exception, Biaks are Protestants. In 1991, out of a total population of 92,561, there were 9,979 Moslems, 1,975 Catholics, 80,273 Protestants, 126 Hindus and 217 Buddhists residing in the regency. While this measure is far from perfect -- many of the migrants residing in the regency are Protestants, as well -- it offers a crude sense of the proportional size of each community.

fortunes as petty traders. While in rural communities one finds the descendants of Hokkien merchants who intermarried with local women during the colonial period, recently arrived Sino-Indonesians generally remain in town.³ Between August 1992 and March 1994, I was one of the regency's close to fifty long-term non-Indonesian residents (Biak dalam Angka 1992: 31). The other non-Indonesians supervised operations at the plymill and canning factory close to Biak City or worked on government or church-sponsored development programs; also included among these aliens were a American Pentecostal missionary and a Dutch Catholic priest. In October 1994, when I returned to Biak to conduct a month of follow-up research, I was one of several dozen short-term foreign visitors, most of whom were tourists spending a day or so in the regency before proceeding to the provincial capital, Jayapura, and further afield.

During both stints of research in this ethnically diverse setting, and during my work in the Dutch archives and among Papuan exiles in Holland, I focused primarily on the perspectives and practices of Biak speakers. In writing this dissertation, in order to make sense of these perspectives and practices and their relation to the region's history, I have moved between scholarly disciplines and viewpoints. My analysis draws on varied and wide-ranging sources: from Southeast Asian studies to the ethnography of Indonesia and Melanesia, from colonial studies to European history to social theory and psychoanalysis. In interweaving these traditions, I have had to endure some cognitive dissonance; I have also encountered some unexpected

³For a discussion of the island's migrant population in the mid-1950s, see van Gendt 1954: 27.

common ground. As I hope to make clear below, and in the chapters that follow, this eclectic strategy has proven crucial to my understanding of Biak and my grasp of the wider significance of this work.

What are the lasting effects of colonialism on the former frontiers of empire? How can one write an ethnography that takes this history seriously -- not only the history of its "object," but the history of its theoretical tools? How can one draw on the findings of regional studies while remaining sensitive to the forces that put regions on the map? What are the limits of reflexivity when informants are as "reflexive" as researchers -- and no less interested in evoking the "other" to validate local "truths"?

And finally, how does one describe a community in today's Irian Jaya that is neither "just emerging from the Stone Age" nor poised on the brink of "becoming Indonesian?" In their quest for foreign potency, instead of "eating" their "enemies," Biaks incorporate alien objects and discourses. Is it possible to imagine how such a society might embrace what is commonly described as "modernity" without submitting to modern structures of identity and power?

Although I cannot promise answers, the following pages and chapters should suggest how and why these questions should be posed.

Approaching the Problem

In 1982, in a slender volume published by a Singaporean press, Professor Oliver W. Wolters, an expert on, among other things, the classical Malay

polity of Srivijaya, laid out his cautious views on the experiences or characteristics that could possibly justify treating the history of Southeast Asia as a unit (see Wolters 1982). Eschewing what was for previous scholars the obvious link -- the "Hindu" origins of the region's earliest states -- Wolters let his imagination take him far into the past, aided by the latest archaeological findings. The available evidence supported a portrait of a prehistoric Southeast Asia characterized by small, localized societies, composed of cognatic kin groups and led by "men of prowess:" individuals whose achievements bore witness to an excess of "soul stuff," the supplement that enabled them to stand out above their peers. Sketching in the broadest of strokes, Wolters conjured this short-lived, forever regenerating polity to account for Southeast Asia's diversity in the face of centuries of exposure to persons, products and texts from afar. Various positioned along the routes that joined dynastic China with India, Africa and the Mediterranean, different societies developed different ways of localizing foreign elements. Unwilling to hazard more than tentative suggestions, Wolters called on anthropologists and historians to elucidate the relevant processes. One way to regard the following dissertation is as a response to Wolters' request.

In an era when support for area studies is waning, it is probably injudicious to introduce a dissertation with a puzzle born of regional concerns. Such a strategy may seem particularly inadvisable when the focus of this dissertation is Biak, Irian Jaya, Indonesia -- a place whose "regional" status is far from clear. As members of a population supposedly "emerging only now from the Stone Age," one would scarcely expect to find Biaks in the annals of "Southeast Asian" history, particular of a "classical" sort.

Nevertheless, as I hope to show, there is method in this madness. In their depictions of Indonesia's richly varied societies, ethnographers have repeatedly described how imported objects serve as the vehicles of power and identity. Their findings resonate with descriptions of societies throughout the world which have peopled distant lands with spirits and ancestors and accorded special status to those who captured their force (see Helms 1988 and 1993). This valorization of what is foreign, far from limited to "Southeast Asia," provides a starting point for this study. This work seeks to illuminate the lasting effects of the so-called colonial encounter by exploring this tendency to place the foreign at the heart of "local" worlds.

A strength of anthropology lies in its ability to engage global questions in the often messy context of particular histories. In this case, the history is that of one of the largest ethnic groups in Irian Jaya, a region comprising the western half of the enormous island of New Guinea. Although outsiders have given them a variety of names -- from "Sor mensen" to "Mefoorse" to "Biakkers" to "Papuan" -- the contemporary people described in this study by and large call themselves *kawasa*(B) or *orang*(I) *Biak*.⁴ Numbering close to 100,000 -- if one includes Biaks living outside of Biak-Numfor Regency - - in a province with a population of 1.9 million,⁵ they share an Austronesian

⁴I use "B" to indicate *bahasa Biak*, the local language, and "I" to indicate *bahasa Indonesia* or its predecessor, *Melayu*.

⁵See O'Neill 1996: 11. An estimated 250,000 of Irian Jaya's inhabitants are migrants from other parts of Indonesia. While Dutch writers would often compare western New Guinea to the Netherlands, O'Neill chose an American state. Irian Jaya is roughly the size of California, which has a population of 30 million.

language, spoken in a variety of dialects, and a seafaring past. The earliest records depict Biaks as fearsome pirates, terrorizing the Moluccan coastlines to the west of New Guinea (see Haga 1884: *passim*). Other documents have portrayed them as traders, as well as raiders: travelling iron-smiths who enjoyed a far-flung network of "trade friends" and out-migrated kin (see Kamma and Kooijman 1973). Through their delivery of tribute to Tidore -- and its vassals to the east -- Biaks occupied the furthest periphery of the Spice Islands polity (Andaya 1993; Kamma 1947-49). Because of this long-standing relationship with Tidore, Biaks were among the first "Papuan" to encounter European explorers, merchants, missionaries and officials. This variegated history of contact on a sometimes volatile frontier put Biaks in a delicate position when in 1949, for reasons I discuss below, their "neglected" corner of the Dutch colonial empire became the last that the Netherlands would release.

The Dutch justified their retention of western New Guinea after World War II by claiming that they were protecting the "primitive" Papuans' right to self-determination (see Lijphart 1966). Since the transition to Indonesian rule in 1969, two decades after the rest of the country gained independence, Irian Jaya has been the site of ongoing cycles of unrest and repression (see Osborne 1985). As suggested by recent events in the interior and coastal, Dutch promises to support an independent "West Papua" have lingered in local memories.⁶ Despite the government's efforts to transform the

⁶After several years of quiescence, the province was swept back into the global spotlight in early 1996. Revelations of human rights abuses near the Freeport McMoran mining site raised the profile of Irian Jaya nationally. A report submitted by the Catholic bishop in Irian Jaya reported, among other

province's inhabitants into loyal Indonesians, some former Papuans have continued to dream of governing their own, autonomous state. Over the years, Biaks have been well-represented among both the supporters of integration and the stubborn opponents of Jakarta's rule.

Today's Biaks are fishermen, farmers, teachers, students, soldiers, athletes, artists, and government officials. Their diverse lifestyles and divided allegiances have combined to spawn confused perceptions of Biak identity. An American Melanesianist once welcomed me to her class by remarking that it would be helpful to have the view from Indonesia; a Dutch Indonesianist once thanked me for presenting my findings on a culture outside the "field of study;" in a highlands village, a Dani man responded to my crude attempts at comparative research by remarking, "We're not different from the Biaks -- they're almost like us Irianese."

atrocities, the shooting by a military patrol of an unarmed group of worshippers from the Amungme tribe, who have traditional claims to the land and resources that Freeport is exploiting. The Indonesian Human Rights Commission, founded to counter U.S. criticism of Indonesia's record, particularly in East Timor, investigated the affair, and several commanding officers were brought to trial. The highly publicized kidnapping of a group of European and Indonesian researchers by an OPM faction led by Amungme and Nduga rebels turned international attention to the province. Midway through the crisis, Thomas Wainggi, an Irian academic arrested in the late 1980s for planning a Papuan flag-raising ceremony, died in prison. The return of his body to Jayapura, the provincial capital, sparked riots which left an entire market gutted. Keith Loveard, in an article from *Asiaweek*, notes, "Foreign diplomats say privately that they fear the province could eventually make the security problems in volatile East Timor look like child's play." This was not at all the prognosis during my fieldwork, I should add. See Loveard 1996.

I came to know Biak through twelve months of historical research and eighteen months of fieldwork. The first and perhaps most important text I consulted was F.C. Kamma's (1972) account of *Koreri*, the messianic movement that periodically erupted during Biak's colonial past. I also read the Dutch missionary-anthropologist's two volume history of the Protestant mission in New Guinea (Kamma 1977), before turning to an array of letters, documents and books. My studies in Holland, where I traveled periodically from my temporary home in London, came in handy in Irian Jaya, where many of my informants were familiar with the same Dutch books. While my field research occasionally took me to Jayapura, the provincial capital, and further afield, I spent most of my time on Biak Island. I conducted most interviews in Indonesian, the national language, which even older Biaks speak well. My knowledge of Biak language sufficed for brief conversations, an occasional clarifying question, and the analysis of spells and songs that an ever widening circle of associates helped me to transcribe, translate and interpret. Although I joined two households, one in Biak City and the other on the island's northern shore, the broad range of Biaks who took an interest in my study steered me away from focusing on a single place or group. Thus, while my understanding of Biak was shaped by those I knew best, this is by no means a community study. And, while much of my research focused on conventional topics, such as kinship, inheritance, and ceremonial exchange, and while I relied for the most part on the qualitative methods that are the hallmark of anthropology, I made no attempt to limit my analysis. I spent as much time pondering the practices of town-dwellers as I did the life styles of their rural kin.

It is common for anthropologists to claim not to have written the study that they envisioned when they set out for the field. Fieldwork is commonly described as a rite of passage, a transformative encounter with the unexpected that recasts familiar concerns (see Turner 1996: 96; compare Geertz 1973a).⁷ While my experience in some senses conformed to this convention, it did so at a remove. Instead of finding unexpected changes, I discovered unexpected continuities. What I learned in the field diverged from what I knew about Indonesia's colonial history, but not in predictable ways. Scholars of Java and other parts of the Indies have depicted a transformation in local responses to foreign powers with the transition from early to late colonialism. In the former period, one finds an appropriation of alien "influences," in the latter, the "enforcement" of the modern "measures" of the state (see, e.g. Taylor 1984; Kenji 1986; Shiraishi 1990). Versed in this literature, I went to Biak expecting to find on this fringe the drama that played out at the Indies' center: a mestizo society that vanished as distances collapsed, a new modernity that set the stage for the post-colonial order. I could not help assuming that a powerful set of political and economic forces would soon turn Biaks into orderly national cultural subjects. Although I

⁷ See also Ibid.: 105. "From this standpoint, much of the grotesqueness and monstrosity of liminal *sacra* may be seen to be aimed not so much at terrorizing or bemusing neophytes into submission or out of their wits as at making them vividly and rapidly aware of what may be called the 'factors' of their culture.... Monsters startle neophytes into thinking about objects, persons, relationships and features of their environment they have hitherto taken for granted." Geertz (1973a) refers to ethnography as the practice of "looking for the ordinary in places where it takes unaccustomed forms" (p. 14) and starting "beyond the obvious and superficial, from a state of general bewilderment as to what the devil is going on -- trying to find one's feet" (p. 27).

detected "mestizo" logics in all manner of "postcolonial" practices, it was not until I started to write about Biak that I began to wonder if a different plot might be unfolding. The challenge of describing contemporary Biak brought out the second, more ambitious goal of this dissertation: to explore how the logic through which Biak incorporates the foreign might serve to reproduce a form of sociality that stands in intimate opposition to that offered by "modern" forms of authority. In pursuing this problem, I have had to grapple with the limitation of conventional views of "modernity." Biaks are anything but "traditional," in the sense of the word that denotes a clinging to outmoded institutions. Are there other ways of conceiving what it might mean not to be "modern" in the midst of what is so often called "our modern world?"

The third aim of this study, at once the most tentative and audacious, is to bring together supposedly antithetical theoretical approaches. In recent years, the critique of anthropology's complicity with imperial power has spawned a combination of defeatism and disavowal.⁸ Some scholars have responded by focusing on the fantasies of indomitable centers, while others have privileged the "agency" of the marginal.⁹ On the one hand, one finds a

⁸The publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (1978) is widely taken as a founding moment in this critique.

⁹Recent examples of these contrasting trends include Stoler 1995 and Tsing 1993.

Jean and John Comaroff (1991: 9) describe the impetus behind the study of "resistance" as belonging to a broader effort to "save the humanist subject from structural extinction." For other attempts to theorize the agency of the marginal, see, among many others, Scott 1985, Comaroff 1985, Gewertz and

retreat into the history of "Western" representations; on the other, a celebration of the history-making of "non-Western" cultures.¹⁰ Those who take these opposing positions sometimes risk allowing either pessimism or wishfulness to lead them to assume that every analysis will yield the same outcome. The problems posed by Biak's complicated past have prevented me from adopting either of these approaches. To write this study, I have had to bring together the insights of anthropology and colonial studies. But I have been forced to challenge the conformism that sometimes seems to plague them both.

In the six chapters that make up this study, I explore how Biaks have reproduced their society's boundaries by transforming what is foreign into a source of value, potency and authority. I approach Biak as a symbolic economy: a dynamic system of relations and distinctions, reproduced through a logic which guides the dialectical engendering of actions, institutions and values.¹¹ My main argument is simple: Biak's valorization

Errington 1993 and Kaplan 1995. My point is not to dismiss the importance of positioned interests in the "making of history," but to challenge the dichotomy ("agency/structure") through which history has often been thought. In my opinion, in order to theorize resistance, one must begin with a nonessentializing conception of the social in which time does not surprise "structure" from without, but haunts it from within. That is, one must recognize the inextricable interdependencies that prevail between history, discourse, and social life. See Derrida 1976a and 1978a. For a discussion of the problematic implications of recent attempts to restore an autonomous "indigenous subject" to India's history, see Chatterjee 1993: 27-34.

¹⁰See Said 1994. On indigenous history-making, see Sahlin 1985.

¹¹While my approach broadly falls within the Geertzian project of "thick description" -- a practice which is "like trying to read (in the sense of

'construct a reading of') a manuscript -- foreign, faded, full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations, and tendentious commentaries, but written not in conventionalized graphs of sound but in transient examples of shaped behavior" -- it attends as closely to the "saying" as to the "said." See Geertz 1973a: 10, 19. See also Ricoeur: 1981. On the one hand, my strategy entails recourse to a general notion of "ideology." In this regard, this study builds on ethnographic analyses that address the problem of social reproduction by attending to the unintended effects of social action. For an example of this dialectical approach to anthropological analysis, see Sangren 1987. On the other hand, my strategy adds a close reading of the internal margins of social discourse to this concern with the social margins of "culture." Accordingly, this study draws on literary approaches that focus less on "meaning" than on the systematic engendering of its effects. A few examples of analyses focusing on the "textual economy" of literary works and films include Brooks 1984, Culler 1981, Iser 1989, Eco 1979 and Heath 1975. On the relation between these two aspects of a focus on textuality, see Derrida 1982a. See also Said 1983: 31-54. Making a somewhat more subtle point than Said's pronouncement that every "text is in the world," Heath suggests how an attention on the "movement of relations" within a particular economy coincides with a concern for what lies beyond its margins.

To analyse the filmic system is to follow narrative and figures, economy and logic, the shifting regulation, the placing of the subject and the displacements on which that depends. Such an analysis, inevitably, cannot maintain the division between cinematic and non-cinematic, which it constantly transgresses in response to the *work* of the text. Propositions, exchanges, figures straddle the different matters of expression as so many shifters from code to code, rendering difficult the construction of the filmic system by analysis in a strict allegiance to that division. (...) The notion of textual system is subsequently conceived in an attention to a ceaseless systematising activity, the force of an endless production of '*poussées significationnelles*'; thus it becomes a question not of *a* system, the expression of single overall coherence, nor even of *several*, the sum of different readings, but of *systematicity* -- 'something always of a structural and relational (but not necessarily exhaustive) order.' It is such a *movement of relations* which has been understood in this analysis as the filmic system. (Heath 1975: 112-13)

of alien elements has served to keep alien orders at bay. Without downplaying the changes that have swept northern New Guinea, from the nineteenth century onward, I follow continuities across a history of disruptions, revealing how an order born of confrontation turns the forces that threaten it into a focus of desire. While the next three chapters focus on Biak's domestic dynamics, the last two take a comparative approach to Biak myth and history, in an effort to explore how one might regard modernity as the margin that shapes and haunts social discourse in Biak. The study concludes by showing how Biak's messianic response to colonial incursions welcomed the emergence of "modern" modes of subjectivity, but only as the shock that would end the world.

To understand how Biaks have reproduced the margins of their society, one must consider Biak's place in a changing social world. It is in the nature of boundaries to signify what exceeds them as well as the object they supposedly enclose. Before turning to Biak, an introduction to this dissertation's margins is in order. I have named the three interrelated problems that have inspired this study: the localization of the foreign, the marginalization of the modern, and the challenge of integrating history and ethnography. In the remainder of this introduction, I will discuss these problems in the context of debates in Indonesian, Melanesian and colonial studies. I will then consider the features of Biak's history that encouraged me to move beyond the conventions of these debates. While this dissertation draws on insights derived from these three traditions of scholarship, it fails to sit comfortably in any of them. To understand why, one must return to Oliver Wolters' ambivalent effort to bound his field.

Southeast Asia and the Search for "Something Else"

Scholars of Southeast Asia have examined many of the topics addressed in the following chapters. One finds the most interesting parallels, pertaining to this work's central theme, in a modest, yet adventurous work. *History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives* is not a textbook -- not even a "mini-textbook," its author remarks (Wolters 1982: x). Nor is it the prelude to a more ambitious project. Having taught early Southeast Asian history by subregion, avoiding overarching comparisons, Wolters took up the task of writing this volume as a "once in a lifetime" diversion. The occasion for this diversion was a seminar on "Problems and Progress in Cultural Development in ASEAN," an association that came into existence through the signing of a treaty in 1976. While Wolters does not elaborate upon the genealogy of his speciality, it does not take much imagination to recognize the relationship between Cold War politics and the carving out of new scholarly arenas. From this perspective, Southeast Asia is scarcely ancient. The product of the impossibility of research in some places and its "strategic" character in others, the region owes its existence to the Chinese revolution of 1949-50 and its vitality to the Vietnam War.

Wolters does not take up the problem of Western involvement in Southeast Asia or discuss the rise of Islam and Theravada Buddhism in the region. Instead, he focuses on a different geopolitics than those conventionally cited as the basis of the region's coherence. Against the view that would make early Southeast Asia into the satellite of a distant "civilization," Wolters searches for other sources of distinction. Behind the apparently exogenous origins of local culture lies something alien to India's classical traditions.

Herein lies the subtlety and relevance of Wolters' speculations. He refuses to sacrifice the particular as he reaches for the general. Instead of presenting variation as the noise around a statistical norm, he makes difference central to his definition. Whatever united "Southeast Asian" societies was the same thing that divided them, undermining the very effort to speak of them as a group.

In light of this contradictory impulse, one could read Wolters' portrait of Southeast Asia's prehistory as a myth which validates the analysis conducted later in his book. Wolters disregards the variation found across the region's societies when he describes Southeast Asian kinship as simply "cognatic." Wolters uses the term in the most general sense to point to what he calls a "downplaying of the importance of lineages" (Ibid.: 4). Making descent a problematic source of authority, the contradictions inherent in the system of inheritance created a space for something foreign to its logic: "soul stuff," that indeterminate spiritual element which validated the leadership of specific individuals. Within each locality, "soul stuff" became the basis for hierarchy in a context in which kinship did not fix unequivocal distinctions. For Wolters, "soul stuff" likewise becomes the focus of a comparison that differentiates societies in the region.

In Southeast Asian languages, the terms for "soul stuff" vary from society to society, and the belief is always associated with other beliefs. The distinction between "soul stuff" and the associated beliefs is so precise and essential that they can be defined only in the language of each society. (Wolters 1982: 6)

Just as every society possessed "soul stuff" in its own distinctive manner, every individual in these belief systems possessed it in a distinctive degree.

Nevertheless, a person's spiritual identity and capacity for leadership were established when his fellows could recognize his superior endowment and knew that being close to him was to their advantage not only because his entourage could expect to enjoy material rewards but also, I believe, because their own spiritual substance, for everyone possessed it in some measure, would participate in his, thereby leading to *rapport* and personal satisfaction. We are dealing with the led as well as the leaders. (Wolters 1982: 6)

Along with the relatively high status of women in "prehistoric" Southeast Asia, this interplay of cognatic kinship and "something else" sets the region apart from China, India and New Guinea.¹² But more important for Wolters' argument is the role of this dynamic in reproducing differences in the face of foreign influences. In Wolters' mythology, the first "man of prowess" to embrace a foreign pantheon profited from the new idiom of authority to assert through ritual his proximity to the Gods. "Indianization" provided a resource for those who sought to be "Ancestors:" the founders of genealogies, rather than simply their custodians. These societies' "ancient preoccupation with signs of the present" gave rise to a "present-mindedness of outlook" and an "elite which always took modernity urbanely in its stride (Wolters 1982: 41-42).

