METAPHOR, RITUAL, AND EXPRESSION: THE PERSON IN RAUTO DISCOURSE AND RITUAL PRACTICE

METAPHOR, RITUAL, AND EXPRESSION: THE PERSON IN RAUTO DISCOURSE AND RITUAL PRACTICE

Ву

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Abstract

This thesis discusses the relationship between religious phenomenology and the understanding of speech, and of person which is held by the Rauto, a tribal group of Southwest New Britain, Papua New Guinea. The first two ethnographic chapters of the thesis consist of an analysis of Rauto understanding of (1) the "structures of the person"; and (2) a formal genre of speech called amala wauluke which constitutes an extended commentary on notions of person, language and human agency. In the chapters I establish the notion that, in Rauto understanding, speech and song shape experience by both expressing and shaping the nature of the person.

The next two chapters discuss a category of ritual and of song which Rauto call aurang. Aurang is performed during female and male initiation, and during the collective planting of large gardens of taro. The rituals and songs are said to prompt the growth of young men and women, as well as to enhance the growth of the taro crop. During these ritual events the notion that speech and song both express and effect the physical and moral nature of human beings is literally performed. I conclude the thesis by discussing how concepts of human agency and of person color aspects of the Rauto experience of time, place and the life

of society.

The thesis reflects a general change in interpretive anthropology's understanding of culture. It is shaped by the view that culture is composed of many different forms of discourse, rather than by many different systems of symbols. In the course of the work I suggest that the view of culture as discourse can make it easier to explain the seeming paradoxes and ambiguities of belief, most especially about order and disorder. The particular contribution of the thesis is to suggest a particular way of looking at the relationship between a people's understanding of the nature of language, and its moral imagination. I argue that Rauto views of language represent ways of interpreting the moral nature and capabilities of people.

<u>Acknowledgments</u>

I would like to thank a number of people for helping me to carry out my fieldwork, and to organize my thoughts enough so that I could write this dissertation. First, I would like to thank my supervisor Matthew Cooper for his commitment to me. He was always there when I needed advice and intellectual guidance. His perceptive comments and criticisms of my work were almost always right, and I benefited enormously from them. I would also like to thank him for his tolerance of my approach to anthropology, though it is rather different than his own. I am grateful to John Colarusso and David Counts for their encouragement and support. I am glad that David Counts suggested that I consider West New Britain as a possible place for field research.

Rick Goulden and Bill Thurston have my heartfelt gratitude for teaching me and my wife Coralie, Tok Pisin, and for their corrections of and comments on my various representations of the Rauto language. I am also grateful to Karen I. Blu for offering helpful suggestions and comments on parts of the dissertation, and for supporting me throughout my graduate student career.

My mother and father made it possible for me to study anthropology by offering understanding and financial

and moral support. Though they may not know precisely what anthropology is, it was always more than enough for them to know that anthropology was what I wanted to do. They have my love, and my thanks.

I owe much to my wife Coralie for her steadfastness, her company, her humor and her good spirits and charm. Her help both in the field, and during the period of writing was invaluable. She has shared all the good and the hard times. Kikalme itau ambip.

Finally, I owe a debt beyond words to the Rauto. I consider the period of my fieldwork to have been the most interesting, and personally fulfilling time of my life. I especially wish to thank Komosio, Watetio, Tamal, Parak, Kalapua, Brumio, Lumbat and Rakome for their help and friendship, and for sharing the poetry and the power of their lives with me and Coralie.

I am grateful to the Government of Papua New Guinea, and the West New Britain Provincial Government for allowing me to live and work in Southwest New Britain. Funding for my field research during 1985-86 was generously provided by the Fulbright-Hays program, and I am grateful for the program's support.

Introduction

After having arrived in New Guinea one travels to South West New Britain by first taking a jet from Port Moresby to Kimbe, a new town which has grown up around a government sponsored oil palm project. One then takes a small plane over the rugged mountain range which cuts across the center of the island of New Britain, to Kandrian, where there is a small government station, a mission and a To reach the coastal villages from Kandrian it is necessary to take a motorboat either up or down the coast. In order to visit the bush villages one must take a jeep a few miles up into the interior, and then walk in. stage of this journey has a different character and feel to The sight of government officials and expatriate businessmen taking the plane from Moresby up to Lae reminds one of the forces of change which are taking hold of the country of Papua New Guinea. The sight of whole families and of groups of oil palm workers making the trip to Kimbe is a sign of some of the consequences of change. experience of sharing a small plane with villagers who are

carrying taro, sweet potato and areca nut to their kin on the south coast, highlights the tenacity of the traditional life-ways of the south coast in the face of change. Finally, visiting the villages of the south coast for the first time creates a sense that one has entered a world with rather different values and expectations than one's own.

I had not expected to carry out my fieldwork on the south coast. Originally I had planned to live with and to study a group, called the Lamogai, who live near the center of New Britain. On my arrival in Port Moresby, however, I was told that the New Tribes Mission - an American evangelical group - had established itself in Lamogai and would not look kindly on having an anthropologist take up residence in this area. For a young and rather green anthropologist who was about to undertake his first field trip, and who was not feeling all that confidently to begin with, this was rather disconcerting news. I decided not to think about the news too much, and to push on to Kimbe, where I hoped to be able to assess the situation with more precision.

Once in Kimbe, a government official told me that the provincial government would prefer that I carry out research on the south coast. He suggested a number of possible research sites to me and my wife Coralie, and we set off with these places in mind. I did not however choose

to settle in any of the villages which he suggested.

Rather, I decided to work with a group of south coast people who speak a dialect of Lamogai. In the linguistic literature this group is known as the Rauto.

We decided to settle in the coastal village of
Wasum. My wife and I lived there from October of 1985 until
December of 1986. The village is located on the banks of
the Anu River, which is some thirty kilometers distance from
the government station at Kandrian. Every few weeks we
would make field trips to the bush villages of Ipuk and
Giring which are located some four to five miles inland from
the coast. We would also carry out weekly visits to the
nearby coastal village of Sara.

Like many first time fieldworkers, we had a difficult first few weeks. We made numerous faux pas, and continually felt either put upon, angry, or sorry for ourselves. I also remember often feeling malarial and somewhat diffident. Yet we were fascinated by what we were finding out about the Rauto, and our piqued curiosity kept us going in the difficult early months of research. Certain moments and events of this period remain particularly vivid in my memory since they marked the initial development of a degree of mutual respect and interest between the Rauto and ourselves. For instance, just a few days after our arrival a ceremony to mark the slaughter of a number of tusked pigs

was held. The tuskers had of course first to be rounded up from their hiding places in the bush and carried down to the ceremonial grounds. I remember people's looks of amazement as I ran off after the tuskers with the men who had been asked to capture the pigs. I remember the laughter as people described again and again how I kept faltering as I helped carry the tuskers back to the ceremonial grounds.

In the months just after our arrival we took down genealogies, began compiling a dictionary of Rauto, recorded behavior, and carried out interviews. Initially we worked in Tok Pisin. Only after some seven months in the field did we begin to do some interviewing in the vernacular. During the early months Coralie took the initiative of beginning to record Rauto myths in the vernacular. As she worked on the laborious task of transcribing and translating the myths she began to acquire an understanding of Rauto. She then would teach me what she learned of the language and of the myths. Soon, I tried my hand at transcribing and translation. I then began to collect, and to translate spells and a number of different genres of song. I also took down some life histories.

During this period of intensive text collection I discovered that Rauto elders knew a great number of proverbs and metaphors. I spent a few weeks learning these figures of speech. Being taught the tropes was time consuming and

difficult as the process of their translation had at least four different aspects to it. First I had the metaphoric phrase spelled out for me by my informants. Then the reference of the verbal image which the metaphor created, was described for me. The images described socially and culturally important events, and scenes of life. As I had not seen, and was therefore not familiar with some of these, the scenes had to be described with some degree of depth. Finally, the meaning or moral of the metaphor was explained to me.

The metaphors fascinated me. They seemed to resonate with much that we had seen during our field work, and with much that we had discovered through our translations of other sorts of texts. It was apparent from the metaphors and from the other texts which we had collected that speech and song were extraordinarily important symbols in Rauto culture and were somehow related to concepts of self and person. Yet, I could not put together more than part of the picture of the part which these symbols played in Rauto culture during my time in the field. The work of conceiving the thesis and proceeding with the analysis of the texts took place after I got back from the field. It took place after I began to re-acquaint myself with a particular tradition of anthropological thought. During the period when I wrote the thesis, Maurice

Leenhardt's work <u>Do Kamo</u>, James Clifford's biography of Leenhardt (1982) and the seminal work of Michele Rosaldo (1980), Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Roy Wagner (1978, 1986) provided a steady supply of analogies with my Rauto data, as well as ideas for its interpretation. The works of these authors showed me how to make use of the opportunities afforded to me by the traditions of interpretive anthropology. Partly because of the influence of these works I decided to center the thesis around the Rauto concept of the person.

It was clear that the metaphors which I had translated represented Rauto commentary on the relationship between language and person. Having made this elementary observation I began to see that the understanding which was expressed by the tropes could help explain other salient beliefs and practices. Thus, it provided me with a way of understanding Rauto ritual life and religious phenomenology. It also allowed me to explore systematically Rauto representations of time, of place, and of social continuity. This is basically what I did in the field, and how I came to make sense of what I did. I would like now to discuss, albeit briefly, the character of the fieldwork and some of the things which I would have liked to have done more systematically. I choose to do this here because my explanations can offer further insight into the character of

the text which I have produced.

In my predoctoral research I studied what I would call the formal discourse of Rauto culture: i.e. metaphor, ritual, myth and song. Yet I see now that if I wish to draw a fuller picture of Rauto experience I will have to proceed in future fieldwork to a study of the informal discourse of this culture. By informal discourse I mean life histories, notions of friendship and interpersonal relationships, and concepts of emotion. Such work would allow me to discuss the emotional tone of everyday life more fully than I do To accomplish this it would need to be based on a more reciprocal ethnographic conversation with my Rauto friends than the conversation which forms the foundation of this thesis. The thesis, which is written in a realist style, has the somewhat distant tone of a monologue. style is not unrelated to the way that I carried out the research and to my primary interest in religious phenomenology.

During most of the research Rauto men and women taught me about their culture, in response to my sometimes awkwardly expressed questions about it. Yet, though one can be taught about the culturally patterned meanings by which people live, the personal character of a life cannot be formally taught or delivered to the ethnographer by his informant. This more personal understanding is made through

reciprocal discourse. Though I did carry out this type of discourse with Rauto men and women while using Melanesian Tok Pisin, it was not until the very end of my field stay that I was able to begin to engage in it in the vernacular. And so, for a very long time I felt somehow one step removed from a complete understanding of key matters, such as religious and moral concepts.

Here I must also say that the way that I carried out the research did reflect a certain personal predilection. I am by nature reticent. During my time in the field I was extremely conscious of the fact that my presence was, ultimately, an intrusion on the lives of the Rauto. I welcomed the emotional safety which interviews with gatherings of men and women afforded me. For a long time then I interviewed people during what I would call formal gatherings. Ultimately however this form of research came to frustrate me, and during the last few months most of my interviewing was done with only one individual at a time. This period was the most personally rewarding time of my fieldwork. During it I began to become as interested in finding out about lives as in studying cosmology.

During the research most of my strongest friendships were formed with men. I did however come to know and to work with a number of elder women. The men more or less claimed me, involving me in their activities, such as pig

hunting and taro planting. Yet, they recognized that women's "matters" were important to my work as well, and they did not begrudge me the time which I spent interviewing women. The women for their part claimed Coralie. I would frequently prepare questions for her and ask her to interview specific women. I would also often tag along after her when I knew that she was going to meet a group of women. In this way I provided myself with an excuse for barging into women's conversations and activities.

The People

There are approximately 2,500 Rauto. They live along the coast and in the rainforest of a portion of the province of West New Britain, in the country of Papua New Guinea. The lowland forest environment of this people is crisscrossed by many streams, and by a number of rivers. The topography is quite rugged, and in the rainy season, travel can be particularly difficult. The environment however is in no way as difficult as is that of the peoples who inhabit the foothills of the Whitman Range, which lies some twenty miles to the Northeast. The soil is also fairly fertile and, by and large, yields an abundance of food.

The Rauto speak an Austronesian language which is one of a number of dialects of Lamogai. Lamogai languages

are widespread in New Britain. They extend from the Southwest coast almost all the way up to the North coast and include Lamogai proper, Mok, Ivanga, Aria and Rauto.

Both coastal and interior dwelling groups prefer to live in hamlet settlements. Yet from the early days of Australian administration the Rauto have been exhorted to live in villages. This instruction has been heeded more by coastal than by bush groups. Indeed, with the decline in the frequency of government patrolling since independence in 1975, the people of the interior have given up the village pattern of residence almost entirely. This continues to frustrate both the administration and the various mission groups who proselytize among the Rauto. The missions find the dispersed hamlet-dwelling pattern to indicate a lack of concern for sociality, and the ties of community in general. The government, for its part, finds it difficult to administer and census hamlet dwellers.

Traditionally houses were and in some cases continue to be built near garden sites which are under immediate cultivation. In traditional times these small hamlet sites were surrounded by stockades for protection against parties of raiding warriors. Where possible the stockades were built around giant banyan trees. Fighting platforms were constructed some way up the trunks of the ficus. If the men of the settlement found that they could not hold the

stockade from a raiding war party they would scramble to the ficus and man the fighting platforms.

Hamlet residences usually have from twelve to forty co-residents. However these numbers fluctuate, as people frequently leave the residence to attend ceremonial work, or to visit kin or trading partners and to take up temporary residence with them.

The Rauto are slash and burn horticulturalists who subsist on taro, yam and sweet potato. Their diet is supplemented by bananas, amaranth, coconuts, breadfruit and occasionally, pork and wild game. Fish is also a frequent addition to the diet of coastal villagers.

These people were first visited by missionaries in the early 1930s. However, permanent missions were not established along the Southwest coast until the mid-1930s, when the Catholics built one at Pililo Island, and one at Turuk, which is a bluff overlooking the bay of Kandrian. The bush Rauto were not effectively brought under government control until the late 1940s. To this day the Gimi-Rauto census district remains the only non-council area in Papua New Guinea, as these people continue to reject the idea of establishing local government councils, and thus bringing themselves more directly under the aegis of government. Despite a good many years of missionization and government control the Rauto, as well as the neighboring Gimi and

Kaulong, remain culturally conservative. This is no doubt one of the reasons that the New Tribes Mission has targeted Southwest New Britain as fertile new ground for their evangelical efforts. During my time in the field they established themselves among the Seng Seng and Gimi language groups. They have also built a center in Kandrian where they plan to coordinate their data on the languages and beliefs of the peoples of Southwest New Britain, so that they might begin the process of bible translation. The new mission, like those that came before, is having its effects. One of these has been the strong reemergence of cargo cult beliefs and practices. Another is the redisruption of the character of mortuary ceremonial, especially of the rites of secondary burial which I describe in the last chapter of the thesis.

