

# INTRODUCTION

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## *The cargo will not come ...*

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The French reader was the initial target of this introduction. He usually knows little about the South Pacific cultures. For instance, while he has had more than one occasion to see pictures of ‘Tahiti’ or ‘Easter Island’ in eastern Polynesia, he knows almost nothing about the political, social and cultural realities of the western half of the region. With the exception of the two islands of Wallis and Futuna, this part of the Pacific has no French territories; instead, there are a variety of small independent States which have kept their own Polynesian tongue as the official language. The present work will take the reader to Wallis, as well as to the States of Tonga and (Western) Samoa.

Another example: the word ‘Aboriginal’ is well known as a term for the first inhabitants of Australia. But the extent to which this identity was imposed from outside on a set of extremely diversified groups is generally less known. The reader will be able to make a closer examination of the political and cultural stakes involved in this identity and to measure the role they play in building today’s Australia.

And if he has heard about the Melanesian ‘cargo cults’ — perhaps the only social phenomenon in this region to have gained worldwide fame — the reader probably has little idea of their variety. These messianic cults can be quite different from the media image of an illusory expectation kept alive by magical practices concerning a miraculous cargo supposed to be brought by great ships. Their variety is enriched by equally ill-known contemporary changes. Today’s cargo cults present a new face of which this work gives a few examples.

In 1957, Peter Worsley published a study of these cults entitled ‘The Trumpet Shall Sound’, alluding to the Biblical announcement of the final coming, the advent of heaven on earth ... and the arrival of the mythic ships bearing the long-awaited cargo.<sup>1</sup> But the metaphor could no longer be used today.

Beginning in the early 1900s, a time when Europeans were already present, Melanesians could contemplate from afar the wealth brought by the Whites but which they rarely distributed. The Melanesians also saw them waiting for the ships, impatiently scanning the horizon: the isolated missionary stations and military posts were dependent on supplies from outside. The cargo cults which sprang up at this time were founded on the belief that, by going through certain motions, the White people’s merchandise would come to the indigenous inhabitants as well; some even said that the cargo was sent by the ancestors, but that the Whites had intercepted it and taken it for themselves. At the same

time, local groups sought, through this imaginary appropriation, to couch a certain form of power in thinkable terms — which would play a role in their resistance to colonisation. They also sought to understand the Christian message and, in so doing, transformed it. Other, more recent cults awaited not only shipments of cargo but also the arrival of white leaders, like the movement waiting for the American president L. B. Johnson to come and govern them.<sup>2</sup> But today the time has come for realism: the trumpet will not sound, the cargo will not come.

And yet, while they no longer wait for the mythic ships, the contemporary attitude of the Pacific peoples is not one of societies having decided to turn inwards, cloistered in their gardens wrested from the forest. One can, for instance, decide to create one's own cargo and its containers, as in the case of the Sulka, which will be described. The 1990s were also a time of new hope — and new illusions — prompted by the increasingly rapid integration of these societies into a world system encompassing the Pacific basin or the entire globe. Our book will propose several illustrations of this. A good number of these societies are now caught up in such accelerating change. Nevertheless, they have preserved an intense awareness of their own identity. This is anything but immutable, but after all, isn't what counts the representation of a specific 'us' shared by the members of a group?

As this work puts in at several islands in the immensity of the Pacific Ocean,<sup>3</sup> it invites the reader to understand how the inhabitants of these islands, large and small, seek to affirm both an individual identity and their belonging to the contemporary world.

Social and cultural anthropology has always considered that it makes sense to speak of *a* society or culture, at least for a given period of time. In so doing, it observes phenomena connected with identity: expressed values and ways of conducting social relations. Even if such relations sometimes imply profound differences of status, class and obligations between individuals, they have a sufficient number of references in common for those concerned to share, on certain points, a similar representation of this place — that we call 'society' — which, they say, founds these obligations and these prohibitions, these duties and these rights. Each of the examples set out in this book underscores the weight and import of this identity: it speaks to everyone, even if, at times, it works to the benefit of only a few.

The same anthropology is immediately faced with the diachronic dimension: history — is any society exempt? — and its major phases, its *longues durées* which stack up one upon the next and imprint themselves on memory; but also the subtle, imperceptible day-to-day changes of which the observer becomes aware only when he returns several years later (two examples in the present volume benefit from a series of studies carried out over a span of more than 20 years); and finally the fundamental transformations sparked by cultural interpretations desperately seeking to make sense of the impact of a radically new element, such as the arrival of Westerners in societies which did not even imagine such beings existed. Such are the changes whose consequences the anthropologist feels compelled to incorporate into his or her narrative.

Inclusion of the diachronic dimension also leads to regional comparisons, especially if the variations observed between neighbouring groups offer regular similarities or term-for-term inversions recurring too often to be a matter of chance, thus imposing the question of a possible common origin. Is it legitimate to speak of a unitary culture when it comes to the

groups under study? The query is particularly apposite in the absence of historical documents, and the articles on Papua-New Guinea provide an enlightening example of this type of research. The notion of change is thus understood here in both a historical and a structural perspective.<sup>4</sup>

Each of these two dimensions — identity and change — raises a series of methodological problems, and their interrelation raises even more. However, rather than going into a long theoretical discussion of the models available today,<sup>5</sup> the authors of this work all agree that anthropology is comparative or it is not anthropology, that there have never been ‘societies without a history’ and that the anthropology of change is simply anthropology. They have therefore chosen to contribute to the debate by means of numerous and specific examples. What has brought them together is first of all the fact that they all work in the South Pacific, that their fieldwork consists of long and repeated studies and that, during the seminars held by the research group of which they were all members,<sup>6</sup> they have noted the convergence of the questions raised by these studies.

In all these examples, we will see how local identity is confronted with another dimension, an interaction whose effects are observed by each author. Because the Pacific peoples have long lived in their islands and, until the arrival of the Europeans, had never encountered large-scale wars of conquest imposing a social and linguistic unification, all of these groups, whether they inhabit the space of an island or a valley, developed notions of identity rich in a diversity of symbols. Then, in the space of two centuries — and sometimes thirty years — they saw it all. They experienced the arrival of the mission. Immense quantities of wealth passed before their eyes, in the possession of the army, the government functionaries, the colonists and the businessmen — objects which seemed to contain a power until then held only by the gods or the dead, ‘things with *mana*’, we should say, borrowing an expression from Marcel Mauss.<sup>7</sup> They heard talk of universalist values, and later some, who had stayed in their valley, discovered they were citizens of a nation-State or inhabitants of a ‘territory’ belonging to some remote power. Others were driven from their valley; they made war (Whites spoke of ‘uprisings’) and they lost. Others still were never colonised; but even though no foreign administration ever established itself, the new laws of the world monetary system nevertheless commanded recognition. At the same time, new terms appeared, general ones, like ‘Aboriginals’ or ‘Pacific Way’, or regional ones — as the example of the ‘Anga culture’ will show — attesting that the articulation between identity and change has undergone a change of scale.

The texts collected here are all based on fieldwork. This is characteristic of the anthropological study, even when its object includes some history — for here we are talking about the history of local representations, experienced on a day-to-day basis, about representations of identity, at times those which singularise an individual, at other times those in which the ‘us’ of local speech refers to the whole group. The exposition of the facts favours such fieldwork.