¹²An interesting wrinkle in Wolters' prehistory is its reliance on the model of the Melanesian "Big Man." Some highlights in the debates concerning the general applicability of this model include Sahlins 1963; Godelier [1982]1986; and Godelier and Strathern 1991.

According to Wolters, Southeast Asia's "ancient preoccupation" with the classically "modern," if you will, lent its elite a predilection for "universalizing texts," a predilection which potentially could have led to something analogous to the "modern" forms of consciousness I discuss later in this study. Their "sense of universal standards of excellence" might have encouraged the inhabitants of the region's centers "to look out into distant space for evidence that contradicted their conviction that their own center was 'unique'" (Ibid.: 46). Yet the embrace of universalizing discourses did not have this homogenizing effect. Instead, it gave rise to the "paradox" of a "multi-centric landscape of universal sovereigns," a paradox which is not a paradox when one considers the logic through which foreign texts became part of local cultural "wholes" (Ibid.). Taking up a Saussurean model of language as a system of negatively defined distinctions, Wolters depicts a situation in which the foreign and the local, in reciprocal fashion, provide a perspective in which one stands for the "strangeness" in the other. A critic might think that he or she is reading an "Indian" epic, but certain key shifts in meaning will "throw into sharp relief the 'something else' in local culture responsible for the localizing process," a "something else," which like the word for "soul stuff" varied from society to society. Likewise, for an analyst focused on a seemingly indigenous cultural "whole," imported elements will point to "something else," which serves as a supplementary source of authority. It is no accident that the loan words that Wolters uses as examples of localization refer to some variety of spiritual potency: foreign signifiers serve to figure the unrepresentable origins of representation, what appears in local ideology as the transcendent source of social power.¹³

¹³Wolters does not cite Mauss [1902-1903]1972) or Lévi-Strauss'

Looking for "ancient India" in Southeast Asia, the historian finds the traces of a local "prehistory." Looking for an indigenous, self-contained system, the anthropologist finds a reservoir of alien power.

In Wolters' model, kinship and soul stuff stand in a supplementary relationship. Making up for something missing in kinship, "soul stuff" allows for the recognition of differences -- between persons, societies and ethnological regions. One might wish to reflect, as I do in relation to Biak, whether one could view this dynamic as a dialectic, with the force of "something else" destabilizing lineages at the same time that destabilized lineages lead to the quest for "something else." In somewhat different terms than Wolters uses, one could depict the system he portrays as involving an interplay between mutually constituted ideologies, one of which locates the source of power in the transcendent realm of the ancestors, the other in the distant world of outsiders.¹⁴ In need of no origin, such a formulation side-steps the nostalgia that lurks in Wolters' appeal to the prehistoric past. In any

([1950]1987) commentary. Lévi-Strauss introduces the notion of the "floating signifier," the empty sign in the linguistic system that makes up for the imbalance between the reserve of signifiers and the universe already "mapped." Like Benveniste's "shifters," the floating signifier signifies the source of signification and calls for a shift from a system of empty distinctions into "full speech." See Benveniste [1958]1971.

¹⁴Inspired by Marx, Sangren develops such terms carefully, using the word "production" to refer not only to the provision of "material goods" and the means of producing them, but to the generation of individual and collective identities and the conditions on which their emergence rests. For an analysis of patrilineal kinship ideology in Taiwan that exemplifies this approach, see Sangren n.d.

case, the value of Wolters' tentative approach to the structure of Southeast Asian history becomes clear when one considers the alternative. Edmund Leach's (1960-61) article, "The Frontiers of Burma," reveals where a stress on "foreign imports" can lead. The hill people may be "barbarians" in the eyes of the more "civilized" people of the valleys. But Leach cannot conceal his own opinion of where the true "barbarism" lies. The valley leaders are despots, capriciously dominating their cowed population in a society ruled by impulse. The hill tribes exemplify a smoothly functioning system, ruled by ancestral law. If China is to thank for the order of the latter, India is to blame for the disorder of the former. The "worst off" communities are those that stand between – impoverished and degraded by their adulterating exposure to the valley's "civilization." I may use the term "frontier" in Leach's sense in this study, but I will place the effects of geography in a very different light.

In relating Wolters' tentative model of "translating" foreign elements, I have addressed issues familiar to the anthropologists of Southeast Asia. *History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives* is not an old book. Nor is it without precedent: Indonesianists in the Netherlands have long taken an interest in finding family resemblances among societies united under Dutch colonial rule.¹⁵ One can easily place the questions that have exercised generations of ethnographers of Indonesia in relation to Wolters' speculations. One way to portray the "state of the field" would be to follow John Bowen's lead. In his survey of anthropological writings on Southeast

¹⁵For a list of attributes which mirrors that of Wolters, see Josselin de Jong [1935]1977.

Asian cultures, he tracks an evolution from "interpretive approaches" inspired by Boas and Weber to recent efforts to "reshape the original interpretive model to better take account of the social context in which cultural forms are produced and interpreted" (Bowen 1995: 1047). He ends his sweeping review with a call for an "actor-oriented interpretive perspective" that approaches culture by way of a "history of people interpreting public forms" (Ibid.: 1068). Well aware that any such schema does violence to its contents, I propose as an alternative a "galactic" scheme, grouping scholarly works into satellites orbiting Wolters' constellation of concerns: "men of prowess," "cognatic kinship," and a history of receptiveness to foreign discourses and things.

As Bowen's choice of terms suggests, the largest body of works in this universe would circulate around the well-known writings of Clifford Geertz. *The Religion of Java* reflects Wolters' polemic in its title: this is not *The Religion of India* or *Mecca* writ small.¹⁶ Perhaps more stridently, this is not

¹⁶ Geertz defends his categorization of Javanese religious life into three variants: santri, prijaji and abangan. "

Java -- which has been civilized longer than England; which over a period of more than fifteen hundred years has seen Indians, Arabs, Chinese, Portuguese, and Dutch come and go; and which has today one of the world's densest populations, highest development of the arts, and most intensive agricultures -- is not easily characterized under a single label or easily pictured in terms of a dominant theme. It is particularly true that in describing the religion of such a complex civilization as the Javanese any simple unitary view is certain to be inadequate; and so I have tried in the following pages to show how much variation in ritual, contrast in belief, and conflict in values lie concealed beneath the simple statement that Java is more than 90 percent Moslem. If I have chosen, consequently, to accent the religious diversity in contemporary Java -- or more particularly

The Religion of America, Geertz implies, directing his anti-anti-relativist insistence upon the incommensurability of cultural values against the dual foes of utilitarianism and Marxian theory (see, e.g. Geertz 1973b: 193-233). Works most explicitly building on the Geertzian tradition have tended to link local forms of ritual and performance with local notions of personhood and spiritual power (see, among others, Rosaldo 1980 and Errington 1989).

A second satellite might consist of works building on the tradition of Dutch structuralism, inaugurated by J.P.B. de Josselin de Jong and his student, F.A.E. van Wouden (see J.P.B. de Josselin de Jong [1935]1977, [1952]1977; van Wouden [1935]1968). In 1935, when de Josselin de Jong proposed defining the "Malay Archipelago" as a "Field of Ethnographic Inquiry," the new chair of anthropology at Leiden University identified four widely shared characteristics: 1) "the remarkable resilience of Indonesian cultures towards foreign cultural elements, which they neither rejected nor simply adopted, but Indonesianized, and thereby integrated into the indigenous cultures"; 2) a "conceptual system" characterized by "socio-cosmic dualism;" 3) "double descent"; and 4) "asymmetric connubium" or "generalized exchange" with "the bride-giving clan...always more or less subordinate to its bride-taking partner" (P.E. de Josselin de Jong 1988b: 2). The last three elements inspired the lion's share of the research directed by de Josselin de Jong, who took the relation between bride-givers and bride-

in one given town-village complex in contemporary Java -- my intention has not been to deny the underlying religious unity of its people or, beyond them, of the Indonesian people generally, but to bring home the reality of the complexity, depth, and richness of their spiritual life. (Geertz 1960: 7)

takers as the "atom" of Indonesian kinship (see J.P.B. de Josselin de Jong [1952] 1977).¹⁷ Variably inspired by Lévi-Strauss' writings on myth and kinship, some of the heirs to the Dutch structuralist tradition have analyzed the symbolic dualism most prominent in Eastern Indonesian cultures (see Fox 1980). Others have focused on the structural interplay of kinship practices and ideologies across the region (Errington 1989: 262-72, 1990; Visser 1988)¹⁸ and within the socio-cultural orders of specific locales (McKinnon 1991).

Another take on the "downgrading of the importance of lineages" would place the dynamics of kinship within a broader analysis of problems of language and history (see, among others, Siegel 1969, 1986 and Rafael [1988] 1993). This group of works would bear a close relationship to a fourth body of scholarship concerned less with the specificities of Southeast Asian

¹⁷It is worth noting how de Josselin de Jong's reading of Lévi-Strauss confounds the "atom of kinship" with its specific social manifestations, thus historicizing variations that the latter depicted as transformations within a universal structure. In his comparison of Balinese and Outer Island kinship ideology, James Boon (1990a: 221) elaborates on this critique. "The famous 'atom of kinship' formulation...has a major drawback: despite the author's warnings, it allows readers to infer substantive social relations rather than dialectical fields of structural differences. Readers led around Lévi-Strauss by Josselin de Jong's commentary sometimes mistook the 'atom of kinship' for an 'elementary structure,' whereas the 'atom' is the minimal set of contrasts for generating the range of elementary structures.

¹⁸Errington (1989: 262-72, 1990) resolves a problem that has plagued her Dutch colleagues through a model for island Southeast Asian kinship which integrates systems with and without asymmetric exchange. Visser (1988) calls for the "methodological study of transformations" on a smaller scale.

societies than with transformations lying beyond Wolters' frame of reference. Where Wolters explores the origins of continuity, these works highlight the dynamics of change. Benedict Anderson's ([1983]1990) seminal work on nationalism is but one of many which employ the concept of translation to track the emergence of new forms of consciousness in the late colonial period (see also Shiraishi 1990; Mrazek 1994). The "modernity" depicted in these works may not be the same "modernity" referred to by Wolters, but it bears clear affinities. The concerns that occupy John Pemberton (1994) bring us full circle to a critique of the Geertzian project. The notion of "ritual" is shown to be the product of a new and powerful "localization," the late colonial appearance of a modern form of authority that constitutes cultural essences and selves.

Although Pemberton's insights might lead one to distain such an exercise, it would be relatively easy to place this dissertation within the ethnological universe just depicted. The "floating homes" of Biak's past, described in chapter 2, would justify Biak's insertion into the schemes of scholars who present Southeast Asia as a region of "house-based societies" (Carsten and Hugh-Hones 1995 and Waterson 1995). *Keret*, the general term for Biak's named patriclans, refers to the huts once erected for expedition leaders in the center of the islanders' large outriggers. The prefix *rum* or "house" appears in the names of many of these patrilineal groups, whose subdivisions are known as *sim* or "rooms." Descriptions of the now abandoned clan dwellings reveal the spatial coordinates of these terms; each *keret's rumsom* consisted of two rows of *sim* opening onto a central corridor above which hung an enormous canoe.

Moving from the organization of Biak houses to the dynamics of Biak families, chapter 2 goes on to describe a contemporary kinship system that seems to fall at the furthest limit of Shelly Errington's "exchange archipelago" (Errington 1990: 54-55).¹⁹ As in many parts of island Southeast Asia, notions of power and the person interact on Biak to reproduce a social order that highlights relations between siblings and recognizes inheritance through both the male and female line. My analysis of this order concurs in some respects with McKinnon's (1991, 1995) analyses of Tanimbar, which traces how contrasting ideologies and practices interact to reproduce a hierarchical system of alliance. But the interplay of discourses does not institute a stable hierarchy on Biak; it orients practices that overwrite the distinctions that earlier generations inscribed. In Tanimbar, as elsewhere in Eastern Indonesia, bridegivers, who are socially superior to their fixed marriage partners, are said to give the gift of "life": either a daughter or the valuables needed to contract a new union. Instead of giving "life," in Biak, bridegivers are viewed as giving the "foreign:" imported valuables presented by brothers to the offspring of their out-married sisters, less in anticipation of the nephew's marriage than to instill the qualities needed for a person to travel far. Instead of the vagaries of nature, the vagaries of contact are seen as bestowing individuals with mobility and talent. In many of the region's societies, the acceptance of a spouse makes up for the loss of a sibling; in Biak, marriage creates a dilemma which is never resolved. The affection between brothers and sisters at once complements and aggravates the aggression that prevails

¹⁹ I should note that Biak does not fall on the map representing Errington's typology.

between brothers, who, as unmediated equals, figure the threatening aspect of the foreign. Infused with love and longing, the cross-sibling relationship mediates between prospective "men of prowess" and ever-changing sources of alien power.

Chapters 3 and 4 take up well-worn topics in the interpretive tradition: warfare, magic, music, dance, and oratory. Like others who have analyzed ritual process in the region, I draw connections between the performative crossing of boundaries and the pursuit of authority and prestige (see Atkinson 1989). By ignoring Biak's past and focusing on these obvious commonalities, one could read this dissertation as an ethnography of an understudied corner of "Southeast Asia." Nevertheless, it aspires to be something more. Historians have considered how late colonial Southeast Asian elites came to assume a "modern" consciousness of society (see Kahin 1952; Roff 1967; Ito 1979; Anderson [1979]1990, [1983]1991; Marr 1981; Kenji 1986; Shiraishi 1990; Mrazek 1994; Winichakul 1994). But the most interesting question asked by Wolters is why their predecessors did not. The advance of the so-called world system may largely account for the later elite's change in ideology; their extended exposure to colonial institutions and ideologies taught them to view their societies as "backward" in comparison to Europe, which was now regarded as the center of power. Coastal New Guinea was scarcely insulated from the wider colonial order. Yet strangely enough, this study of contemporary Biak focuses on the paradox that Wolters attributes to the world view that characterized "early" Southeast Asia. What is it about the logic of Biak society that ensures its reproduction as a "universal center?" How are "modern" world-views at once embraced and excluded, admitted yet forever kept outside?

Blessed with a colonially bounded "field of study" -- a clearly marked space on an imperial map -- de Josselin de Jong never thought to look for connections between patterns of culture and histories of contact.²⁰ But his largely descriptive ethnographic project has proven more difficult for contemporary anthropologists to sustain. Without colonial institutions to hold ethnographic boundaries in place,²¹ as soon as one fills in a region's

²⁰Nor has it really occurred to his successors. See Milner 1988: 11. Milner goes over the four phenomena that constitute the "structural core" of the Indonesian Field of Anthropological Study. "The first, namely the selective adaptation of foreign cultural elements, is the least distinctive of the four. We might be inclined to leave it aside in this discussion on the ground that the other three phenomena are not only sufficiently absorbing and controversial to keep our symposium fully occupied for more than a week, but that they are also in need of redefinition in the light of the abundant new evidence which has accumulated during the last twenty-five years."

²¹Asked to comment on the concept of Indonesia as a "field of study," Robert Blust (1988: 28) concludes that there is no inherent linguistic "unity" in this "diversity," a point that anthropologists tend to obscure when they refer to the "Indonesian languages" shared by societies in the region. "I realize, of course, that on some level Dutch Indonesianists are cognizant of the artificiality of defining a field of scholarship on the basis of colonial history. Yet in practice very little is done to compensate for the misimpression introduced and often propagated by such expressions as 'Indonesian Language.'"

Blust goes on to explain the subgroupings of the Austronesian language family and concludes that 'the notion "Indonesian" language has no meaning for purposes of linguistic classification. The best known 'Indonesian' languages (Malay, Javanese, Toba Batak, Ngaju Dayak, etc.) are WMP (Western Malayo-Polynesian), but if we are to identify 'Indonesian' with WMP we have no right to exclude the languages of the Philippines, Palauan, Chamorro, the Chamic languages or Malagasy from the category 'Indonesian languages.' At the same time we have no right to include languages such as

Bima, Manggarai, Savu, Roti or Buli as 'Indonesian' languages without including all of the Austronesian languages of Oceania." See Blust 1988: 30-31.

P.E. de Josselin de Jong (1988a) emphatically takes exception to Blust's notion that his predecessor defined his field "in terms of national (and former colonial) boundaries." "If any statement deserves a place under the heading 'Misunderstandings,' this one does." Josselin de Jong goes on to cite pre- and post-war linguistic works which discussed Tagalog, Bisaya and the languages of Sarawak and Madagascar under the rubric of "Indonesian languages." But later, when de Josselin de Jong discusses the implications of redefining the field in terms of current linguistic categories, he seems "daunted" by the fact that "the Philippines have assumed a more central position for work in the WMP area than 'all other MP languages' and cultures!!" See de Josselin de Jong 1988a: 257-58. Finally, at the very end of his commentary, de Josselin de Jong apologizes for the appallingly meager representation of Indonesian scholars in the volume. One assumes that de Josselin de Jong is no longer referring to Western Malayo-Polynesian speakers when he expresses his hope "that Indonesian anthropologists in particular will derive some benefit from this volume, which has their national slogan as its title. It is for them above all that the FAS-approach, for all its imperfections, sets problems of immense scholarly and practical importance." Ibid.: 262.

In a recent article, Patricia Spyer (1996: 28) tracks the "practical importance" -- and historical origins -- of the ideology of "Unity in Diversity." Her dry assessment of the "FAS" approach is worth quoting. "The intimate relation between the Dutch colonial project, adat law studies, and what came to be the theoretical presuppositions of, in particular, the Leiden school of anthropology, which conveniently saw (and in some cases continues to see) the former Netherlands East Indies as an integrated 'field of anthropological study (J.P.B. de Josselin de Jong 1983[1935]); Visser 1989), may also explain the lack of any sense of scandal or even irony intended in the title of a recent collection on Indonesia by Dutch scholars: *Unity in Diversity: Indonesia as a Field of Anthropological Studies* (P.E. de Josselin de Jong 1984)."

defining characteristics, its edges invariably start to bleed.²² At once time, the implicit comparison with India seemed to offer Southeast Asia a degree of coherence. Recent scholarship stressing the importance of multiple ideologies of dominance has called into question the portrait of Indian society as fixed by an all-encompassing hierarchy of castes.²³ One is reminded of Adam Kuper's (1983: 95) commentary on the fate of Evans Pritchard's masterpiece: "even the Nuer are not like *The Nuer*." In search of better understandings of the "unity" of Southeast Asia, some anthropologists and historians have turned to the linguistically related peoples of Pacific.²⁴ Such a broadening of perspective would locate Biak, with its Austronesian

²²Lévi-Strauss called Indonesia a realm of "*sociétés à maison*" -- but the Yurok, Kwakiutl, and medieval Japan and Europe also belonged to the list. See Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995: 6-18 for an overview of Lévi-Strauss' conception of *société à maison*. Carstens and Hugh-Jones end with the admission that "the problem is not one of discovering which societies are 'house societies' but of discovering which ones are not." Ibid.: 18.

²³For the long dominant model of caste, see Dumont [1966]1980, 1980. Raheja's (1988) semiotic analysis of the *dan*, an unreciprocated transfer of "inauspiciousness," elucidates its relation to other ideologies and transactions. This discourse enables Gujar landowners to conceive of themselves as ritually central, despite their lower rank on a hierarchy of purity that places the Brahmans on top. For a historical critique of Dumont's portrait of caste, see Dirks 1987.

²⁴See Andaya 1993: 6. "It is my belief that historians would gain new insights into the evolution of Southeast Asian society by widening their scope of inquiry to include historical and cultural developments in the Pacific." See also Errington 1989: 28. "As James Boon has commented, if Bali had been approached by Europeans by way of Polynesia rather than by way of India, it would have rightly seemed 'Western Polynesia' rather than the 'East Indies.'" See Boon 1977.

vernacular, somewhere towards the middle of the "so-called Malayo-Polynesian World" (Boon 1990b: ix).²⁵ But it is not enough to replace one label with another. Biak's turbulent past brings to light the historical contingencies that give rise to seemingly natural ethnolinguistic categories. These contingencies stand out equally vividly when one approaches Biak from the opposite side of the frontier.

Melanesia and "the West"

No less than Southeast Asian studies, the anthropology of Oceania has left its mark on this study, most evidently in chapters 2, 3, and 4. If the former tradition provided this dissertation with pressing questions, the latter has frequently pointed the way to a response. A comparison of contemporary traditions of ethnography reveals different sets of orthodoxies and heterodoxies. The nature of the questions that plagued early observers can be read in the polemics of later writers. In Southeast Asian studies, one might plausibly argue that the early penchant for comparisons with India and China lent a certain modesty to later ethnographies. The explicit comparisons with "us" which came later have tended not to yield "grand theory" but an assertion of the cultural specificity of every group.²⁶ Those

²⁵See also Blust 1988: 29 for an diagram of the "higher-level structure of the Austronesian language family." "Malayo-Polynesian" refers to all Austronesian languages outside of Taiwan. Biak belongs to the "South Halmahera-West New Guinea" branch of "Eastern Malayo Polynesian," a division that also includes the "Oceanic" languages of Melanesia,

²⁶See Geertz 1973a: 21. Through "exceedingly extended acquaintances with extremely small matters," the anthropologist "confronts the same grand realities that others -- historians, economists, political scientists, sociologists

-- confront in more fateful settings." But "(e)thnographic findings are not privileged, just particular: another country heard from. To regard them as anything more (*or anything less*) than that distorts both them and their implications, which are far profounder than mere primitivity, for social theory." Ibid.: 23. For an extended comparison of "us" and "them" with regard to political theory, see Errington 1989: 3-10. Errington returns to the issue of relativism at the end of her study.