There have been no prior ethnographic studies of the Rauto, and indeed few ethnographers have worked in Southwest New Britain. The first anthropologist to visit the south coast was E. W. P. Chinnery. He spent a few weeks sailing up and down the coast and visiting various native societies in 1927. From his descriptions and accounts I can see that he visited at least five different linguistic groups(see Chinnery 1927). In 1935-36 an ethnographer named J. A. Todd lived and worked in Kandrian (then called Mowe-haven). In the 1960s and early 70's Jane Goodale and Ann Chowning

carried out fieldwork among the Kaulong and Seng Seng peoples, groups which live in the foothills of the Whitman Range. I reference and in some cases discuss the works of all these scholars in the body of the thesis.

A Note on Ceremony, Kinship, and Person

Rauto social structure, like that of the neighboring Kaulong and Seng Seng, is basically organized around a principle of cognatic descent. Cognatic descent groupswhich are usually associated with a particular territory are called rip. Though people can reside with and share in the use of the resources of either paternal or maternal kin, there is a bias toward patrifiliation. Co-resident patrikin who claim close association with a particular territory also enjoy a slight political dominance over their resident matrikin. The patrikin of a place are said to derive from, or "be born of men"; their co-resident matrikin are said to be "born of women". The Rauto also distinguish matrikin from patrikin with the phrases "those of the barkcloth" (patrikin), and those of the grass skirt (matrikin). Unlike the neighboring Kaulong, the Rauto apply these particular distinctions to all co-resident patrikin and matrikin, and not only to the "children of a sister" and the children of a brother (see Goodale 1983:283-86).

I was also told that patrikin share the same blood and bone, whereas the blood and bone of resident matrikin will derive from other men, or from another apical male This idea is an extension of the Rauto ancestor. procreation belief that the father contributes blood and bone to his child. The mother's physical contribution to the developing fetus is said to be "only water". biological contribution is thus downplayed. The one-blood distinction, and the recognition of the principle of patrilineal descent which it implies, was invoked most often during my period of fieldwork during disputes between the matrikin and patrikin of a residence over the use of resources. During one such dispute I heard the patrikin of the residence say that since the resident matrikin "derived from women" they did not really belong in the residence. Therefore they had no right to make a claim over the group's In contrast the cognatic model of both descent resources. and resource use was invoked when the patrikin needed the cooperation of, or desired the good will of resident matrikin. In such situations I sometimes heard patrikin tell resident matrikin that "we are all brothers here" thus implying that all the occupants of a hamlet residence should share equally in bearing the burden of labor and ceremonial.

Patrikin are also said to share the same "totem" or emblem. It is said to be wrong for a man and a woman who

share the same blood, bone, and emblem to be married to one another, though I was told that sexual relations occasionally do occur between "one blood" classificatory siblings. Ideally one should marry a distant - not closer than second generation - cross cousin. Second generation cross cousins will not share substance yet will be close enough relations so that they will demonstrate concern for and will care properly for each other.

Like the Kabana of Northwest New Britain (see Scalleta 1985:76), the Rauto practice a form of sister exchange. The preferred marriage strategy is for a woman to marry a man (mmbss) of her mother's patrikin who resides "in her mother's natal village"(Scalleta: 76). The Rauto say that this woman has then "come back" to the place of her mother, or that she has come back to her origin place (sep vate). Thus the woman's matrikin will receive a replacement for her mother. The Rauto use two phrases to refer to the completion of sister exchange. These are "the return of the fire (ayi nondro), and the return of a woman (ilim nondro).

Rauto kinship terminology is a variant of a Dravidian-Iroquois system. That is, the system distinguishes "cross from parallel relatives in each of the middle three generations" (Keesing 1975:105). Thus there are separate terms for MB (atenme) and for FZ (ado) while MZ is classified with mother and FB is classified with father.

Ego distinguishes his or her own cross from parallel cousins. Ego also distinguishes the children of cross-cousins from the children of parallel cousins. Importantly male ego distinguishes his ZS and ZD with a special kin term (tuturek), while female ego calls BS and BD by the same term. The term differs from those which are used for either the children of cross or parallel cousins and appears, as I indicate below, to mark the culturally significant relationships between a man and the children of his natal sister on the one hand, and a woman and the children of her natal brother on the other. Ego also "distinguishes a class of cousins (MBC and FZC) from parallel relatives who are equated with siblings" (Keesing 1975:106). I produce a list of kin terms below.

A. <u>Kin terms for cross relatives on father's and mothers'</u> side in middle four generations (male ego)

Mother's side Father's side								
M	=	ina		F		ivo		
MB	=	atenme ZS= ti	uturek	FZ	=	ado		
MBS	=	vita ZD= ti	uturek	FZS	=	vita		
MBD	=	lutngon ¹		FZD	=	lutngon		
MBDD	=	ilegiap		FZDD	=	ilegiap		
MBDS	=	lo		FZDS	=	lo		
MBSD	=	ilegiap		FZSD	=	ilegiap		
MBSS	=	lo		FZSS	=	lo		
MBDDS	=	mumgu (grandchild))	FZDDS	=	mumgu		
MBDDD	=	mumgu		FZDDD	=	mumgu		
MBDSS	=	mumgu		FZDSS	=	mumgu		
MBDSD	=	mumgu		FZDSD	=	mumgu		
MBSDS	=	mumgu		FZSDS	=	mumgu		
MBSDD	=	mumgu		FZSDD	=	mumgu		
MBSSS	=	mumgu		FZSSS	=	mumgu		
MBSSD	=	mumgu		FZSSD	=	mumgu		
		_						

B. <u>Kin terms for parallel relatives on father's and mother's side in middle four generations</u>

Mother's side Father's side = ivo = ina F MZ= iname = pat ivo (ivo sadi FBif younger than father) = aiver or tauro MZS = aiver or tauro FBS (younger or elder (same sex sibling terms) sibling of same sex MZD = luto FBD = luto MZDD = imi (child)FBDD = imi (child) MZDS = imiFBDS = imiMZSD = imiFBSD = imi MZSS = imiFBSS = imi MZDDS = mumgu (grandchild) FBDDS = mumguMZDDD = mumquFZDDD = mumguMZDSS = mumquFBDSS = mumguMZDSD = mumquFBDSD = mumguMZSDS = mumguFBSDS = mumguMZSDD = mumquFBSDD = mumquMZSSS = mumguFBSSS = mumquMZSSD = mumquFBSSD = mumqu

One of the many matters which the terminological distinction of cross from parallel relatives appears to mark is the special set of ceremonial, economic and ritual duties which the matrikin and the patrikin of a person have to each other. These reciprocal duties and obligations are implicated in the creation of the social identity of persons. Lying at the core of the matrikin, patrikin relationship and partly providing a model for it is the special relationship of nurturance and mutual support which should ideally exist between siblings of the opposite sex. Here I would like briefly to discuss this relationship,

especially how it ultimately comes to engage the energies, resources and ritual acumen of groups. Part of what follows is similar to Goodale's discussion of sibling relations among the Kaulong (see Goodale 1981:279-298).

Apparently unlike the neighboring Kaulong the Rauto opposite sex sibling relationship has a double aspect to it. It is characterized both by mutual support and by a degree of avoidance. Indeed as a sibling pair approaches sexual maturity an injunction prohibiting the pair from sitting together unaccompanied, or eating in each other's presence comes into effect. This prohibition will extend to the end of the lives of cross siblings who share one or both parents. However, the prohibition does not disrupt the pattern of aid and assistance which brother and sister provide to each other. Aid consists of reciprocal gifts of food, acts of labor and offers of economic aid for the entire course of the life of siblings. This behavioral norm also quides the relationships of patrilateral parallel cousins of the opposite sex.

The obligations of siblings to each other become particularly culturally marked when they take spouses and produce children. Before marriage sibling relationships and duties are of a personal nature. After marriage siblings' reciprocal duties bring separate kin groups into relationship. One sees this most especially in the

reciprocal exchanges which accompany the rituals which are performed for children. Mother's brother (atenme) and his paternal kin are key participants during most of the ceremonies which are performed for sister's children. Indeed the ritual and ceremonial duties of mother's brother and his patrikin to the children of their sisters are greater in number, if not importance, than those which they have to their own children. The atenme and his kindred are key actors in the series of ceremonies which raise a child's name and thus help establish the child's social identity.

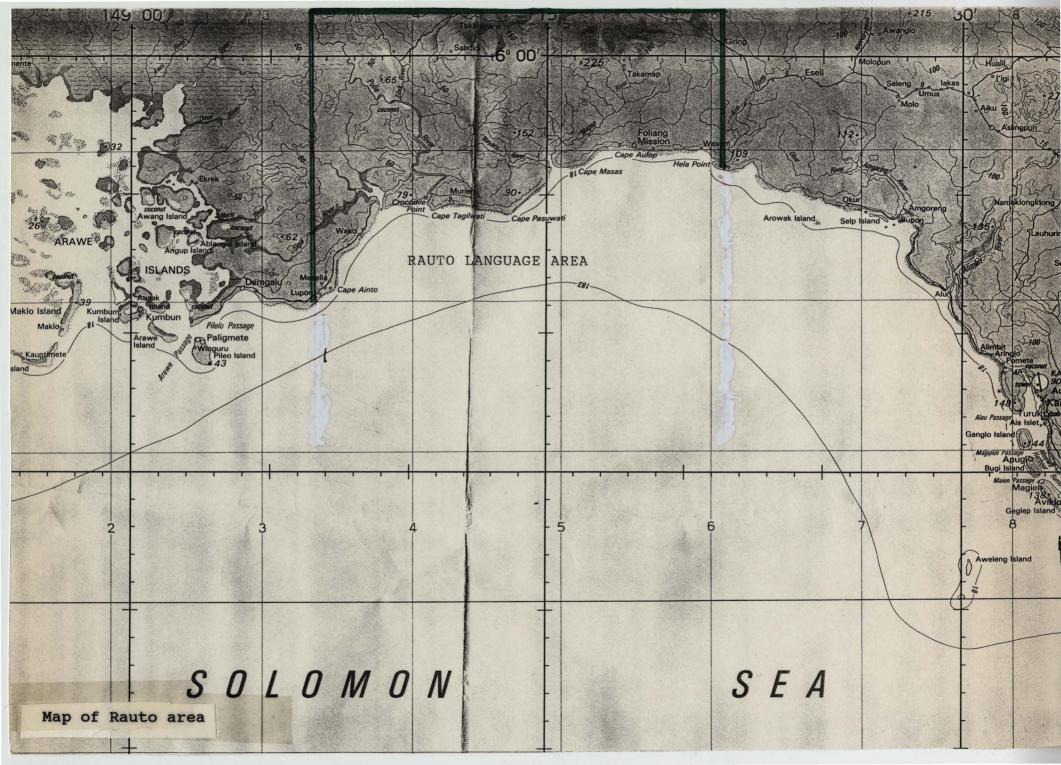
The atenme rather than the child's father will usually chose the name of the child of his sister's son or daughter. The name, which will usually be taken from the store of names associated with the maternal uncle's own patrikin, will be called out by him in a public naming ceremony - see pp 55. Through the performance of this action the maternal uncle attempts to augment an aspect of the child's developing identity with the social identity of his group. The atenme, or a man who is classified with him, will also bear responsibility for carrying out the circumcision of the male child of either his actual or classificatory sister. The maternal uncle will also sometimes sponsor, but will more often perform the initiation of his sister's male child - see pp 197. During the course of the initiation the maternal uncle and other

maternal kin will sing a series of magical songs, called aurang, which are thought to prompt the physical growth of the initiate. It is also the duty of the maternal uncle, or a man classified with him, to teach his actual or classificatory sister's son the names of the different sections of the sacred spirit masks which are kept in the men's ceremonial house. The ceremonial context in which the teaching is done will mark part of the formal introduction of male children into the men's house². Finally, mother's brother, or a man classified with him, and a specified group of maternal relatives are responsible for honoring the first born children of their sisters during a series of ceremonies which are performed exclusively for first born³.

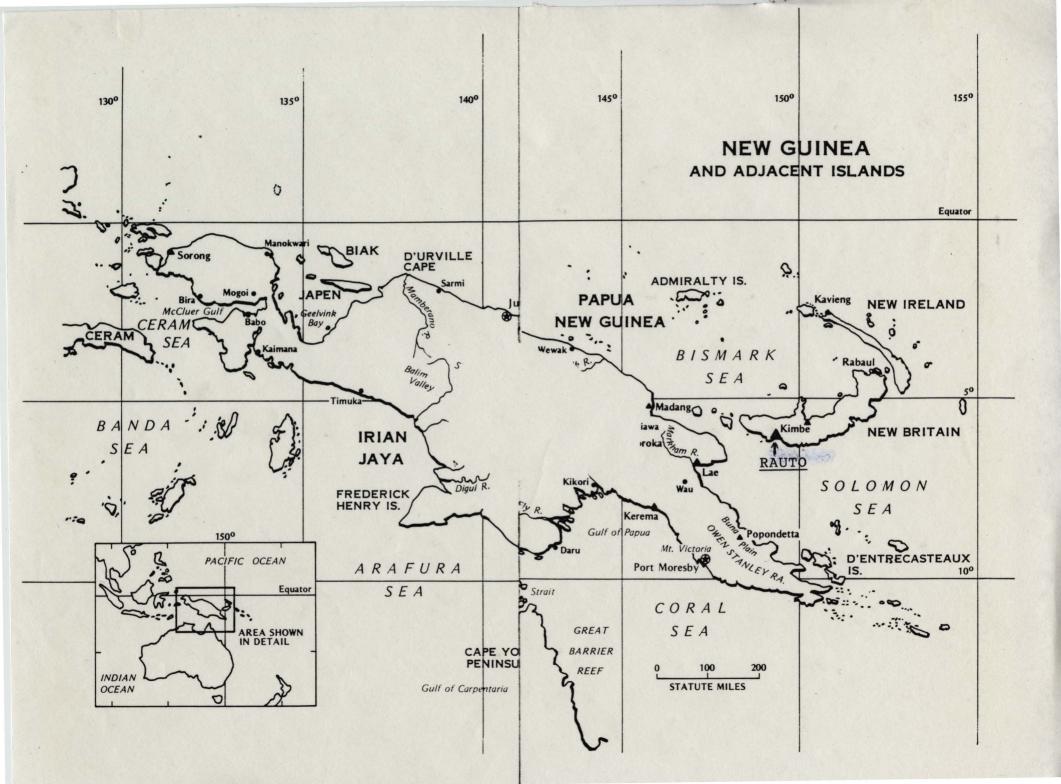
Through the performance of these ceremonies the matrikin of children invest something of their spiritual efficacy and agency in them. This honoring of children through ritual and ceremony is meant to enable them to become effective social agents. The children's fathers, along with other patrikin, will provide payments of pearl shell valuables, pigs, and taro to the maternal uncle and the assisting matrikin for honoring their children, and as compensation for the energy which they invest in them. Thus, resources flow as payment to the matriline; affect and spiritual nurturance are given back to the children of sisters. Though the matriline does not share "substance"

with the children of its sisters, its continual celebration of and ritual shaping of the social personhood of these children establishes a spiritual connection with them. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the matrikin are the kin of spirit for the Rauto. The patrikin are the kin of power. They provide political and economic wherewithal and position to their children. The culturally significant relationship between a person and his matrikin does not end with the person's death. As I show in the final chapter of this thesis, rites of secondary burial provide a final opportunity for a person's matrikin to honor him with ceremony and song and to celebrate his past social agency.