There is an urgent need to bear witness, owing to the rapidity, the magnitude and the diversity of the changes under way in the Pacific, a continent-sized region which is gaining international importance as a point of contact and encounter between the economic powers of Southeast Asia and those of the Near East and the Anglo-American world.<sup>8</sup> It is also

increasingly perceived as holding values which could be useful to other continents, as certain religious or cultural movements proclaim. Compared with a Western world in the grip of massive 'deconstructions' (whether the collapse of ideological 'systems' or the break-up of States into numerous communities each claiming its own 'ethnic' identity) and ill-compensated by 'reconstructions', some of which seem troubling to say the least, the Pacific world — without being absolutely peaceful, far from it — seems, to a certain extent, to be going through a period of restructuring. Broader identities are being held up to the West, forms of thought seek to adapt to the dimensions of the Pacific basin, if not to those of the whole globe. One astonishing but typical example of these new visions is the 'Alliance of Pacific Cultures', recently put forward by a delegation of several hundreds of traditional Samoan chiefs: in 1994 these chiefs travelled thousands of kilometres to confer with their Hawaiian counterparts and, pushing on to the shores of America, with representatives of the Amerindian nations, with a view to proclaiming the utility and the universal value of certain aspects of the 'Pacific cultural tradition'. Their idea was that the adoption and implementation, by Western societies themselves, of certain features common to the Pacific cultures could lead to the construction of viable societies in a West which appears, to these Pacific peoples, to be in many ways socially and morally bankrupt.<sup>9</sup>

This recent initiative shows that the consensual ideal of the 1970s — the 'Pacific Way' — is still alive, here and there. The term was launched in a speech pronounced before the United Nations by the Fijian Prime Minister, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, in 1970 as it happens, and immediately caught on. A few years later, Ron Crocombe, professor at the University of the South Pacific (USP, Fiji), wrote an entire article bearing this title<sup>10</sup> — and subtitled: 'An Emerging Identity' — which enumerated the contexts in which the expression was meaningful. It was a 'brotherhood' of 'all islands people' in the image of the brotherhood underlying the naming and kinship systems of the cultures of this region (where the classificatory extension of consanguineous kin terms is very broad: for instance, all older female cousins, and even all older women, are called 'mother'). It is a 'unity' between the countries, which is felt by the politicians, church administrators and sometimes by businessmen, and affirmed 'vis-à-vis Europeans and Asians'. This ideal was expressed first and most strongly in Fiji, Samoa and Tonga, then it reached Papua New Guinea, the Cook Islands, Kiribas, Tuvalu, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Nauru, etc., keeping pace with the advent of autonomy or independence. In effect, the term also implies rejection of the colonial situation, thus suiting the newly independent States and the ideology of those working in this direction. The case of the two major regional powers is clearly more ambiguous: at the time of Crocombe's article, Australia and New Zealand were beginning periodically to show that they felt a part of the 'Pacific unity'. Last, and most importantly, this unity is affirmed at the cultural level. The differences of culture and social organisation so often underscored by the foreign experts (for instance the system of 'aristocratic' chiefly families in Polynesia as opposed to the more 'egalitarian' system in Melanesia) were pushed into the background,<sup>11</sup> and into the foreground moved whatever seemed to constitute shared strong points, namely the ethic of 'peace' and 'consensus', involving a purportedly specific tradition of negotiation and decision-making.<sup>12</sup>

But this restructuring had its flaws, if we include in the picture the internal frictions and the contrast between the small States and the great regional powers. As M. Panoff wrote

in 1991, this consensual ideal of the Pacific Way, born during that honeymoon which characterised the early stages of decolonisation, 'shattered in Vanuatu, in Papua New Guinea, in Fiji, and developed cracks in Samoa and the Cook Islands'.<sup>13</sup> By an appalling irony of history, Papua New Guinea now finds itself, with the secession of Bougainville fifteen years after its own independence, in the situation of a dominant, repressive power in its own right. Fiji is being torn apart by strife between two numerically comparable populations, one of Indian origin and the other indigenous. And Samoa (formerly Western Samoa), whose social system has always vaunted the merits of political consensus (at least within the sacred order instituted by genealogical ties), underwent in 1994 a political crisis fuelled by a divide, as new as it was deep, between town and country, salaried workers and farmers, new political cadres and traditional chiefs.

In the Pacific as in other parts of the world conflicts are a legacy of the preceding period. But today, the situations inherited from the colonial era are complicated by wider problems, in particular with the burden of economic constraints. There are few societies, few States in the Pacific which today could be said to be in a position to control their own economic choices, and these external constraints have serious internal consequences, as shown by the two examples just mentioned, that of Papua-New Guinea (hereafter PNG) and that of Samoa. There more than elsewhere one can measure the inequality among the societies of this region: those the size of no more than a small community, highly dependent on international aid packages — which come with requirements intended to modify custom so as to promote 'development', itself the cause of more inequalities and conflicts<sup>14</sup> — and the others, the major regional powers, those which, like Australia and New Zealand, can compete in what has come to be called the 'concert of nations'.

Another feature of this collection of texts: despite the specific nature of the situations described, and underscored by the space given to directly observed facts, the present analyses illustrate an Anglo-American debate which has gone through a number of phases since it first arose more than fifteen years ago. Initially centred on the issue of the 'invention of tradition',<sup>15</sup> where values reputed to be, but which are not necessarily, 'traditional' are invoked as authoritative arguments in the new conflicts spawned by the contemporary situation, it has ultimately brought anthropologists face to face with themselves: is it legitimate to inquire into the 'authenticity' of the ideas and practices used by the societies one is studying?<sup>16</sup> The debate continues, but it has taken more open forms.<sup>17</sup> In reality the question raised is an ambiguous one, for it touches on two different debates. It is clear that it is not for the observer to say whether a given fact 'belongs to this or that culture', nor whether it is 'traditional' or not (or 'authentic', 'genuine', 'modern' or the outcome of 'acculturation'). He merely observes the way the parties include, exclude or hold this practice at a distance. Alternatively, he may speak of 'a society', in the simple sense in which, by observing the practices through which the people themselves agree that a given individual holds or loses his or her place in the social space designated by the personal pronoun 'we', he identifies the boundaries beyond which these practices are no longer valid or no longer have consequences; in this case he will say that one has reached the bounds of the society concerned.

If the question of identity, that of the individual or that of the group (the latter sometimes being considered from the problematic standpoint of 'ethnicity'<sup>18</sup>), has run

through this debate from its inception down to the most recent developments, one can nevertheless note that this inquiry into the identity of South Pacific societies — or those elsewhere for that matter — long a preserve of ‘ethnologists’, has now been taken up by the societies themselves. The question one needs to hear is no longer ‘Who are they?’, but the one ‘they’ are asking loud and clear: ‘What are we becoming?’ A double transformation of the investigation: the object has become the subject, and the historical dimension is taken into account.

Indeed, a good number of societies in this region went through the missionary and colonial era while preserving — or creating in reaction to the foreign presence — the sentiment of a collective identity. Today the social groups of the South Pacific, whether they locate the identity of their ‘we’ in a few valleys, like the Baruya or the Ankave of PNG, or in a province with respect to the whole nation of PNG, like the new Kivung cult of the Sulka, in a recently forged national identity (the ‘Aboriginals’) or in a continuity with the past (like the State of Samoa: ‘our *FaaSamoa*’), all these groups have representations of this identity sufficiently alive and strong to be able to ask themselves and others the essential questions about their future. One of these crops up time and again, and, although it springs from the pressure of the economic constraints mentioned above, it is still the expression of the minimum degree of liberty, that conferred by political independence: what will the model for ‘becoming’ be and up to what point should one try to fit the model provided by the West? Though not really new, the question has grown singularly acute of late, and the Western model, including its heretofore least-contested aspects, is now being challenged: development, yes; democracy, yes; but not necessarily in their imported forms.<sup>19</sup>

Both Melanesia and Polynesia are present in these articles. One major figure, however, is missing: Micronesia, where French researchers have just begun to work.<sup>20</sup> Australia too is present, but not New Zealand, where here too the question of identity, under intense debate, would call for a thorough study. Relations between Maori and Pakeha (New Zealanders of European stock) raise problems identical to those governing relations between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals in Australia; this is especially true for ancestral land rights. In addition, both cases show a constant growth of the Asian immigrant communities, which fill the business sector; and the resulting changes are also comparable.<sup>21</sup> Yet in spite of obvious shortcomings, what is proposed here already permits a response to one pressing demand: until now there was no recent retrospective on Papua-New Guinea research, and there was a deplorable lack of any general work on identity and change concerning both Australia<sup>22</sup> and western Polynesia.<sup>23</sup>

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We have organised the texts around three categories of situations and analyses. First we will look at the confrontation following on the relatively recent arrival of Europeans in the Pacific, the effects of which are still clearly perceptible in Papua-New Guinea, for instance. The changes in particular will be observed. They run deep and have happened quickly, so that local identities are obliged to invent a new vision of the future.

Next we will study the relationship with a new regional or national identity, rooted, to be sure, in past history, but formulated explicitly under pressure from recent circumstances

— or through the intermediary of the anthropologist's comparative outlook — as well as the multiple consequences resulting from the confrontation between local and global points of view (Australia, PNG, Polynesia). The study, centred on identities, shows how communities preserve, rediscover, restructure or re-create their references. It even happens that the anthropologist has a hand in bringing about this new awareness.

Finally, even in societies in contact with Europeans since the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, as in Polynesia, we will look into their relatively recent entry into the international dimension, the market economy, but also law and human rights, a political dimension therefore which cannot avoid dialogue with 'Western' notions, whether these be exchange rates, private ownership or democracy.