A different way to close the gap does not claim that 'they,' at base, are just like 'us,' but recognizes that *we* are much like *them*. We, like them, are socially formed; we, like them, live within systems of signs and dominant metaphors that are ultimately conventional; we, like them, live in social worlds that seem real to us because they have been made real by the powers that be; we, like them, can engage in conversation with people of vastly different worlds, but cannot view them 'objectively,' from stances outside what our respective cultures allow us to do; we, like them, continually interpret and translate what they say into terms we understand, which, like the terms (signs, metaphors, figures of speech) they use, are ultimately cultural. This way of closing the gap does not promote the use of alien metaphors (such as the metaphor of calculation for all forms of thought, psychological and material investment, and modes of understanding and living in the world) to be imposed or projected onto alien thought processes and social processes, as though a metaphor produced by 'us' had a privileged relation to the real. (Errington 1989: 299)

Finally, see Waterson 1995: 47-49. Waterson's goal is better specify Southeast Asia's status as a region of "*sociétés à maison*" by refining Lévi-Strauss's definition to fit the empirical data -- not to question, as McKinnon does, the broader implications Lévi-Strauss's attempt to provide the "missing link" between "kin-based societies and those governed, presumably, by the political and economic forces of the market." See McKinnon 1995: 173. While the notion of "*sociétés à maison*" may prove useful in some respects, its uncritical embrace seems to me to sidestep the question of whether any "structure," no matter how "elementary," ever exists without the mediation of "fetishized" forms of value. The work of Fred R. Myers (1986a, 1986b, 1989, n.d.) on the Pintupi, a small-scale "kin-based" Australian Aboriginal society, would lead one to suspect not.

who attempt to historicize Southeast Asia's cultural categories tend to remain within this closure. One can trace the colonial construction of "Java," "Minang," or "Toba" without eroding the historical foundations of one's thought.

Despite a brief foray into the relevance of "African Models" among Melanesianists (Barnes 1962; see also Keesing 1987), the comparison that counts has tended to oppose "us" and "them."²⁷ Whether or not these beginnings are a projection of subsequent positions, it is difficult to deny the debts of modern social theory to such figures as the West African "fetisso" or the Trobriand "kula."²⁸ For those who conduct fieldwork in contemporary Papua New Guinea, something about this heritage seems to justify the writing of grandly-titled monographs.²⁹ "The gift" is implicitly "the Melanesian gift," and Melanesianists have a privileged perspective on

²⁷For an early exception to this tendency, see James A. Boon's discussion of Margaret Mead, "Postlude: Mead's Mediations -- Some Separations from the Sepik, by way of Bateson, on to Bali,...and Beyond" in Boon 1990b.

²⁸See Lévi-Strauss [1950]1987: 37-38. Writing of Mauss' sources of inspiration, Lévi-Strauss notes that "the whole of the *Essai sur le don* emerges, in the most direct way, out of Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, also published in 1922, which was to lead Malinowski himself, independently, to conclusions very close to those of Mauss. That is a parallel which might induce us to see the indigenous Melanesians themselves as the real authors of the modern theory of reciprocity." On the fetish, see Pietz 1985, 1987, 1988.

²⁹Two of the most cited works in the ethnography of Melanesia are, for example, Chris A. Gregory, *Gifts and Commodities* (1982) and Marilyn Strathern, *The Gender of the Gift* (1988).

its logic. One finds this assumption mirrored in recent debates over Melanesia's entanglement with the West, which has taken the form of a contest between differing versions of exchange theory (Josephides 1991; Thomas 1991, 1993; Strathern 1993; Lattas 1993; see also Foster 1995). If what is at stake in the mapping of Indonesia's affinities is the status of its "authentic" local cultures, then what is at stake in the positing of Melanesia's alterity is the difference between the commodity and the gift.

The history of scholarship about Melanesian societies has led to a different sort of myopia than one finds in Indonesian studies. It is not "archaic India" that some Westerners long have seen in New Guinea. Rather, it is "archaic man."³⁰ In an article on Orokaivan notions of the person, André Iteanu suggests that the quest for the evolutionary basis of difference began with intimations of alterity, in the form of the earliest fieldworker's own sense of alienation from a wider collectivity. Iteanu refers to Bronislaw Malinowski's "romantic individualism" and his "acute consciousness of the constraints of his own culture" (Iteanu 1990: 35). But, according to Iteanu, it was not simply Malinowski's background that gave rise to these traits; it was in the nature of those whom he confronted in the field. Papua New Guinea's societies

..are probably those in which the problem of the position of the individual in society is most puzzling. A loose kinship structure and the lack of centralized authority give rise to many questions concerning the status of individual action in the social system. On one hand, the inhabitants of

³⁰For a careful account of the history of ethnography in Melanesia, Knauft 1993: 16-24.

Papua New Guinea themselves appear to assert that they attribute exceptional importance to tradition, and that they comply strictly with forms of action established in the past; on the other hand, they seem to claim that each man does what he wishes in pursuit of his destiny. (Iteanu 1990: 36).

Transported to New Guinea's interior, Malinowski's "romantic individual," in pursuit of prestige, was transformed into the reflection of a slightly different figure: a "primitive capitalist," to borrow Pospisil's phrase (Pospisil 1963: 3). Marshall Sahlins' well-known essay -- "Poor Man, Rich Man, Big Man, Chief" -- reflects a cultural materialism that makes the "entrepreneur" strangely more archaic than the "lord" (Sahlins 1963).³¹ The faintly American cast of this post-war focus on "achievement" finds its counterpart in later works which approached the highlands economy from a loosely Marxian perspective. Maurice Godelier distinguishes between the "Great Men" and "Big Men" of the region (Godelier [1982]1986; see also Godelier and Strathern 1991). He argues that, in some parts of New Guinea's interior, the transition from sister exchange to bridewealth has inaugurated new forms of male dominance and new patterns in the exploitation of female labor. Evolutionary theory, albeit it of a different sort than Sahlins', continues to infuse the analysis. The "entrepreneur" fades into the background; "modes of production" take his place.

Now it would, of course, be mistaken to try to fit the anthropology of Melanesia into some neat historical trajectory. The literature on "cargo

³¹ A similar impulse turns Mauss's notion of the *hau* or "spirit" of the gift into an indigenous formulation of the principle of profit and the universal morality of fair dealing. See Sahlins 1972: 168.

cults" in some ways contradicts the identification that I suggested above. Those who researched the phenomenon in the 1950s and 1960s were prone to conclude that the Papuans were not quite "capitalist" enough (see e.g. Lawrence [1964]1971).³² Still, one can roughly characterize a diversity of contemporary works in relation to a tradition that took "Melanesia" as a testing ground for contemporary "Western" social theory. Some analysts have worked to sharpen the connections. With her focus on women's social action and the mediation of social identity, for example, Annette Weiner replaces the so-called norm of reciprocity with a universal desire for "immortality," the acknowledgement earned by those who manage to "keep" while they "give" (Weiner 1976, 1989, 1992). Explicitly generalizing, her writings emphasize the privileged perspective offered by Melanesia on places ranging from early Polynesia to Medieval and Renaissance Europe.³³

³² But see a recent meditation on cargo cults, where Lindstrom quotes (and translates) from Mondher Kilani's *Les Cultes du Cargo Mélanésien*.

In the understanding of cargo cults, which excels in presenting these as a particular example of a relation between means (irrational) and ends (more or less rational) and in pretending that the search for material goods constitutes the basic interest in 'cargo,' this manner of reasoning imposes on specifically Melanesian cultural significations the central myth of capitalist culture -- that of commodity fetishism as the universal mode of thought and action. (Lindstrom 1993: 9)

Lindstrom asks, "Could it be, then, that we are entranced by cargo cults because we are, at heart, commodity fetishists? That cargo cults are so titillating and seductive because we imagine the natives to be exercised by our own secret desires?" See Foster n.d.: 1-2 for a comment on this passage.

³³While Weiner's later work refers explicitly to the validating power of European sacra and heirlooms, in her first book, she already lays the groundwork for these comparisons with a discussion of "Western society,"

Generalizing in a different way, Nancy Munn's work does not concern itself with the evolution of societies, but with the constitution of social value and the phenomenology of exchange (Munn 1986). The Gawans' efforts to elicit the recognition of distant others generates the value through which their society is reproduced.

Other analysts have opposed this universalizing trend by highlighting contrasts between "Melanesia" and "the West." European theories of discourse and subjectivity have a place in Munn's project,³⁴ but not in another cluster of studies which focus on the specificities of the Melanesian

where "the objects men create are alienated from symbolic referents to individual concerns with origins and death."

Thus, in the creation and production of resources that are free from the processes of a life cycle, objects become depersonalized and a shift occurs in the relations between persons and things. It seems imperative for us as anthropologists to consider these views in the light of Western society before establishing analytical categories for the study of non-Western societies. For example, in our own society, has religion as an institution assumed control over the formulation of an ideology of the life and death processes, and therefore at some point have men become free to pursue the means to their own immortality through objects, symbols, and scientific exploration that have little to do with regeneration? Within this trend, I suggest that, when men seek avenues to create their own transcendence that are free of assurances for the perpetuation of life, the value of women declines, tied to the decline in the value placed on life itself. (Weiner 1976: 235)

³⁴In her introduction to *The Fame of Gawa*, Munn places her approach in relation to Touraine, Cassirer, Rabinow and Sullivan, Ricoeur, Bourdieu, Giddens, Heidegger, Sartre, Schutz, Husserl and C.S. Peirce. See also Munn 1990, where she draws on Raymond Williams, Benedict Anderson and Jacques Derrida.

self. With Marilyn Strathern's (1988) elaboration of Gregory's (1982) opposition of "gifts and commodities" comes a divide between Western and Melanesian conceptions of personhood and agency.³⁵ A fiction of

³⁵See Strathern 1988: 3-21. To approach the topic of the book, "ritual of a kind often regarded as quintessentially constituted through 'symbolic behavior,'" Strathern feels it necessary to begin with a careful acknowledgement of "the culture of Western social science and its endorsement of certain interests in social life." Only in so doing, can the analyst imagine "the kinds of interests that may be at stake as far as Melanesians are concerned."

The danger stems not just from the particular values that Western gender imagery puts upon this or that activity but from underlying assumptions about the nature of society, and how that nature is made an object of knowledge. Only by upturning these assumptions, through deliberate choice, can 'we' glimpse what 'other' assumptions might look like. The consequent we/they axis along which this book is written is a deliberate attempt to achieve such a glimpse through an internal dialogue within the confines of its own language. There is nothing condescending in my intentions. (Strathern 1988: 4)

Strathern returns to this problem at the end of the book. "I have referred in a most general way to both 'Western' and 'Melanesian' ideas. And that generality has been with specific intent. All I have done is make explicit such implicit cultural comparisons as entailed in the incidental juxtapositions of deploying one language as the medium in which to reveal the form that another, were it comparable, might take." (Strathern 1988: 343)

It would be mistaken to understate the subtlety of the project Strathern self-consciously sets out for herself. If I do not emulate the course she sets out, it is for reasons that are at once methodological and theoretical. In conducting her "internal dialogue," Strathern sustains "a running argument" with the "premises on which much writing on Melanesia has been based," premises that "belong to a particular cultural mode of knowledge and explanation." While she does not imagine that she can "extract herself" from this mode, she believes that she can "make its workings visible" through relations and oppositions: between Western and Melanesian sociality, between the gift

Melanesian theory is opposed to a fiction of Western orthodoxy in order to bring into focus an alternative apprehension of sociality. In Iteanu's analysis, which also follows this strategy, "our Western view" is opposed to that of an Orokaiva "other" in order to describe the specificity of a society "constructed in terms of relations and not of substance" (Iteanu 1990: 36). Abstracted from forms of ritual, myth and exchange, his depiction of the Melanesian "subject" seemingly breaks free from the categories that impoverished earlier studies of the region's societies. But on another level, this strategy potentially domesticates differences in a more invidious fashion. For example, in Iteanu's account of how the Orokaivans blur subject and object, one finds much that is of ethnographic interest. But one begins to wonder whether this account of the "privileging of relations over identities" does not beg the question of whether identities are ever possible without relations. That is, one cannot help wondering whether "they" are a simplified inversion of an equally simplified "us."

The anthropology of Melanesia has not been without attempts to historicize representations of the region's societies (see, e.g., Knauff 1993: esp. pp. 45-117).³⁶ For the most part, however, recent ethnographies have reproduced a

and the commodity, between anthropological and feminist viewpoints. Ibid.: 7. At the same time Strathern forsakes the search for openings within "Western theory," she inflates the possibilities for laying it "bare" within its own terms. While it must contend with a different set of risks -- those that derive from the temptation to homogenize differences -- the search for openings that I adopt in this dissertation allows for an "internal dialogue" that takes for granted neither "Melanesia" nor "the West."

³⁶Knauff points to the subtle ways in which colonial history shaped the data that led anthropologists to distinguish between highlands and lowlands

logic that balances the fate of "gift exchange" as a distinctive form of discourse on the maintenance of "Melanesia" as a bounded ethnological entity. Robert Foster (1995) categorizes the opposing trends in the contemporary anthropology of the region as the "New Melanesian Ethnology" and the "New Melanesian History."³⁷ Foster refers to the former, exemplified in the work of Strathern and Roy Wagner, as self-consciously embracing "the Us/Them opposition as a useful and, more importantly, a *necessary* analytic device for anthropological inquiry" (Ibid.: 3). For those who share this strategy, the singular logic underlying the Melanesian gift economy lays bare the illusions at the heart of Western commodity exchange. Foster characterizes the latter as exemplified in the writings of Nicholas Thomas, who deconstructs the opposition between gifts and commodities in an effort to affirm the "shared history" that connects the colonized and the colonizers. For Thomas and others, the anthropological search for alternative social orders merely adds to distance that divides "us" and "them." While Foster offers a compelling synthesis of these perspectives into a "New Melanesian Anthropology," he does not consider

societies. The spread of cash cropping in the highlands during the 1950s dovetailed with research that characterized the indigenous economy. This work can be contrasted with an older body of texts on the southern lowlands, which focused on ritual, performance and mythical beliefs. While for historical reasons the typology rings true, the "Big Man" and the "Great Man" may have both more and less in common than Godelier's model suggests.

³⁷ A few of the other works Foster assigns to the "New Melanesian History" include Carrier and Carrier 1989; Carrier 1992; Gewertz and Errington 1991, Keesing and Tonkinson 1982.

what might be missing from both alternatives.³⁸ The problem is analogous to that of defining the distinctive features of "Southeast Asia." Just as even India may not be like "India," even the West may not be entirely like "the West."

Whatever its shortcomings, the tradition of Melanesian anthropology has contributed much to my understanding of Biak. In significant ways, my description of Biak, a patrilineal society, highlights ethnographic features emphasized in studies of the predominantly matrilineal societies that make up the Massim, the home of the well-known regional exchange network, the kula. My analysis of the emotional economy of Biak kinship shares Annette Weiner's focus on the intersection between gendered spheres of social action in the reproduction of political orders of differing scales. In the Trobriands, brother-sister relations mediate between the arenas in which women conduct exchanges to regenerate the matriline and the kula, in which men pursue personal renown. While chapter 2 might recall Southeast Asian models of "siblingship," my emphasis on "sibling intimacy" finds clearer echoes in Weiner's account of the desires that orient the production of social identities.³⁹ The logic that requires Biaks to lose a cross-sibling in order to

³⁸Foster finds an opening for "history" in his account of Tanga social life as set in motion through the interplay of heterogeneous cultural logics: one associated with the commoditized sphere of "bisnis" and the other by the imperatives of "kastom."

³⁹Speaking generally of island Southeast Asia, Errington locates the origins of difference on the level of myth and kinship structure.

The configurations of potency in these societies are various, as I have sketched above; but whatever forms it takes, in many origin myths

potency originated from an ancestral unitary source; then, in these myths, some event caused its unity to fracture, and fracture means difference.

The fracture of ancestral potency created difference of two kinds: hierarchy and complementarity. Hierarchy in this part of the world is expressed and coded as difference in age or seniority. Seniors -- those who are older by absolute ages or by generation or by birth order within a generation -- are superior to juniors because they are closer to the ancestral source than juniors are. Complementarity in this part of the world is expressed and coded as difference in sex, in male and female; but the icon and paradigm of sex difference is not husband and wife but brother and sister, the pair into which, in origin myths throughout the area, the original unitary source of potency split. Both types of difference are evident in and expressed by ideas about generational layer and the relationships between people that are evident in the kinship terminology and the understandings that lie behind it that prevail in the area. (Errington 1990: 46-47)

Weiner offers a more complicated picture of women's dynamic involvement in a multiplicity of relations as siblings and spouses. Myth become more than a charter for orderly social life in this perspective, which focuses not simply on structure, but the "inexorability" of desire.

Although actual sexuality between brothers and sisters is prohibited in most societies, the cultural recognition of a brother's and sister's socially and economically charged intimacy creates a unique bond that unites them for life. Like inalienable possessions, this ritualized sibling bond remains immovable because in each generation politically salient social identities and possessions are guarded and enhanced through it. Therefore, the incest taboo and sibling ties must be reconceptualized as part of reconfiguring exchange theory.

Although in most cases, social and economic intimacy between brother and sister is surrounded with ritual avoidance and sexual separation, these prohibitions only heighten and culturally acknowledge the essential human and cultural reproductive potentialities in sibling intimacy. In fact, the stronger the sibling incest taboo the more it reveals this reproductive power and, instead of being suppressed, it is thrown into the political domain. Sibling sexuality appears in myths, genealogies, and among gods

gain recognition seems to exemplify the insurmountable paradox that compels one to "give" in order to "keep." Complicated by the central place of sexual difference in Biak, Munn's characterization of Gawan value as the extension of "intersubjective space/time" has informed my interpretation of the significance of foreign objects.⁴⁰ I show how in Biak, as in the Massim, as the outcome of transformations and appropriations leading from the

but its constituted power emerges from the intricacies of kinship organization, from contests over political legitimation, and from the economic and political actions of women as sisters. Although actual sibling sexuality may be culturally disavowed, it is at the same time, inexorable. (Weiner 1993: 67-68)

⁴⁰See Munn 1986: 10-11. Munn explains how her view of "space-time" differs from that of Giddens' view that "time-space relations are...constitutive features of social systems." For Munn, the "situated practices" that "make up these systems *themselves* construct different formations of spacetime. As I have argued elsewhere (Munn 1983:280), sociocultural practices 'do not simply go on *in* or *through* time and space, but [they also]...constitute (create) the spacetime...in which they "go on."' In this sense, actors are 'concretely producing their own spacetime.' On the one hand, these practices generate particular spatiotemporal forms (i.e. different modes of intersubjective spacetime); on the other hand, as people actively engage in these practices, they form this intersubjective spacetime in immediate experience. In this latter respect, a mode of spacetime defines a form in terms of which the world is experienced by the agents whose actions produce it. However, as I discuss later, not only do the agents produce their world in a particular form, but they may also be seen as producing themselves or aspects of themselves in the same process."

Gawans are concerned with the relative capacity of certain acts of practices to create potentialities for constructing a present that is experienced as pointing forward to later desired acts or material returns. Practices that constitute the Gawan actor in terms of inter-island relations form a greater 'extension of self' and of the actor's spatiotemporal control than those involving intra-island relations. (Munn 1986: 11-12)

garden to the horizon, "fame" is both the object and effect of actions undertaken in anticipation of an Other's regard. Strathern's insistence on the iconic quality of transacted objects offers other clues to the value of foreign wealth to Biaks. For Strathern, the value of the "gift" lies in its ability to "evaluate" identities and relationships in accordance with the wider resonance of transacted objects. Viewed in the context of "all the transactional elements in circulation," exchange objects bring to light both the "persons of the exchangers" and the relationship created through exchange.⁴¹ The fact that Biaks exchange foreign objects for raw and cooked food bears upon my explanation of the constitution of value and personhood in a process of recognition that highlights sexual difference and relative mobility in space. Nor is Thomas' analysis without relevance; clearly the resilience of Biak's symbolic economy rests on its ability to domesticate alien things (see Thomas 1991: 83-124).

⁴¹For a lucid explication of this approach to value, see Foster 1995: 169-170. Foster quotes Marilyn Strathern, "Marriage Exchanges: A Melanesian Comment," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 13:61, as well as referring to the conclusion of her edited volume, *Dealing with Inequality* .

As Gregory (1982) notes, the economic concept of value implies a comparison of entities, either as a ratio (the one expressed as a proportion of the other) or in terms of rank equivalence. Both like and unlike objects may be so compared. In addition, however, this part of the world (the Southwestern Pacific) is dominated by a third relation of comparison: between an entity and its source of origin. Value is thus constructed in the identity of a thing or person with various sets of social relations in which it is embedded and its simultaneous detachability from them. Here lies much of the significance of gift exchange. (Strathern 1987: 286)

My point, however, is not simply to reassure readers that nothing in this dissertation falls outside the purview of established ethnographic traditions. If there is something distinctive about my approach, it lies in its direct engagement with the all too transparent category that in differing ways serves as the frame of these texts. In seeking to subvert dichotomies without suppressing differences, my goal is not simply to stress how Biak's logic differs from that of "the West," but to integrate the analysis of historically interconnected social orders. The challenge is not simply to characterize Biak's cultural dynamics but to account for their persistence in a changing field of power. The notions of the person that have long dominated European discourse are of necessity more than a foil in my argument. The question is not, "How do 'they' differ from 'us'?" but "What are the conditions that make possible a comparison?" How might an understanding of "commodity logic" as something more complex than an "illusion" enrich an analysis of the history and historicity of social worlds assigned to "Melanesia," "Indonesia" or "Europe" -- or, like "Biak," suspended somewhere in between?