I now turn to a brief consideration of the set of ideas and approaches which have been used, by Melanesianists especially, to interpret cultural constructions of the person and culturally specific concepts of human agency. I also discuss how this set of theoretical ideas has influenced interpretations of the significance of the ritual or ceremonial events which frequently provide a context for the expression of ideas of person and agency.



map 2: Wasum area



map 1: New Britain

CHAPTER I

Theoretical Considerations

From Mauss to Dumont the study of ideas about self and person has turned on the distinction between individualism and what has been called holism. Put simply, in many anthropological accounts, non-western and or preindustrial societies are said to define the person primarily in terms of his relationship to others or to the traditions, offices, and roles which mark out the operation of society (Bourne & Schweder 1982:97-133; Dumont 1986; Fajans 1985:367-395; Shore 1982; Lafontaine 1985:123-140 - to name but a few). The second implicit, and sometimes explicit assumption of much of this work is that modern western societies entertain "a conception of the person as a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe, a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgement, and action organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively both against other such wholes, and against a social and natural background" . . . (Geertz

1983:59).

Mauss (1989:1-25), Durkheim (1965:305-308) and Levy-Bruhl (1928:196-237) thought the holist concept of the person to be historically prior to the individualist concept. Durkheim especially believed that the evolution of a more advanced division of labor in the west was directly linked to the rise of individualism and to the establishment of the variety of values, beliefs and viewpoints which distinguish western societies.

While tending to eschew the evolutionist aspects of Mauss' and Durkheim's thinking about the person, modern writers sometimes argue that traditional people's relational and holistic understanding itself represents a moral stance toward the world. In Bourne and Schweder's view for instance, traditional peoples are held to be quite capable of thinking of persons as individual entities with specific character traits, behavioral tendencies, personal histories and particular passions and attachments (1982:26). simply less inclined to express such views of the person because they do not value them as highly as do westerners. Bourne writes that non-western people such as the Balinese, or the Gahuka-Gama of New Guinea "live by a metaphor and subscribe to a world premise that directs their attention and passions to particular systems, relationaly conceived and contextually appraised," (1982:26) because they are

morally committed to this metaphor.

The view expressed by Bourne and Schweder that particular conceptions of the person lie at the core of a society's moral system is the key idea to emerge from the cross cultural study of ideas of person and self. provided scholars with a way of focusing their discourse about the range of beliefs and practices which constitute culture, while at the same time allowing them to speak about the overarching pattern of meaning which informs various aspects of culture. Yet we now know that the contrast between holist and individualist moral systems has too often been overstated; that partly because of this overstatement the contrast has taken on a political connotation. scholarly writing the opposition of individualism to holism has become part of western society's discourse about itself, often forming the basis for either critique or self congratulation. One has only to read a bit of modernization theory to perceive how individualist values are often associated rather exclusively with the dynamism and progressiveness of the west; how western scholars have associated a relational understanding of the nature of the person with economic and social stagnation. In contrast, in the writing of some Marxists anthropologists, we see how the portrayal of holism can itself serve as a type of political and economic critique of capitalist society (Taussig:1980).

I find both individualist and holist accounts to say something about the Rauto understanding of the nature of the person. Both the metaphor which depicts a person as an autonomous entity striving to create a personal and social identity for himself and the metaphor which portrays a person's life as a reflection of and a product of the lives, beliefs, and actions of others are clearly to be found embedded in the discourse and practices of Rauto culture. Yet both metaphors are, in the final analysis, reductions. As such they do not reveal to us the richness of meaning which informs Rauto discourse about the person. Nor do they explain satisfactorily how and why concepts of person are the reference of so much of both practical and ritual activity.

To account for the centrality of the metaphor of the person in Rauto culture we should not only consider the discourse and practice of the Rauto. We should consider as well the anthropomorphism - humanism would perhaps be a more appropriate term - which distinguishes Melanesian expressivity in general. Leenhardt was the first to discuss with sensitivity and thoroughness the conceptual force which the notion of the person has in Melanesian culture. He was also the first to discuss with both analytic subtlety and power how in Melanesia the concept of the person is itself a concept of force, or human agency. This is most clearly

seen in his discussion of the notion which he called parole.

Clifford has shown how Leenhardt thought New
Caledonian speech to be properly "a manifestation of being"
(1982:10). Leenhardt's informants chose the French word

parole as an equivalent of the New Caledonian term no. For
the New Caledonian, parole or no was person, and speaking
was an act of power. Parole was also "land," "exchanges,"
"seals of agreement," etc. It was the series of acts which
constituted the gist of New Caledonian social life; it was
the personal and conceptual force which gave these acts
meaning and legitimacy.

These thoughts resonate with my own experience of a Melanesian culture. Part of the aim of this thesis is simply to show how a Melanesian people's concept of speech is as well a notion of conceptual force and person, "something more than discourse" or language (Clifford 1982:214). The Rauto term for speech is amala. The term is used to refer to what Rauto consider to be a heightened use of language. Thus speech which moves people and which has positive political or social effects because of its expressive power is referred to as amala. More specifically, this sort of speech would be called amala kairak - a phrase which means firm, or effective speech.

Amala also has something of the same sense of meaning for the Rauto as the term no had for the New

Caledonian. That is, its use sometimes conveys the notion that there is a relationship between speech and personal being. The study of Rauto concepts of speech (amala) which I carry out is thus also a study of concepts of the person. Throughout the course of the study I show how Rauto practices and beliefs are given meaning by the metaphor of speaking, or of singing, and thus ultimately refer to ideas about the nature of the person.

Can provide an excellent vehicle for "poking into another people's turn of mind" (1983:59) takes on an added cogency and significance in the Melanesian context because of this key metaphor of parole. A question remains however as to how one might best speak about the shifting manifestations of concepts of person in Rauto expressivity. I feel the concept of metaphor is the most appropriate methodological device which we can apply in attempting to speak effectively about Rauto expressivity. There are a number of reasons for my choice. Some of these have to do with Rauto views about the nature of language; others have to do with the relationship between our own, and Rauto understanding of the nature of metaphor.

Metaphor and Rauto Views of Language

James Fernandez has written that metaphor provides

an evaluation of ideas, people and forms of conduct by placing them in more, and sometimes less desirable positions "in the quality space of a specific culture" (1974:10).

Fernandez has argued that metaphor accomplishes this ranking of phenomena by translating inchoate sentiments and ideas to domains of experience, or to objects and actions which are clearly understandable to a people. In his view metaphor is part of the living experience of a people; its creation and use is one of the most important ways which a people has of imposing meaning on the world.

Wagner has argued that metaphor constitutes culture by transforming a people's experience of the world (1986:7). It does this, as both Fernandez and Ricoeur also suggest, by drawing into relation different domains of experience and thus allowing people to see the "similarity in dissimilars" (Ricoeur 1979:143). Wagner considers the establishment of a metaphoric relationship between different realms of experience to signify "the replacement of conventional meaning with innovative meaning." He calls this symbolic obviation, a phrase which registers the fact that the meaning of a metaphor is more than the meaning of its semantic parts; that this meaning obviates the conventional meaning represented by the separate semantic components of a metaphor. According to Ricoeur and Fernandez, metaphor manages actually to establish innovative meaning through the

creation of an image which visually depicts this meaning. As Aristotle writes "it sets before the eyes the sense that it displays" (quoted in Ricoeur 1978:142). Goodman (1968) and Black (1962), stress that this iconic aspect of metaphor serves as a type of model linguistic description of an aspect of cultural or social reality; a sort of paradigm of understanding. While these scholars focus on the iconic aspect of metaphor, Ricoeur (1979:146), Wagner (1978:32) and Lakoff and Johnson (1980:3-25) stress that metaphor is both a process involved in the formulation of meaning, as well as the structured expression of specific meaning: It is both a way of understanding, and it is a part of understanding itself.

The understanding of metaphor which I have glossed here is derived at least in part from the view of romantic writers such as Herder that language is inseparable from thought and from being. For the romantics, as for Ricoeur and Wagner, language is a phenomenon which continually transforms and creates meaning in the world. Also, for the romantics figurative speech in general, and metaphor in particular, seemed the most transformative and meaningful aspect of language.

Enlightenment thinkers such as Locke, in contrast, were unreceptive to the idea that figurative speech represented a locus of profound meaning. Locke considered

metaphor to be an "abuse of language," since he thought it could "dismember the text of reality and reassemble it in the most capricious of ways" (de Man 1979:19). Thus to speak figuratively of, for instance, "the legs of a table" or the "face of a mountain" is, in Locke's view, to tell a lie about the nature of reality; it is to mislead. This view is itself derived from the enlightenment notion that language was simply the clothing of thought, rather than its embodiment; that it only existed to convey thought about a tangible, preexisting reality which could and should be described accurately. For Locke the transformative nature of language, most especially figurative language, appeared dangerous or subversive of its primary descriptive function.

The contemplative view that language should not shape the nature of reality and of meaning, but should rather simply describe these phenomena, is not expressed in either the formal or the informal discourse of the Rauto of Southwest New Britain. In their philosophy of language speech is conceived to be a dynamic form of action. Rauto ritual events, song festivals and oratory provide evidence for this assertion. Yet, perhaps not surprisingly, Rauto metaphors provide the clearest indication that for this people language is inseparable from being, from meaning, from power and person.

A disproportionate number of Rauto metaphors allude

to speech. Many describe occasions during which people use their voices in song, or in the performance of magic. Still others describe the use and character of the personal voice when it is used to direct men in battle. Speech, song, the character of the personal voice, and the social contexts in which speech, song and by extension, the voice, are used constitute realms of experience which are readily understandable to Rauto, and which therefore provide them and us with a model for interpreting the outlines of their cultural life. In this model, character is judged, sustenance and peace are secured, moral life regulated, and personal and social identity are fashioned, through the use of speech and song.

The genre of speech which expresses these ideas is called transformed, or turned over speech (amala wauluke) by the Rauto. Wauluke means changing, turning, transforming. Like our own word metaphor it suggests the possibility of change in meaning and in form. Other aspects of our understanding of metaphor can also be seen in the Rauto understanding of amala wauluke. One of these is the notion that metaphor creates a picture with words; that it "sets before the eyes the sense that it displays" For instance, in teaching me their metaphors Rauto would first state a figurative phrase. They would then describe and explain the image which the phrase referred to or recreated. Finally,

they would teach me the meaning and moral sense of the metaphoric image. My informants held a romanticist notion that these images were a locus of meaning, since they said something about experience in a way which was considered to be profound. I was told that it was mostly senior men and women, who possessed a depth of knowledge and experience about social and cultural matters, who were able to understand the meaning and varied references of amala wauluke. It was clear to me that this understanding was considered a form of wisdom.

The argument of this thesis, and the metaphor which organizes the perspective which it expresses, has been influenced by Rauto understanding of the nature of language in general and of metaphor in particular. In fact I have chosen to view concepts of person, time, agency, as well as Rauto understanding of the nature of ritual activity, through the lens provided by metaphor. It is true that I could have chosen some other vehicle for discussing the centrality of the notion of the person in Rauto culture. For instance an analysis of sorcery beliefs or exchange practices would have provided an adequate rendering of Rauto symbolic forms. I have decided to begin my analysis with a discussion of metaphor at least in part because the phenomenon encompasses a variety of other symbolic forms. It does this by providing a comment on them which is also,

as Fernandez's work suggests, an evaluation or interpretation. The creation and interpretation of metaphor by the Rauto represents an exercise in their moral imagination; the moral imagination of the Rauto is one of the primary matters that I am concerned with in this thesis.

The form of the thesis has also been influenced by the meaning of Rauto metaphors. The first two ethnographic chapters of the thesis consist of an analysis of the meaning of these metaphors. They show how amala wauluke refer to notions of self and person, and to language and human agency. In the chapters I establish the notion that in Rauto understanding speech and song shape experience by both expressing and shaping the nature of the person.

The next two chapters discuss a category of ritual and of song which Rauto call aurang. Aurang is performed during female and male initiation, and during the collective planting of large gardens of taro. The rituals and songs are said to prompt the growth of young men and women, as well as to enhance the growth of the taro crop. During these ritual events the notion that speech and song both express and affect the physical and moral nature of human beings is literally performed. The songs and ritual acts express ideas about the moral nature, duties and privileges of men and women. They constitute a type of public discourse about such matters.

My analysis of aurang is guided by the premise that the speech and song of men and women are often used to secure rather different ends. I discuss this point in order to portray Rauto understanding of ideals of male and female identity, and to chart some of the culture wide ramifications of these ideals. I conclude the thesis by discussing how concepts of human agency and of person color aspects of the Rauto experience of time, place and the life of society. In the chapter I translate the meaning of a number of metaphors and myths which are used by Rauto to comment on the passage of time and the meaning of place. The thesis thus begins and ends with a discussion of metaphor.

The thesis also concludes with a discussion of the notion of participation. I also consider this notion in the preceding chapters on ritual. One of the general theoretical points which I make is that an approach which focuses on discourse, and which "backgrounds the institutional implications of ethnographic facts" (Marcus 1986:45) can represent an effective way of talking about participation -a concept which Leenhardt defined as " a felt relation between the self and an interior or exterior object, immanent or transcendent" - quoted in Clifford 1981:222. This is especially the case when considering questions of the relationship between ritual activity and

concepts of the person. As I discuss in the pages which follow, stereotypical events such as ritual seem amenable to a style of interpretation which presents a holistic portrayal of society and a relational understanding of the nature of the person. An approach which is based on the premise that ritual is, among other things, simply one kind of discourse about meaning among many, might provide us with a cogent way of considering the meaning of participation and of holism for the Rauto. This is important because these people have many different ways of speaking about the world and themselves. As Wittgenstein might say, their culture is composed of many different language games and this fact is simply a reflection of the way people are. An approach which is based on the analogy of discourse can enable us to hear and to understand these many different ways of speaking, and to place notions of participation, holism and individualism in relation to them.