These three situations create new areas of inquiry, those already mentioned in the case of 'cargo' or still others concerning money, the notion of personhood, and so on. Some of the new cases of integration have surprising side-effects. For example, money is given in ceremonial exchanges as were formerly pigs or shells ... but money can also be obtained outside the social group, which gives rise to totally different cargo cults or to the overwhelming place now occupied by ceremonial exchanges in the individual's inscription in society. Or a group aspires to 'democracy', but paradoxically this is pursued in the name of tradition and even, in western Polynesia, in the name of the sacred chiefdom.

The examples presented in these articles are grouped around these three poles, although they sometimes partake of all three.

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The first group takes us to Papua New Guinea, a young nation (created in 1975), but a land that has been inhabited for at least the past forty thousand years. Studies conducted on three of the islands, New Guinea, New Britain, New Ireland (all three part of PNG) find slow or radical changes subsequent to the arrival of Europeans. These articles examine recent or already old situations, sometimes using fieldwork conducted over a span of more than twenty years, as Maurice Godelier and Bernard Juillerat have done. The examples show simultaneously three orders of facts: (1) the changes subsequent to the arrival of the mission (some of these islands have only recently heard of Christianity), hence the possibility of directly observing this type of encounter so instrumental in shaping world history but which is now a thing of the past, with the exception, precisely, of PNG (and perhaps Amazonia); (2) the changes prompted by the introduction of European objects, of which the cargo cults represent a particular manifestation; (3) finally, the changes induced by the political evolution of these cultures and their integration into a much broader structure based on a new principle — the nation — which imposes on former 'tribes' an unfamiliar and completely unexpected conceptual and administrative framework.

Maurice Godelier's text speaks of a half century of contact between the Baruya of New Guinea and the White world, a very short span of time considering the number of changes that have come about. The appearance of metal objects, first of all, which replaced their stone tools even before the Baruya had actually seen their first White man; then the 'first contact' in 1951: the demonstration of White power using firearms, the punitive expeditions

starting in 1960, the arrival of the missionaries a short time later. Then came the market, the transformation of gift-exchange into buying and selling, wage labour for some, the appearance of coffee plantations. In 1975, the Baruya became citizens of a new nation, whereas their world still ended with their valleys or with a few neighbouring valleys with whom they fought. Quickly the Baruya realized that the new administration had nothing to offer, and neo-traditional values asserted themselves. The initiations were resumed on a wider scale, but without the rites associated with war, which was banned by the Australian administration in the 1960s (even though one short but lethal conflict did break out). Since the late 1980s, the desire for a place in a wider world has once more manifested itself, and the idea of 'doing business' (*makim bisnis*) appears to have carried the day. Is this process irreversible? The text leaves the question open.

Bernard Juillerat invites us to a parallel analysis, in the form of concise, direct fieldnotes which report work also done in New Guinea, but this time among the Yafar of West Sepik. The first section is entitled '1970': this is the era of the first Australian patrol officers, who had arrived some ten years before, like the missionaries; it is the time of new horizons, discovered by those who hired out to the plantations in New Britain or New Ireland. Next comes '1973', with the beginning of self-government, which becomes the local figure of 'Selfgavman', a sort of boogeyman waiting to grab all the food, a sort of 'cargo' ship in reverse. '1976' is the era of the new government school, but also that of the secret Yangis rite, which had not been performed for over ten years. It is also the first time the Yafar, feeling the inevitable changes in the wind, have asked a foreigner — the anthropologist — to take custody of some of their secrets. '1978', disappointment: the new administration (of the PNG government) doesn't give anything, but it collects taxes. '1981', too many people have died of sickness: an epidemic — usually one of the first gifts of contact — creates too much friction (accusations of witchcraft). It is also the birth of a singular new cargo cult. '1986' ... '1991' '1995'. Much else happens. Fieldnotes are not amenable to summary. Nor is it necessary to present the reader with a problematic, for the narrative does not contain any difficulties, even for someone who knows next to nothing about the Pacific cultures. But each paragraph taken alone paints an evocative picture which places the reader, not without emotion, at the very heart of these Yafar villages. Like the other peoples of PNG, the Yafar are caught between the hope for cargo and the constraints of a slow, uneven 'development' in the midst of a seriously deteriorated health situation. Here too the article ends on a question.

We remain in the Sepik with the analysis of Philippe Peltier, who also has some questions about the changes that have come to this part of PNG. But this time the attention focuses on the creativity that once went into the architecture and decoration of their famous 'men's houses'. Indisputably an art form, but in this region the artistic creation also expressed a 'position with respect to society'; furthermore the men's house was also a central site for ritual activities. Today a good number of these houses have disappeared while others are only empty shells; but their forms have taken over new sites, such as schools and churches.

A considerable quantity of objects used to be amassed in these houses, arranged according to a spatial division based on degree of symbolic power: objects for more-or-less everyday use, head trophies, then further back, ancestral skulls overmodelled with red earth, and in the most secret recess, objects which probably served as clan emblems. These

accumulated items were the memory of these groups and constituted the individuality of each men's house, even as they were the guarantee of an identity constantly under reconstruction. The analysis of two myths shows that the men's houses 'are also ... a story of the exchange of women', in other words of alliances which placed each group within a wider network.

The intrusion of modernity into this region had two high points: first of all general pacification and the ban on headhunting; and then in the 1960s, the end of the initiations and the public exposure of the objects kept in the men's houses out of sight from the women, objects which were subsequently confiscated or sold by the missionaries and merchants. At the end of this period these houses stood empty. Then came the 1970s, the arrival of a missionary converted to the idea of using 'indigenous styles', and the construction of the church in the image of a men's house. In reality the decoration takes a double reading, for the encounter between local and Christian traditions gave rise to a new version of Genesis. But the church is not really a men's house, it is more like a pantheon charged with creating ties between old and new. As for the school, also built on traditional lines, it may denote a process of folklorisation which, via the school, permeates every sector of the society. The changes made to the men's houses were also a 'political tool that enabled [Sepik] societies to find a place in the modern world by playing on Western expectations: after all, isn't the Sepik synonymous with art and Men's Houses?'

The region of Porapora, where Peltier carried out intensive investigations, has seldom been studied because of the difficulty of access. No foreign authority arrived until 1930, so the situation was very different from that of the neighbouring regions like, for example, that of the Banaro, where Thurnwald lived at the beginning of the twentieth century and where B. Juillerat worked more recently.<sup>24</sup> Peltier is therefore in a position to describe many little-known features of these houses and the changes they have undergone.

From the 'men's houses in the Sepik', we move on to the Sulka 'ancestors' house' in the neighbouring island of New Britain. Monique Judy-Ballini shows us how, as in the preceding case, this house is the vehicle for creating traditions: here it becomes the temple of a new cult — the missionaries called it a 'cargo cult', but it is a special kind. Adamantly rejecting the term 'cargo', it asks its members to work for the 'redemption of the sins' of all men, Sulka and others. As in the Sepik, where the men's house became a church, the Sulka ancestors' house features both the local ancestors and Biblical characters, a list of the Sulka dead and a written tablet of the Ten Commandments. Juillerat, in his article on the Yafar, mentions a new-fashioned cargo cult whose representations have to do with guerilla warfare.<sup>25</sup> The cult described by Judy-Ballini is another of these new forms where the members are no longer waiting for 'cargo'. It is still tempting to speak of a cargo cult, but in these two examples, while the hope of wealth is indeed present, these representations reverse those of the previous cults described by Worsley: here cult members themselves help create their own cargo.

In effect, the Sulka Kivung movement demands important financial sacrifices thanks to which its members have begun building a veritable new city which outstrips the wildest hopes of the classic cargo cults. Their success has to do with local politics and 'keeping up with the Joneses'. They play on the opposition between the central government of Papua

New Guinea and the provincial government, a clear sign of the change of scale to which the Melanesian populations have recently been subjected. At the same time, the notion of sin and that of the buying-power conferred by money have been combined in a strange way. To constitute one's own cargo — which is materialised in the unexpected shape of a new city — is to redeem the sins of the entire world. Judy-Ballini gives a detailed account of the sequences of representations which show the members of the Kivung movement to be true acrobats in the art of negotiating the tangled logic typical of the simplistically termed 'syncretic' movements. To 'follow the custom of the ancestors', to do what they demand today, is to redeem the fact that the ancestors themselves followed the 'custom of the ancestors'. The latter sinned unwittingly. Today new knowledge enables one to sin and then to pay for redemption. Furthermore, since the sins that need redeeming are those of the whole world, the supply becomes inexhaustible. This redemption is actually the conversion of a sacrifice, the effect of which is to funnel millions of dollars into bank accounts. As a supreme paradox, the money is used both to make gifts to the central government (whereas the movement refuses to pay provincial taxes) and to construct modern buildings, nullifying, as it were, a question left unanswered for the Sulka: why was this Western wealth never given to them? It is not a question of simply imitating the Europeans and, when the cargo did not come, of making it on the spot. It is a question of speaking with the outside world (from the PNG government to the Europeans) the only language they are, so the Sulka believe, capable of understanding, and of applying the principle of 'the rich get richer'; in short, of making the Whites envious. The ultimate paradox is that part of the money collected is given to the Catholic mission. 'No doubt,' Judy-Ballini writes, 'the God the Kivung strives to better will recognise His own', as should the Europeans when they see the bright shiny new city.