In the ethnography of Melanesia, no less than in the ethnography of Indonesia, the most valuable moments, for the purpose of this study, are those that point beyond the limits of regional interests. Iteanu's analysis of the Orokaiva ritual system focuses on the dialectical interplay between *jo*, a violent and unprecedented "non-differentiation," and *pure*, the "repetitive action" which reestablishes social ties and distinctions. While Iteanu concludes that *pure* is the encompassing element in the pair, thus asserting that there is nothing beyond sociality, his conclusion maintains a glimmer of uncertainty. Referring to the "empirical difference" between children and

pigs, which is unstressed yet evident in ritual, Iteanu quotes Dumont on the relation between "what is represented" and "what actually happens": the "only thing we can affirm" is that "such a relation is necessary and that it is not an identity" (Iteanu 1990: 51). Alluding to the analytic purchase offered by such an acknowledgement of ideology, Iteanu ends by noting that "for the anthropologist, however, it may be that this distinction is the only assurance that Orokaiva society can indeed be compared with others and is, to a certain extent, translatable into the language in which I have been addressing you" (Ibid.). It is Strathern's hasty dismissal of "Western theory," far more than her elaborate symbolic mappings, that cuts off the theoretical possibilities on which the present study depends.⁴² For scholars convinced

⁴²One example would be Strathern's hasty dismissal of feminist analyses "based on Lacanian theory." The Lacanian "divided self" still posits a "unified self" leaving no room for the "multiple self" of the Melanesian. While it would not be fair for me to insist that Strathern "read Lacan" before dismissing him, I cannot help but note the limited and derivative basis of her critique. Strathern quotes Annette Kuhn's definition of ideology, which draws heavily on a reading of Lacan's account of the emergence of subjectivity in what he dubs "the mirror stage."

The non-unified character of the subject posed by psychoanalysis is argued in relation to the implications of the splitting involved in the specular relation of the mirror phase, so that the operation of ideology is seen as a lived relation of the imaginary ego-ideal, the unified self, and hence as involving an attempted closure or recuperation of the subject/object split, an imaginary coherence. The work of ideology is to construct a coherent subject. (Strathern 1988: 366-67)

Strathern goes on to characterize Kuhn's account of ideology as a "eulogy to the restoration of unity through a celebration of use value production as against exchange value, where 'production for use-value involve(s) a unity between thinking and doing, thus making the process of labor a creative, learning experience.'"

that their object of study lies within "Melanesia," this failure to acknowledge divergent traditions of "deconstruction" seems not to pose a problem.⁴³ But

Strathern thus invokes an extremely impoverished rendition of a particular moment in Lacan's writings. In this dissertation, I will have something to say regarding the limitations of Lacanian theory. For the moment, it is worth noting that this "unity" flagged by Strathern, no less than "the Melanesian," operates as a fiction, an after effect of the entry into discourse, rather than as an originary moment of "lived" experience, leaving the "work" of ideology forever incomplete; that notions of "learning" are quite alien to Lacan's account of the subject, which is the subject of the unconscious, not conscious experience; that Kuhn's privileging of a simplified version of the mirror stage does scant justice to Lacan's perhaps more relevant theorization of discourse and desire, a term which always denotes the desire of the Other -- with the Other a figure for the Symbolic, the system of negatively defined categories. I do not for a moment claim that Strathern's project could be assimilated to Lacan's. Nonetheless, if one wanted to look for a basis of comparison, one might begin by assessing their accounts of symbolic discourse, sexual difference, recognition, and desire.

⁴³Strathern describes the defining features of Melanesia in her introduction to *Dealing with Inequality*. The Melanesian societies described in the collection, along with one eastern Indonesian society,

share many cultural features, and some speak related languages. The people of this region are characterisable as 'egalitarian' in world terms: horticulturalists, whose local organisations are small scale, and whose cultural efflorescence is to be found in institutions based on wealth exchanges and life cycle events. Big men and institutionalised ranking flourish to a lesser or greater degree, but nowhere is property ownership in land or the alienability of labor a systematic basis for social discrimination among men. (Strathern 1987: 2)

I cannot deny that Biak, as well, shares "some of these features." What I find objectionable is the failure to consider the wider context in which such "features" come into view, persist or are effaced. The absence of any consideration of the historicity of "Melanesia" becomes particularly apparent when Strathern describes what is missing from the region.

this dissertation must account not only for Biak's social logic but for Biak's changing position in colonial and post-colonial discourses. To that end, a theory that poses -- however "fictively" -- as "Melanesian" is not much help in explaining the historical dynamics through which this category came to appear.

Beyond Ethnology

The sixth and final chapter of this dissertation pays the most heed to the effects of colonial history on European perceptions of Biaks. Long-lost Indonesians, subjugated Melanesians, the “most Europeanized Papuans, with

The peoples of this part of the world lack the rhetoric of a Judaeo-Christian past or the yearnings of a Rousseauesque present. They do not have the conceptual tools of stratified state systems which project fantasies of a common humanity or unitise the citizen-isolate, nor indeed of a capitalist economy which commoditises 'sex.' Many of them, however, do seem to have a vested interest in maintaining internal relations among themselves through exchanges of all kinds which simultaneously preserve difference between categories of persons and enable them to enter into relations with one another. (Strathern 1987: 6)

Again, the present study will not deny that such differences are evident in Biak. But it will raise a question Strathern and others neglect when they take difference for granted. It is precisely by examining how Biaks "maintain internal relationships among themselves through exchanges of all kinds" that I will attempt to account for their resistance to Western "rhetorics" and "yearnings" -- and the "conceptual tools of state systems." Like the emergence of such factors elsewhere, their failure to accede to the "rhetoric of a Judeo-Christian past" is a feature to be explained, not assumed.

the most European outlook”⁴⁴: Biaks have played conflicting parts in the colonial and post-colonial dramas that have unfolded in western New Guinea. Despite its affinities with approaches from either side of the border, something prevents this ethnography of Biak from falling smoothly into the ranks of Indonesian or Melanesian studies. Another place where one might position this dissertation is in the body of works now classified as "colonial" or "postcolonial studies." A study of the rhetorical constitution of "the Papuan" would have plenty of evidence on which to draw. In the history of western New Guinea, the link between European interests and representations has been all too evident. Contradictions in the former gave rise to ambiguities in the latter, which offer themselves to contemporary analysts as symptoms of the vicissitudes of colonial rule.

Vast and uncharted, the so-called Land of the Papuans has long evoked the wonder and horror of the sublime. For Inigo Ortez de Retes, who christened and claimed the huge landmass for the Spanish crown after landing on the mainland in 1545, something about the paddlers he passed near Biak seems to have reminded him of the inhabitants of another legendary coastline (Haga 1884, vol. 1: 5-11).⁴⁵ "New Guinea," like its

⁴⁴Such was the assessment of the Dutch colonial official in charge of Biak's local government after the war. See de Bruyn 1951-52: 9.

⁴⁵ During the last month of 1526, the new Portuguese governor of Ternate, Don Jorge de Menezes, anchored in a harbor near one of the "Papuan islands" when he ran into adverse weather on his way to the Moluccas. In 1528, the Spanish governor of Tidore, Alvara de Saavedra, took shelter in a bay off "isla del ora," an island that Haga, the nineteenth century Dutch historian, again suspected was Biak. According to Haga, one of these two figures should be credited with the "discovery" of New Guinea. Ibid.: 5-6.

namesake on the west African coast, thus entered the European imagination with an aura of danger, mystery and wealth. Rumours of gold mountains and powerful kings filled the reports of the Spanish governors of the Spice Islands sultanate of Tidore.⁴⁶ The Dutch mercantilists who succeeded them played up New Guinea's savagery to scare off rivals to the lucrative Moluccas trade.⁴⁷

In 1545, Inigo Ortiz de Retes also had a brush with Biak's "Papuan." His ship was passing between a large island, probably Biak, and many small ones -- the Padaidos, Haga thinks -- on June 15. "From the largest, 23 canoes, manned by Papuans, paddled up to the ship and let them (the Spaniards) know by signs that it should anchor in a bay of that island. When the boat sailed on, they shot arrows to prevent it from leaving, but were driven back by cannon fire." Five days later, Ortiz de Retes landed on the mainland, which he christened New Guinea and claimed for the Spanish Crown. *Ibid.*: 10. See also Sollewijn Gelpke 1993.

A group including Biak, Supiori, the Padaido Islands was christened the Schouten Islands after their "official" discovery in 1616 by the Dutch explorers, Willem Cornelisz Schouten and Jacob le Maire. See Haga 1884, vol. 1: 29.

⁴⁶In 1521, Antonio Pigafetta, a companion of Magellan, wrote of the powerful king of the Papuas. Andres de Urdaneta, a Spaniard who lived in the Molucca between 1526 and 1535, reported rumours of gold from the islands of the Papuans, which were "heavily populated" according to the Malays. See *Ibid.*: 5-6.

⁴⁷See the memoirs of a former governor of New Guinea, van Baal 1989, vol. 2: 139. "Through the years, New Guinea was known as savage and inhospitable. The East Indies Company valued this inhospitality. It made settlement unattractive not only for itself, but also for other western nations (of which the English were the first to come to mind) that would be able to threaten its spice monopoly in the Moluccas from there."

When challenges to Dutch sovereignty arose in the 1880s, different features of western New Guinea came into view for colonial observers. One officer composed a volume supporting the theory that Hindu evangelists had built the "temples" found "in our archipelago's east" (Horst 1893). Through a plot which turned on coastal New Guinea's "degeneration," the text found a place for its primitive inhabitants in the golden age of civilized leadership to which Dutch colonials claimed to be heir. An earlier advocate for an expanded Dutch presence in New Guinea described its coastal people as gentle, sweet, timid folk, using terms more often applied to the "docile" Javanese (Bruyn Kops 1850: 233-234).⁴⁸ These perspectives, I should note, were rarely dominant: enthusiasm for the hinterland waxed and waned. One officer was suspected of taking his own life after the government cut funding

⁴⁸"Zachtaardigheid, zelfs vreesachtigheid, goede inborst, gevoel van regt, kuisheid (chastity), schijnen algemeen en grondtrekken van hun karakter te zijn. Onder een beschaafd bestuur zouden zij spoedig aan hetzelfde gehecht worden en groote diensten kunnen bewijzen. Daar zij aanleg tot beschaving schijnen te hebben, zouden de misbruiken, zooals menschenroof, koppensnellen en anderen spoedig verdwijnen, dewijl deze minder in hun karakter dan in hunne gewoonten liggen. Een geringe bezetting zou hen zeer gemakkelijk in bedwang houden en hen in nijvere landbouwers en eerlijke menschen kunnen doen veranderen."

("Gentleness/sweetness, even timidity, a good disposition, a feeling for justice, chastity, appear to be general and fundamental traits of their character. Under a civilized government would they quickly attach themselves to the same and could demonstrate great service. Since they appear to have an aptitude for civilization, the abuses, such as slave catching, head hunting, and others would quickly disappear, since these lie less in their character than in their customs. A small garrison could very easily keep them in control and could change them into diligent farmers and honest men.") (Bruyn Kops 1850: 233-234)

for the territory; another proposed that Holland should wash her hands of New Guinea simply by selling it off (see Smeele 1988: 57-84).

In chapter 6, I discuss the challenges faced by those who tried to invest in this territory, which never could promise a certain return. It was not until the 1930s, during a decade when international capital found a foothold in the territory with the opening of plantations and the discovery of oil, that talk of New Guinea's essential difference from the rest of the Indies drowned out other voices (see Klein 1953-54). For reasons I have discussed in detail elsewhere, a group of "Europeans" suddenly saw this "Stone Age Land" as alien to Indonesia, and its inhabitants as the members of a distinctly different race (see Rutherford 1997). In the period leading up to the Great Depression, the rise of nationalism and European unemployment combined to threaten the privileges of those who formally stood at the pinnacle of the Indies' racial hierarchy. To create a place for their downtrodden brethren, colonials confronting the blurring of racial boundaries projected a free and self-sustaining "Europeanness" onto this enormous "virgin land."

In the 1930s discourses on New Guinea, theories of degeneracy gave way to a theory of evolution, which imposed a new gulf between the colonizer and the colonized, but also allowed for new identifications. Holland clung to western New Guinea after relinquishing the rest of the Indies for an array of reasons: to continue the scientific explorations of the 1930s, to provide a "white homeland" for mixed-blood Europeans, but ultimately, as the other excuses fell by the wayside, to guide what was now perceived as a

goodwilled, if unschooled population into the modern world.⁴⁹ In the appealing rhetoric of post-war colonialism, "equality" was the constantly deferred reward offered to obedient natives. The Dutchman's peculiar kinship with the Papuan made western New Guinea more than simply a testing ground for social theory. A Dutch newspaper feature on a visiting Papuan leader began much like the journalistic walk on the "wild side" with which this chapter opens. The first paragraph announced that Marcus Kaisiepo's forebears had been headhunters. But with Holland's generous help, he had become "modern" just like us!

The story of Holland's ill-fated attempt to prolong its colonial role is complex. As the balance sheet on the adventure makes amply clear, more than "material" interests were involved (see Lijphart 1966). The efforts of Indonesian leaders to "liberate" their Irianese brothers involved an equally uneven mixture of motives. While the New Order regime now profits royally from Irian's rich natural resources,⁵⁰ in the 1950s and 1960s,

⁴⁹For an account of the interests that led to the Netherlands' retention of New Guinea, see van Baal 1989, vol. 2: 161-5.

⁵⁰The American company, Freeport McMoran, is a major investor in the province. See *Far Eastern Economic Review* 1994. The cover of this edition, which recounts Freeport McMoRan's plans to begin exploiting "the world's largest gold reserve and second largest open-pit copper mine," features a photograph of the site with the inset face of a tribesman, below the title: "Indonesia's Last Frontier: Gold Rush in Tribal Hills." Freeport's open-pit mine at Grasberg, high in the Sudirman mountains, produces an average of 7.2 million dollar's worth of copper, gold and silver per day.

"Freeport signed its first Irian contract, gaining rights to 24,000 acres, in 1967. Since then it has become the biggest foreign taxpayer in Indonesia. A

Indonesian identity was no less invested in saving "West Irian" than Dutch identity was caught up in preserving "West Papua." Benedict Anderson has suggested how Indonesian nationalists like Sukarno, the first president of the Republic, learned to view western New Guinea as part of their homeland from the maps depicted on the colonial logos that surrounded them (see Anderson [1983]1991: 176-7). The fact that some of Indonesia's new leaders had languished in the notorious prison camp at Boven Digoel no doubt played a part in their refusal to let Holland retain this land where martyrs to the new nation had lost their lives (see Salim 1973: esp. 35-37).

President Sukarno's resolve bore fruit in 1963, when, under U.S. pressure, Holland placed western New Guinea in the control of a United Nations Temporary Executive Authority partially staffed by Indonesian soldiers and officials (see Osborne 1985). When Indonesia's "New Order" regime violently came into power in 1966, the nature of the national project and Irian's place in it changed. The two editions of an autobiography by a female paratrooper involved in West Irian's "liberation" reflect a shift in the

new contract gives Freeport access to nine million acres in the central range -- an area one and a half times the size of Vermont.

'This is elephant country,' said Freeport's Peter Doyle, using the geologist's term for terrain with extra-rich deposits. At the company's exploration office in the lowland town of Timika, Doyle uncovered a map of the new concession, where geologists have identified 75 target areas. As George Mealey, president of Freeport-McMoran, tells me later, "Someone will be mining here for the next century. (O'Neill 1996: 29)

For a more sober account of the province's economic prospects, see Manning and Rumbiak 1991.

representation of Irian identity (see Herlina 1985). In the first edition, Herlina depicts the "liberated" Irianese as comrades corrupted by the lure of Western living; in the second, she portrays them as Stone Age tribesmen. In Herlina's revised edition as in current depictions of the province, any resistance to statebuilding is represented as a product of isolation and ignorance.⁵¹ "Development" will inoculate the backward Irianese against

⁵¹ Herlina repeats her reply to a newspaper reporter who asked for her opinion regarding the OPM.

“Sebagaimana Bung ketahui, Indonesia telah berpengalaman dengan segala ulah dan bentuk pemberontakan. Dan pemberontakan-pemberontakan itu termasuk eksekusi dari proses Indonesia Merdeka, maupun dari proses Indonesia yang sedang menata kemerdekaan itu. Namun Bung sudah menyaksikan, bahwa Indonesia mampu menyelesaikan semua bentuk pemberontakan itu secara gemilang. Yang paling berakar pun di mata pengikutnya, seperti DI/TII itu, juga dapat ditumpas sampai tuntas. Nah, apalagi OPM. Bagi kacamata saya, itu wujud pemberontakan yang paling kecil dari segala pemberontakan yang telah terjadi di Indonesia. Berarti, bukan apa-apa bagi kita. Namun, tentu saja, tetap mengganggu, bagaimanapun kecilnya. Dan bentukan antek-antek bekas penjajah itu amat tipis sekali pengaruh keyakinannya. Sebab, itu ditanam pada masyarakat Irian yang masih sangat sederhana. Sekalipun memang mereka terdiri pula dari yang sudah terpelajar, namun jumlah itu amat kecil. Penganutnya masih lebih banyak yang tak terpelajar, dan hidup di dunia lingkungan primitif. Saya pikir, pemerintah sependapat dengan saya, bahwa membasmi mereka merupakan hal yang kecil dan mudah. Ada pepatah Jawa mengatakan *menang ora kondang, kalah kisinin* (mengurus barang yang tak seimbang untuk dilawan). Saya pikir, pemerintah bisa menyelesaikan pemberontakan itu hanya beberapa jam saja, kalau mau, tak perlu bertahun-tahun. Namun untuk apa begitu serius membasmi mereka yang belum terlalu mengancam kedaulatan kita? Menurut saya, lebih baik tidak dibasmi secara militer penuh, sebagaimana biasa menghadapi pemberontakan. Sebaiknya diatasi secara lebih manusiawi, terhadap mereka yang masih primitif itu. Ya, dengan pendekatan yang lebih luwes, dan kekuatan senjata hanya untuk

mengawal petugas yang mengadakan pendekatan, jangan sampai kita jadi korban perlawanan mereka.'

'Jadi, Ibu yakin pendekatan secara lunak tidak berbahaya?'

'Oh, saya tidak bilang bahwa tidak berbahaya. Tetapi saya tidak setuju apabila operasi itu seratus persen berbau mesiu, mengingat musuh atau pemberontak kali ini hanya dilakukan oleh anak-anak kita sendiri yang masih hidup di alam lingkungan primitif. Katakanlah mereka ada senjata, tetapi senjata mereka hanyalah tombak dan panah yang masih lebih menonjol sebagai milik mereka.'"

(As you, my comrade, know, Indonesia has had a good deal of experience with all sorts of rebellions. One can consider these rebellions as belonging to the excesses that have accompanied the process of gaining and institutionalizing Indonesia's independence. And you surely have already witnessed that Indonesia is capable of brilliantly dealing with all kinds of revolts. Even those most deeply rooted in the eyes of their followers, such as DI/TII, have been utterly annihilated. What more with the OPM. As I see it, it represents the smallest of all the rebellions that have ever occurred in Indonesia. That means it's no big deal for us. However, for certain, no matter how small, a rebellion is still a nuisance. And the formation of such antiques left over from colonialism still has a very slight influence on people's convictions. Because it has taken root in an Irianese population which is still very simple. Even though the movement emerged among the educated, their numbers are very small. The majority of the followers are uneducated and live in a primitive environment. I think, and the government is in agreement with me, that it would be a minor, simple matter to destroy it. There is a Javanese proverb that says *menang ora kondang, kalah kisinin* (sort out matters that aren't worth opposing). I think that the government could deal with the movement in a couple of hours, if it wanted to; it wouldn't take years. But what would be the point of taking the trouble to destroy those who don't really threaten our sovereignty? I believe that it would be better not to eliminate them with full military strength, as one would in facing a revolt. It would be better to overcome this problem by adopting a humanitarian approach to these primitive people. Yes, with a smoother approach, taking only those weapons which are needed to protect the staff carrying out the negotiations so that we don't fall victim to their opposition.'

the lies of rebel leaders, frustrated "troublemakers" who tempt the innocent with separatist fantasies and dreams.

The changing discourses and desires projected onto New Guinea's coastal inhabitants suggest that something in addition to empirical observation was involved in their ethnological classification. It is no accident that institutions devoted to the study of New Guinea emerged in Holland in the late 1930s.⁵² At that time, Dutch enthusiasts had reasons to begin a tradition of knowledge divorced from "Indology" and "Javanology," disciplines inaugurated in an older period of colonial rule. But while changing colonial imperatives recast the contents of Papuan identity, the effects of something other than European interests can sometimes be detected in colonial descriptions. James Boon has implied that the eruption of older discourses in otherwise "evolutionary" texts marks moments of uncertainty in the imperial project (Boon 1990b: 25). In the case of New

'So, you are sure that this gentle approach wouldn't be dangerous?'

'Oh, I didn't say it wouldn't be dangerous. But I wouldn't agree to launching an operation that smelled one hundred percent of ammunition, given that the enemy or rebellion this time is only being carried out by our own children, children who still live in a primitive state. You can say they are armed, but their weapons are only the spears and bows and arrows that are still their more conspicuous possessions.' (Herlina 1985: 530-31)

See also Djopari 1993: esp. 127-131, 160-69.

⁵²On the founding of the New Guinea Study Circle and the journal, *Tijdschrift Nieuw-Guinea*, see Rutherford 1997.

Guinea, I will argue that it is not simply European theories of "degeneracy" that appear at such moments; "something else" may be exerting itself in the margins of colonial discourse. As a margin, this "something else" must remain illegible; it cannot be "given a voice," as a familiar politics of representation might suggest.⁵³ But it can encourage us, as Wolters was encouraged in his readings of seemingly "classical" texts, to imagine a center that orients a distinctly different scene.