Here I feel it would be useful to flesh out these assertions and to see how the notion of participation has been discussed in work which most especially considers the problem of ritual and person in Melanesia. This overview will necessarily force me to consider problems of the relationship between systems of meaning on the one hand, and notions of society, and of individuality on the other. This will provide a basic background for the ethnography which

follows.

Ritual, Person and Society

Work on ritual is well advanced in Melanesian studies, (for work on rituals of production see: Malinowski 1961 [1935]; Fortune 1932; Tuzin 1978; Kahn 1986; for work on children's ceremonies see: Lewis 1980; Allen 1967; Scalletta 1985; for treatment of the relationship between the two see: Barth 1975:232-238; Herdt 1983; Gell 1975:277). Many different theoretical concerns are represented in work on these ritual processes. Herdt (1982:ix-xxii) provides a skillful analysis of a number of these, ranging from the concern of the old culture and personality school with showing how rituals performed for children play an important part in shaping sexual and social identity, to the present interest of symbolic anthropology to describe the relationship between world view and ritual process. I will not repeat Herdt's discussion here. The purpose of this brief gloss on theoretical matters is to identify certain themes of recent ethnographic work on ritual in Melanesia which at least identifies a relationship between person and ritual event or process. I will suggest that much recent work on ritual and personhood is guided by a new synthesis of theoretical assumptions. Here and in the course of my

presentation of ethnographic data I intend to indicate how this new synthesis of ideas might be useful in explaining certain aspects of Rauto ritual, and ideas about the person, as well as how it fails to account adequately for other aspects.

Much recent work on rites of production and on children's ceremonies especially is concerned with explaining the dynamics of what has come to be called "socio-cultural reproduction." This currently extremely popular phrase serves as a symbol for actions or processes which reproduce a culturally specific relationship between belief and social or institutional forms. Of course, one could say that the study of these processes has been a traditional concern of anthropologists, especially those influenced by the work of Durkheim. One of the things that distinguishes more recent analysis of this problem from earlier work, however, is the current emphasis on describing the way that ritual action expresses values and sentiments which structure or maintain forms of social inequality. These concerns are implicit or underplayed in more traditionally Durkheimian or Turnerian works on ritual, such as for instance Gell's analysis of the Ida ritual of the east Sepik people the Umeda. These are primary concerns, however, of scholars such as Keesing (1982, 1983) and Herdt (1983), who have been influenced by the new neo-marxist

anthropology of knowledge and ritual.

Gell is primarily interested in the social effects which the dramatic enactment of ritual scripts has on Umeda social life. In his analysis of the Ida ceremonial he (1) that the battery of symbols revealed in the rite essentially derives its meaning from the Umeda system of social relationships; (2) that the manipulation of symbols through ritual action is a way of both dramatically recreating the Umeda system of social relations and of expressing the system of ideas which informs social relationships. The Ida ritual described by Gell is particularly interesting because it is both a fertility ritual meant to regenerate forces which are thought to aid horticultural and human reproduction, and it is a "children's ceremony," in which young men are symbolically provided with a new social identity.

One of Gell's points is that the Ida ritual symbolizes the metamorphosis of asocial energies and tendencies into productive social energies. This change is dramatically represented when on the final night of the ritual, masked dancers who are supposed to represent wild cassowary, are replaced by young men who have assumed the role of the Ipele bowmen, or the hunters of the cassowary. Gell makes it clear that when Umeda bachelors assume the role of the Ipele bowmen they also symbolically affirm

ideals which stress the importance of sociality as opposed to individual autonomy; the importance of restrained sexual conduct as opposed to licentiousness (277). Importantly, the dramatic enactment of these ideals of conduct is at the same time "an enactment of reproductive processes" (161). Symbols of fertility abound in this ritual process and the dance itself is said to prompt the regenesis of the stands of village sago palm. The cassowary dancers especially represent "nature in a generalized way" (244). Gell writes that the cassowary mask is a symbolic representation of the "total society" of the Umeda people and that since the mask as well represents a quality of "florescence" like a tree which is "at the apogee of its development cycle," (244) it characterizes Umeda society as being fully "developed," or we might say, fully reproduced.

Besides being the most sensitive analysis of a New Guinea ritual system which has ever been done, Gell's work is important in a theoretical sense partly because it shows how the creation of social identity is, at least for Umeda, dependent on the proper manipulation of "natural processes" through ritual action. Gell thus restates the Durkheimian idea that culture "appropriates" nature or natural processes through ritual, and ultimately gives meaning to these processes by using them for its own schemes - which in this instance involves the expression of an ideal of social

conduct. Indeed, in his monograph Gell shows how the classification of objects and processes of nature is related to the Umeda conception of society. This is especially apparent in a chapter which deals with the symbolism of the Umeda language. Here Gell suggests that Umeda see an identity between the social and the natural. He then goes on to argue that this identity can be perceived in the resemblance between words which describe the processes and things of the two realms (119-155). This relationship between society and nature is invoked and manipulated in the Ida ritual.

Gell's analysis also suggests that the direction of ritual scripts by adult men is a way for them to assert control over processes which shape personal identity and which "reproduce" social forms. However, Gell does not stress this point, nor does he relate the Ida ritual to Umeda folk accounts or verbal statements about the nature of personhood. Thus, we do not come to discover if Umeda ideas of personhood and individuality are directly related to central processes of Umeda culture - such as that represented by the performance of the Ida ritual.

Gell's ethnography more or less presents us with the specter of a society reproducing itself "for its own survival" in a ritual process, rather than of social forms deliberately being manipulated by specific individuals

during ritual. This latter notion is specifically addressed by Herdt (1983) and by the many contributors to his volume on initiation rituals in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. These authors specifically consider how sociocultural reproduction may be linked to the actual shaping of the psychological and sexual dispositions of children in Highland ritual. Thus, in the introduction to the volume, Keesing (1983:20-32) argues that because of this relationship these ritual processes facilitate the reproduction of systems in which adult men dominate youths and women. Interestingly, a number of the contributors to this volume write that in Highland initiation ceremonies adult men literally "forge" an identity for young men which is distinct from and in some cases the symbolic opposite of what is taken to be the nature of women. For instance, the weaning of Sambia, Awa and Bimin-Kuskusmin initiates away from foods which are perceived to symbolize the nature of women is interpreted to be a part of the symbolic "forging" of a specifically masculine identity by Herdt (56), Boyd (249) and by Poole (106), respectively.

Perhaps paradoxically, in many of the Highland cults described by these ethnographers men seem to claim that they possess powers which are analogous to the abilities of adult women to nurture children. Thus, an idea which informs a number of homosexual cults in the Highlands is that adult

men can nurture boys and sustain their physical growth through homosexual acts. Analogously, adult Bimin-Kuskusmin men "aid" the growth of taro by burying bamboo canes holding amounts of semen in gardens (Poole: 106). Here I must note that men are considered responsible in a symbolic sense for both the production of food as well as for the shaping of the identity of boys in a number of New Guinea societies (Tuzin 1982, 1978; Poole 1983; Williams 1940). Importantly, this "pseudo procreative" metaphor or "male emulation of women's reproductive and nurturing powers" (Keesing 1982:8) appears even to inform New Guinea ritual systems in which sexuality plays no part. Thus, Kahn writes that for the Wamirans of the Massim, taro is symbolically classified as men's children, and that in the practices of garden ritual men "become symbolic masters of reproduction and procreation" (1985:92).

In explaining this politicized cosmological assertion of New Guinea men that they control powers of physical and social regeneration Keesing notes an overriding concern of men to assert their superiority over and their distinctiveness from women (1983:8). Thus he and others such as Kahn (1986:75) imply that a tangible sexual and political antagonism lies at the core of ritual symbolism. He also suggests, like many other writers on ritual, that the cosmological schemes and systems of classification which

are revealed in ritual processes are themselves shaped to a large degree by male political interests (1983:27). This point brings us to the question of the relationship between knowledge systems on the one hand and ideas about gender on the other.

All of the authors whose work I have cited, with the exception of Gell, have implied that in New Guinea adult men are aided in their attempt to assert control over women, over the moral and physical development of children, and over food production by the very form or character of the knowledge which they express and manipulate in ritual processes. That is, they suggest that the character of this knowledge is such that it inhibits the creation of alternative interpretive schemes which could perhaps lead to different and more reciprocal forms of relationship between the sexes. Thus, because so frequently New Guinean cosmological schemes exalt "male" qualities and denigrate "female" qualities, ethnographers argue that in ritual men reproduce a cosmology which is consistent with their political interest in social control. The authors of the Herdt collection take this point one step further and argue that in the Highlands, cosmologies or abstract classifications of foods, plants, fauna and human characteristics are consistent with certain sorts of psychological dispositions. Thus, they argue that the

teaching of cosmological knowledge and the formation of social and sexual identity and ideas about the nature of the person are different aspects of a single, unified process. Also, in these authors' accounts it is implied that sociocultural reproduction is partly a product of the performance of a set of formalized acts meant to manipulate the emotions of initiates in certain specific ways.

As is obvious, the approaches to ritual which I have discussed here appear to be an amalgam of analytical ideas which derive from a number of intellectual traditions. instance, the social philosopher George Herbert Mead's influence can be seen in the assertion that the self is formed or engaged most completely through forms of symbolic action (Cohen 1977:118). Freud's influence is apparent in the parallel which is noted between individual sexual identity and abstract cultural ideas. Durkheim's influence can be seen in the concern with accounting for the social effects rendered by the manipulation of symbols in ritual. The influence of Marx can be perceived in the concern for indicating the relationship between the maintenance of social inequality and the maintenance of a "dominant ideology" or a dominant interpretive scheme. Finally, there is another element which though not stressed by any of the authors of the Herdt collection, has figured prominently in at least a few discussions of ritual and personhood in

Melanesia, and which has been seen to facilitate "sociocultural" reproduction by a number of scholars working
outside of Melanesian studies. I would call this element
the "aesthetics" of ritual performance. In New Guinea
studies this element is discussed in most depth by Gilbert
Lewis in his work on the initiation ritual of the Gnau of
the West Sepik Province.

Lewis argues that ritual is essentially "expressive performance" like theatre (1980:10). His major concern in putting forth this argument is to demonstrate that the aesthetic elements of ritual; "the decorations, singing, the aromatic plants, the formality, stiffness or strangeness of gesture" effect the way that meaning is apprehended by the spectators and participants of a ritual event (20). Indeed, according to Lewis it is primarily the "emotional and aesthetic coloring of ritual" which creates the feeling that it expresses significant meaning (146). Importantly, Lewis argues that ritual events do not communicate meaning in a clear or rational way as for instance does a written message. Rather, ritual stimulates the emotions and the mind in such a way that it "evokes a response" from participants and spectators. Lewis believes that the nature of this response produces a sort of dissonance between the intellectual understanding that the rite conveys meaning symbolically, and the feeling or emotional conviction that

it actually produces the reality represented by this meaning. In the phrase of literary critics the ritual performance "suspends the disbelief" of participants and Borrowing a number of ideas about representation and symbolism from the art critic E. H. Gombrich, Lewis writes that in ritual "people are prone to take the symbolic objects or actions" of the rite "for the reality they stand for." "In other words, they mistake the concreteness and substantial nature of the objects or actions for the reality of the sentiments and ideas they feel" (198). He here implies that the ritual situation is one in which the line between person and the meaning of a ritual symbol has become blurred. In his interpretation there is an implication that people "participate" in the ideas and values represented by ritual acts and symbols. Thus, ritual establishes an identity between meaning and person. Following the literary critic Auerbach we would perhaps call this type of identification mimesis.

What most interests me about a number of the works which I have discussed here, is the understanding of the person which they express. The idea that character is forcefully shaped when the social order is exhibited to people during ritual occasions; the notion that ritual symbolism shapes mind and self and limits intellectual speculation; the idea that people participate in the ideas

and values which are represented by ritual acts and symbols, all these notions imply that in a traditional society like that of the Rauto or the Gnau, etc individual consciousness is easily overwhelmed and thus that the person lacks a strong center of consciousness.

I find this understanding of participation to say only a little about Rauto understanding of the nature of the person. I find Leenhardt's idea of "plentitude" to say rather more about Rauto experience. Leenhardt felt that "the person as opposed to the individual was capable of enriching itself through a more or less indefinite assimilation of exterior elements" (Clifford 1982:216). The idea that experiential enrichment was made possible by events such as ritual, ceremonial, or speech making lay at the core of Leenhardt's evangelical project in New He perceived the social usefulness of such Caledonia. events. He recognized that they represented living modes of thought and experience and he tried for this reason to coopt aspects of them to the Christian tradition (Clifford:74-91).

The idea that individual enrichment came through participation in the lives and natures of others and in the meanings expressed by ritual events and exchanges implied an element of self direction and thus self consciousness on the part of the individual, rather than its absence. Indeed,

Leenhardt perceived a desire and an individual need for self and social renewal in the long planning and staging of such events. The events were forms of self and social creation and as such they could not, in Leenhardt's view, be eliminated without dire consequences for the soul of the New Caledonian. Their loss meant the loss of Melanesian consciousness.

For the Rauto the ritual events of aurang, exchange events, oratory, and song festival, are also forms of self creation or invention. Rauto metaphors express an awareness of this. However, a number of them also express the notion that the most compelling aesthetic experiences of Rauto lives - ritual moments, exchange events, song festivals, oratory, warfare - also offer the prospect of domination, inequality and social disorder. One of the problems of this thesis then becomes perceiving how this dilemma is recognized and expressed in the context of Rauto thought and experience. That it is recognized and expressed indicates that the Rauto have more than one way of thinking about the nature of their own lives. One of the central ideas of the thesis is that these different ways of viewing the world are represented by Rauto "theories and constructions of the person" (Marcus 1985:45). I follow White and Kirkpatrick here in considering persons to be first, "cultural elements, topics of knowledge and discourse. Persons are constructs

deemed capable of experience, will, action, identity and the like." "Persons are cultural bases for formulating and exploring subjective experience. Equally, persons are recognizable as elements of social life, as occupying social statuses and as participating in social groups and events." (1985:9).