This first set of texts ends with a reconstruction proposed by Brigitte Derlon: the analysis of a cargo cult in New Ireland, in the Mandak linguistic zone, which was totally or almost totally unknown. Here too the cultural process obeys a sacrificial logic, but this time it no longer hinges on money, as among the Sulka. It seems that this cult demanded the killing of a human being. Here, too, one of the author's conclusions was that the aim was not to accumulate wealth, but to establish a dialogue and a balanced exchange with the Whites.

The study invites the reader along on a meticulous investigation. First of all this cult was popular in the early twentieth century and lasted only a few years. The author therefore had to work from the texts she was able to collect on the spot; there are no other studies on this cargo cult in Mesi, an area where no one else has worked. Secondly, Christianity has cast a shadow of shame over these memories and accounts. The ethnological study thus turns into an exercise in ethno-history. Derlon uncovers the particular circumstances of the time (a famine, the arrival of White wealth) as well the long-term social logic which guided the whole kinship system, land-holding, the theories of conception and the reproduction rights on certain sacred objects — *malanggan* are famous in Melanesian museography. As in Peltier's study on the men's houses, these art objects renowned in Europe are replaced in their context, thus taking the museum visitor to the very heart of this society.

In such a social organisation where identity and rights are transmitted in the group through the maternal line, the wife and her children enjoy only a use right on the lands of the matrilineal group of their husband and father, and this right ceases when he dies. But if,

in the framework of his funeral rites, the wife's group makes an offering of her corpse or that of one of her children, the group acquires a permanent right on a share of the land. This is not a commercial transaction. The particular method of killing causes the victim to be identified with the deceased man and, as a consequence, to be affiliated to his group. Through a logic which combines the efficacy of a sacrificial rite with local conceptions of the transmission of the substances constituting the identity of persons or groups, the victim's descendants cease to be outsiders. It so happens that the logic governing land rights also operates in the transmission of rights on the *malanggan* ritual objects, these being themselves representations of the clan's identity. Human sacrifice played the same role.

With these elements in hand, the investigation returns to the village which was the site of this cargo cult and shows that the sacrifices were meant to give a victim 'to the White people's *malanggan*' so as to create a spiritual kinship leading to a sharing of the wealth. Once again the cluster of available details has a number of aspects. We find a mythology peculiar to this village as well as the familiar theme of the cargo sent to the Black men by the Whites, but also an unexpected sequel to the classic story: once the Whites had learned to manufacture the wealth they had captured, this wealth became a symbol of their identity, and the cult conceived a sacrifice aimed at the Whites, at the White people's *malanggan*, which would gain them affiliation to this source. Another surprise: the wealth was comprised essentially of ... books. The word 'to write' is formed from '*malanggan*': the capture through affiliation in accordance with a traditional ritual of a specifically White knowledge, which nevertheless was part of the wealth stolen from the New Irelanders' ancestors. Is this to say that communication — at least in writing — has become possible between Melanesians and Europeans?

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The second set of texts presents the process of establishing a communal identity in which we see simultaneously the affirmation of the singularity of many fragmented small groups and an investment in a collective identity which is taking and changing shape at a rapid pace.

The Aboriginal peoples of Australia descend from over four hundred different language groups. In the 1960s, the term Aboriginal (written until then in French with a small *a*), a term remaining from a colonial segregationist discourse, acquired a capital A and became the emblem of a new identity, which stressed the ancestral customs, but also an instrument of resistance and the advancement, in particular, of demands for the recognition of ancestral land rights. As it grew, the notion of collectivity paradoxically also reinforced a new assertion of the singularity of the different local groups, which redefined themselves only partially in terms of traditional elements.

Inclusion in a larger identity can be explicit, engaged or political, like the notion of 'Aboriginal'. It can also be implicit, giving rise locally to a few comments, as when a member of one of the twelve linguistic groups comprising the Anga culture zone in Papua New Guinea discovered and remarked on the initiation or marriage practices of another group a few valleys away. But here too awareness of a certain similarity with more-or-less distant neighbours is expressed, and the regional government is there as a reminder. The chief discourse, however, is that of the observer. He knows from the linguistic and genetic studies

and from comparing the features central to their social organisation, that the Anga constitute a single culture, as far back as their history can be traced. The term 'Anga', however, is a recent invention, referring to an entity whose exact boundaries are known only to anthropologists, a few politicians and a handful of patrol officers. Furthermore, no sooner is this unity affirmed by the analysis than the field of investigation finds itself awash in diversity. Yet the differences present a systematic character revealed by a process of observation which alternates between the most comparative point of view and the most local, so as to pin down the different levels of Anga identity.

In the present example, the anthropologist's knowledge contributes to the construction of at least part of this vision of identity. This is also the case in Australia: earlier anthropological work, like the opinions of experts called upon to testify in land-rights cases, is used to define, with the plaintiffs, the references of the 'group' pressing its claim. In Polynesia, the role of the anthropologist can be even more marked when he is an ethno-archaeologist trying to unearth forgotten food-growing practices — cultivation pits in this case — which the population reinvests with a both new and rediscovered identity. The example comes from the Tuamotu archipelago.

Some twenty years ago in Australia, the word 'Aboriginal' acquired a capital A. Barbara Glowczewski-Barker explains why and gives us an ethno-history of relations between Europeans and Aboriginal peoples. The notion of 'Aboriginal', left over from the colonial discourse, today is based on a double claim to identity: a persistent identity (identification by language, beliefs and ancestral songlines) and a resistant identity (revision of the official history of contact, land-right claims, critique of exclusion and exploitation). In addition to this pan-Aboriginal policy and ethic, new values stress the singularity of local identities, in which one can see a redefinition if not a reinvention of tradition.

Land claims are a priority for Aboriginal peoples. Recognition of a native title which would confirm once and for all that the Aboriginals are the original owners of the land has become a question of principle. But could any one authority legitimately represent all groups concerned? In addition, non-Aboriginals obviously reject the idea of a national treaty which would ratify any division of the nation. This has become a burning question since, for the first time in their history, a court case (the 'Mabo case' from the name of the representative of a group of Torres Strait Islanders) recognised an Aboriginal group's native title on lands.

When studying Aboriginal identity, one usually forgets the specificity of 'essentialist' indigenous theories, no doubt because these are so complicated. Glowczewski-Barker presents an enlightening exposé. In Australia, the spirit-child traditionally transmits 'essences' which identify the child in spirit and flesh with its kinsmen, but also with natural species and with places. It is this 'elsewhere' which links a person 'from the inside' to his or her ancestors and to certain animals and plants. The body not only gives each person their humanness and singularity, their individual and collective identities, it also comprises 'essences' which surpass the human dimension. The famous but often badly understood question of the 'Dreaming' concerns these ties, which identify an individual with an itinerary, with places and with natural species as well as with other individuals.

As for the boundaries between tribal identities, these used to be under constant negotiation, subject to encounters and alliances between various groups, owing to the

kinship system, to the exchanges of goods, but also to the exchanges of rituals and narratives which thus connected the itineraries with the places associated with them. This confirmed the singularities of a filiation common to humans, ancestors and places: the alliances preserved or negotiated these singularities. Despite being relegated to reserves, some Aboriginal people have managed to establish a wide circulation of an increasingly large number of rituals elaborated so as to include various changes induced by colonisation. This accelerated circulation has not resulted in a uniformisation of beliefs but, on the contrary, in the constitution of the varied local versions into a new body of mythical-historical lore.