Colonialism, Modernity, and Anthropology: An Internal Exit?

A sustained attempt to imagine the relationship of a local world to its horizon, this dissertation, of necessity, has had to explore different pathways from those pursued by the anthropology and history to which it is indebted. The crux of the problem is the question of order and what -- if anything -- lies beyond its bounds. Colonial studies, like anthropology, has responded to the problem with varying degrees of attention to the implications of different strategies. Extending the critique of modernity to a study of the "colonizing" of Egypt, Timothy Mitchell is compelled, by the nature of his analysis, to posit another world beyond the modern European "world-as-

⁵³While some anthropologists have recently attempted to write ethnography "from the margins, theorists addressing the problem have argued a "margin" as such cannot "speak" in any "self-conscious" sense; it would be what both engenders and disrupts the myth of self-presence. On the problem of marginality, see Tsing 1993, 1994; Derrida 1976a: 139-140 and 1982a: xxiii.; and Spivak 1988a. I discuss the problem of marginality at greater length in Rutherford 1996.

exhibition" (1991: xiii).⁵⁴ Admittedly aware of the dangers, he sketches a portrait of a pre-colonial order which appears as everything that the colonial is not.⁵⁵ Combining a particular reading of Bourdieu with particular readings of Foucault and Derrida, Mitchell sets up a series of dichotomies: on the one side we have representation and the effect of the real, on the other, polarization and the encompassment of opposites; on one side, difference and the authority of writing, on the other, identity and the politics of voice. To convey the specificity of modern knowledge/power as it emerged in history, like Foucault, Mitchell is forced to characterize what came before it. Despite Mitchell's condemnation of "totalizing" theories, his

⁵⁴ "As a motif exemplifying the nature of representation, the book takes the great nineteenth-century world exhibitions that formed part of Europe's colonising project. Drawing on the work of Martin Heidegger and Jacques Derrida, it refers to this modernist metaphysics as the world-as-exhibition." Ibid. But to show what was new about the "process of enframing" entailed in "the rebuilding of Cairo and the introduction of organised civilian," Mitchell has to say something about the "kinds of housing and ways of living" that the colonising project replaced. He does so through an appeal to depictions of "premodern" Mediterranean towns and Bourdieu's portrait of the Kabyle village. See Mitchell 1991.: 48.

⁵⁵"I have two reservations about what follows. First, because the purpose of such examples is to make visible our own assumptions about the nature of order by contrasting them with a kind of order whose assumptions are different, I run the risk of setting up this other as the very opposite of ourselves. Such an opposite, moreover, would appear inevitably as a self-contained totality, and its encounter with the modern West would appear, again inevitably, as its rupturing and disintegration. These sorts of self-contained, pre-capitalist totalities acquire the awful handicap, as Michael Taussig has remarked, of having to satisfy our yearnings for a lost age of innocence. Such consequences, though perhaps inevitable, are undesired and unintended" (Mitchell 1991: 49). See also Pemberton 1994: 17.

study yields a unity not unlike that generated by Strathern's theoretical fiction. There is nothing outside the closure of Mitchell's argument. The pre-colonial completes and complements the colonial, just as "Melanesia" completes and complements "the West."

Mitchell's analysis is in some sense self-consuming: it cannot escape the power of its own critique. While this effect is "undesired," it is perhaps not "inevitable," given a different reading of the texts on which he draws. In showing how modernity transforms all the world into an exhibition, Mitchell quotes Derrida's statement on "a kind of labyrinth that includes in itself its own exits" (Mitchell 1991: 10).⁵⁶ Read straightforwardly as a description

⁵⁶ Mitchell writes, with reference to the Paris exhibition of 1889,

It was as though, as we will see, despite determined efforts within the exhibition to construct perfect representations of the world outside, the real world beyond the gates turned out to be rather like an extension of the exhibition. This extended exhibition would continue to present itself as a series of mere representations, representing a reality outside. Thus we should think of it as not so much an exhibition as a kind of labyrinth, the labyrinth which includes in itself its own exits. (Mitchell 1991: 10)

The footnote to the final sentence refers the reader to Derrida 1973 and 1981: 5, where Derrida notes that all of his subsequent writings "are only a commentary on the sentence about a labyrinth of ciphers that is the epigraph to *Speech and Phenomena*." The translator includes this epigraph, taken from Husserl, *Ideas*, trans. W.R. Boyce Gibson (New York: Macmillan, 1962), p. 270, which reads:

A name on being mentioned reminded us of the Dresden Gallery of our last visit there: we wander through the rooms, and stand before a picture of Tenier's which represents a picture gallery. When we consider that pictures of the latter would in turn portray pictures which on their part exhibited readable inscriptions and so forth....

of the nature of European power at a particular moment in its historical emergence, the statement does not apply to Mitchell's thinking. In John Pemberton's (1994) analysis of the Indonesian New Order's politics of culture, one could say that the phrase is given a different inflection. Focusing on the dynamics of the "labyrinth's" power to "include," Pemberton attempts to "defer" the domestication to which Mitchell's strategy inevitably seems to lead.⁵⁷

Pemberton's goal is to write a history of the postcolonial present of the Indonesian New Order, an oppressive regime whose remarkable longevity rests on an "ambiguous, interiorized form of repression that makes the apparent normality of everyday life conceivable, desirable" (1994: 7). In tracing the roots of New Order hegemony, Pemberton shows how ethnography depicting "stability and order" as the dominant values of Javanese culture almost perfectly meshes with the discourses of a government that presents politics as a void in which nothing occurs. Pemberton turns to colonial sources to account for the New Order's obsessional devotion to the idea of a "traditional Javanese culture" (1994: 10). What he finds in "native texts" is not an "indigenous" realm of meaning,

⁵⁷*On the Subject of "Java"* runs a similar risk, or series of risks, of setting up another world that might lie beyond the power of the culture effect and, thus, be so recognizably different that it would have to be acknowledged as a self-contained totality: another time, another epistemological space, another culture. The book runs these risks while working through two very different sets of materials -- ethnographic, on the one hand, historiographic, on the other -- in an attempt to defer the inevitability which Mitchell foresaw." (Pemberton 1994: 17)

but a contradiction born of the violence through which colonial identities emerged. Acutely aware of his potential complicity with power, Pemberton refuses to posit an autonomous pre-colonial order. He arrives self-consciously at the conclusion that Mitchell unintentionally replicates in the structure of his argument. In order to hold open the possibility of a realm external to order, Pemberton devotes his analysis to depicting the opposite: a seemingly indomitable discourse of knowledge/power that thrives on what presents itself as chaos.⁵⁸ "Resistance," once recognized, poses no threat to

⁵⁸"In Chapters 4 through 7, I examine the emergence of cultural discourse under New Order conditions and retrace the effects of such a discourse as they have been secured within a framework of 'tradition.' I delineate the contours of what has been contained within this framework, by indicating what has become marginal, displaced. By identifying the marginal, however, I risk valorizing margins in such a way that they could appear as yet another form of recognizable 'diversity' or, at the other extreme, appear so utterly unrecognizable that they come to represent a total difference, a generic other. In my attempt to write through and, perhaps, beyond this dilemma, the risk remains obvious." (Pemberton 1994: 17-18)

The place where this risk is confronted most concerns events known as "*rebutan*" to the Javanese, "struggles among rivals fighting over power-laden objects" which occur at village annual observances, acts of ascetic pursuit, and sometimes weddings.

Emerging from within such celebrated scenes of 'tradition,' *rebutan* remains, thus, as uncanny traces of what 'tradition' is not. Although *rebutan* occur less and less frequently, the attraction of *rebutan*, that is, the tendency to rebut, still lingers. To the extent that one might want to identify in this tendency the remnant of an essentially cultural response, the world it would represent is fast vanishing, becoming just the sort of lost age of which Taussig warned. And this exposes, in turn, a modern yearning I would rather leave partly unfulfilled, not entirely satisfied by the thought of culture. (Pemberton 1994: 18)

the regime. The New Order reproduces itself by defining and domesticating its margins, interminably taking the "outside" "in."

In this dissertation, I attempt to resist the temptation to retreat from the radical implications of studies like Mitchell's and Pemberton's. But I also attempt to resist the equally alluring temptation to conform to their conventions. "A kind of labyrinth that includes in itself its own exits": it may well be possible to give this statement a third inflection. The effect of the labyrinth's structure may be "inclusion," but an exit lies at its heart. Instead of restricting this paradox to "the West," a category no less problematic than "the Rest," could we not speak of it in relation to other kinds of sociality, lying beyond the narrowly defined contours of colonial rhetoric? Such an approach would not ignore its own genealogy, but neither would it ignore the fact that such an acknowledgement cannot lift the burden of history. The search for an untainted reserve of theory, like the search for an untainted "non-Western" world, returns the critic, unawares, to the position where he or she started. But once one stops dreaming easy dreams of escape, one finds new possibilities in captivity. A better strategy may be to return to the supposedly discredited canon with an eye to unexplored possibilities. One must not underestimate the power of modern disciplines to "contain," but one should not overestimate their coherence. As the circularity of Mitchell and Pemberton's rhetoric suggests, it is not easy to opt out of scholarly conventions. If the labyrinth of modern theory has any exits, they can only lie within.

One way to begin to theorize modern theory's "internal exits" is through a rereading of the texts of anthropology. One such text, incessantly reread in

the present study, is Marcel Mauss' ([1925]1967)*The Gift*. As careful commentators have noted, Mauss' classic can be read as much as an indictment of the alienating effects of the market as an account of archaic exchange.⁵⁹ Jonathan Parry takes *The Gift* as revealing how, in the history leading up to modern capitalism, the ideology of "interested exchange" and the "disinterested gift" have come to appear "as two sides of the same coin" (1986: 458).⁶⁰ To clarify the specificities of modern institutions, Mauss shows how a "combination of interest and disinterest" is the taken-for-granted condition in societies unlike his own. In a somewhat different reading, Derrida (1992) takes Mauss' classic as less a critique of the "pure gift" than as a reflection on its impossibility. The implicit distinction at work

⁵⁹See Mauss [1925]1967: 74-75. "The mere pursuit of individual ends is harmful to the ends and peace of the whole, to the rhythm of its work and pleasures, and hence in the end to the individual."

⁶⁰ "The whole ideology of the gift, and conversely the whole idea of 'economic self-interest,' are *our* invention; and the text explicitly acknowledges the difficulty of using these terms for societies such as the Trobriands where *prestations* -- the word itself must have been chosen for its connotations of constraint -- are a kind of hybrid between gifts, loans and pledges. The Malinowski of *Argonauts* was certainly in error to suggest that what is given by a father to his children is a 'pure gift.' But as the context makes entirely clear, Mauss's real purpose here is not to suggest that there is no such thing as a pure gift in *any* society, but rather to show that for many the issue simply cannot arise since they do not make the kinds of distinction that we make. So while Mauss is generally represented as telling us how *in fact* the gift is *never* free, what I think he is really telling us is how *we* have acquired a *theory* that it should be.

The interested exchange and the disinterested gift thus emerge as two sides of the same coin. Given a profound dislike of the first, mistrust of the second is only logical." (Parry 1986: 458)

in the narrative is not the dichotomy, "gift/commodity," but the tension between the desire of the gift and the inescapable effects of exchange.

As Derrida notes, while Mauss ends *The Gift* with a call for "measured" generosity, "gift exchange," in its "archaic" form, is anything but reasonable. "Reciprocity" may appear to be Mauss's ethic, but in the "total prestation," chance and coercion coincide. Mauss begins his essay with a straightforward question: "In primitive or archaic types of society, what is the principle whereby the gift received has to be repaid? What force is there in the thing given which impels the recipient to make a return?" (Mauss [1925]1967: 2). As a "total social phenomenon," the circulation of prestations gives rise to positions of dominance and subordination in a context that comprises "all kinds of institutions: religious, legal, moral, and economic" (Ibid.: 35). It proceeds in a manner "at once interested and obligatory," engaging things that appear as persons and persons that appear as things. "War" is scarcely suppressed in "primitive exchange," because "everything" is at stake. By giving, a person gains recognition, but only through a medium that is collectively shared. At the moment of expenditure, dependence on others is eclipsed but not eliminated; to win acknowledgement for one's generosity is to become a "debtor" oneself. The indestructible urge to surmount this paradox is the force that energizes exchange.

The violence of this urge becomes clear in Mauss' depiction of the potlatch, in which the chief must throw everything, including caution, to the winds.

Consumption and destruction are virtually unlimited. In some potlatch systems one is constrained to expend everything one possesses and to keep nothing. The rich man who shows his wealth by spending recklessly is the man who wins prestige. The principles of rivalry and antagonism are basic. Political and individual status in associations and clans, and rank of every kind, are determined by the war of property, as well as by armed hostilities, by chance, inheritance, alliance or marriage. But everything is conceived as if it were a war of wealth. Marriage of one's children and one's position at gatherings are determined solely in the course of the potlatch given and returned. Position is also lost as in war, gambling, hunting and wrestling. Sometimes there is no question of receiving return; one destroys simply in order to give the appearance that one has no desire to receive anything back. (Mauss [1925]1967: 35)

Those who cannot repeat the extravagant wager risk becoming slaves, the possessions of those who boldly expend.⁶¹ Performing a "ruse" that conjures life out of death, the chief in the potlatch feigns an impossible moment of expenditure. He validates the social sources of personhood by acting out a drama of absolute loss.

"If things are given and returned," Mauss notes, "it is precisely because one gives and returns 'respects' and 'courtesies.' But in addition, in giving them, a man gives himself, and he does so because he owes himself -- himself and his possessions -- to others" ([1925]1967: 45). If one accepts that social identities are always symbolically mediated, it becomes easy to imagine how

⁶¹"The sanction for the obligation to repay is enslavement for debt. This is so at least for the Kwakiutl, Haida and Tsimshian. It is an institution comparable in nature and function to the Roman *nexum*. The person who cannot return a loan or potlatch loses his rank and even his status of a free man." Mauss [1925]1967: 41. Mauss cites a myth in footnote 149 where ten potlatches are held to bring a miserly old chief back from the dead. Ibid.: 106.

the strange logic of the gift might infuse the dynamics of discourse more generally. One can try to compensate particular individuals, but the debt to the media is impossible to repay. As Derrida (1992) points out, Mauss takes the interval between the gift and the return as what distinguishes "straightforward exchange" from the total prestation ([1925]1967: 20). But the "spirit of the gift" affects more than an "external" audience; it implicates the giver's intentions, conscious and unconscious: his or her symbolically mediated images of the "other" within. To be disinterested, a gift would have to be given with no anticipation of reciprocity. But the moment that such a gift were conceived as such, it would enter discourse and yield a return. Rigorously speaking, the gift is thus impossible: like a spectre, its appearance signals its demise. The only way to conceive of this impossibility is to think of an offering unrecognized by any of its "givers" or "receivers." Given in a moment of absolute forgetting, received as the violence of an unprecedented shock, such a gift would give nothing but an immeasurable interval of deferral: a gift of time in advance of any form.

This reading of Mauss works against that of Lévi-Strauss, which derives the tenets of structuralism from Mauss's writings by synthesizing moments that *The Gift* keeps distinct into a system of unconscious mental structures (see Lévi-Strauss [1950]1987: 49). With the elision of time comes the suppression of the "materiality" of symbolic media. Gone are the coppers which grunt to be given away (Mauss [1925]1967: 44),⁶² gone is the *hau*

⁶² See also Mauss [1925]1967: 116, fn. 212. "The copper Dandalayu 'grunts in the house' to be given away...The copper Maxtoslem 'complains of not being broken.' The blankets with which it is paid for keep it warm. The name means 'which other coppers are ashamed to look upon. Another

which longs to return to its "place of birth" (Ibid.: 9);" what Mauss, following his native informants, called the "spirit of the gift" is "no more than the subjective reflection of the need to supply an unperceived totality" (Lévi-Strauss [1950]1987: 58). Comparing Mauss to "Moses conducting his people all the way to a promised land whose splendour he would never behold" ([1950]1987: 45), Lévi-Strauss attributes Mauss's shortcomings to the timing of his scholarship: he was too early to profit from the "general laws of language" as a system of negatively defined contrasts.⁶³ Derrida and others have taken note of the implications of this move. "For a logic of

copper takes part in a potlatch and 'is ashamed.'...A Haida copper, belonging to chief 'He whose property makes a noise' sings after being broken: 'I will decay here, I took away many people (to death through the potlatch).'"

⁶³Noting the antinomies brought out in Mauss's discussion of *mana* or magical power, Lévi-Strauss redefines the term as "a simple form, or to be more accurate, a symbol in its pure state, therefore liable to take on any symbolic content whatever." He notes that in the "set of symbols" that make up a cosmology, as in a language, "a *zero symbolic value*, that is, a sign marking the necessity of a supplementary symbolic content over and above that which the signified already contains, which can be any value at all, provided it is still part of the available reserve, and is not already, as the phonologists say, a term in a set."

That conception seems to me to be rigorously faithful to Mauss's thinking. In fact, it is nothing other than Mauss's conception, translated from its original expression in terms of class logic into the terms of a symbolic logic which summarises the most general laws of language. The translation is not of my making, nor is it the result of my taking liberties with the initial conception. It merely reflects an objective evolution which has occurred in the psychological and social sciences in the course of the last thirty years; the value of Mauss's teaching lay in its being a first manifestation of that evolution, and in having contributed greatly to it. (Lévi-Strauss [1950]1987: 64-65)

the thing, insofar as it would include the substantial power, the intrinsic virtue of the gift and the call for the counter-gift, Lévi-Strauss substitutes a logic of relation and exchange which causes all difficulties to vanish and even the very value of the gift" (Derrida 1992: 74).⁶⁴ Transactions need only be regarded from the viewpoint of their outcome, "inside a totality which is closed and complementary to itself" (Lévi-Strauss [1950]1987: 61).

To find an exit from the totality posited by Lévi-Strauss, one would have to look to its origin -- the birth of language as the union of nature and culture at a moment when the entire universe began to signify all at once.⁶⁵ Preserved

⁶⁴Derrida also cites Remo Guidieri's comment that "Lévi-Strauss settled the score of the positive substantialists all too quickly." See also Weiner 1985.

⁶⁵See Lévi-Strauss's commentary on Mauss for an explanation of this origin.

All magical operations rest on the restoring of a unity; not a lost unity (for nothing is ever lost) but an unconscious one, or one which is less completely conscious than those operations themselves. The notion of *mana* does not belong to the order of the real, but to the order of thinking, which, even when it thinks itself, only ever thinks an object.

It is in that relational aspect of symbolic thinking that we can look for the answer to our problem. Whatever may have been the moment and the circumstances of its appearance in the ascent of animal life, language can only have arisen all at once. Things cannot have begun to signify gradually. In the wake of a transformation which is not the subject of study for the social sciences, but for biology and psychology, a shift occurred from a stage when nothing had meaning to another stage when everything had meaning. Actually, that apparently banal remark is important, because that radical change has no counterpart in the field of knowledge, which develops slowly and progressively. In other words, at the moment when the entire universe all at once became *significant*, it was none the better *known* for being so, even if it is true that the emergence of

in unconscious structures and restored through ritual, in myth, this moment appears as the death of sociality, in a utopia where women are no longer exchanged, that is, a world where one can "keep to oneself" (Lévi-Strauss [1949]1969: 497). The easy criticism levelled at this version of structuralism is that it neutralizes time. But moving beyond it is not simply a matter of tracking exchanges through history; one must attend to the workings of history in exchange. When one stops thinking of time as something that surprises structure, new possibilities are opened.⁶⁶ No

language must have hastened the rhythm of the development of language." (Lévi-Strauss [1950]1987: 59)

See also [1950]1987: 61. "The universe signified long before people began to know what it signified; no doubt that goes without saying. But from the foregoing analysis, it also emerges that from the beginning, the universe signified the totality of what humankind can expect to know about it. What people call the progress of the human mind and, in any case, the progress of scientific knowledge, could only have been and can only ever be constituted out of processes of correcting and recutting of patterns, regrouping, defining relationships of belonging and discovering new resources, inside a totality which is closed and complementary to itself."

⁶⁶See Derrida 1978a: 291. "History has always been conceived as the movement of a resumption of history, as a detour between two presences. But if it is legitimate to suspect this concept of history, there is a risk, if it is reduced without an explicit statement of the problem I am indicating here, of falling back into an ahistoricism of a classical type, that is to say, into a determined moment of the history of metaphysics. Such is the algebraic formality of the problem as I see it. More concretely, in the work of Lévi-Strauss it must be recognized that the respect for structurality, for the internal originality of the structure, compels a neutralization of time and history. For example, the appearance of a new structure, of an original system, always comes about -- and this is the very condition of its structural specificity -- by a rupture with its past, its origin, and its cause. Therefore one can describe what is peculiar to the structural organization only by not taking into account, in the very moment of this description, its past

longer cast onto an unattainable horizon, the urge for an "exit" becomes the force that generates distinctive social worlds.

When one focuses on the paradoxical desire of the gift, one finds new openings for this study in contemporary ethnography. Writers focusing on the dynamics of social reproduction have indicated the figures that such a desire might generate. In his writings on the Pintupi of Western Australia, Fred Myers relates the value of the Dreaming, as a transcendent source of social identity, to the dilemmas of life in the Pintupi camps, where to give to one is always to sacrifice another (see Myers 1986a, 1989, n.d.). He depicts a society at once vexed and sustained by the tension between "a valued autonomy and the claims and necessity of shared identity" (1989: 22). Faced with the threat of violence and dispersal, one must give the possessions on which one's autonomy depends. Life cycle rituals provide Pintupi with a short-lived arena for regional relationships. The "holders of the land" nurture initiates with sacred knowledge, calling on an external source of value and identity that both resolves and reproduces the tensions of daily life. The hierarchy that emerges in ritual contexts reaches its climax when an aged elder passes on his privileged position. But the successful leader must die to enjoy absolute autonomy. He only escapes the burden of reciprocity at the moment he joins the ancestors, at the fleeting moment of death.

conditions: by omitting to posit the problem of the transition from one structure to another, by putting history within brackets. In this 'structuralist' moment, the concepts of chance and discontinuity are indispensable."