CHAPTER II

Structures of the Person and the Ways of People

"When a canaque says of a man 'he has no words in his heart' we understand that he thinks nothing or that he is without efficacy, and empty"

--Maurice Leenhardt Do Kamo

Wittgenstein once remarked that human beings think and act in many different modes of discourse (1967:30). This chapter is in a sense an extended commentary on this remark. In it I describe some of the many different ways the Rauto have of speaking about persons. The terms and metaphors the Rauto use to provide comment on various aspects of self and person are numerous and convey a sensitive and profound understanding of the range of qualities and characteristics of human beings. However, these terms and metaphors draw meaning from two conceptual structures which possess their own rules for what Crick (1976:135) has called "signification" - the designation of objects, acts, or utterances as meaningful. In the

following chapter I speak about one of these structures. This structure consists of beliefs about and metaphoric evaluations of the "public face" or persona of individuals. Here in contrast, I note some of the ways in which Rauto conceptualize and speak about the relationship between person, or public persona and the self: the individual qualities and characteristics of people.

I begin the chapter with a discussion of Rauto understanding of what can be called the formal aspects of the human personality: name, or social reputation and identity (anine); mind and thought, (amta nal); heart or sentience, (momso). By eliciting the meanings associated with each of these concepts I outline what can be called the Rauto "model" of the human personality. I note here that when experience and emotion are talked about they are always considered in relation to these aspects of the personality.

The second section of the chapter consists of a consideration of the Rauto concept of lai, which can be translated as the character of a person. A person's character is represented by his personal habits and characteristics as well as by his characteristic way of dealing with others. Through a consideration of talk about the character of persons we can begin to discuss aspects of the ethos of men and women in Rauto culture. In this section I discuss as well how Rauto moral philosophy is

related to this people's particular understanding of the nature of the human personality. In the concluding section of the chapter I turn to a consideration of the central Rauto metaphor of the human voice. I suggest here, and in the chapters which follow, that the use of the voice in song during the performance of aurang and other rituals of the life cycle symbolizes the relationship between self and person. It is also an expression of an idea that the individual powers of both men and women can be directed toward the realization of positive social ends.

Ideas About the Structures of the Person A. Anine: name, identity, reputation, spirit.

Anine is the Rauto word for name. In speech referring to persons the word is most often used when reference is made to someone's social reputation. Thus, the phrase a man or woman who has "name" is one of the most powerful verbal expressions of status distinction which the Rauto will make. A person who "has name" will in some sense be perceived as conforming to ideal patterns of "cultural behavior and well known social routines" (Kirkpatrick & White 1985:10). These especially involve the sponsoring of song festivals, feasts and ceremonies, the settlement of disputes, the successful management of both operational and

interpretive knowledge and, among many other things, the successful production of foodstuffs. By performing all these activities and by cultivating the socially valued personal qualities which I describe in the following pages of this chapter a person is said to raise his or her name (pane anine). The concept of anine in one sense then refers to what Mauss would have called the social persona - the person considered in relation to the roles and requirements of his society (1985:14).

Yet anine has a meaning which extends beyond the individual and thus describes more than simply his or her rank and status. Anine is also the word for personal name and a person's name is itself a statement about the relationship of that individual to the cultural tradition of the Rauto. A name will be given to a child a few years after its birth in a formal ceremony arranged by its parents. A feast will be prepared to mark the occasion and a number of kinsmen will be invited to witness the naming. During the course of the feast the child's father or maternal uncle will walk to the front doors of the men's ceremonial house of the child's ramage and will then publicly call out the name which he or his own father or uncle has chosen for the child. All those invited to the ceremony will then clasp each other's hands in approval of the child's name. I was told that this sign of approval is

shown at least partly because the child's name will remind people of an aspect of their cultural tradition. This is because the child's name might be the name of an important cultural object such as a part of a sacred spirit mask (watetio), or a section of the men's ceremonial house (molokio). A name can be taken as well from a character in Rauto mythology or from one of the colorful and aromatic plants which Rauto use for personal decoration or for magic (wirim). I was told that because people's names had the meanings which they did, the cultural traditions of southwest New Britain would be "kept in the minds of persons." That is, as long as people were given formal names, the meanings and things represented by these names would survive.

When this particular meaning of the concept anine was explained to me I began to understand the sense of reverence with which Rauto men and women treated the objects, the foods, the aromatic plants and the clothing of both everyday use and ceremonial occasion. Infused with meaning by everyday use, these things symbolize belief and confidence in the essential correctness of a way of life. However because Rauto often celebrate these things in song, myth and ritual one could say that they represent more than simply a belief in the propriety or correctness of life. As I make clear in later chapters their use conveys something

of the poetry of Rauto existence. The belief in the essential correctness of life and the celebration of the poetry or the aesthetics of that felt correctness is symbolized as well by the name of a person. By being given a name one is being given part of a culture; one is being informed of the Rauto belief in and aesthetic appreciation of a way of life.

The fact that one's name is an important part of one's identity is formally confirmed by the belief that a person should not touch or go near someone who shares his name. When a person takes the same name as a fellow village or hamlet resident he or she is thought to be taking something away from that person. Thus, a time should be arranged when the person who has taken the name should offer some valuable to the original possessor of the name. Usually a small pig and some pearl shell valuables will be handed over. A smaller token of wealth will then be given back to the name taker as a sign that he can now engage in a reciprocal relationship with his namesake. The two will then clasp each others hands for the first time. Henceforth, they will be able to interact with one another. These beliefs and practices indicate that Rauto, like the Melanesians of New Caledonia, perceive that life is "lived plurally" (Clifford:1982:X). That is the Rauto perceive that one's identity can be shared with others; that people

participate in each others' lives. A namesake can, however, be a threat to one's sense of identity or individuality. By sharing his name a person loses a bit of himself; he must be repaid for this loss.

A person will also possess a number of informal names which describe his personal skills and habits or which allude to the events of his life. Thus, if someone is a good fisherman, huntsman, or food producer he will acquire names which will celebrate his practice of these skills. A person will accumulate a series of these informal names over the course of a lifetime. After someone's death his various names will serve as reminiscences of his life. The names will convey a partial image of the person.

Name, reputation and identity cannot be considered apart from personal experience, from emotion and from personal power. Rauto talk about such matters often refers to what they call momso, which is the heart. Here I will outline the Rauto concept of heart in order to indicate how its development allows for the construction of identity.

B. Momso: Heart, Sentience, Conscience

The term momso represents a number of rather complex concepts. In Rauto speech as in English speech the heart is a metonym for sentience. It is especially associated with

or said to be the seat of feelings of sadness (momsoine ulang), nostalgia (momsoine makai), gratefulness (momsoine vris), and pity (momsoine ulang). The heart also represents a concept which I would gloss with the English word conscience. If a person has committed what the Rauto consider to be a wrongful act, he is said to be made aware of this by a feeling which stems from the heart. person will say that he feels regret for his acts in his heart:

Nga	de	sulu	рe	wom

If I do you wrong I will feel regret in my heart ma momsoingnog ulang

Free translation

Nga klo amala leina ma momsoingong ulang

If I step over the line of the law (speech) I will feel regret in my heart.

There is a mythical aspect to the Rauto understanding of the power and function of the heart. is represented by the belief that the inner strength and vitality of a person stems from the heart.9 The heart is said to give strength to the body by providing an essential heat or warmth to it. As persons mature their hearts are said to grow stronger and their bodies warmer. This makes

it possible for people to engage in an increasing number of social and economic activities. The strengthening of the heart is also thought to be related to the development of certain physical characteristics, for instance taut skin and bright eyes. 10 Still, the major indication that someone's heart is powerful will be the ability to produce an abundance of foodstuffs. Leading men and women are thought to be particularly distinguished by this ability. This idea about the nature and power of the heart was distilled from my many conversations with elders about taro magic and productive ability. In these conversations elders pointed out a three-way relationship between "strength of heart," productive ability and the power of a leader's taro magic. This relationship emerged particularly clearly in discussions about the magical power of the breath of a taro magician and of how the power of the breath and magic of leading persons inevitably lessened with old age. Here I would like to summarize some of these conversations in order to explore some of the social implications which Rauto perceive to accompany the strengthening and the weakening of a person's heart.

For Rauto, as for Trobrianders, much of the power of magic is thought to be carried on the breath of the magician (Malinowski 1960:409). When a leading magician begins to age people will sometimes say that the magician's breath has

gone (sanger ino, ino ingos la) or that the breath has lost heat and has become "cold" (sanger ino, ino ingos imbrip kenong). This will especially be noted after a few poor taro harvests. When the breath of a headman becomes cold and weak he should no longer perform the garden magic for the people of his hamlet, though his knowledge of the verbal component of his garden spells might be perfectly intact. Thus, one could say that in Rauto perception as persons age and weaken their magic (wirim) weakens along with them. When I asked my older informants why this was so they told me that as a person ages his heart becomes weak and thus no longer is able to warm and convey strength and heat to the body and breath. Thus, his garden magic will lack potency. At this point (or ideally, at some time before it) the aging garden magician is to hand over his duties of magical performance either to his eldest son or to his eldest sister's first born son. If, as is almost always the case, the head garden magician is also a headman he should formally abdicate from this position as well. He is now to direct those with pressing political or economic concerns to take these matters up with his heir. Also, henceforth all the gifts of food made to a headman to secure his favor and solicitude or to enmesh him in the political plans of others are to be redirected to his heir. It will now be the heir's duty to redistribute these gifts and to begin to build upon

and extend the social influence given to him by the headman. In order to lessen the difficulty of this transition of social power the headman may even move his house away from the area of the main hamlet settlement. As Rauto say "father and son have now changed places" (imi wakasei la pe ivo). I would say here that older people's diminished ability to work and to produce foodstuffs is explained in part by Rauto perceptions of the role played by the heart in prompting the physical and social development of the person.

C. Shame and Idioms Which Refer to the Skin (Tandra)

Idioms which refer to the heart are metaphors for the inner being and for the strength of persons. In a way they convey a sense of people as individuals who possess varying degrees of power or capability. These idioms stress the differences between and the separateness of persons. However, another type of idiom stresses the way in which the person is influenced by and is formed by the actions of others. This altogether different emphasis is conveyed by idioms which refer to the skin (tandra).

Idioms which refer to the skin often are used to convey fears of personal vulnerability. Thus, to be afraid is to feel fear on the skin (tandra wlo). To feel uneasy or threatened is to feel somehow that one's skin is not

altogether right (tandra sulu). Conversely to feel at ease in one's situation is to have good skin (tandra itau). The Rauto also express feelings of what I would call a sense of social vulnerability by using idioms which refer to the skin. Like a number of other New Guinea peoples the Rauto say that they feel shame on the skin: tandra maing.¹²

The person who is shamed feels the speech and the gaze of others to be at once a reproach and a violation. Since the idioms which describe this feeling refer to the skin - the external covering of the body - they are consistent with the idea that the cause of the feeling is external to the person. There is thus a certain logic to the character of the idioms.

In the many explanations which were offered to me of the concept of shame (maing) almost all identified the speech and the thought of others as the cause of the feeling, as in the following explanation:

Maing pe oduk tirie amtasek Tikanes pe ilo asap kaden. Timaing pe tiklokopas kai oduk amtasek. Tikin sulu pe taulip la solo liki kaden. Osaiye, tikanes "ai imi ogo

Free translation

People feel shame when dancing before the gaze of others or if they speak to their sisters-in-law. They will be shamed if their barkcloths fall and others

ko sulu dok." La kanes ligo taulip, kanes ilo asap kaden ye la lia gamgam. Oduk tiwur amala. Osaive maing, la kaine kare. Pane kamut. De apasrong. Me simel kai kamut. Mela de sep krimkrim aune. Ye kaine kai kare uren kano. Ye tilele la ko ta ousine. Osaiye pat oru la sep "la ko kino ei?" elim la oduk sep pe amala pe tikele gamgam ye tikele tikanes ilo kaden la tikarkar amala. Tir la ko wowrum ye imi ogo la kaine kare isa la ko ous oduk tious la ko, la ko, la ko tarike nangar tir, me oduk tikanes "ooei!" Kaine kare tan tir, uren. Osaiye ous ous ti songsong tila tirike wala ye mata sep oru pe pat o kaine kare pe oduk ye

see. If someone calls out (sexual innuendo) to his sister-in-law. Afterward people will say "this child has committed a great wrong." People then gossip that this person has spoken to his sister-in-law and that the two have stolen away (slept with each other). The gossip will rage. Afterwards this person will tie his barkcloth to the branch of a tree and hang himself and thus he will die. People will gather together to talk (about the person's whereabouts) then they will look for him. Many people will say he has stolen away with his sister-in-law. Meanwhile this child will have hung himself. They will look for him and

wala tibulbul pe ina mala.
Ye takanes pe ianmala. Ye
la kaine kare.

eventually find him hanging dead. The people will call out "he has hung himself!"

The whole village will run to come and see him. They will then speak about their gossip (how it was wrong for them to gossip so).

The main scenario which is recounted in this passage - which was offered to me as an explanation of the concept of maing (shame) - is a familiar one to Rauto. In it a young man who is accused of sleeping with a woman (bw) whom he is forbidden by custom even to speak to or to look at, is overwhelmed by the social opprobrium which this accusation brings with it. The feeling which one gets from the passage and indeed from most Rauto talk about shame is that the emotion makes a person feel socially exposed in a way which is intolerable to him/her. One of the culturally patterned responses to this feeling is to attempt suicide, as I witnessed a number of times during my period of fieldwork.

In the passage the speaker shows by way of anecdote the power which the gossip and the opinions of others have over the life of the individual; in effect he shows that these thoughts and opinions are a major part of Rauto moral life. The speaker also indirectly questions the justice of this reality by expressing the idea that gossip and the social opprobrium which it represents can literally kill a person. The last line of the passage conveys a sense of tragic contrition about this social reality and thus a veiled criticism of what can be called the social relations of Rauto moral life.

Mind and Thought: Amta Nal

Rauto understanding of the nature of mind and of thought is complex and multi-layered. There is for instance first a social dimension to mind. The acquisition of culturally valued "objective" knowledge marks what can be called the social development of mind. In for instance learning an important myth or the names of the different sections of the men's ceremonial house, or those of the different sections of a sacred spirit mask, a young person is introduced to a socially recognized store of knowledge. This development of the social dimension of mind is often formally noted with the performance of ceremonies and the giving of certain types of feasts. Achievement ceremonies are also performed for young men and women to celebrate their first attempts at the management of socially useful knowledge. For instance a small feast may be held in honor

of a young person after he or she has made a first attempt to perform taro magic.