Aboriginal laws have a long and often tragic history, running from apartheid to 'self-management', by way of assimilation; the latter has taken several forms, for example, 'whitening' (the separation of half-caste girls from their families and marrying them to 'quadroon' boys), etc. Today the notion of Aboriginal has positive connotations and, for Aboriginal people themselves, the dichotomy between 'half-caste and full blood' no longer describes skin colour or the amount of Aboriginal blood in their veins, but life-styles and ways of thinking, (those who opt for an Aboriginal life-style being known as 'full-bloods' and those who live in town, in the White world, being called half-caste<sup>26</sup>). Activists using Aboriginal roots as a reference, call all people of mixed blood 'Aboriginal'.

The debate between religion and ethnic identity is also a major thread running through the issue of Aboriginality. Aboriginal spirituality is based on a network of links between individuals, their lands and their myths; but this network does not relate to the Aboriginal groups or to the land of Australia as a whole. The Aboriginal notion of 'place' stands in opposition to the Christian idea of universal space. Furthermore Christianisation was violently imposed (children were removed from their parents) and went hand in hand with a ban on a number of traditional practices, thus destroying one whole dimension of what it meant to attain adulthood as well as the representations of the gender roles. In addition the ban on mixed marriage resulted at times in the destitution of paternal authority and, for the youngest, in a lack of identification, phenomena which contributed largely to the development of alcoholism and delinquency.

After the 'Mabo case', the passage of a federal 'Mabo law' and the institution of a set of special courts, one might have thought that the land-rights question was headed in the right direction. But the States brought in their own laws as a check on the federal decisions. Even so, today 'reconciliation' is encouraged and the recognition of a history free of a simplistic and unilateral vision. The reconciliation commission is looking for inspiration in the territorial rights treaties recently passed with the Maori in New Zealand or with the Indians in Canada, and activists are starting to promote a many-faceted aboriginality and to develop ties with other indigenous peoples in the Pacific, whether within the framework of the UN or in the Festival of the Pacific, etc.

In Melanesia it is the Anga culture group which provides a glimpse into two dimensions of identity: a regional dimension, with the article by Pierre Lemonnier, who asks in what way the twelve Anga language groups constitute a specific culture representative of an original mode of social organisation, and a local dimension, with the contribution by Pascale Bonnemère, who, in counterpoint to Lemonnier's article, examines a specific attribute of personhood in one of these groups.

By looking into the various definitions of the Anga culture group, which inhabits the Highlands of PNG, Lemonnier also raises a methodological problem that cannot be avoided for a region like New Guinea, which counts no fewer than 850 languages and over 1000 tribes or local groups. Seeking to discover what — technical systems, language, way of exploiting nature, social organisation — in various areas distinguishes the Anga from the other human groups in the great island, the author demonstrates that the specificity of this set of groups, that is its identity in the eyes of anthropologists, results from an original combination of practices and representations consistently found in all the tribes of this group.

Lemonnier's article also presents itself as a defence and illustration of the use of comparative models in Melanesian anthropology. He shows how a constant give-and-take between the detailed ethnography of individual societies and the descriptive models of various 'types' of economic and social organisations encountered in New Guinea enables us at once to refine our knowledge of Anga societies (and of 'Great-Men' societies, of which one Anga group, the Baruya, furnishes the prototype) and to specify how they contrast with other New Guinea systems (Big-Men societies, the system found on the island's southern coast). By the way war, male initiations and gender relations dominate social life and, above all, constantly refer back and forth to each other, the set of Anga societies provides a rigorous illustration of the social logics which Godelier has shown to lie at the heart of the world of 'Great Men'. This social landscape stands in sharp contrast to those societies a few hundred kilometres away which focus on Big Men, organisers of large-scale exchanges of pigs and shells. Among the Anga, who do not practice intergroup ceremonial exchanges, the great warriors, the masters of the initiations and, to a lesser extent, the shaman healers, are the 'Great Men' who occupy the principal political positions. Nevertheless, as Lemonnier stresses, in several of these groups, the use of wealth differs measurably from that observed among the Baruya, so that, in view of the ethnographic material now available on other Anga groups, one point of the model based on the Baruya case needs modifying: rather than limited use of wealth in marriages, it is the compartmentalisation of the exchanges in which these items are used which opposes 'Great-Men' societies to the Big-Men systems. Which in turn means that the question of the absence of large-scale economic exchanges and of political status linked to the manipulation of wealth in the Anga groups must be recast. And the debate is relaunched.

The third part of the study deals with the ways in which the Anga go about defining themselves and constructing an ethnic or tribal identity. We see how the same institutions, practices and behaviours which struck anthropologists by their consistency among the Anga, but also because they were the opposite of logics observed in other parts of New Guinea, are precisely those elements which enable each tribe to perceive itself as different from its neighbours and which reproduce its identity.

Pascale Bonnemère analyses the name-forms used by the Ankave. Personal names provide a way to investigate the definition of personal identity. Detailed examination of the names of all inhabitants of one valley revealed the rules underlying their construction. It appears that these rules are fundamentally different depending on whether the person is a man or a woman. Not only do the elements which go into most of the names given to either

sex refer to different realities (clan versus toponym or bird names, for example), their structures, too, obey opposite logics. Men's names situate the individual with respect to his genealogy — they mention certain ancestral clans — and to time, while women's names refer rather to the space and territory of a single clan, her father's. Bonnemère compares these differences with the specific features of the Ankave kinship system: the differences in personal names according to the gender of the person named, like the practice of using another name form, the 'name of endearment', which depends chiefly on the mother's clan.

But Ankave personal names display other features than gender difference, and their analysis enables us to advance the question of personhood in this society. Chief among these characteristics is homonymy: several people can have the same name. This implies that the name is not where the Ankave have chosen to express the individual's most personal attributes. Another specificity lies in the system used for naming siblings, which gives younger children the same name as the eldest and simply tacking on a qualifier of birth order. Analysis of the names of several sets of siblings reveals that same-sex classificatory siblings (close or distant cousins) are considered to possess a greater degree of sameness than opposite-sex real siblings (brothers and sisters).

In the context of the changes Ankave society has been experiencing of late, it seems that these two characteristics will have opposite effects on the evolution of the naming system. The Ankave's penchant for homonymy leaves them perfectly free to adopt Biblical names, the limited number of which inevitably leads to repetition. But these names do not readily lend themselves to the addition of a qualifier of birth order. It is therefore most likely that the Ankave will continue for a long time to use personal names and other forms of address as their ancestors did.

This second set of texts ends with an example from Polynesia containing one very special feature. The role played by the researcher-observer was decisive here. Jean-Michel Chazine gives us 'an attempt at participant ethno-archaeology' in Tuamotu. The Tuamotu archipelago is comprised of atolls, which form a very special environment owing to a number of problematic natural conditions. For the ethno-archaeologist, their interest lies in permitting a time-study of the relationship between these natural conditions and the past and present adaptability of the inhabitants of these atolls. The author tells us how conducting this general study ultimately led to an altogether original experiment: following an attempt on the part of the researchers at rehabilitating some old cultivation pits, at a time when local food sources had almost entirely disappeared from the atolls, a few inhabitants took the initiative of using the old and new techniques placed at their disposal by these researchers to create their own subsistence gardens.

At the outset, a double approach had been decided on which combined environmental analysis (sea-level fluctuations, climatic conditions, growth rate of the outer reef, etc.) with properly anthropological analyses (interviews, collecting oral traditions, etc.). Subsequent field observation made it possible to take into consideration the widespread remains of old cultivation practices, embodied in the cultivation pits. In former times, these pits enabled the inhabitants to grow what were probably large quantities of taros just above the water table, thus providing the islanders with a ready supply of food. This is all the more interesting since, on the one hand, the Tuamotu atolls have long been reputed to be almost

totally non-productive — if one excepts the growing of coconuts, introduced by the Europeans — and, on the other hand, today's inhabitants, having become entirely dependent on outside resources, now exhibit serious nutritional deficiencies. The idea of refurbishing these cultivation pits gradually gained ground: the goal was to use these pits to demonstrate 'the important autochthonous food-producing potential', and a program was developed by the research team. In addition to mapping the pits, this consisted in interviewing elderly inhabitants who were 'eye-witnesses or themselves possessors of ancestral knowledge' in the hope of recovering the cultivation techniques formerly used in these pits. The experimental rehabilitation, planned to last at least two years, was accompanied by a program of demonstrations and audio-visual displays geared to the inhabitants and explaining the complete arsenal of old and modern techniques available to them.

Despite the many problems (presence of plant-eating crabs on the floor of the pits and difficulty obtaining taro shoots, notably), the experiment went ahead. But most surprising was that, as the experiment unfolded, a dozen householders took the initiative of establishing their own subsistence gardens using the techniques explained during the experiment. These gardens, made unbeknown to the research team, show how old skills can be reappropriated; but they also indicate that this kind of 'transplant from the past' can take an unexpected turn and totally unforeseen forms.