To take another example, Nancy Munn (1986) points to a different paradox in her analysis of the Gawan kula as constituted through the pursuit of value, which she argues, one should recall, that the Gawans understand as the extension of intersubjective space/time. Carried out through the hierarchically nested transactions that constitute kula, a man's attempts to elicit the regard of distant others generates his own fame and the fame of others, and the value of the objects through which both are construed. But they also generate a fear of negative value transformations, which coalesces in the figure of the witch, the anonymous counterpart of the big man, whose subversive acts of consumption generate an alternative field of intersubjective space-time. The spectre of the neglected other underwrites a dialectic in which the contradictions underlying the "visible" realm of relations are repeatedly figured -- posed and overcome, but only to reappear. Like Myers, Munn not only reveals a paradox in the logic of the social organization of interest; she shows how this heterogeneity is crucial to Gawa's reproduction. This "order" creates and domesticates what seems to lie beyond it by mediating contradictory desires.

Be it "autonomy and relatedness" or "equality and hierarchy," both Myers and Munn show how social action turns on a dilemma -- the tension between the conditions of discourse and its effects. As I show in this study, Biak's desire for the foreign is fixed upon an equally insurmountable paradox. The word *amber*, which means "Westerner," "non-Irian Indonesia," and "civil servant" all at once, conveys the double modality in which what is alien appears on Biak: what is outside the local is at once alien and threatening and a source of recognition and respect. In chapter 2, I show how Biak social life centers on this ambiguity by examining the practices that

constitute three relationships: between mothers and children, brothers and sisters, and brothers and brothers. I highlight an idiom of memory and debt that attributes power to those who nurture others. In Biak, the paradigmatic "feeder" is the Biak mother, who, in an action that renders reciprocity impossible, tentatively "ranks" her children by transforming them into "foreigners" by conveying to them valuables from afar. A mother's ability to transform foreign objects into the media of personhood depends in turn on her position as a particular kind of sister: a feast-hosting *bingon*, or "outmarried woman," who receives guests from her own clan with an extravagant show of generosity, matching their aggressive show of foreign potency. Continued in varying forms into the present, the model for this dynamic was the celebration or *wor* held to mark transitions in the life of a *bingon's* sons and daughters. This night of dancing, punctuated by frequent meals, ended with the presentation of titles and porcelain to the children of the hostess and exchanges of foreign wealth and raw food.

The symbolic interplay between food and the foreign constitutes identities on two levels: foreign to her children -- who belong to their father's clan -- the mother becomes the source of both mobility and difference, her difference from her affines transformed into her children's difference from their peers. Foreign to his sister -- whose loss is key to his status -- the brother becomes the source of relatively durable distinctions through a display of consumptive expenditure. The "love" between brother and sister derives from transactions which make each the source of recognition for the other. So does the aggression between brothers, who represent the threatening aspect of the foreign to one another. Unmediated by the passage of the gift, they stand as rivals in relation to patrilineally inherited status and

land, whose role as a potential source of distinctions is at once supplemented and eroded by the bestowal of maternal gifts.

Where chapter 2 focuses on a social logic that transforms alien realms into a source of value and indebtedness, chapters 3 and 4 outline performative practices that transform them into a source of authority and power. Here, the focus shifts to displays of alien significance and potency that constitute the very boundaries that their performers are held to cross. Magical, musical and textual practices keep the foreign foreign through repeated appeals to an external origin of power and meaning. Through an analysis of warfare, magic, music and dance, I show how practices tapping the power and pleasure of surprise create the impression of unprecedented events. Through an analysis of the translation and circulation of foreign texts, I show how practices tapping the authority of the written create a reservoir of inaccessible truth. These three chapters emphasize what other ethnographers have stressed in their efforts to relate social action to cultural values. The effort to transcend local society only serves to reproduce it. In Biak, the foreign figures the impossible desires at the heart of social discourse: the "exit" through whose containment social order reappears.

Susceptible as it may seem to ending in closure, my analysis of Biak's dynamics has a place within the trend in contemporary anthropology that I referred to above: one which focuses on the dialectics of social reproduction.⁶⁷ What might not fit this trend is the way I call into question

⁶⁷Besides the writings by Myers and Munn already mentioned, works representing this emphasis on social reproduction would include Atkinson 1989; Sangren 1987, 1991, 1993; Turner 1977, 1979, 1991.

this closure by interpreting these dynamics in relation to theorists commonly associated with critiques of the discipline. In this dissertation, I cite the writings of Lacan, Bataille, Benjamin, Derrida, Althusser and others associated with the "deconstruction" of "Western" ideologies. My goal in adopting this strategy is more than polemical. I hope to show that it is not only possible to forge a link between what are often taken to be disparate approaches; it is essential if one is to appreciate the significance of Biak's symbolic logic. To understand the historical and political implications of Biak's fetishization of the foreign, I have to find a shared set of terms in which to discuss Biak and its "others." Without these terms, I would be forced to exclude from this analysis certain questions concerning Biak's colonial history and place in the modern nation-state. Instead of constructing a "Biak theory" that would allow me to critique "the West" from a distance, I have looked to some of the critical approaches that have emerged within "Western" theory, approaches that, as I have suggested, can be traced in part to alternative readings of well-known anthropological texts. While "Biak theory" might have allowed for comparisons, this strategy has enabled me to conceive of the conjunctures through which Biak -- and its "others" -- have emerged.

By naming in a single breath such a broad range of theorists, I do not mean to blur the significant differences that divide their formulations. Just as certain critics of anthropology could be accused of short-changing the field's heterogeneity, critics of what is too hastily called "post-structuralism" have often been careless in their readings. For starters, the texts that inform my

analysis have very different relations to "structuralism": Bataille and Benjamin wrote well before the term took on its current meaning; Althusser, Lacan and Lévi-Strauss were contemporaries; Abraham, Torok and Derrida in differing ways represent a radicalization of structuralist thought. Moreover, while works labelled structuralist share certain traits, one would be equally unwise to overstate their uniformity or ignore their borrowings from other "traditions." As much as Lévi-Strauss' writings clearly owes to Rousseau and Mauss, he insists upon his debts to Marx and Freud (see Lévi-Strauss [1961]19898).

While any such classification can only be provisional, for my purposes, one can distinguish among the theorists most important to this study by imagining the inflection that they might give to that paradoxical statement about the labyrinth. Certain aspects of Lacan's writings seem to stress containment.⁶⁸ But Lacan's focus on the logic of a singular economy has the same effect as Lévi-Strauss's -- it results in nostalgia for a determined origin.⁶⁹ Calling to mind Lévi-Strauss's myth of the lost unity of "nature" and "culture," Lacan locates the origin of sociality at a threshold crossed by every psyche. The child's accession to language institutes sexual difference at the same time it divides the Symbolic and the Imaginary from the Real (Lacan 1977a, 1977b, 1977c, see also Anonymous 1982; for a discussion of

⁶⁸See, among other writings, Lacan's lecture on "*The Purloined Letter*" (1988: 191-205). See also Derrida's (1987) critique of Lacan's reading of the short story by Poe.

⁶⁹The same nostalgia is evident at certain moments in Foucault's writings as well. See Derrida 1978b and Sangren 1995.

these texts, see chapter 5). While this threshold only becomes legible after the fact, the desires that orient social discourse aim at its recovery. Defined as the desire of the Other -- the empty source of the system of negatively defined signs -- this "lost unity" is thoroughly mediated by collective categories and, hence, thoroughly irrecoverable. As Lacan suggests in his readings of Sade and utilitarian theory, what appears to lie beyond the social only serves to underwrite it (1992: 167-240). The maternal image is an effect of the accession to discourse; the "Real," once lost, is never restored. Taking shape in the gap between the child's demand for unconditional love and the specific needs met by the mother's response, desire is indestructible. Although the site constantly beckons in a range of guises, there is no returning to the immediacy of the source.

Where one might imagine Lacan as showing how the labyrinth might be seen as producing its exits, Bataille, Benjamin and Derrida suggest how the exits might be seen as producing the labyrinth. Taking up Mauss' depiction of the *potlatch* in relation to readings of Hegel and Marx, Bataille derives a theory of sociality and sexuality which privileges not recovery but expenditure (1985, 1989, 1991). Although the chief who presents himself as "giving everything" wins recognition, the result of the "ruse" does not account for the social salience of the limit evoked and domesticated in the gesture. For Bataille, societies of varying forms respond to a shared imperative: the need to expend, by ever more circuitous paths, the energies that flood the "system" from beyond it. He depicts this dynamic through the metaphorical image of life forms that evolve in response to the excessive energies of the sun. In an equally allusive rendering of the sources of the social, Walter Benjamin locates the absent origin in the realm of the divine

([1920-21]1978, [1923]1968). In his account of the birth of law and the origins of translation, Benjamin posits the violence of a rupture emanating from beyond the closure of worldly ends. To account for sociality, one must account for the urge to mediate differences. Benjamin evokes the self-translating figure of the "Holy Writ" as the source of distinctions and debts among languages. Impossible to repay, the debt to this untranslatable origin energizes attempts to return to a source in which code and meaning are one. In the models presented by both Benjamin and Bataille, the dilemmas of desire are enlisted in the ongoing reproduction of the dynamic structures of social life.

While the originary difference described by Benjamin takes on a theological cast, in Derrida's writings, one finds an array of closely related notions, none of which are reducible to the others (see Derrida 1981: esp. 3-14). In commentaries on various works of philosophy and literature, different terms appear as symptomatic of the contradictions that energize and undermine dominant logics. "Something" lies beyond "structure" -- a description which already domesticates what is at stake -- but by the same token, the desires behind domestication are impossible in the absence of what eludes social order. Where Lévi-Strauss and Lacan position a lost unity at the origin of sociality, Derrida points to an undecidability that cannot be fixed at a particular place or time. One gets a sense of where Derrida diverges from structuralist assumptions in his commentary on Rousseau's *Origin of Languages* (1976b: 270-280; see also Rousseau [1783]1966). It is not himself that man recognizes in his first encounter with the other, but a "Giant." Before repetition gives rise to the "pity" of identification comes the "first passion" of "fear." "Absolute fear would then be the first encounter of

the other as *other*: as other than I and as other than itself. I can answer the threat of the other as other (than I) only by transforming it into another (than itself), through altering it in my imagination, my fear, or my desire” (Derrida 1976b: 277). Such is the paradox of mediation: for exchange to occur, there must be a collective code and hence the suppression of differences. But shared "meaning" never masters what at once bears and haunts it. Without differences there would be no exchange.

Rigorously thought, the paradox of mediation disqualifies any attempt to name, even mythically, what lies outside of order "in general." Nevertheless, it opens the way to a consideration of orders "in particular," through an analysis of the forces at play in the inscription of historically specific boundaries. Suspicious of appeals to the innate stability of structure, Derrida dethrones Lacan's indivisible "Signifier" at the same time he displaces the origin posited by Lévi-Strauss (see 1987). For Lacan, the phallus may be a "farce," yet the lack that defines it is fixed. Despite its peregrinations, the "truth" of desire will always return to a feminine source. Widening the lens through which one might read the Lacanian text, Derrida suggests that the frame, no longer extraneous to the scene, might orient the seemingly inevitable return to an origin. Instead of the "Real," "Nature," or some such figure of a lost intimacy with the immediate, the margins of one discourse may point to the center of another. The work of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok on the historical specificity of every psyche concords with this complication of psychoanalytic theory (see Abraham and Torok 1986, 1994). "Intertextuality" would apply not simply to the interface between "books," in the limited sense of the term, but the interaction between historically distinctive symbolic "economies," be they the fetishist's system

of meaning and that of a broader society, or a local group and an encompassing state. One social order would appear as the margin of another, an external realm to be represented and taken in.

In the next three chapters of this study, I focus less on the "exits" than on the "labyrinth." While I make frequent allusions to an array of colonial pasts, what I seek to illuminate is a distinctive mode of social reproduction that emerged from a history of encounters. Over the course of this analysis, the comparison to other symbolic economies becomes more explicit, allowing me to pinpoint what sets Biak apart. In the last two chapters, I move beyond Biak to consider the historical and political implications of its social logic. I explore how, in differing ways, forms of sociality defined as "modern" could be taken as constituting Biak's limits. In chapter 5, I compare Kierkegaard's "Fear and Trembling," which I take as a myth depicting the founding of modern Christianity, with the story of Manarmakeri, a narrative describing the birth of Biak's messianic dreams. My analysis illuminates a conjunction between the paradox at the heart of Kierkegaard's text and the paradox at the heart of Biak sociality. In an oblique way, this comparison calls to mind Jonathan Parry's thoughtful (1986) commentary on Mauss, in which he suggests that the notion of the "pure gift" became possible with the emergence of universalistic religious discourses.⁷⁰ I suggest that Biaks

⁷⁰More importantly a *universalistic* ethic of disinterested giving can surely only encourage the creation of a separate sphere which is immune from the requirements of such a demanding precept. The ideology of the pure gift may thus itself promote and entrench the ideological elaboration of a domain in which self-interest rules supreme. It is not I think coincidental that the ideology of the 'pure gift' is accorded such prominence among groups -- such as the Jews and Jains -- which have a particularly close historical association

refuse to sacrifice local sources of recognition by locating God not in an otherworldly heaven but beyond a worldly horizon, in *Sup Amber*, the Land of the Foreigners, to the West.

Only a reading that points to the peculiarity of modern conceptions of identity, space and time can provide a basis for conceiving of their subversion. Only by understanding the logic at play in Biak's modes of incorporation can one grasp the historical responses I depict in the sixth and final chapter of this study. Here, instead of contrasting and comparing myths, I seek to set Biak in the context of a broader colonial history. At the same time I suggest a means of retheorizing the "phenomenon" known as the "cargo cult," my analysis calls into question the coverage of the term. Biak's messianic responses to the changing colonial imperatives marked neither a premature explosion of "proto-nationalist" sentiment nor the final gasps of a dying local culture. The hopes that inspired the Korero movement, which I introduced above, have found a place in discourses both supporting and opposing Indonesian rule. But Korero's logic cannot be contained within the familiar political categories of nationalism and separatism: neither extreme remains ascendant for long.

with market trade, for the two spheres define each other -- sometimes less, but with us today as sharply as ever. With renewed ideological stress on the autonomy of the market go renewed pleas for philanthropy to assume the responsibilities it denies. It was possibly through such speculations that Mauss arrived at his now perhaps not so quaint-sounding moral conclusion - - that the combination of interest and disinterest in exchange is preferable to their separation." (Parry 1986: 468-9)

This dissertation thus engages an expanded body of theory: Abraham and Torok, read with and against Lacan, Derrida, against and with Foucault. But it has also engaged anthropology against its "poststructuralist" critics, in an effort to register a common historical source. In some ways, I am offering nothing radically new in this analysis of Biak's fascination with the foreign: the problem is at least as old as *The Elementary Structures of the Religious Life*, where Durkheim describes how what seems "alien" to "human social relationships" comes to stand for their source ([1912]1965: 245-55).⁷¹ Just

⁷¹In his familiar formulation, Durkheim equates the sacred with society. The social is experienced concretely by the aboriginal hoards during their periodic festivals. Transported by the excitement of their mutual proximity in the gathering, they project this "effervescence" onto the mark of the clan. In many ways, this classic text is a treatise on the familiarly foreign. Durkheim refers to a myth concerning an ancestor who lived so long among the species that gave the clan its name that his fellows no longer recognized him. "All these facts allow us to catch glimpses of how the clan was able to awaken within its members the idea that outside of them there exist forces which dominate them and at the same time sustain them, that is to say in fine, religious forces." Durkheim [1893]1984: 245. But "(t)he primitive does not regard his gods as foreigners, enemies or thoroughly and necessarily malevolent beings whose favours he must acquire at any price; quite the contrary, they are rather friends, kindred or naturally protectors for him." Ibid.: 255. This is because the "sacred" lies within him.

But the clan, like every other sort of society, can live only in through the individual consciousnesses that compose it. So if religious force, in so far as it is conceived as incorporated in the totemic emblem, appears to be outside of the individuals and to be endowed with a sort of transcendence over them, it, like the clan of which it is the symbol, can be realized only in and through them; in this sense, it is imminent in them and they necessarily represent it as such. They feel it present and active within them, for it is this which raises them to a superior life. This is why men have believed that they contain within them a principle comparable to the one residing in the totem, and consequently, why they have attributed a sacred character to themselves, but one less marked than that of the

as Biak is a product of history, so are the perspectives that have at once limited and made possible this analysis. I only hope that this ethnography of Biak's historicity can suggest the insights potentially gained by reopening connections that academic fashion seems precipitously to have closed.

Like every characterization of the "West" or the "Rest," this study unavoidably does violence to its object. Perhaps I have understated the transformations that have swept this coastal world and the degree to which its inhabitants have adopted "modern" viewpoints. If so, it is in hopes of holding open the possibility that something unexpected may have resulted from these changes, an "effect" that lingers on, working against its "cause." In the following chapter I attempt to point out the thorns that line the path that this study has trodden. This endeavor has not been without its risks.

The Settings

It is a convention for writers -- and a courtesy for their readers -- to preface an ethnography with a brief description of the setting that forms the

emblem. It is because the emblem is the pre-eminent source of the religious life; the man participates in it only indirectly, as he is well aware; he takes into account the fact that the force that transports him into the world of sacred things is not inherent in him, but comes from the outside. (Durkheim [1893]1984: 253)

This notion is taken up by Lévi-Strauss in his reconsideration of "totemism," as Fred Myers points out. "While the markers do not need to be 'natural species,' Lévi-Strauss is correct to point out that the culturally recognized bases for classification typically *do* find their purchase outside of human social relations themselves." See "Place, Identity and Exchange," p. 4.

backdrop to the social world about to be described. In this case, the task is complicated, since I will be attempting to make sense of Biak's mode of incorporating the foreign by placing it in the context of a series of pasts. My description of the "setting" of my fieldwork must include information from the sources I consulted in the Dutch archives before reaching the island. I am aware of the limitations of the literature on New Guinea, shaped as it is by colonial interests and anxieties. In the records depicting this long "unpacified" territory, especially those that preceded the opening of government posts, the focus frequently shifts between peoples and places. But the relative poverty and particularly blatant "bias" of the sources were not the only obstacles I faced. Even with the best of records, we could only imagine Biak's "founding moment." Yet if the past is never retrievable in its own terms, that does not mean one cannot attempt to read its traces. One of the points of this study is to attempt such a reading in an effort to envision the historical processes that gave rise to Biak's contemporary social and cultural dynamics.⁷² In the final chapter, I return to the problem of history at greater length. What follows now are but some guideposts erected in an effort to render imaginable the worlds in which Biak took shape.

The "Precolonial" World of Maluku

⁷²Foucault was not the first to speak of writing such a history of the present. "History is not the past," Jacques Lacan suggests, commenting on Freudian analysis. "History is the past in so far as it is historicised in the present -- historicised in the present because it was lived in the past." See Lacan 1991: 12. On the problem of historical interpretation, see also Gadamer 1987.

Roughly 500 miles west of Biak island, at the Moluccan court of the Sultan of Tidore, the first "Papuan" to enter the "European" line of vision were probably distant ancestors of today's Biaks (Andaya 1993: 99-105, esp. 104).⁷³ But well before seventeenth century voyagers found their way to the "Spice Islands," the Papuans and other inhabitants of the far-flung coasts claimed by Tidore and nearby Ternate were linked to distant lands by warfare and trade. Of all the "precolonial" polities in the so-called "Lands Below the Winds," Tidore and Ternate were among the latest in emerging as

⁷³ Andaya (1993: 145) notes that, for Portuguese and Spanish chroniclers, the early sixteenth century wars of conquest fought in the region were 'a united Malukan (including the Papuans)' effort against the Europeans." See also Reid 1994: 273, 277-79, 285, 288. Francisco Serrao, the first Portuguese captain in the "Spice Islands," arrived in 1511. The rulers of Tidore and Ternate "competed to bring Serrao's men to their capital, and thereafter to play the Portuguese card against their rivals." The following is an excerpt from a Portuguese treatise written in roughly 1544.

Formerly, upon seeing a man with a helmet, they said, 'Here comes an iron head,' and all of them ran away presuming that we were invincible and not subject to death. But at present they know that under that helmet there is a head that can be cut off, and a body that is not immortal. And seeing us fire muskets, they imagined that our mouths breathed out a deadly fire; and at hearing bombards shooting and the Portuguese being mentioned, pregnant women had a miscarriage because among them artillery was unknown nor had they any inkling of it. But for a long time now [1544], they make war with us and do not hold us in much esteem...They are men expert at arms. (Reid 1994: 278)

On the name "Papuan," see Sollewijn Gelpke 1993. From this point forward, I will not encumber the term with quotation marks. An ahistorical identity is, of course, not implied.

centers (Reid 1988, 1993; see also Lieberman 1993, 1995).⁷⁴ Evidence suggests that they would have missed the influences that shaped the so-called "Indianized states," which is not to say that the North Moluccas had no relationship with them. Archaeological findings from the southern coast of New Guinea's Bird's Head peninsula, suggests that the Papuans occupied the furthest edge of a very old network of trade.⁷⁵

The imagination has little to feed upon, in envisioning Biak's "prehistory," that is the nature of local societies before the arrival of traders in New Guinea's coastal waters. The available linguistic evidence suggests that the region was populated from the west by speakers of "proto-Austronesian" between 4,000 and 5,000 years ago.⁷⁶ When Biaks got caught up in the

⁷⁴Lieberman stresses the contribution of "post-1300 commercial and urban vitality" to widespread Islamic conversion in the region. See 1993: 543. "Particularly in those once peripheral cultural zones with weak traditions of Indianized statecraft (e. g. Makassar, Ternate, Maluku, and Aceh), the combination of expanded revenues and Islamic ideology seems to have encouraged a novel political consolidation in the same way perhaps as Indianization during the first millenium C.E. had empowered Southeast Asia's earliest kingdoms."