Since the development of mind allows for the development of self there is also a personal dimension to The development of this aspect of mind is thought about in terms of the increasing ability of a person to invest energy and self in objects and in relationships. Another way of stating this would be to say that in Rauto thought the mind allows for the application of will, thought and self to a realm which is external to the person. a Rauto person will say that the things and people that he has invested something of himself in "carry his name" and identity: "aningnong mana pe angan ogo". The expenditure of knowledge and energy in securing the development of things and people (i.e. crops and children) during the performance of various aurang is one form of the investment of self in the external world; the performance of the labor of planting and harvesting trees and crops is another; the cultivation of trade partnerships is yet another way. through the investment of energy and self in things and people that strength of heart (momso) and body develop and a person begins to raise his name (anine). As the mind directs this process one could say that it guides the development of self and of person.

The directing function which the mind carries out in

the development of self is perhaps appropriately revealed in idioms which use the eye (amta) as a metaphor for individual thought and will. In discourse the eye is attributed active perceptive functions that we would consider to be appropriate to mind. Thus, being clever is to have an "eye with many thoughts" (pat ogo amta nal ino amtaren). can also forget (amta mulmul); or disobey, (amta wong). choose is also to think with one's eye (amtagu nal, "my preference"). The eye is also a metaphor for an aspect of identity. This is especially to be perceived in talk about possessions. Thus a thing that is a precious possession of someone, and is identified with him will be said to belong to or be of his eye, (amta ino). For instance it was explained to me that the heirlooms, (alul), of a person were referred to as the memory of his eye, (amta amune)13. this usage the eye refers to the visage of the person and conveys a sense that his essential identity is represented by the valuable just as, for instance, his face in a sense represents his identity.

As mind directs the development of self a person acquires what Rauto call lai. Lai translates as a characteristic way of behaving and of being, what we would perhaps call personality. In what follows I consider certain socially recognized personality traits of men and women, as well as how they relate to certain aspects of the

ethos of Rauto culture.

The Way of a Person

Rauto concepts of self can be discerned in images conjured by talk about the way (lai) of people. This talk and these images both reflect and shape the style of personal interaction which constitutes the social life of the Rauto. The images which inform Rauto speech about the ways of people are thoroughly Melanesian. They reflect a strong concern with giving and with receiving, with strength and personal fortitude, with personal and social vulnerability. Yet they also show a lively appreciation of personal eccentricity, and a lyrical appreciation of the disorderliness which is often wrought by personal interaction.

The first set of distinctions which I discuss have to do with personal bearing and with generosity - perhaps the most lauded of all the virtues. As with everything else the Rauto hold a number of thoughts both about generosity and the generous person. A generous woman or man is referred to by the phrase mela amto. The phrase translates as the "palm of the hand." It refers specifically to someone who is known to honor his debts and social obligations, or to show his appreciation of others by giving

away things which are highly valued - such as large and beautiful pearl shells. Such a person is said to show the inside of his/her hand to people. This is one of a number of phrases which use the hand as a metaphor for generosity as (for instance) mela kra - a person whose hand is able "to find." Penuriousness is referred to by the phrase elel mela - one whose hand finds something which is insignificant.

Ideally generosity should be tempered with an ability to husband resources carefully. The ability to gauge the amount of resources in one's possession carefully enough to make possible a dramatic give away is a skill which is especially valued. The eventuality of falling short, of not being able to provide either sufficient food or payment especially for ritual services or ceremonial occasions is a very real worry for people. It finds expression in a number of traditional sayings such as:

ree translation

ngatongoi nangon mulqu la ket

I distribute the food but

my hand falls short

amol klipo auna mara the mouth of the rope

mara la ko alangdok tang ma (used for ascending trees)

is too large

The first trope provides another example of how the

hand serves as a symbol of generosity. It as well conveys in an understated yet powerful manner the anxiety and disappointment felt by someone who has been found unable to provide for his quests or to adequately satisfy his ceremonial obligations. The second trope contains a subtle allusion to the social shame which such an occasion can cause for a person. The rope (klipo) referred to in the metaphor is a piece of hemp. When people wish to ascend a tree to gather areca, coconut or fruit, they first tie the hemp around their ankles in order to keep their feet fitted snugly around the trunk of the tree. If the hemp is fitted tightly enough about the ankles the climber will be able to ascend the tree easily and quickly. If however too much rope is used, or it is not tied tightly enough around the ankles, the person will have a difficult time climbing the tree and may indeed fall. The metaphor refers specifically to the resource demands made on people by ceremonial work. By sponsoring ceremonial events which are too ambitious in scale - thus figuratively speaking, cutting too large a length of rope - one invites failure. Though trying to appear generous one appears instead to be niggardly, or at best incapable and foolish.

While ceremonial provides a major opportunity for people to give things away publicly, the casual visiting and informal meetings of everyday life provide opportunity for

the demonstration of one's good way (lai itau) in less spectacular or less socially visible settings. In these settings gifts of food will usually be offered to people by women out of their own domestic larder. Indeed one could say that it is women who are most responsible for enacting the Rauto ethic of generosity. This point is made explicitly to a woman just prior to her marriage. Before a woman is brought to her husband an elder kinsman - usually a maternal uncle - will sit her down and formally instruct her in the proper way of giving, among other things:

My friend Tekla told his niece Walopme that she should never attempt to hide food from the sight of others; or to prepare it secretly. Tekla also told her that she should offer food to all who came to her house; that she could not give it simply to those whom she liked. She was counseled against "holding out" when visitors came, hoping that they would leave before it became obvious that she was hiding food. Walopme was then told that she would be responsible for giving a portion of her family's food to visitors who came to stay in the hamlet's men's house, and also how she would be expected to prepare food when the community of men met.

Though meant to be a lesson in the ethic of generosity this litany of do's and don'ts also says a good deal about how Rauto often find ways to circumvent rules of sharing. To this list can be added a number of other practices. One of these is remaining in one's garden house until late in the evening in order not to have to contribute food to the men's house and to its visitors. Another is preparing and eating food in one's garden house in order to circumvent the rules of sharing which hold sway in the hamlet or village. A somewhat more extreme variation on this theme would be the stashing of a cache of food in the rainforest where it can be eaten privately. There are also more subtle ways of avoiding the onus of demonstrating "good way." One of these is to understate the amount of food resources or valuables in one's possession. This is a ploy which people will use when they are asked to make a large contribution to ceremonial and they do not wish to do so.

These practices and strategies exist alongside of formally articulated beliefs about sharing and generosity. They are as much a part of everyone's life as are the more lauded ways of behaving. They represent some of the ways in which people try to look after their own interests and wants. They are an obvious expression of a desire to keep one's food and possessions to oneself. Because Rauto recognize and respond to this desire their interactions with

each other often appear to reveal that there is a certain complicity between them. For instance, people know when and why their neighbors prepare food in their garden houses. They know if others are lying when they say that they have little spare food or shell money to contribute to ceremonial. Yet most often people will "wink" at these duplications words and actions. By doing this they tacitly consent to giving others a degree of leeway in observing ideals of generosity. The person who shows truly bad way (lai sulu) is not always someone who refuses to give, but is rather the person who forces himself on others; it is someone who appears at the family house (itar) at the moment at which the food is being brought out; or it is the person who makes a habit of visiting families while they are "away" in their garden houses. Rauto say that such persons lack shame and are avaricious. Indeed such persons are deviant in the sense that they are either not willing or are incapable of taking part in the complicitous and necessary game of protecting the self from ideals which can sometimes exact too high a price14.

The Rauto possess a complex of proverbs which denigrate avariciousness and which link this character trait to a socially recognized style of personal comportment. A greedy person is called amta reprep, a phrase which translates as something like "his/her eye wishes

everything." The implication of the trope is that a person will empty your house of its goods if his eye happens to see these things. The Rauto compare the eyes of such a person to those of a wild pig, as in the following trope:

Free translation

Pat ogo nes me pane iglano re kai ma adai, ye mela tir ye mela tir, ye la nak amta langono kanem keuena.

The person walks into our place. He doesn't sit down at all. He stands and stands. His eyes shift like those of a wild pig.

The restlessness and the quick movement of the eyes of such a person are said to be signs that they are on the lookout for something and are not really willing to observe the proper social formalities in order to get it. The bearing of a person called **amta reprep** indicates that they have no wish to restrain personal desire with a concern to comport themselves with good way.

The tension which exists between individual desire and the need to comport oneself with good way assumes many forms among the Rauto. This seems most to reflect a series of currents and cross-currents of belief about the self rather than a unified and consistent philosophy of selfhood. I would argue that a set of culturally patterned reactions

to expression and assertion in some sense generates this tension and shapes to a degree Rauto ideas about good and bad "way." Indeed, the Rauto concept of lai consists to a degree of a set of moral judgments about different forms of self-assertion. Perhaps another way of putting this would be to say that Rauto ethics are not based solely on a conception of the person as an embodiment of moral will. many ways the Rauto define the person as much in terms of specific criteria of "proper" self assertion. 15 For instance the investment of personal power and force in people during aurang is a form of assertive excellence. The way in which moral claims are made on the property, food or time of others also involves assertion and appeal, or in effect social performance. Frequently one makes such claims by asserting the worth of one's person and thus one's right as an equal to have one's wishes considered. One invests personal power in people during rituals called aurang by symbolically asserting the power of one's personality during the performance of song. In this latter example self assertion becomes a form of creativity for the Rauto; it is a means by which a person directs his or her strength of personality outward and in so doing creates and recreates the moral fabric of social life and - as is make clear in later chapters - of persons. Ideally personal power should be asserted in a way which does not harm or offend people

and thus tear the moral fabric of society. If it is not done in this way self assertion will be considered to be a reflection of "bad way" (lai sulu) as it is, for instance, when a person performs sorcery to secure his/her own interests, or to take revenge on another.

The Rauto ethic of performative assertion has created a belief that strength, magical charisma or any other unique capacity should be demonstrated and thus actualized and not talked or boasted about. Yet perhaps because many Rauto see nothing wrong with being assertive and frequently are, boasting, though socially frowned on is not uncommon. The Rauto recognize this contradiction and their culture provides a specific way of dealing with it. Ideally, if a person wishes to speak about an accomplishment he should do so in an allusive manner which downplays the significance and difficulty of the accomplishment. huntsman who single handedly has managed to track down and spear a wild boar or one who has successfully wrestled a boar to the ground after it has been driven into his section of the net might, when speaking of his triumph, refer to his prey as a small wallaby - (ngarap keneng sading ino pe isaru).

This allusive style of speaking is referred to as the "speech of the people of Sara" (amala Sara ino) as it is said to have been used first by the people of the Rauto

hamlet of Sara. Regardless of its origin, all Rauto recognize it when they hear it and they know that the person who has used it is referring to what he/she considers to be a major accomplishment. The use of amala sara ino is a way in which a person communicates his or her own sense of pride and importance to others without appearing overly haughty.

A person who consistently speaks in this way will be referred to as auna wule, a phrase which translates as someone whose speech is praiseworthy. The phrase implies that a person's speech somehow conveys a sense of his worthiness and strength and yet is not braggadocio or obviously conceited. The obvious self control of people referred to as auna wule is greatly respected. It is contrasted with the lack of control shown by conceited and boisterous persons who are euphemistically called oduk adang adang ino - joyful people. This less esteemed character type is spoken of as a "laughing jokester" who brags outrageously and generally enjoys hearing himself speak.

One of the more obvious points which emerges from this brief discussion of the concept of lai is that, for the Rauto, self assertion requires and should be done with a good deal of social skill and consideration for others. The proverbs and metaphors which express this notion resonate with my own feelings and observations about the character of personal interaction in southwest New Britain. In this vein

I remember the humility and selflessness shown by even the most prominent men and women when I asked them about their knowledge of custom and of their social accomplishments. remember the lengths which people would go to, to avoid direct confrontation and defiance of others in debate and the effort made by people not to intrude on others as they went about their daily tasks. I remember the gifts of food which were graciously given to visitors without fanfare and yet with the hope that accounts of such generous acts would be told and thus serve as proof of the giver's good way. have memories which are just as vivid, however, of lai sulu; of overassertiveness; of people deliberately intruding on the space of others and of taking what was perhaps too keen an interest in others' possessions. All these different forms of human action as well as the terms and metaphors which are used to describe them indicate that social ideals are thought by the Rauto to be realized or undermined by different forms of self assertion.

In the chapters which follow I show that this insight about the relationship between individual personality and overall cultural pattern lies at the heart of both the religious and the secular aspects of Rauto life. That is, I show that this moral insight of the Rauto links the stereotypical action of ritual to the performative interaction of everyday life and explains why there is a

degree of complementarity between these two forms of human action. Another way of putting this would be to say that the Rauto ethic of performative assertion gives a culturally patterned meaning to both the desire to secure one's own interests and the social need to reaffirm the structure of moral life in ritual. Indeed, the most powerful and dramatic assertions of individual power and identity which I witnessed took place during ritual events - called aurang which clearly were meant to achieve social, or collective, as well as individual goals. This seeming paradox indicated to me that these ritual events were about the relationship between individual power and social (moral) ideals. were a symbolic statement about the complementarity of self and society. The core symbols of these events are song and In the songs and speech of ritual occasions speech. individual power is temporarily co-opted for social ends. In this way song performance and speech become examples of good way (lai itau).

Song and the Way of a Person

In myth and in ordinary discourse song is a leitmotif of the self; of personal concern, desire and accomplishment. The singing of song during ritual and ceremonial events, during the telling of myth and during the

performance of everyday tasks is perhaps the most lyrical form of self assertion and expression which is practiced by Rauto people. It is also primarily through song that the Rauto celebrate the phases in the life and development of the person. Thus, there are songs which celebrate the birth of a child (sequingen). There are categories of song which celebrate circumcision (aiumete). There are special songs to celebrate the onset of adulthood in young men and women There are categories of song which celebrate (aurang). personal accomplishment and ascendancy (atauro). Finally there are the songs which celebrate death and secondary burial (luwungong, serpowa, igle wangna, igle rine). acquisition of this large repertoire of songs is a crucial part of the cultivation of social identity. Through acquisition of it one is taught a way of understanding and celebrating the nature of the person, and one learns the most essential aspects of ritual and ceremonial life. song is perfectly suited to symbolize the particular interrelationship of individual and social concerns which characterizes ritual life.