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The third set of texts deals with western Polynesia. Here the representations of the various identities were elaborated in a particular context: these were societies that had never been colonised (Tonga) or that had known colonial rule for only a short time (Samoa), whose land had never been confiscated, and which had never been chosen for settlement colonies, including a French territory such as Wallis. The analyses also underscore the series of changes that have occurred. These are not, however, the consequences of the 'first contact' — which took place a century and a half or two centuries ago, and sometimes more — they are phenomena resulting from the insertion of these countries into the modern world: the impact of the market economy and money or the encounter between traditional models for managing society and Occidental systems, such as democracy, for instance.

Of the three Polynesian societies considered here, two are now independent States: Tonga and (Western) Samoa. They are nation-States in their own right, members of the United Nations, even if their size has won them the label of 'micro-States'. Both present one very particular feature: the traditional socio-cultural unit — 'ethnic' group as it used to be called (at least from the linguistic standpoint and from the point of view of their origin myths, obligations and prohibitions, which all have a number of points in common) — coincides with the new political entity — the State. It is a bit as though each of the hundreds of 'tribes' in New Guinea had become a separate State rather than all being gathered into what is today Papua-New Guinea. These States thus have the means — in terms of ability to represent what their identity is or 'should be' — to cope with the changes that they can avoid no more than anyone else. It should therefore be no surprise, for instance, that cargo cults were virtually non-existent and that today the chief problem, among others, is how to realise

the coexistence of democratic values with traditional chiefdoms. As for Wallis, which together with the island of Futuna, makes up the French overseas territory of Wallis-and-Futuna, its ties with France clearly pose their own problems of identity, unknown in Tonga or Samoa, and which call for a separate study. Nevertheless, as we will see, even in Wallis there are strong identity signposts, based on tradition but also open to integrating certain aspects of modern culture. This is the case, in particular, of the objects circulated ceremonially; and in this matter, Wallis and Tonga can be considered together.

Françoise Douaire-Marsaudon shows us, for instance, that in both Tonga and Wallis, the ceremonial objects which, from time immemorial, have borne the signs of this identity are still the focus of village life: the food items and 'riches' (tapa and mats) which drive the exchanges at an undiminished rate — which may have even increased with the entry of paper money into the circuit and thus the possibility of buying pigs and mats to circulate. Ever since Mauss', *Essai sur le don* (1925), theories on ceremonial gift-exchange in Polynesia have enjoyed a certain popularity. Yet most of the studies use the example of New Zealand's Maori people. The objects and practices involved in ceremonial gift-exchange in Tonga and Wallis reveal features which are at the same time different and the same. Starting from the study of specific cases drawn from field material and history, Douaire-Marsaudon shows first of all that some of these objects, like food and wealth, function, in the representational system of the societies in question, as individual and collective tokens of identity. But these tokens of identity are not merely static emblems for the individuals and the groups. The author demonstrates that they are no doubt called to represent the individuals and the groups as they are engaged in 'becoming', and she points out some of the implications of this dynamic aspect of these representations of identity; at the same time, she discusses new ways of giving which seem to make a complete break with the traditional conception of gift-exchange.

Food and wealth are not only the primary objects exchanged ceremonially, they are also strongly 'gendered' objects: in both Tonga and Wallis, food is produced, cooked and presented by the men, while 'riches' — essentially mats, barkcloth and coconut oil — are prepared, manufactured and offered by the women. Polynesia is renowned for the considerable quantities of food, especially pig meat and tubers,<sup>27</sup> which can be accumulated for a gift-giving ceremony. The stacking, distribution and collective consumption of these food items have a variety of functions: affirming oneself as a group, establishing or reestablishing relations disrupted by some event (death, birth, transmission of a title, a chief's visit, or today the swearing-in of a member of Parliament).

The 'riches' are mainly objects manufactured by women: lengths of barkcloth, mats and coconut oil. These used to be made by commoners, together with and under the direction of women from the aristocracy who controlled them. Among the aristocracy, certain fine mats and tapas, duly embossed with individual insignia, were passed down from generation to generation and made up the 'treasure' of the *kainga* group, while others circulated between groups, all of which corresponds to Annette Weiner's definition of the paradox of 'keeping-while-giving' or even Godelier's 'keeping-for-giving'.<sup>28</sup> Today the manufacture of these 'riches' has become more democratic, but the noble families still preserve and transmit their highly valuable objects. Thus these female gift-objects are both

wealth, 'signs' of wealth and 'talismans' — to borrow Mauss's expression (1925) — believed to attract more 'riches'.

In Tonga as in Wallis, food and wealth are always displayed and given together. Formerly, and to a large extent even today, these gifts were the sign of the debt underpinning the reciprocal obligations between a chief and his people. Today as yesterday, they measure the status and the wealth of the exchange groups, and in other parts of the world, such exchanges often assume a strongly agonistic character.<sup>29</sup> But above all the author stresses the meaning of these male and female gift-objects, located in the traditional system of representations of the life cycle: she interprets them as being held to represent not only the productive or creative capacities of the men and women of the groups present, but also the promise of life carried by these women and men and hence the token of the continuity of generations.

Alongside the traditional food and 'riches', other objects, from the West, have appeared in more recent times, in particular hard currency. And yet, all these items, including the money, which have come to be included in ritual gift-giving, are vested with the same function as the traditional objects. Certain new practices however are altering the logic of gift-giving by making it a means of personal enrichment. The author wonders about the coexistence of apparently entirely contradictory values within the same set of social practices.

We are still in Tonga with the text of Marie-Claire Bataille-Benguigui and Georges Benguigui. The authors show us how, in a Polynesian society where traditional hierarchy still plays a crucial role, aspirations to a new way of managing society and its conflicts — known as democracy — are beginning to emerge. Behind the demands for democracy, we also catch a glimpse of the issue of identity.

Although the present political regime is far from being a model of democracy, it represents the efforts of a nineteenth-century ruler, regarded as the founding father of Tonga, to protect this country from the voracity of the great powers by endowing it with a European-style Constitution containing the first affirmations of democracy and individual rights. By preaching that all people are equal before God, the Christian Churches also helped sow the seeds of equality and individualism. These continued to grow with Tonga's entry into the capitalist market economy and its mutation into a consumer society. Other facts too played a role in the emergence of the democracy debate: the growing demand for education, large-scale Tongan emigration, the birth of a so-called 'middle' class and the appearance of an intelligentsia. The pro-democracy movement crystallised around a newsletter and a group of leaders — often teachers — from middle-class backgrounds.

At the outset, the opposition denounced excesses and corruption in general. A second phase opened with the demand to oversee the activities of the government ministers — almost all nobles — a much more 'sacrilegious' exigency in the eyes of the traditionalists. A third phase began with the calling of a massive Convention, inviting all of Tonga's intellectuals and religious leaders living at home or abroad. This Convention ended with a call for a new Constitution which would limit the king's function to an apolitical role, thus provoking a split in the opposition between those who, desirous of reform, still supported the monarchy, and the others who challenged the idea.

The identity debate broke out over the 'passports' affair, in which the government had sold, at fabulous prices, the Tongan passport to citizens of Asian countries in a 'delicate' or

precarious situation. Following a series of petitions and mass demonstrations, the government was forced to call an emergency meeting of the Parliament to 'regularise' the affair by constitutional amendment.

One measures in this instance the distinctive nature of these States. Their smallness (Tonga numbers 100,000 inhabitants) means that news spreads fast and that a government cannot conceal its actions for long. Furthermore, their already long history of contact but also a tradition of reciprocal obligations between chiefs and subjects result in the formulation of a certain number of demands for democracy in political life. At the same time, owing to the sentiment that the existence of sacred chiefs rests on a millennia-old tradition, any clever appeal, in case of conflict, to a transcendent reference is still effective. Thus today many members of the democratic opposition do not want to hear about any revolution which might topple the royal family by force.