⁷⁵On the region's connection with another "Indianized kingdom," see also van Baal, Galis and Koentjaraningrat 1984: 41. "Irian took its first wavering step into recorded history with Prapanca's mention of Wwanin as one of the dependencies of Majapahit (Nagarakrtagam 14-5-3). The name Wwanin has since been identified with Onin, the northwestern part of the Fakfak peninsula." Salim, an Indonesian nationalist imprisoned at Boven Digoel, refers to descriptions of New Guinea in old Chinese texts. See Salim 1973: 38.

⁷⁶Some sources date the first "generally recognized Austronesian prehistoric culture" to 3,000 B.C. Papuan languages have a much longer history in the

soon-to-be Islamicized world of Maluku, their tendency to flaunt convention was a contributing factor. Instead of continuing East, like other "proto-Austronesians," these seafarers turned back towards the setting sun, in a diaspora which seems to have taken them to Biak and points West.⁷⁷ It

region, dating back to 40,000 or more years ago. See Scaglion 1996: 2. Andaya cites Bellwood's estimation that Austronesian-speaking people first arrived in the eastern Indonesian islands at around 2,500 B.C., following a second wave of Papuan migration from the east. See Andaya 1993: 104. See also Bellwood 1985: 120-121, 128.

⁷⁷See Blust 1988: 29. Noting that Biak myths associate the west with the land of the dead, Kamma claims that the Biak people originated in the area between Sarmi and Jayapura, near what is now the border with Papua New Guinea. According to Kamma, the history of the Biaks is inscribed in their hair, skin and blood as well as their tongue.

The inhabitants of the Schouten Islands and their emigration areas may be regarded as a mixture of Melanesian and Papuan elements, being a little shorter in stature than the Melanesians, and a little more robust than the genuine Papuans of Central New Guinea. Most of them have the typical frizzled hair, although some have wavy, a few even straight hair. In a few regions (for instance in Wardo) there are traces of Indonesian and Micronesian influences due to mixing with captured slaves or castaways. A few very dark types reveal the influence of adopted slaves from the mainland. The population of the interior of Biak, formerly called the Arfak people, are generally darker-skinned than the coastal populations, and they have frizzled hair. H.C. Bos, who investigated blood groups, found a conformity between the proportions of blood groups in Biak and in Sahu (Halmahera), Seram (Kaibobo and Wemale), Amboina, Sangir, the Kai Islands, and Alor. He concluded that 'this might indicate earlier migrations in those regions...' It is indeed not unlikely that this conformity is due to emigration of Biak people and absorption of captured slaves and castaways. (Kamma 1972: 79)

Kamma identifies nine "dialect groups" in the Schouten Islands and Numfor and three the "emigration areas" Roon, Dore, and West Waigeo. The oldest migrant communities, found in East Halmahera and North Seram, as well as

would be far-fetched to ascribe the nostalgia that I encountered in Biak conversations, songs and myths to such "ancient" sources.⁷⁸ Which is not to say that many contemporary Biaks would not be delighted to support such a theory. *Kontiki* is a popular book among the island's literati, who sometimes cite Heyerdahl's hypothesis in their transcriptions of clan myths.

Much easier to document than the origins of those mysterious "ancient Biaks" is the relatively recent origin of their name. It was not until the nineteenth century that the term *Biakker* first appears in European writings on the region. In this dissertation, I use the name "Biak" to designate both an ethnolinguistic category and a social order. In western New Guinea, very old communities of people speaking mutually intelligible tongues can be found not only on Biak, Supiori and the surrounding islets, but also in parts of Numfor and on the north shore of Yapen, as well as far to the west, in the Raja Ampat islands, which lie on the other side of the Bird's Head Peninsula (see Kamma 1972: 7-8). People who speak the Numfor version of the same language have long inhabited the island of the same name and the shores of Doreh Bay, a natural harbor on the northeastern tip of the Bird's Head which was once a favorite stopover for foreign traders and explorers. In the past, however, none of these migrants would have called themselves "Biaks;" the

communities on the island of Gebe and along the north-western coast of the Bird's Head no longer speak Biak. See Kamma 1972: 7-8.

⁷⁸Somewhat less cautiously, Scaglione (1996) argues that the present day dominance of coastal citizens of Papua New Guinea can be traced to concepts of chiefdom rooted deep in a proto-Austronesian past.

earliest European records identified them by their village of origin or founding clan.⁷⁹

These far-flung communities appear to have been both the outcome of and impetus for early expeditions, undertaken in enormous seagoing outriggers. Manned by up to fifty paddlers and a captain, who navigated by indigenous methods across the open seas, Biak craft visited coastal regions far to New Guinea's west and returned with the fruits of plunder and trade (see Miedema 1984: 1-24). As I noted above, their crews included what their descendants in some villages remain today: travelling smiths who supported their adventures by exchanging iron knives and machetes for local goods (see Kamma and Kooijman 1973). Ironsmithing gave the travellers an advantage in combat, which is no doubt responsible for the "Biakkers" foul reputation among early missionaries (see Kamma 1977: 617-18). While different parts of the island had differing traditions of trade and travel, most of the Biaks I knew stressed their connections to seafaring ancestors. It is said that their language was once the *lingua franca*, spoken throughout this coastal world.

⁷⁹Early in this century, F.J.F. van Hasselt (n.d.: 5) observed, "People outside the islands call all its inhabitants Biakkers. The people on the islands know themselves as the inhabitants of Soweke, Sopen, Manwor, Warsa, etc." In 1992, when I began eighteen months of fieldwork, people in the Schouten Islands and elsewhere "knew themselves" as "*orang Biak*," "people of Biak" -- a place whose center, each insisted, lay in their own area, if not village.

On Biak migrant communities in the Bird's Head, see Miedema 1984: 1-24 and Haenen 1991: 12-15.

In the myths and stories told by today's Biaks, as in the annals of the North Moluccan courts, one learns of the long voyages Biak leaders undertook to deliver tribute to the Sultan of Tidore (Kamma 1982). In exchange for bringing slaves, ambergis, massoi bark and birds of paradise to the Sultan, Biak warriors received titles, uniforms and imported goods, including beads, iron, porcelain and cloth. Some Dutch writers claim that communities that failed to deliver tribute were subject to punitive attacks by the Tidoran *hongi*, a fearsome fleet of vessels manned by hundreds of slaves, including a good number of Papuan captives (Kamma 1947-49, 4: 256-63). As I suggest in chapter 6, the evidence for "precolonial" Tidoran severity is somewhat sketchy, as the best description of a *hongi* raid came from the pen of a Dutch East India Company officer, who escorted the fleet as part of a violent campaign to suppress "piracy" in the region (Kamma 1947-49, 4:). Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt that the seas between Biak and Maluku were dangerous, and that the West was a source of destruction, as well as wealth.

Given the limited nature of the sources, any attempt to locate Biak in a purely "precolonial" world can only end in failure. But for my purposes, the presence of European witnesses is not a corrupting force. Throughout this dissertation, I suggest that there have been important continuities in local representations of outsiders, despite dramatic changes in Biak's relationship to the outside world. The shock that founded Biak is not to be located at a particular moment -- nor is the search for historical origins necessary to my argument. My aim at this point is merely to establish that what I am calling Biak is a frontier phenomenon, a symbolic economy that has long persisted in the far periphery of centralized powers.

The Mestizo World of the Mission

On February 5, 1855, the schooner Ternate dropped anchor in Doreh Bay, a day's sail from the island of Biak.⁸⁰ It was carrying some excess baggage on this, one of its annual trading trips to the northern coast of New Guinea: a prefabricated house, a cow, and some chickens, ducks and geese, a year's supply of food, trunks filled with books, writing implements and paper, boxes of beads, pen-knives and cloth -- and two young Germans, Carl W. Ottow and Johann Gottlob Geissler (Kamma 1981, vol. 1: 53). As far as Mr. Duyvenbode, the merchant who owned the Ternate, was concerned, the two men were his new agents in New Guinea, who would potentially provide him with a more reliable source of the commodities native to the region (Kamma 1981, vol. 1: 52). The Germans saw matters differently: their task was to bring the Gospel to this very dark corner of heathendom. From their home in Berlin, the brothers had come to Mansinam Island, where they were about to disembark, under the guidance of Reverend Ottho Gerhard Heldring, the future founder of the Utrecht Mission Society and a friend of their mentor, the German theologian, Johannes Gossner (see Kamma 1981, vol. 1: 15-40).⁸¹ They were among the first participants in a scheme set up to aid unemployed "Christian workmen" by sending them to the colonies to ply their trade among the natives, whom it was hoped would be inspired to convert through this exposure to Protestant piety and industriousness. Ottow

⁸⁰On the history of the mission, see Kamma 1977, 1981.

⁸¹ On the philosophy that inspired the founding of the New Guinea mission, see Heldring 1847.

and Geissler, who were both trained as cabinetmakers, were promised no stipend, only travel expenses. The Papuans had little use for furniture, as the missionaries soon discovered, but they did have a passion for foreign goods.

Gossner and Heldring had set up Ottow and Geissler for a struggle by sending them to darkest New Guinea, a place well beyond the reach of regular means of transportation, let alone a modern government's protective hand (see van der Veur 1966 and Smeele 1988). Officially claimed by Holland in 1828, the huge territory to the west of the 141 parallel was as yet without a permanent colonial presence. Various attempts to establish posts had ended dismally, thwarted by illness and attacks by local tribes. The government had taken to erecting *wapenborden*, metal plates embossed with the Dutch coat of arms, in hopes of turning back foreign intruders. Colonial officials in Ternate tried to discourage Ottow and Geissler from burdening the administration by settling in "unpacified" territory (Kamma 1981, vol. 1: 51). However, in the short run, the missionaries proved as useful to the government as they did to the merchant who provisioned them. In addition to trading with the Papuans, Ottow and Geissler supported themselves by rescuing shipwrecked Europeans, a service for which they received a monthly fee from the resident, whom they saved from embarrassment by preventing foreign casualties in a region nominally under his command.

Ottow and Geissler would be followed in the coming years by fourteen other missionaries, most of whom came from the same humble backgrounds and had to make do with equally limited resources. Although the Utrecht Mission Society, which took over the post in 1863, had concerns about the propriety of selling knives while saving souls, the evangelists scattered along

the eastern shore of the Bird's Head found the practice difficult to abandon (see Bergsma, Looijn and Voorhoeve 1889; see also Beekman 1989). For one thing, they needed this sideline to support themselves, even after the mission society started sending meager stipends to the field. They also needed to trade in order to attract the Papuans' attention. On the rocky soil of this mission field, which yielded nary a Christian for decades, the European brothers managed to attract an audience for their tidings by serving as a source of foreign goods.

In differing ways, John Furnivall and Jean Gelman Taylor have written about the uneven hybridity that characterized the newly founded colonial frontiers of the region now known as Southeast Asia. *The Fashioning of Leviathan*, Furnivall's account of the establishment of a post at Tenasserim, in occupied Burma, on the "furthest eastern limit of the Indian Empire," points to both the strength and absurdity of a colonial officer's belief in the rationality of his mission (Furnivall 1939: 4). Without the faintest confirmation that his pronouncements and postings are making any sense to the locals, Mr. Maingy keeps sending reports to his superiors, through whose eyes the exercise maintains its meaning. Between the lines of his letters, however, one reads of a personal life style adapting itself to local conditions, which, at this stage in the "civilizing mission," prove impervious to Mr. Maingy's attempts at reform.

If the mestizo world of early colonialism is faintly legible in this work by Furnivall, Taylor's remarkable (1984) study, *The Social World of Batavia*, lays out its logic, its contradictions and its conditions of possibility. Given the length and difficulty of the voyage to Batavia, its main outpost on the

north coast of Java, the Dutch East Indies Company (VOC) discouraged outgoing officers from bringing European wives (see Taylor 1984: 6; see also Stoler 1989a: 636-639). Instead, in the Indies, they married local women, who mediated between the merchants and a variegated "native" world. Lineages developed which linked VOC luminaries not as father to son, but as father-in-law to son-in-law, with new arrivals marrying their superiors' mixed race daughters. Wealthy mestizas spoke Malay and managed Indies-style houses, combining local habits with a taste for Western finery and a talent for navigating the paths of power. Their brothers had dimmer prospects, for those who did not succeed as lower-level clerks vanished into the native population. But their sisters remained at the center of a society that was neither European nor native, but composed of something of both.

Something like the institutional absurdity described by Furnivall prevailed for almost a century in coastal New Guinea. The steady stream of letters from the missionaries addressed to their superiors in Holland portrayed their ongoing struggle in stereotypical terms (see Kamma 1977: passim). A raid by the natives was a sign of upheaval in Satan's kingdom; God's protection repeatedly saved the Dutch brothers from death. Conversations with the Papuans filled the pages of the Utrecht Mission Society journal in articles depicting the first inklings of Christian conscience -- or, more commonly, Satan's power to harden the heathens' hearts.⁸² As in Mr. Maingy's reports,

⁸²The UZV's annual journal for its supporters was *Berigten van de Utrechtsche Zendingsvereeniging*. The UZV also produced a "strictly confidential," in-house yearly journal entitled *Handelingen van de Utrechtsche Zendingsvereeniging*. See also Utrecht Zending Vereeniging

between the lines of these texts, one catches glimpses of a world that did not fit the rhetoric. Ottow and Geissler complained that they had to "steal" words in order to launch their first evangelical task: the translation of the Bible into the dialect spoken by the Numfor migrants amongst whom they lived (Kamma 1977, vol. 1: 85.⁸³ The presence of Biak traders -- or raiders -- at church services was duly noted; they were nowhere near converting, but they seemed terribly interested in something more than the tobacco given to them in exchange for sitting through the sermons (Kamma 1977, vol. 1: 231). Missionary words, no less than those acquired from the missionaries' Numfor neighbors, quickly entered circulation. One Biak trader asked a missionary to give him the monopoly on a story, so that he could exchange it in a distant village for some rice (Ibid.). Despite their "Pietist" hostility to worldly institutions, the missionaries were forced to adhere to the logic of local practices, according to which the flow of objects engendered identities

1909. In addition, authors ranging from mission supporters to the "brethren" in the field penned booklets depicting scenes from the struggle in New Guinea. On such publication, produced by the supporters of the mission on Biak, eventually became a periodical. See *Het Bestuur der Classicale Zendingsvereniging* 1911.

⁸³ In November 1855, Ottow, left alone, "immersed himself in language training." Soon he had a list of hundreds of words. But it was rough going; he often had to "steal words," as he put it. See also Kamma 1981, vol. 1: 119. "hal yang terakhir ini agak mengherankan kita. Pada waktu mempelajari suatu bahasa, orang biasanya dibantu dengan rela, kecuali kalau halnya mengenai perkara-perkara yang mau dirahasiakan. Mungkin juga, orang yang diajak bicara itu betul-betul tak dapat menjelaskan kata-kata Numfor itu dalam bahasa Melayu." ("This last matter rather surprises us. When someone is learning a language, people usually help readily, except if the matter concerns affairs they want to keep secret. Maybe, too, the people he invited to speak with couldn't explain Numfor words in Malay.")

and relationships, and "things" embodied magical powers. Unable to subsist without local trade or travel without local means of transport -- or weather the chronic warfare without the good will of local warriors -- the missionaries inhabited a world no less constructed by the "natives" than by the uneven exercise of "European" power.

The "mestizo" world of the missionaries, as one may call it following Taylor, was not mediated by unions between Dutchmen and local women. The only brother to get caught with a Papuan lover was immediately sent home (see Kamma 1982, vol. 2: 116). Nonetheless, a particular ideology of kinship was key to the reproduction of this small society. The board in Holland arranged marriages with pious European women for some of the missionaries, but others chose their wives from among Ternate's European and Eurasian Christians.⁸⁴ One of the best known missionaries married his "brother's" widow, a practice common among the locals as well (see Kamma 1981, vol. 1: 311).⁸⁵ The missionaries' sons and daughters tended to remain in New Guinea, choosing their spouses from among their Evangelical "cousins" and carrying on the Good Work.

⁸⁴Marriages were arranged for both Ottow and Geissler with German women several years after their departure. Geissler, due to what then seemed to be a fatal foot infection, wrote to tell his fiancée not to come. Ottow was married in Ternate to August Letz, who was sent from Holland. See Kamma 1981, vol. 1: 106-107, 113. Geissler was finally married in 1861 to Justine Pauline Reinard, a woman born in Ternate, who came to New Guinea with her Chinese foster son. Ibid: 161.

⁸⁵In 1871, J.L. van Hasselt married the widow of C.F.F. Mosche.

Besides their children by birth, the missionaries raised "free-bought" slaves, who were long the only Christians in Dutch New Guinea (see Kamma 1981, vol. 1: 263-4).⁸⁶ Although there is evidence that this practice might actually have encouraged intergroup raiding, it initially seemed a perfect expression of Christian charity for the missionaries to save unfortunate captives from their fate. For the region's inhabitants, these purchases may have seemed like an extension of local practice, in which persons circulated between former enemies against the flow of valued goods. The villagers in Mansinam were unwilling to let their sons and daughters attend the school hastily built by Ottow and Geissler; some expressed a fear that if their children learned Malay they were be sold to the crew of the next passing ship. But they had no objection to the education of the "slaves," which in some households numbered well over thirty. Drawn from a panoply of ethnolinguistic groups, many of these adopted "Papuan" learned to read and write; some even learned Dutch, a useful talent for the handful who accompanied their parents on home leave. Towards the end of the century, five of these foster children attended the seminary for native evangelists in Depok, Java (see Kamma 1977, vol. 2: 573; see also Beekman 1989: 67). Through the thin thread extended by this minuscule elite, New Guinea participated in what was commonly called the "native awakening:" the spirit of "modernity" which swept through the colony as new technologies linked the Indies to the outside world.

⁸⁶To fill the ranks of his catechism classes, Geissler bought the freedom of anywhere between forty and seventy-five slaves. See Kamma 1981, vol. 1: 104, 116, 121, 123. See also Adriani, Bergsma, van Leeuwen, Voorhoeve 1896.

It takes some imagination, but one can identify ways in which coastal New Guinea participated in the broad trends of Dutch colonialism. Nonetheless, in this dissertation, I have resisted the temptation to project the plot that unfolded elsewhere onto Biak's history. As I mentioned above, scholars have shown, in great detail, how the mestizo world at the Indies' center faded in the late colonial era with the expansion of European migration to the Indies and the emergence of new forms of racial and national consciousness.⁸⁷ On this frontier of the Indies, the transition to "modern" colonialism transpired somewhat differently. It was not simply the challenges posed by the environment that softened the effects of colony-wide changes. A mode of domestication derived from an earlier history of encounters contributed to the resilience of local cultural logics across a series of sweeping transformations: Biak's mass conversion in 1908, its pacification in 1915, a sharp rise in wage labor in the 1930s, the Japanese Occupation and the Allied invasion; the transfer to the United Nations in 1963. Scarcely visited by Europeans during the nineteenth century, Biak became a key center of transport, trade and government following World War II. Yet, as I will argue in the following chapters, something of a "mestizo" world has remained.

The New Mission and its Demise

⁸⁷Besides the works cited above, see Stoler 1989b.

Not surprisingly, the past that weighs most heavily on the minds of today's Biaks is that which followed the destructive years of World War II. The post-war period was shaped in important ways by what preceded it: an outbreak of the Koreri movement started by Angganeta Menufandu, a widow from southern Supiori (see Kamma 1972: 157-209; see also chapter 6). Inspired by the female prophet, thousands gathered at locations throughout Biak, Supiori and Numfor to sing and dance and wait for Manarmakeri, the Biak ancestor said to have created Western wealth and power. In the following chapters, I will have more to say about Angganeta, Manarmakeri and the logic of Koreri. For now, it suffices to note that although this outbreak was neither the first nor the last, its effects were particularly dramatic. The uprising began in 1939 on the eve of World War II and the events which spelled the crumbling of colonial authority in the Indies. It ended four years later when Japanese Occupation forces gunned down hundreds of men, women and children on a beach in Biak's east. It was followed by a major assault by the Allied forces, who sought to secure the island's recently built airstrips for use in MacArthur's return to the Philippines. The flurry of construction that followed the bombing of the island transformed Biak's physiognomy in critical ways.

Biaks already had a history of mission education and a taste for migrant labor, the island's youths having been prime recruits for the oil fields that opened in the western Bird's Head in the 1930s (see Klein 1937; see also chapter 6). Under the Allied Occupation, hundreds of young men flooded into what is now Biak City to take jobs as coolies. Supervised by the Army Corps of Engineers, they built roads, ports, airfields, hospitals, supply depots and barracks for all the soldiers. These workers' wages allowed local people

to add a taste for beer to the appetites that they developed early in the invasion, when the Allies supplied communities displaced by the fighting with rations of biscuits and tinned meat. The supply dumps offered a plentiful supply of equipment and furnishings for resourceful villagers, who took to killing fish with grenades, storing water in oil drums, and hanging up gas canisters as church bells (see van den Berg 1981: *passim*). The bounty of the war years continued in an attenuated form with the return of the Dutch and the resumption of colonial rule.