The two aspects of song, the personal and the social, are discussed in different ways by Rauto. The myths and personal accounts which show how song is related to personal triumph and concern have an informal, lyrical, and sometimes humorous quality to them. The metaphors and

proverbs which convey a sense of the social power of song when it is performed collectively during ritual have a formal almost epic quality to them. An example of the former way of speaking about song is I think best conveyed by the following two accounts. One is a myth the other is a story which was related to me as an accurate telling of the events surrounding the courtship of the narrator's father. I will recount this latter story first:

"Once the woman (who was to be my mother) came to Ipuk to attend a song festival. My father saw her and liked her immediately. He thought long and hard about how he would win her. On the day of the song festival he had some betel charmed for him by a magician and he placed this in his coconut frond basket, setting the betel nut aside for the song festival. He then chewed charmed ginger and areca so that he would be able to sing strongly at the festival, and so that he wouldn't tire during the night. When the song festival began he hid himself well in the midst of the dancers so that my mother could not see him. He kept his head down and did not sing the verses of the agresket

(warrior's chant) with the other men. He made sure that my mother received some of the betel which he had charmed that day. Toward the end of the night when the sky began to lighten and the men gathered together to sing the augosang, my father hid himself really well right in the middle of the singers. He then began to sing for the first time that night. He sang at the top of his lungs until the sun rose. Everyone was taken by his singing. When the song festival finished he quietly left the ceremonial grounds and went to rest in his garden house. My mother followed close behind him and caught up with him when he was going into his house. He told her he didn't like her and to go away. She picked up a heavy tree branch (rege) and said she would hit him with it if he didn't sleep with her. He then took her."

Abbreviated Version of the Myth of the Origins of Taro Magic

Once a man called Tuktuk left his hamlet at Gasmata and began to walk westward with his

sister. As they walked through the forest together people would call out to them "hey, you two over there come here and sit down with us, you and your wife come and sit down with us." The people thought that Tuktuk's sister was his wife; the two were angry at this so they just walked on. (Scenario repeated a number of times.)

The two then came upon a young boy and his mother. The boy called out to Tuktuk saying "hey you two over there, you and your sister come and sit down with us." They all then sat down together and Tuktuk spoke. habits and manners are very good little child, others shamed us with their speech but you did not." Tuktuk then decided to tell the boy about his taro magic. He told the boy to go into the forest and then carry back ginger and ginger grass, coleus, lemon grass, banana leaves and many other things and to separate them into small bundles. When the boy came back he and Tuktuk passed in front of all the men and women who were making gardens with their bundles. In front of everyone Tuktuk began to sing the aurang

for the taro and while he did this he sand out his name as well. As he sang all the people gathered around him. Hearing him sing these people then realized who Tuktuk was and they called out to him and the little boy: "we know you now Tuktuk, now the taro will grow well." Tuktuk and the boy continued to perform song magic until the garden plots of all the people were charmed. Tuktuk then said that the work was finished and that he would now leave the young boy to perform magic in his stead. He told the men to follow the lead of the boy and not to become angry with him because he possessed the taro magic and they did not. He and his sister then walked northward toward Molo, all the while singing the aurang for the taro and placing their magical bundles in the garden plots of many people. When the two reached a place called ai omta they climbed to the top to an ironwood tree. They turned into a clump of ginger grass which now hangs down from a top tree branch...they remain there to this day.

Though the courtship story was said to be an accurate telling of an actual event there is a literary quality to it. Indeed the major themes of the story appear time and time again in Rauto mythology. Perhaps the most common of these mythological themes or motifs has to do with the relationship which the Rauto perceive to exist between identity and song. In both the courtship story and the myth of the origins of taro magic before the protagonist or hero sings he is essentially an anonymous figure. For instance in the courtship story the hero remains hidden in the midst of a group of dancers and has no identity for the woman he In the story the protagonist reveals his wishes to win. identity and exhibits his personal and magical power by Similarly, in the taro myth the culture hero tuktuk reveals his name as well as demonstrates his magical power and knowledge through song.

The myth makes a number of other points about song. The most salient of these is that magical knowledge is taught to people and power is passed on to them through the teaching of song. Thus the culture hero passes on his knowledge and power to the young boy by teaching him song magic. The boy then publicly demonstrates his newly acquired power to aid the growth of taro by singing the aurang along with Tuktuk in the presence of a crowd of men and women. The myth specifies that this act has a political

dimension to it, that because the young boy can perform the aurang he should be considered a leader of men and women. The myth then also makes the point that song can serve as a social marker; that one of the ways in which leadership is achieved and maintained is through the learning and performance of song magic. This point is a reflection of an aspect of the reality of Rauto social life since people, most especially hamlet leaders, acquire prestige by coming to possess a large repertoire of songs and of song magic. Indeed being a ritual leader in Southwest New Britain does not mean, as it does elsewhere in New Guinea (see Jorgensen 1988; Barth 1975), that one possesses a secret body of esoteric knowledge. Being a ritual leader means being a performer and a teacher of song. Thus Rauto say that leading men and women "hold" - (tinokop sakul) the songs that celebrate the person; that serve as the leitmotif of the identity of the characters of myth; that are said to prompt the development of children and of crops. This does not mean that they are necessarily the only ones who know them, but rather that it is thought appropriate that only they should lead others in the performance of these songs. This demonstrates that song and song magic is not thought of in isolation from the person, from his or her personal capability and social influence. Song magic is not thought of as an objective and abstract body of knowledge which is

cooley managed by leaders. Rather it is thought to be a symbol of personal and social being. Not surprisingly then for Rauto the least noteworthy of human beings is the person who is disinclined to sing at song festival and ritual events and to speak during moot or debate. Such a person is disparagingly called auna kip - closed mouth. The personality or way of the person so labeled is considered to be weak while he himself is considered to be ineffectual.

The Social Power of Song

A number of metaphors show that Rauto feel the moment of the song festival - the moment of collective song performance - to be one of singularly concentrated power. A number of these metaphors refer to the power of singing and to the power of the moment of the song festival through reference to forces and events in nature:

Osua ogo alia la ko gel lut re kamsek kai talelek re ma manikikik langono maululukluk

Free translation

The shields (men) arrive at the song festival, their feet stamp the ground which shakes as during an earthquake.

Milol ye oduk tide munuk turuk, osua ogo tigel ye terpen uon. We softly sing and people imitate song doves, the shields (men) appear and the dancing ground overflows.

Both tropes derive their power partly from the contrast which exists between day-to-day life and the occasion of the song festival. Activities of everyday life such as food gathering or garden work are usually carried out without much fanfare or chatter and only occasionally with song. People either tend to their tasks alone or they work with members of their immediate family. Frequently they will leave the gardens to search the forest for areca nut, or perhaps to follow the trail of game. At about one o'clock (oklo amto), they will take cover from the burning heat of the sun in small shade houses which they have built from tree saplings, vines, and wild banana leaves. At this time both the taro gardens and the hamlet residences are dead quiet (ano reprep) and seemingly empty (ano merping). Indeed throughout the day human activity seems intermittent and without focus. As people disperse to pursue their own goals and activities social life appears to be without focus, center or concentrated energy. In contrast during song festival people gather together and in so doing concentrate their power. They decorate themselves with

aromatic and magical plants and leaves; they paint themselves with red ocher and they "arm" themselves with magically charmed areca nut, and sometimes as well with spears and shields. When the dancing ground is full and men and women are singing at the top of their lungs, their voices will break the silence of the surrounding forest and will be heard for miles in all directions. According to the first trope during these occasions the power of people seems equal to that of nature itself. Thus the metaphor states that during song festival "the earth rumbles from the stamping feet of men and women, as if an earthquake were taking place."

The second metaphor - "we softly sing and people imitate song doves . . . the shields arrive and the dancing ground overflows" - refers to the scenario of the song festival itself. Initially, in the early evening, a few adolescent boys and girls will appear at the dancing ground (terpen) and will begin to sing the segheingen. This is a category of song which is meant to alert those who will be the main performers at the song festival that people are now waiting for them to appear. I was told that this singing acts to draw others to the dancing ground. Soon a group of singers will appear at the edge of the song plaza. Out of shame they will cover their faces with fan shaped leaves so that in the fading light of dusk people will be hard put to

distinguish their faces. The singers will sing softly at the edge of the forest. After a few minutes they will enter the dancing ground singing as powerfully as they can. This will signal that the song festival has begun in earnest. Soon other groups will appear and the song plaza will overflow with people. The metaphor refers to this scenario by comparing the singers to flocking song doves. It relates how initially only a single or a few song doves will lite on the branches of a fruit tree in order to feed on its fruit. Their cries will then attract other birds; soon the branches of the tree will be filled with birds.

In the chapters that follow I discuss how song and speech are symbols that outline the different parts men and women play in shaping social and moral life. That is, I show how speech and song are also metaphors for gender. I show how this is so in part by discussing the various ritual events which provide a public opportunity for men and women to exhibit their personal power through song. Thus, in the chapters on ritual I consider the moral significance which a number of the expressive uses of singing has for the Rauto. Yet, before I turn to a consideration of ritual, and of song, I must discuss the Rauto concept of speech, as well as its relationship to ideals of male social identity.

CHAPTER III

Speech, Person, and Community

"His word is made up of fixed stories, mythic or not, of images which evoke moments of valor; it has a dynamic content, it is the wisdom and brilliance of the ages. It has symbolic value. It lends significance to tradition and actualizes it. It situates men in the time in which they live; it raises them to a higher plane; it calls them to existence." - Maurice Leenhardt Do Kamo

This chapter is about the metaphors of the Rauto. In discussing these tropes and in attempting to show how they are understood by the people who created them I hope to reveal something of the moral imagination of the Rauto. 17 I also hope to convey a sense of the complexity of Rauto thought about the relationship between concepts of society on the one hand, and ideals of male social identity on the other. The nature of thought about this matter is shaped by a central cultural metaphor: the act of speaking. Rauto thought about the nature of the person, about the character of social life, and about the conduct of men and women is expressed through the use of this metaphor in both

proverbial and in everyday discourse. More specifically, Rauto metaphors provide a set of judgments about the social effectiveness of actors by alluding to events - such as debate, ritual, and warfare - in which people use speech to influence the course of social life. It is by gauging the usefulness and power of acts of speech, or of song, that the tropes evaluate types of people.

The Rauto have a term for metaphor; they call it amala wauluke which translates as something like transformed or turned-over speech. Sometimes metaphor will also be called amala kairak which translates as firm or strong speech.19 The word kairak (hard) also is the root of the word for elder (oduk kairakrak). This is appropriate as it is recognized that it is mostly older people who possess the depth of knowledge and experience which is needed to interpret the traditional tropes. Indeed, metaphor is sometimes referred to as the speech of the elders (amala kairakrak ino). The imagery of the tropes is what gives them their descriptive power. The images convey a philosophy of the relationship between person and society while they outline the central beliefs and practices of Rauto culture. In the tropic images considered as a whole "there comes to the surface an implicit collective understanding of what things in the world are of most significance" (Redfield 1975:187). For the Rauto the most

significant things are people and the many ways in which they fashion their own social and personal identities. Amala wauluke can be considered to be an extended commentary on these matters. As I show, one of the most interesting aspects of this commentary has to do with a central dilemma of Rauto social life. This dilemma is summarized by the belief that when people engage in the range of traditional activities which are thought to bring social prominence they sometimes subvert a number of the social ideals of their society. The Rauto reflect on this problem in their traditional metaphors and in the bargain express an implicit criticism of certain dominant ideas, as well as of social practices which reflect relations of power. In the chapter I suggest that this point calls into question an assumption of a good deal of anthropological writing about the relationship between speech and the belief systems of what are called traditional societies. This is the idea that dominant forms of discourse about person, self, and the "nature of things" are often accepted uncritically by the people of traditional societies because these societies offer no culturally patterned way to evaluate the meaning of culture forms.

Bloch's argument about the political function of formal speech (e.g. political oratory and proverbs) represents one form of the expression of this idea. For in-

stance, in his 1975 volume he writes that formal speech reaffirms the legitimacy of traditional authority, and thus of social inequality, by relating the structure of authority "to a state" which is thought to have "always existed and is therefore of the same kind as the order of nature" (1975:16). Bourdieu reiterates this idea in his 1977 work (236 n. 42). He writes that the identification of authority with natural order during oratorical and or during ritual occasions creates an experience which he calls doxa - the Greek word for opinion (164). He distinguishes societies which hold a single formalized opinion about the nature of things (doxa) from those which possess heterodoxies and orthodoxies of opinion and thus, more than a single socially recognized truth about the world (164-165). 21

Yet, as Bloch himself notes in a later publication, such views of the relationship between discourse and belief appear "to leave actors with no language to talk about their society" as they "can only talk within" it (1977:281). That is they can only speak about their experience by using the socially recognized and formal terms and concepts which define their experience. For Neo-Marxists like Bloch and Bourdieu this is tantamount to saying that culture is a prison of language - an ideology which prevents actors from altering the status quo by disguising the true nature of authority. Bloch is unsatisfied with this view of culture

and experience and in his 1977 essay he attempts to modify it. Here he posits that all societies possess at least two unrelated ways of understanding and speaking about the world; (1) through "static and organic imaginary models . . . which gain a shadowy phenomenological reality in ritual" and other forms of formal communication; (2) through an "everyday practical" form of communication.22 One need not accept the view that there is no relationship between practical (i.e. economic) and "phenomenological" discourse in order to credit people with a critical and profound understanding of the nature of their own lives. necessary, however, that a different view of the nature of belief systems as well as of the forms of speech which people use to reflect on them be adopted than the one put forward by the writers whom I have discussed.

In this chapter I show that Rauto metaphors constitute a formal discourse about the moral dilemmas of traditional Rauto social and political life and thus are in no way divorced from the realities of this life. The tropes also portray an aspect of the Rauto belief system as multi-layered, complex, and sometimes even contradictory, rather than as shallow and as consistent as ideology.

Order, Speech and Person

In Southwest New Britain hamlet leaders (adepdep)

who direct the affairs of their own communities and who have much influence in communities other than their own, are thought to embody certain ideals of personhood.24 Indeed in political and in economic life the Rauto certainly recognize differences in status among themselves. They possess a developed system of bigmanship, and of bigmomanship. Yet beliefs which belie culture wide concern with political and economic status are balanced by an egalitarian ethic. As in many other Melanesian societies the "trick" for bigmen and bigwomen is, as White writes "to demonstrate strength," and ability "without being cast as haughty" or as overly aggressive and thus socially disruptive (1985:346). However this delicate balance is not easily achieved. maintenance and its loss are central concerns for the lives of Rauto men and women and hence are, as I indicate, central foci of discourse. Indeed this concern is one of the main subjects of tropes which note a relationship between speech and ideals of character as the following discussion indicates.

In the first few metaphors which I discuss speech serves as a symbol for conduct and understanding.

Ungup ogo anona "The tall coconut tree de tirkek amles twists and turns in the wind to avoid sorcery."