That is why, running through all these debates, we see various ideas which may even seem contradictory. Intermixed with the question of Tonga's identity, we find elements of xenophobia. Some of the most fervent supporters of democratisation have at times taken the defence of tradition. Alternatively, a good many churchmen are highly critical. Royalists oppose Western-style democracy to traditional Tongan consensus. Here, too, the debate is complex because, in Tonga, consensus depends on a distinction between nobles and commoners which gives the former an absolute majority in parliamentary decisions.<sup>30</sup> Lastly, the question of economic development has produced some unexpected alliances: the king and certain nobles involved in business have turned out to be fervid supporters of rapid development, while the opposition leader leans towards a slow-paced economic program which would take into consideration Tonga's specificities.<sup>31</sup>

The two authors have collected a large number of quotations from recent stands taken by the various protagonists. They thus provide a very direct picture of the ideological complexity of the ongoing debates. We see how the usual analytical notions of 'syncretism' and 'acculturation' must be set aside. Tongans are well aware of what, on the one hand, the tradition of 'being Tongan' and, on the other, Western values mean for them, and they express their opinion: 'I want to be a modern man and a Tongan, not a modern man who happens to live in Tonga'. Another makes substantially the following analysis: freedom is what people are looking for, therefore democracy is good because of the freedom it contains; but freedom is more important than democracy; now this democracy, when it is 'Lincoln's democracy', leads to political parties and from there opens the way for a new logic of people dominating each other.

The States of this region thus challenge the analysis and ask it to refine its concepts: for one thing, the traditional hierarchical organisation can contain a discrepancy with regard to the idea of political inequality. The first makes the superior the source of the inferior's authority, whereas in inequality the superior and the inferior have simply different access, more or less, to the source of power, which is established or imported from outside. In Tonga, and to an even greater degree in Samoa, a divine-right or ancestral authority, to be brief, based on genealogical ties (a link between the ancestors of the two ranked individuals) does not seem to be experienced in the same way as an authority established by democratic vote. The first is visible because it was already there (even if certain circumstances are needed

to reveal or to underscore it — this is the logic of *mana*); the second is unpredictable, subject to the whims of opinion and alliances of the moment. In a word, the first is divine, the second merely human. This is why the debates unfolding in these countries over a switch to a Western-style system of government are much more complex than they might seem: it is not simply a matter of replacing an inequality with an equality.

Serge Tcherkézoff describes the situation in (Western) Samoa. As we mentioned in passing, it presents a number of parallels with the Tongan case when it comes to the ongoing political and economic debate. Although Samoa does not have a royal family but a State, with a head of State, an elected Parliament and a government chosen from the Parliament, the situation is comparable in a somewhat multiplied form. Here the sacred chiefs are all heads of extended families, enthroned in the name of the family founding ancestor: there are over 10,000 of these chiefs (for a population of 160,000). No distinction is made between ‘noble’ and ‘commoner’ families, but one is made between those individuals selected by their extended family to carry the ancestor’s name (who, from that moment on ‘are’ the founding ancestor) and the rest. To be elected and thus become the (family) ‘chief’ or *matai* is not a matter of birthright; the family chooses from among all the descendants according to their assessment of the candidate’s capacity to represent the family with dignity in the ceremonial exchanges (oratory, ability to organise work in the gardens but also to amass sums of money, with the abuses such criteria can entail).

The Constitution, voted at Independence, follows the British model in terms of individual rights, but not for elections: only the *matai* can vote and run for Parliament. This is the reason for the debate between tradition and ‘democracy’. It is thus a very specific debate, but the ideological positions are similar to those mentioned for Tonga. Does access to political democracy imply the total abolition of the *matai* system? If this were the case, few would support the project because it would mean calling into question the form of society represented by the extended family. This notion of family is the basis of village organisation — the country is essentially one big set of villages — and above all, the keystone of the land-holding system: there is scarcely any private ownership of the land, and 80 per cent of the country is comprised of so-called ‘family’ lands, managed collectively by the extended family, the sole ‘owners’ being the ancestors who entrust their management to the *matai*. Nevertheless, the present government is moving towards private ownership, something also demanded by the ‘development’ advisors. This is why the opposition numbers a good share of the country’s ‘great’ *matai* and their families, that is extended families whose genealogy goes way back (and who therefore contain a greater number of members who recognise each other as descending from common ancestors). One of the first steps taken by the government was to redefine eligibility to vote, which recently has been extended to anyone aged twenty-one and over; only *matai*, however, can stand for election.

Because the *matai* system is the backbone of the family organisation and the land-holding system, as Tcherkézoff’s text stresses, the debate is as heated here as it is in Tonga. To do away with this organisation so as to establish a full electoral democracy would be to bring about as fundamental a transformation as a switch from a monarchy to a republic would in Tonga. There would be more equality, but more inequality as well, some say. There would be a rich/poor divide for access to the land, whereas today no one is without. A division would grow up between the political class, accustomed to parliamentary give-and-take and to

election campaigns, and those whose upbringing rests primarily on traditional principles and family customs. Here people also mention the fact that the *matai* in Parliament is constantly under the eye of his family and village constituency, which can revoke his *matai* title at any time (and therefore his seat in Parliament): that, some say, is true democracy.

The study also analyses the different periods of change. For the democracy debate is only the latest in a long series. It contains elements which shed light on the first contact, at the time of the missionaries' arrival. When it comes to identity, the analysis distinguishes the way the inhabitants express their belonging (1) to a 'Samoan' culture, *FaaSamoa*, which extends beyond the borders of western Samoa, (2) to a social system, *faamatai* (the *matai* system with all its ramifications, organising a sort of universal hierarchy) and (3) to an independent State, Samoa. These three areas of belonging operate simultaneously, but in spaces which only partially overlap.

Tcherkézoff also raises a general question of methodology for the study of social change. What is needed is a two-level model. At present the Samoan government is facing crucial choices for the country's future. The method proposed makes it possible to foresee some of the consequences. First of all there needs to be an analysis of the different facets of identity (cultural, social, national) over a period of time during which the 'encompassing' values of identity are unchanged (the references which made it unthinkable for some of those concerned that certain relations could ever be reversed). These areas, because they are the most global system of belonging for everyone, represent the first level of the model. In these domains, various concomitant facts can be juxtaposed whose simultaneous presence is contradictory only on a second level, where it creates a sort of space in which the superiorities are indeed inverted, but which remains encompassed by the broader space of the initial references. A host of imported technical objects and monetary practices have thus entered into Samoan society without calling the *matai* system into question. Another change which can occur without producing a fundamental transformation: the new element is directly identified with the encompassing references and placed, without creating a contradiction, on the first level. This is obviously more unusual, but it occurred in the case of the integration of the missionaries: they were ascribed a role of sacred authority with regard to the village, a role which was perfectly identified as that of the sister with respect to her brother when he is a *matai*. Other seemingly innocent modifications introduce elements at the second level which subsequently enter into direct contradiction with the encompassing relations, since the values they create resist inclusion (encompassment) in the pre-existing space, but this contradiction becomes apparent only gradually. This is the case, for example, of any change involving land rights or anything which might destroy the ranked unity of the two basic Samoan principles, in which the principle of family-village organisation (the *matai* system of *faamatai*) encompasses the political organisation (voting laws and the principle of government power, *malo*). In some cases, what is intended as a 'technical' change can lead, through a series of unforeseen consequences, to a fundamental ideological transformation — a modification of the representations of identity, an obliteration of certain encompassing relationships which ensured the individual's belonging. This kind of reflection is necessary for countries which are today massively asking themselves the question of identity in the form of 'what kind of society for tomorrow?'

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The situations illustrated by the three sets of articles tells us, in sum, that the cargo won't be coming after all. Those who believed in its imminent arrival, because they had discovered that the world was bigger than their island or their valley, lost all hope when the Europeans departed; today they have altered their expectations and are themselves building different cargo. Those trying to cope with newly enlarged or remodelled identities are experiencing other difficulties and creating other, new forms of hope for the future, such as seizing control of their own land or controlling the economic circuits rather than being controlled by them. And those who saw the wealth arrive two hundred years ago, those who explained to the Whites that, in their language, those things which are 'true', 'effective' and 'divine' are all part of the same notion, *mana*,<sup>32</sup> have long since understood that the holds of the European sailing ships were empty of 'true' wealth and full of bogus wealth. Thus, when Polynesians claim Christianity or democracy for their own, they make them part of their tradition: they feel they know the 'true' meaning of these values, an originally imported one — they admit — but which has long since been transformed by the *mana* of these societies which lived and continue to live on these islands in the Pacific Ocean.

The texts collected in this volume take an *anthropological* approach to the variety of societal problems which confront the peoples of the South Pacific today: religious revival, the sociology of relations between local groups, regions and nation-States, the problem of culture areas, the place of democracy in the transition of States founded on sacred chiefdoms, the role of ceremonial exchanges in a market economy, and so forth. All of these questions call for an anthropological outlook in the sense of a truly *interdisciplinary* approach by what are called the 'social sciences', and above all in the sense of a priority given, through long and repeated fieldwork, to the interpretation of lived experience, what the French term the *vécu*: acts, thoughts and attitudes exhibited and voiced by those confronted with these questions.