Above I described the new discourses on New Guinea that emerged in the decade before the war, and how they laid the foundations for Dutch efforts to keep this distant corner of the Indies after the rest of the colony won independence (see also Rutherford 1997). Whatever the complex considerations that shaped Holland's postwar policy on New Guinea, its continuation rested on appeals to the interests of the Papuans. Holland retained western New Guinea at great political and financial expense, under the pretext that only a European power could prepare the "Stone Age" Papuans to become responsible national citizens. Biaks and other coastal people with history of mission education were well placed to cooperate in this campaign, which was in dire need of participants. Their role was presented to a global audience in the propaganda booklets produced for the member states of the United Nations, where Indonesia hotly contested Holland's claims. The glossy photographs of the civilizing mission's beneficiaries often came in pairs. "Before" and "after" shots cast "naked" west Papuan highlanders as primitive tribesmen, while coastal workers sporting uniforms played the proud products of Dutch rule.

Throughout the 1950s and into the early 1960s, under a much expanded Dutch colonial administration, many Papuans took advantage of enhanced opportunities for wage labor, education and government service. Just as Biaks were hard hit by the Allied invasion of western New Guinea, the islanders sharply felt the impact of Holland's efforts to accelerate its civilizing mission. Biaks played a prominent role in the Netherlands' efforts to cultivate a plausible native elite. Colonial officers raided the Protestant teacher's college for graduates to train as district officers, administrators and propagandists. Given Biak's long tradition of service to the mission, it comes as little surprise that many of the earliest Papuan leaders hailed from the island. Recruited for employment as nurses, teachers and civil servants, Biak women also enjoyed unprecedented opportunities during the post-war period of Dutch rule.

The ongoing development and repair of the colony's infrastructure also provided a field of employment for less educated Biaks. During the 1950s and early 1960s, a relative scarcity of labor kept wages high, while heavy Dutch subsidies kept prices relatively low. Biaks formerly employed in the colonial service can still remember buying produce from Australia and consumer goods from Europe imported for the benefit of new Dutch recruits. Bridewealth levels rose dramatically, as laborers spent their wages on Chinese porcelain and provisions for feasts. While the forms of singing and dancing associated with Koreri were sternly forbidden, village celebrations grew in size and splendor.⁸⁸ Parties were held to mark the homecomings of

⁸⁸Besides relying on my informants' memories, I gained some sense of the celebrations held during the 1950s from documents discussing the

students and workers. Each year, the Queen of Holland's birthday occasioned fireworks, contests, and a parade, complete with Papuan marching bands and floats.

Both before and after the transition to Indonesian rule, like other coastal Papuans, Biaks paid a price for their prominence in the Dutch project. Under colonial rule, any sign of dissent was rapidly squelched; those caught with Koreri paraphernalia or singing Koreri songs could be sent to jail (Galis 1946). A former pro-Indonesian activist whom I met during fieldwork claimed that he had spent the 1950s in the reopened prison camp at Boven Digoel. When the Netherlands finally relinquished New Guinea in 1963, many of the Papuans offered refuge in Holland included Biak officials and politicians. Besides splitting up families, the rapid withdrawal of the Dutch brought other kinds of hardship to the islanders (see Hastings 1969; Garnaut and Manning 1974; Sharp 1977; May 1985; Osborne 1985; Manning and Rumbiak 1991; Djopari 1993; Kaisiepo 1994). While the Indonesian regime selected a prominent Biak, Frans Kaisiepo, to serve as Irian Jaya's first governor, and while educated Biaks who held government positions tended to keep their jobs, Dutch-trained informants remember worrying that their loyalty to their new rulers would fall under scrutiny. Fearing reprisals, some Biaks felt compelled to burn their Dutch-language documents and books.⁸⁹

government and the mission's sometimes conflicting policies on Papuan feasting. See Kijne n.d. and van Baal 1952.

⁸⁹One of my informants told me sadly how she had burnt a letter from her penpal, Holland's Queen Juliana.

Ostensibly under the supervision of the United Nations Temporary Executive Authority, Indonesian officials dealt harshly with Papuans suspected of dissent during the years leading up to the "Act of Free Choice" in 1969. But the harshest aspect of the early period of Indonesian control was the economic hardship that followed the collapse of Dutch rule. With its currency artificially pegged to European exchange rates, the territory was hit hard by the raging inflation then crippling Indonesia. Prices soared as job-seekers flooded into the province. A black market thrived, emptying stores and offices of valuable equipment and goods. Urban Biaks still remember waiting in lines during the mid-1960s to receive meager rations of rice.

On Biak, as in other parts of the province, some opponents of integration into Indonesia responded violently to the harsh new conditions. Founded in the late 1960s, the *Operasi Papua Merdeka* ("Free Papua Operation" or OPM) kidnapped village officials, attacked army barracks, and launched a campaign of sabotage on the island (see Savage 1978; Osborne 1985; Djopari 1993). Entire communities fled into the forest to join the rebels, who sought to evade capture by the Indonesian troops by sheltering in the island's rugged interior. The situation in North Biak was particularly tense, with villagers caught between the sometimes coercive separatists and an always suspicious Indonesian military. Although armed resistance had petered out on Biak by the early 1980s, new methods of opposition were emerging among the young. In 1984, the military responded swiftly to a flag-raising demonstration led by students and faculty from the provincial university in Jayapura. Mass arrests followed the aborted uprising, and scores of students and intellectuals fled across the border to Papua New

Guinea. Biaks of all political persuasions mourned the passing of Arnold Ap, the well-known anthropologist and artist from the island who died in military custody during the same year. In the early 1990s, not only did my informants have "uncles" in Holland, they also had sons in PNG. Biaks were as well represented in this second generation of Papuan nationalists as they had been in the first.

These periodic episodes of political turmoil were accompanied by a steady improvement in the economic prospects of "Glorious Irian," *Irian Jaya*, as the province came to be called (see Garnaut and Manning 1974 and Manning and Rumbiak 1991). Granted a contract in the late 1960s, the Freeport Copper Mine, high in the mountains of the mainland, was eventually to put Irian in the black. Having long been a drag on the colonial and national economy, the region today is a leading earner of foreign exchange with a GDP surpassing some Southeast Asian nations. Along with government sponsored "transmigrants" from poor parts of Java and Bali, the transfer attracted thousands of newcomers from southern Sulawesi to the province, where they set up small businesses and quickly came to dominate the larger markets. Shopkeepers of Sino-Indonesian descent joined the descendants of an older generation of Chinese traders to fill in the corners of the urban economy. As during the colonial period, the government and the church continue to provide the preferred routes to advancement for young Irian Jayans. Biak parents complain bitterly when the progeny of migrants beat out local children for government training programs and jobs.

When I arrived in Biak in 1992, the most difficult years of "integration" appeared to be coming to an end. The governor at that time was

from the Sentani tribe, an ethnic group whose territory lay close to the rapidly growing provincial capital at Jayapura. Then in the final year of his term in office, this popular leader visited the island as part of "Turdes," a highly publicized tour of villages throughout the province. With his calls for a moratorium on transmigration and the protection of local land rights, Bas Suebo's strong rhetoric seemed to offer an "official" outlet for local displeasure. Whether "development" would dispel the dream of a "Free Papua" was far from certain. But at that particular moment, the government finally seemed to be winning the battle for Biak hearts and minds. From bloodthirsty pirates to blessed converts to promising candidates for self-rule: colonialism had tagged Biaks with a series of labels. While recent events in Irian Jaya call this impression into question, during my fieldwork, resistance to the identities imposed by outsiders almost appeared to be a thing of the past.

New Order Biak

Perhaps even more explicitly than most, this dissertation is the product of a particular historical moment. Biaks often told me how lucky I was that I had timed my research as I did; if I had come a few years earlier, I could not have talked with them at all. From the mid 1960s to early 1992, it had been virtually impossible for individual foreign scholars to obtain a permit to conduct research in the province. In the early 1980s, while teaching on Java, I was exposed to the stereotype of the "primitive" *orang Irian* and heard the rumours of unrest that trickled back from the province. But if my supervisor from the Ford Foundation had not sent me to the province to conduct

interviews in 1990, as a summer intern on a study approved by the Indonesian Department of Forestry, the thought of conducting fieldwork on Biak probably would never have crossed my mind.

Carried out between August 1992 and March 1994, my fieldwork on Biak was made possible by what officials described as a shift from the "security" to the "prosperity" approach to Irian's governance (see Djopari 1993: 154-166). Like the foreign tourists who passed through Biak on their way to the highlands, I was a direct beneficiary of this change in policy, itself a product of the New Order's growing confidence in the outcome of Irian Jaya's integration. Although my project set out to explore whether "something else" in Biak discourse might be working against the appearance of New Order authority, my research would not have been possible at all if this appearance had not been convincing to those in power. As an anthropologist, I had a clear-cut place in a wider effort to transform former "Papuan" into plausible national-cultural subjects. My plan to document the local practices of an "Irianese tribe" fit perfectly within the purview of a national ideology that absorbed threatening differences into an innocuous "unity in diversity" (see Pemberton 1994; see also Spyer 1996). With the help of data on their "traditional" customs and costumes, Biaks would find their place in a series of regional identities. Ethnicity would be a matter of culture, not politics -- and thus no longer a rallying point for separatist dreams.

My research doubtlessly appealed to the government for more prosaic reasons, as well. Of all the regencies in the province of Irian Jaya, Biak was particularly ripe for anthropological research. Every other day, a plane on

its way between Los Angeles and Bali landed on Biak's seemingly endless runway. Pale or sunburnt, depending on the time of the year and the direction of the flight, its passengers would crowd into the international transit lounge to while away an hour watching a local dance troupe perform. The domestic transit lounge filled with even greater frequency with hikers and government officials on their way to Jayapura and the popular Baliem Valley. Well before I arrived to begin my research, the national and provincial government had put forward an array of schemes designed to take advantage of Biak's "strategic" position as the gateway to the nation and the province. Bureaucrats of varying stripes had proposed everything from the building of a satellite launcher on the island to the opening of a tax-free industrial zone (see Cendrawasih Pos 1993b, 1993g, 1994a). But the scheme that sparked the most enthusiasm would entail the building of a series of "five star" resorts, designed to lure wealthy tourists out of the transit lounge. Biak would be the next Bali, I was told. My research would prove that, just like Bali, Biak had a "culture" for visitors to enjoy.

The Biak that I came to know during my research seemed anything but ready for a massive rise in tourism. Visitors who land at Biak's airport are met with a vision of scrubby plains, spindly ironwoods, and pock-marked cliffs. While I enjoyed its rugged landscape in the late afternoon light, the island's beauty was definitely an acquired taste. The author of a 1990 guide to Irian Jaya acquired this taste for Biak's beauty with a vengeance and penned a rhapsody to the island's coral reefs and sparkling sands (Muller 1990). It seems that he was befriended by Dutch-speaking locals, who took him through the coastal villages and helped him overcome the obstacles posed by a general absence of hotels, restaurants, toilets, and roads. Other visitors

were less fortunate. I frequently encountered them wandering aimlessly in the afternoon heat and dust through Biak City's empty streets. Neither primitive nor modern nor obviously exotic, from the perspective of most tourists, Biak had little "culture" -- or "nature" -- to offer. This perspective was not shared by the island's inhabitants. My interest in Biak filled local officials less with surprise than with pleasure. They had no trouble imagining why I had come.

During the period of my research, 96,000 people made their homes in Biak-Numfor Regency, an administrative unit comprised of the islands of Biak, Supiori, and Numfor, the nearby islets of Rani, Insumbabi, and Meosbefondi, and the Padaidos, a scattering of atolls off of Biak's east coast.⁹⁰ Covering an area of 3,130 square kilometers, Biak-Numfor is the most densely populated regency in the province of Irian Jaya and the only one with a single local language. As I explained above, about half the population resides in Biak City, where, along with the airport, one finds military bases, government offices, a port, a petroleum depot, a canning factory and a plymill, two movie theatres, two markets, two "supermarkets," and numerous shops. While the Indonesian government does not offer demographic statistics by ethnicity, the data on religion suggests the rough boundaries of the population: most of the Moslems, Hindus and Catholics, people by and large originally from outside the regency, make their homes in town, while the rural population is predominantly Protestant (see Muller

⁹⁰Statistics from the Departemen Penerangan as displayed in the Pameran Pembangunan, Biak, October 1-6, 1993.

1990: 51).⁹¹ North Biak, where I spent much of my time, is a sizeable subdistrict in both area and population (Biak dalam Angka 1992: 4, 21).⁹² While settlements of relocated forest clans dot the road between Biak City and Korem, the subdistrict seat, North Biak is dominated by large, long-standing coastal villages, strung like beads along the hilly, windswept Pacific shore.

While rural Biaks have been said to enjoy a "broad-based, diverse, and seemingly rather prosperous non-monetary or subsistence economy" (Engineering Consulting Association 1990: 32),⁹³ their involvement in the urban economy are impossible to ignore. Equally adept in the garden as at

⁹¹As I suggested at the beginning of this chapter, Biaks probably make up about three-quarters of the population. Muller puts Biak Numfor's population at 81,000 and has Protestant Christians comprising 85 percent of the population. Biakkers are predominantly Protestant Christians, as are immigrants from Ambon, Manado, and other parts of Irian.

⁹²North Biak has an area of 632.69 square kilometers, 20.21 percent of the entire area of Biak-Numfor Regency. It has a population of 10,751, consisting of 5,582 men and 5,169 women. (The regency as a whole has a slanted sex ratio of 108.82 -- a phenomenon neither confined to the city nor recent, which Dutch officials sometimes put down to the practice of female infanticide.) The population density in North Biak is 17.00 per square kilometer, compared to 107.17 in Biak City and 29.57 for the regency as a whole.

⁹³ "The very low paid-labor participation rates...are in agreement with the very low household money expenditures, especially in rural areas...but both these conventional economic indicators are seemingly at odds with the generally good condition of the population observed in the field." The statistics on the same page work out to a per capita annual rate of monetary expenditure for household consumption of \$196.20.

sea, Biak villagers cultivate and harvest a range of cash crops, in addition to taro root and sago, long the main staples on the island. As elsewhere in Indonesia, women control the marketing of their families' produce and transform their earnings immediately into domestic necessities. The fishermen from some East Biak villages have joined cooperatives for the export of red snapper, but elsewhere their catch is generally kept for local consumption. Although many Biak villagers maintain close ties with relatives who earn steady salaries as teachers or clerks, anywhere beyond the outskirts of Biak City, wage labor represents a temporary source of income. While the island has long participated in a wider capitalist economy as a "labor reservoir," rural Biak remains relatively less commodified than similar places in Papua New Guinea (compare Foster 1995: 25-66).⁹⁴ Men

⁹⁴"Commoditization refers to the process by which a society dominated by the production of use-values -- whether for immediate consumption or for circulation in long-distance trade and ceremonial exchange -- becomes over time increasingly constituted by relations of commodity production and exchange. That is, commoditization implies the way in which commodity relations become incorporated into cycles of social reproduction as necessary conditions for sustaining socially defined standards of living: 'on one side, the production of commodities as a means of exchange to acquire elements of necessary consumption, on the other side the incorporation of commodities in the cycle of reproduction as items of productive consumption (e.g. tools, seeds, fertilisers), and individual consumption (e.g. food, clothing, building materials, kerosene, domestic utensils)' (Bernstein 1979:425)." Foster 1995: 26. Foster follows Bernstein in stressing the danger of confusing "labor reserve areas" for "resilient traditional economies." See also Carrier and Carrier 1992.

The obvious source of this discrepancy lies in the tendency of the government and private firms to import labor from most densely populated parts of Indonesia, rather than relying on the supposedly "unskilled" indigenous population. Biaks are relatively better represented in the labor market than other Irianese groups, but still fall behind workers from other

throughout the island speak proudly of their adventures at distant mines and construction sites. In East Biak, where gardening land is relatively scarce, one can identify the houses of families with sons working for Freeport-McMoran by looking for glass panes and cement walls. Yet laborers who dislike their supervisors or tire of the schedule still seem to feel that they can simply go home.

The inhabitants of Sor, my village home on the north coast, had some basis for presenting their community as quintessentially Biak. I was frequently told that Sor had produced lots of *amber* -- that word meaning "foreigner," "civil servant" or "non-Irian Indonesia." Between 1992 and 1994, Sor consisted of a mixture of coastal and forest people, including a number of groups who had been resettled on the shore during colonial and postcolonial periods of pacification.⁹⁵ Many of the village's patrilineages were linked by marriage, although unions with more distant communities were valued as well. Among Sor's residents were teachers, health workers, a Biak-Chinese merchant, and at least a dozen retired soldiers and civil servants, many of whom relied on fishing, farming, and hunting to augment their meager salaries and pensions. On the whole, in terms of lifestyle, the gap between

provinces. See Manning and Rumbiak, "Irian Jaya: Economic Change, Migrants, and Indigenous Welfare." on the policies of Freeport McMoran, see "Treasure Island" and O'Neill, "Irian Jaya: Indonesia's Wild Side."

⁹⁵Most of these people came to Sor during the 1910s and 1920s, when Biak "warriors" resisted taxation and corvee labor, and again in the 1970s, when the OPM resisted Indonesian rule. With the opening of roads slated for the island's interior within the next few years, many of the more recent arrivals were contemplating moving back to their clan land.

the poorest and the wealthiest members of the community was relatively small. Inequities were above all represented in the homes that lined the coastal road, which ranged from raised huts of wood and bamboo to a handful of small, sometimes crumbling concrete structures, built with the savings of former "wage-eaters" or supplied by the government to house its local employees. The predominance of corrugated iron roofs, rather than the usual thatching, signified Sor's relative prosperity when compared to communities which had generated fewer *amber*.

When I told the head of the local women's group that I wanted to move to Sor, I was directed to the only working latrine in the village. Abraham Rumapura's solid concrete home, with its metal door locks and glass windows, was the product of an unexpected windfall: the pension that Abe and other Papuan veterans received for their service in the Dutch colonial army, thanks to the lobbying of a sympathetic pastor in Holland. By the time that the case went through in the late 1980s, the Dutch government was behind on Ben's payments, and so the ageing farmer received a lump sum of cash in addition to his first monthly payment. Abe used much of the money to build a house and equip it with a selection of luxuries: a sewing machine, a singing clock (which struck midnight with "It's a Small World After All"), a bunk bed, a coffee table, some chairs, and an upholstered couch. Despite these amenities, Ben's family could usually be found in the large lean-to that functioned as a kitchen, seated on wooden benches or the cool cement floor with the many relatives of Ben's wife, Marta Rumera. Marta continued to garden and market her produce, despite the fact that the family had a regular source of income. With eight children to raise and a plethora of deserving relatives to help, Abe had little trouble spending his stipend. Like their

neighbors, Abe and Marta dreamed of transforming their sons and daughters into something that money alone could not make them: well-known, high ranking, highly educated persons -- "big foreigners" or *amber beba*.

If my rural home typified one ideal in Biak sociality, my home in town typified another. Sister Sally Bidwam, who welcomed me into her household, considered herself to already be an *amber beba*. Sally was by no means the biggest of the island's "big foreigners," but she had a strong claim to the respect of other Biaks. The daughter of one of Biak's early "native" evangelists, Sally had joined the first generation of Papuan school girls to continue their education after the war. Selected to participate in a training program for native nurses, she had boldly accepted the offer, without even asking her parents for permission. Sally liked to describe her upbringing under the care of strict Dutch teachers, who instilled in her the best of Western morals and manners. In addition to the long, gruelling days in the hospital, she spoke of lighter moments as well: picnics, badminton matches, and parties with Dutch and Papuan friends. Long estranged from her husband, an *amber* from another coastal tribe, ever since the early 1960s, Sally had lived in a small brick house in a complex built by the Dutch navy to house sailors with families. Home to a changing cast of foster children and relatives from Sally's West Biak village, this house stood across the street from the regency hospital, where Sally oversaw the training of health workers. Sally frequently complained to me of the indolence of today's crop of doctors and nurses. Given her penchant for firm Dutch discipline, if anything, the "New Order" was not orderly enough.

During the months I spent with them, Sally and Abe spoke frequently about Biak's future. For Ben, who showed enthusiasm for the government's projects, the coming years promised to bring Biak ever closer to the outside world. Like younger activists, Abe warned that the opening of roads and bridges could do harm to those foolish enough to sell their clan land, as the prices offered for roadside property shot up. But he insisted that life would be better, once the forest people could return to their homes and local women could travel more safely to Biak City and back. Sally spoke more pessimistically about Biak's prospects. There was no way that today's young Biaks would be able to follow in her footsteps. Standards of education and morality were declining in the regency; even health conditions had taken a turn for the worse. The future would bring changes, both Abe and Sister Sally agreed, but one should be cautious in gauging their effects. No one knew for certain what "development" might bring.

Abe and Sister Sally were not the only Biaks who welcomed me into their households. I spent a good deal of time visiting other parts of the island or province at the urging of friends and informants. Whether I was asking about Biak myth or history, people were loath to relate the authentic story without "proof": the marks that the narratives had left on the landscape. I learned as much during bus rides and walks to these far-flung points of interest as I did at any particular site. I travelled by sea with groups of Biaks, once to the mainland and once to Jakarta, Indonesia's national capital; I stayed with Biak families in Jayapura and further abroad. Fishermen, farmers, anthropologists, artists, rectors and regents all numbered among my informants. Among almost all of them, I detected the same ambivalent openness to the future. They seemed to underline what I was inclined to

believe: that, for better or worse, Biak was on the brink of a great transformation, on the threshold of irreversible change.

It is not common for an anthropologist to contradict her informants. But in Biak, as in so many post-colonial places, one often comes to see more than what first struck the eye. The next five chapters represent a sustained attempt to resist the temptation to portray Biak as an endangered species. They are a meditation on the resilience of local conceptions of space and time in the midst of a seemingly shrinking world. This dissertation is less a study of the margins of modernity than an experiment in imagining the marginalization of colonial and post-colonial forms of order. It seeks to show how the order of the modern nation state has come to appear in Biak ideology as the "alien" source that orients and authorizes social discourse. It searches for possible signs of a distinctive local future in the lingering marks of the past.