The ambition of the present book is to inform the reader about the *contemporary realities experienced* by the inhabitants of this region, with a view to contributing to an *intercultural dialogue* between the reader and these inhabitants, and not with the sole aim of encyclopedic knowledge. It would be of no use to learn that, in such and such a South Pacific country there are cargo cults, astonishing naming systems or an animated debate over democracy, if at the same time one did not become aware of the place occupied by these social facts in daily thinking, in these inhabitants' vision of themselves, when they wonder, not without some anxiety, about their future and their identity.<sup>33</sup>

## Footnotes

- 1 See Worsley (1977).
- 2 Details on this example can be found in Lindstrom's book (1993), which traces the notion of 'cargo' through the discourses of missionaries, colonisers, anthropologists and local movements.
- 3 The French traditionally speak of *Océanie*: a geographical and culture area. Today there is a tendency to follow the more frequent local use of the English term, 'Pacific': when countries in the area meet, the speeches evoke the Pacific peoples (see below, the Pacific Way, a well-known expression of identity). Our stopovers are located in the southern part of this region: the South Pacific. Researchers working on this area continue to be known as 'Oceanists' though, in both English and French.
- 4 Which was already the case in an earlier book devoted to the comparative approach to Polynesia, part of the contents of which coincides with the themes developed in the present volume (Hooper and Huntsman, eds., 1985; for the notion of change, see Anthony Hooper's Introduction, pp. 8 and 10).
- 5 See Babadzan (1982), Baré (1987), Biersack (ed. 1991), Bonnemaïson (1986), Borofsky (1987, ed. 1994), Carrier (ed. 1992), Davidson (1966), Denning (1966, 1980), Friedman (1981, 1985), Godelier (1984, 1991, ed. 1991), Hau'ofa *et al.* (eds. 1993), Hooper and Huntsman (eds. 1985), Howard (1990), Howard and Borofsky (eds. 1989), Keesing and Jolly (1992), Linnekin (1991a), Linnekin and Poyer (eds. 1990), Robillard (ed. 1992), Sahlins (1981, 1987, 1995), Thomas (1989), Tonkin *et al.* (eds. 1989), Valeri (1982), White (1991); as well as *op. cit.* below in notes 14-19.
- 6 See 'Acknowledgments' and, at the end of this volume, 'Biographies'.
- 7 It should be borne in mind that South Pacific ethnography was determining for the pioneers of French anthropology: this was true for M. Mauss, for his teacher E. Durkheim (in his last period), for his companions, like H. Hubert, with whom Mauss wrote so many pages on magic in Melanesia, for his young colleagues like R. Hertz, who carried out a detailed analysis of Maori practices (see below). The recasting of the notions of forbidden and sacred, the revision of Australian totemism, of the ceremonial circulation of gifts in Melanesia and Polynesia, as well as the concept of *mana*, borrowed from these same culture areas, are all well known. *Mana*, a term that is both Polynesian and Melanesian, is an active, mobile force capable of assuming any shape. It is rooted in the representation shared by all individuals of belonging to a group which defines their identity; this sharing leads to the idea of a sacred element constitutive of the group (whether or not this idea takes the form of a spirit, a god or an ancestor); this 'sacred' component is then ascribed the power to occupy objects (or people) which, at some point or other, represent the group as a whole in the eyes of each of its members (see Durkheim 1968 [1912]; Hertz 1970 [1928], etc.; Mauss 1904, 1906, 1925; for more on *mana* one can also consult Fournier 1994 and Tcherkézoff 1991, 1995a).
- 8 See the historical, geographical and social atlas published by Antheaume and Bonnemaïson (1988).
- 9 The first aim was to let other parts of the world know that Pacific basin cultures have a tradition of reaching political decisions by 'consensus' (in contrast to majority rule), which is a way of making peace between diverging views, whereas voting ratifies the victory of one group over another (on the logic of consensus, see Chapter 12, this volume and the reference in note 12, below). A few photos of the Hawaiian trip appeared in the magazine *Poliata* (1995, n°1, Apia, W. Samoa).
- 10 See Crocombe (1976).
- 11 Furthermore, today we know (Hooper, 'Introduction', in Hooper and Huntsman 1985) just how artificial these great cultural divisions are and how they were exaggerated by a typological division which took an external view (Burrows 1939; Goldman 1955; Sahlins 1958), and how the same authors sometimes later replaced these views with a 'structural' comparison of the socio-cultural forms which, on the contrary, show the unity of the Pacific cultures — the case of Fiji, geographically situated on the borderline of the former dichotomy, is a prime example (Sahlins 1962, 1987).
- 12 The Prime Minister of the Cooks explained, in 1975, how even when all the regional heads of State but one were in agreement on a decision, they felt they had to continue talking until they achieved unanimity, at least nominally, rather than force the result by the logic of numerical advantage (see Crocombe 1976: 15-17 for this and other examples of the value of 'unanimous compromise' in defining the Pacific Way).
- 13 See Panoff (1991: 3).
- 14 On the consequences of Western-style development, see Lockwood *et al.* (eds. 1993) and Tcherkézoff (1992b).

- 15 See Keesing and Tonkinson (1982), Linnekin (1983), Hanson (1989), Keesing (1989), Linnekin and Poyer (1990), Trask (1991), Keesing (1991), van der Grijp and van Meijl (1993), Friedman (1993), Otto and Thomas (1997), Babadzan (1999).
- 16 See Trask (1991).
- 17 See Jolly and Thomas (1992), van der Grijp and van Meijl (1993), van Meijl and van der Grijp (1994).
- 18 See Keesing (1989), Linnekin and Poyer (1990), Tonkin *et al.* (eds. 1989; the Introduction presents a detailed study of the notion).
- 19 See Aiono (1992) and all of the articles in *Culture and Democracy in the South Pacific*, Crocombe *et al.* (eds. 1992); see Hau'ofa (1994), Hau'ofa *et al.* (eds. 1993), Jourdan and Philibert (1994), Lockwood *et al.* (eds. 1993), as well as the many articles by public figures in the Pacific published regularly in *The Contemporary Pacific*, a successful journal launched in 1989 by the Center for Pacific Island Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.
- 20 With the exception of J.-P. Latouche (CNRS), who worked on genealogies as 'mythistory' (Latouche 1984).
- 21 On this point, see a recent article in the *Pacific Islands Monthly* (Barber 1994).
- 22 At least before B. Glowczewski, who presents the case of Australia here (see Chapter 6, this volume, and some of her recent publications 1999, 2002, 2004), to which must be added the work of Marika Moisseeff on the cultural objects which play a central role in reproducing the identity of Aboriginal groups (see Moisseeff 1989, 1994, 1995).
- 23 As in the case of Australia, the work on western Polynesia is of recent date and is published by the authors present in this volume (see Chapters 10–12). We add that the comparative work on identity and changes in the region began with the special issue of *Etudes rurales* devoted to the status of land in the Pacific, which constitutes a veritable collective work (in which most of the present contributors appear; see Baré, ed. 1992); it is well known how important, for these societies, land is as a fundamental source of identity: 'It is the land that owns the people' (and not the other way around), they say in the Pacific (on this theme, see Chapter 1).
- 24 See Juillerat (1993).
- 25 Along the border with Irian Jaya (the western half of New Guinea, under Indonesian rule).
- 26 The very same history could be traced in western Polynesia for the word *afakasi* ('half-caste').
- 27 Yams, taros, sweet potatoes in Tonga and Wallis; taros in Tikopia, Anuta, Futuna, Samoa; breadfruit in Tahiti.
- 28 See Weiner (1992), Godelier (1994, 1996: 50ff).
- 29 The author disagrees on this point with the interpretation of Mauss (1925) for whom the Polynesian gift system is not competitive in the potlatch sense.
- 30 In Samoa one hears the same debate about consensus, but this time it is a criticism coming from the opposition, led by the traditional chiefs, against the present government's adherence to the principle of the majority rule and its consequences.
- 31 The same split today in Samoa pits the government, closely connected with business, against the opposition.
- 32 See Sahlins (1987: 38) and above, note 7.
- 33 We thank Bernard Juillerat and Pascale Bonnemère who kindly read [in 1995] the [French] draft of this introduction [The reader of this English edition must be aware that this text has been written ten years ago. That is why the Bougainville war is mentioned as current, the Solomon crisis is not mentioned, etc.]