In this complex metaphor the swaying coconut tree symbolizes a Rauto hamlet leader or "big man" (adepdep). The trope alludes to the stance of a leader as he speaks at a village moot. With his hands clasped behind his back he twists his torso slightly and continuously as he speaks, just as a tall coconut tree twists and turns in a strong breeze, seemingly avoiding the main force of the wind. the metaphor the mention of the orator attempting to avoid sorcery is an allusion to the traditional belief that sorcery attacks will often be made on a headman at a village moot. I was told that during these occasions a leader's rivals will chew bespelled betel nut (areca) and then will direct their spittle at the adepdep as he speaks. The orator's swaying movement in a sense represents his attempt to dodge the sorcery of his rivals. Yet, in a wider sense, this movement is a metaphor for a culturally valued style of personal conduct. My older informants told me that this metaphor meant that an elder or bigman should try to side-step confrontations with other men through the skillful use of persuasive speech. Thus in the trope "sorcery" serves as a symbol of disputes in general.

While discussing the meaning of this metaphor with informants I was told that in potentially volatile situations where recourse to violence is a possibility speech should be used to balance claims and arrive at a compromise

which ensures that fighting does not take place. One of the most important and valued skills of a traditional leader is just this ability to settle claims and to stop fighting. fact, an important definition of firm speech, amala kairak, is speech which ends violent dispute or which inhibits it from coming about in the first place. The Rauto say that when people are angry speech of this kind "clears their eyes," amala kairak de amta win, and "makes the heart fall and cool," amala kairak de momsoine kai la ma. A person might also say that speech of this kind has brought him out of a dense tangle of rainforest and has led him to a forest clearing (amala kairak tanengong pe ano palaga). terpret this last trope to refer to relative clarity of perception. The imagery of this set of tropes is interesting. It implies that the Rauto correlate anger with the confusion of being lost. The strong speech of a leader brings them out of their confusion by calming their anger, thereby letting them perceive the proper course of action to take. Here the voice appears as a symbol of domestication, and of instruction. The imagery of these few tropes and proverbs appeared to me also to express a view of social life as an arena of frequent contention and dispute. Indeed, as I observed the unfolding and sometimes the culmination of numerous feuds in the hamlet in which I lived, I came to acquire a visceral understanding of this

view of social life. I also came to acquire a similar sort of understanding of a proverb which explained anger and dispute by comparing them to a dense tangle of bush:

Free translation

Oduk tikarpan, ano mlok ano arar.

The men are angry, the hamlet is like a place of tangled bush.

Becoming caught in a tangle of bush means that one's physical movement, sight, and sometimes even one's breathing become restricted. In Rauto social life anger and dispute often have the consequence of restricting people in ways which might seem comparable. They restrict the range of people's social relationships; sometimes they restrict the physical movement of people between separate village hamlets or between sections of a single hamlet. They also sometimes place restrictions on verbal interaction. In Rauto understanding, "firm speech" appears as the primary means for the amelioration of this division of social space and social relationships. Thus I was told that when the headman of a place died feuds would erupt, simmering resentments would come to a head, and the village or hamlet would no longer be kadu (heavy). I interpreted this last phrase to mean that the village would no longer have significance, a significance which was created and maintained through the firm speech of a headman.

While the effective voice of a prominent man or woman serves as a symbol of a productive and peaceful social life, the ability to generate and use firm speech is also a sign of personal power and good character (lai itau). Conversely, tropes which express a negative judgment about types of behavior or about the character of people do so by alluding to socially disruptive and destructive uses of speech:

Free translation

Pat ogo ilo

The speech of this

amala wauia.

person is weak.

Pat ogo kroine

This man's voice is

langono

the cry of the ramal

munuk ramal ko

bird, his voice changes as

kroine mlok

does the voice of the bird.

nekekek langono.

Takanes sokol pe

Let us not speak of this

oduk ogo auna

person, he of the biting

mouth, his own mouth has

devoured him and so he has

died.

Tide omon la ko

They send word, the

la tide munuk

others imitate (the voice)

leline.

of the leline bird.

The first trope can be understood to be the antithesis of the phrase amala kairak, or strong speech. phrase "weak speech" is a metaphor for a person who is not able to halt the fighting and feuding of other people. Indeed, it is a metaphor for a person who is not inclined to try to direct the course of social life in any way. such a person does venture to speak his speech does not penetrate to the core of the matter which he has discussed, and thus he fails to persuade. The difference between people who are distinguished by the use of either firm or weak speech was also explained to me by allusion to a journey through the landscape. The speech of wise and persuasive people is said to "go around the landscape" visiting all the named places of the land, and then to return to its source or base (wate). The speech of a person without knowledge is said to go only a short way into the landscape and to miss stopping off at many essential places. In this figure of speech understanding is symbolized by the relative length of a journey. The many places of the landscape mentioned in the allusion refer to the essential points of a person's speech or argument. The reference to "the return to the source of the journey" is an allusion to the basic premise of the person's speech, and to how well the various points of the speech confirm this premise. Interestingly, speech which strikes people as being weak is

said "not to bear fruit" or not to have substance or "meat"

(ilo amala keneine adai). This idiom indicates an essential connection between perceptive - and thus effective speech - and accomplished action.

The trope "this man's voice is the cry of the ramal, his voice turns as does the voice of the bird" conveys its message by alluding to the cry of a large seabird, called a ramal in Rauto. I was told that the bird often flies in the middle of a flock of smaller seabirds, such as terns (atroi), crying out in a voice which - unlike that of the surrounding terns - constantly changes in pitch, volume and duration. The bird's inconstant voice is a metonym for people who constantly change their plans. The speech of such people is said to turn (nekekek) constantly. Turning one's speech is often perceived to represent an attempt at putting people off verbally. It is seen as a self-serving and insincere way of acting and it is also categorized as "weak speech." People who "turn" their speech will not be trusted to act on their word to satisfy creditors or, more generally, to live up to the obligations that others perceive them to have incurred.

In the third trope takanes sokol pe oduk ogo, auna nengen kano la ko uren ("let us not speak of this person, he of the biting mouth, his own mouth has devoured him and thus he has died") speech serves as a metaphor for the harmful

and eventually self-destructive force of anger. The trope specifically refers to the death of a person who was quick to anger and who habitually denigrated other men and women. The trope alludes to an event which almost always follows upon the death of a person. After someone has died, most of the kin who reside within walking distance of the person's hamlet meet and discuss the possible causes for the death. The possibility that the person died as a result of a sorcery attack is always considered at these meetings. People then review the personal history of the deceased and try to find in it evidence of unresolved past disagreements. They also try to consider the person's past "transgressions" (sulu or rong in tok pisin) in order to determine who might have had reason to initiate the sorcery attack. When the close kin of the dead person agree on a likely candidate they will sometimes bring an accusation against this person and will demand compensation payment (ulu) for the death. The trope alludes to a meeting of this type; however, as people begin to speculate on the reasons for the death they are told that these are apparent, that the person caused his own ruin by antagonizing so many other people through his or her speech and actions. His own mouth is said to have devoured him.

In the next trope, speech serves as a symbol of social conflict. The trope tide omon la ko la tide munuk

leline ("they send word, the others give the cry of the crow") is an allusion to a public challenge. The trope describes a group of people making an accusation and then requesting compensation from another group. This second group then openly mocks the speech and requests of the first group. Their defiance is expressed in the trope by mention of the mocking cry of the crow. The trope serves as a particularly apt description of social conflict because of the sensitivity which the Rauto show when their speech is questioned, cut short, or in this case openly mocked. Indeed it was explained to me that making sport of another person's speech was traditionally a signal for the beginning of a spear fight.

The Systematic Nature of Rauto Metaphorical Concepts of Speech and of the Person

The few metaphors which I have discussed express a number of concepts which appear to be part of a systematic style of discourse about the relationship between speech and the person. In this metaphoric discourse and I argue in Rauto perception, speech is given a number of anthropomorphic qualities. Thus, like a person, speech or the voice of specific individuals is said to be either firm (kairak) or weak (auram). Further, the voice is perceived

to be active that is it shapes the character of social life and its effects are felt to be immediate and compelling, as are the actions of a human being. A related idea conveyed by the tropes is that speech is a type of body which has a surface as well as depth and volume. Thus, strong speech is said to have depth and heaviness while weak speech is shallow, and has a quality of lightness.

The attribution of the qualities of a person and of a body to speech is consistent with metaphorical concepts which suggest that the achievement of prominence and the development of personhood are the result of a slow, almost physical, or organic process. In the Rauto view the power of the voice increases as a person goes through the long process of constructing his or her own identity or name The training of the voice in song, in the skills (anine). of debate, in the recitation of myth and metaphor, and in the performance of magic itself serves as a metaphor for this process. A fully cultivated or skilled voice is a person's main tool as he attempts to build alliances, sponsor and arrange ceremonies, and generally "build a name" (pane anine).25 There are no short-cuts either in the cultivation of the voice or the achievement of influence. One must figuratively "grow into" prominence as the following metaphor suggests:

ko de arol pat ma.

Pat uru taker taker

la kele ma adepdep ye

Free translation

The man imitates and thinks he is the headman yet he is the arol plant which sits in the middle of a tree.

The metaphor has a number of different aspects of meaning. First, it suggests that a person who too quickly or at too young an age attempts to act the part of a headman must somehow really be without true influence. In the trope such a person is compared to a type of fast-growing fern or air plant (arol) which will grow from a crevice or small hole in the branch of a large tree. The arol is not really part of the tree and its exuberant growth is in no way related to the growth cycle of the tree. One informant told me that "the arol lacks the tree's deep roots, just as the pseudo headman lacks the influence and power of a true headman." I was also told that the arol does not begin its growth where a true tree should. Rather, "it begins its growth in the middle" (pane pe pangramu). It is a sort of upstart which has not gone through the necessary or appropriate steps in attaining its position. Of course, these same remarks apply to the pseudo headman. inference of the trope is that what influence the pretender

does possess is really dependent on the power and approval of a true headman. The pretender is parasitic on a true headman as the arol is parasitic on its tree. Thus, perhaps the most subtle idea expressed by the metaphor is that a person who "begins in the middle," who does not go through the long process referred to as building one's name might ultimately be dependent upon others, especially leaders.

Metaphors which anthropomorphize speech and which allude to the development of social influence by referring to physical development are consistent with proverbs which mention the strong parts of the body in order to allude to personal power and influence. For instance, prominent men and sometimes prominent women are referred to as itar ino tokwo, the backbone of the house; itar mugulu, the stomach of the house; itar momsoine, the heart of the house. men are also often referred to as udiep muqulu, the stomach of the men's ceremonial house. These last two metonyms are significant in that they equate strength with the interior of the human body while simultaneously suggesting a quality The tropes then attribute such of depth or profundity. qualities to elders. The symbolic equation of the heart with the elders is also significant in that in traditional belief the heart is thought to be the source of the body's strength and as well the source of the power of magical speech. Thus, the metonyms which equate the prominent

person with this part of the body appear to suggest that he or she is perceived as representing the animating force of Rauto society.

The speech of prominent men and women is also associated with other sacred portions of the body: especially the mouth, as for instance in the metonym amala mlok palaklak auna - speech (of the elders) rests on the mouth of the center post of the men's ceremonial house. In the trope the importance of prominent men is alluded to by a reference to the center post of the men's house, an architectural feature which literally holds the ceremonial house Bigmen are identified with the center post. mouths - identified in the trope with the top of the center post - support the structure of the ceremonial house by uttering strong speech. The trope identifies this speech with the roof beam of the ceremonial house thus suggesting that this speech is - to use one of our own tropes - over the heads of others, especially young people. The main idea expressed by the metonym is that the speech of leaders plays a central role in the affairs of the men's house and thus in the affairs of the hamlet. Perhaps appropriately then prominent men are also referred to as udiep apna (the head of the men's ceremonial house).

The symbolic correlation of firm speech with the mouth in metaphor is particularly significant when one

considers the ritual importance which the skulls and jawbones of prominent men and women had, and continue to have in some places in Arawe, in mortuary ceremonies.²⁶

After the death and burial of a person and a period of interment the skull, jawbone and hand bones are unearth-The remaining pieces of flesh are then cleaned from the bones by a ritual specialist. After the period of their preparation by the ritual specialist the bones are wrapped in sweet smelling herbs called adi and are placed in the men's ceremonial house. In the next few days, and also at times during the next few years, a number of different singing and dancing ceremonies are held to honor the bones of the dead. At a ceremony that I attended the jawbones of two men of renown were placed in the middle of two small pearl shells and were then covered with the adi (herbs). Two dancers - nephews of the deceased - then held the pearlshells out in front of them with outstretched arms and began to perform a graceful skipping dance. They danced parallel to one another from one end of the hamlet's dancing ground to the other end, and then back again. As they performed people attending the ceremony sang the special songs associated with this particular part of the ceremonial song cycle. A few women stood on either side of the dancers' path and waved sweet smelling herbs and colorful crotons at the bones as a sign of homage to the dead.

told that the jawbones of the prominent dead were honored in this way because, during life, the voices of these men and women "spoke of giving food to others," "uttered the taro magic" which insured the survival of the hamlet group's members, and "arranged the killing of pigs and the distribution of pork at ceremonial pig kills." The hand bones are unearthed and honored because, in life, prominent men and women are said to have "given many gifts of food to others." The skull is honored because it most powerfully recalls the memory of the dead person and because the eyes of the skull are said to continue to watch over the hamlet insuring its survival and prosperity just as, during life, the eyes of headmen and headwomen watched over and supervised the hamlet group and its affairs. Indeed the skull and the bones are thought to continue to contain something of the efficacy or even spirit of the dead. For this reason the dances are called igle wagna - "spirit of the jawbone" to indicate the belief that the agency of the deceased never becomes wholly detached from the bones. Thus, while the bones remain in the hamlet, something of the agency of the dead remains permanently attached to the hamlet. For the Rauto the most powerful symbol of the influence and strength of human agency is the voice. By memorializing and honoring it in mortuary ceremony the Rauto provide the person with a form of personal immortality at the same time that they celebrate strong speech and the human voice as the foundations of social life.

Adepdep and Metaphors of Violence and Anti-Community

Violence and the fear of domination once touched the lives of the Rauto in an immediate and sometimes overwhelming way. Violence, or the prospect of it, colored the relationships between kin and introduced an element of uncertainty to the relationship between non-kin. or the threat of it made, and continues to make Rauto people wish to live apart from each other so that they can run their lives without the interference of others. From their own accounts, observations, and metaphors about their past it is clear that the uncertainty introduced into their lives by the possibility of violence sometimes made the Rauto willing to compromise their independence and to curb their anger and suspicion of others. But anger and suspicion were, and indeed still are, close to the surface of social This remains a fact of daily understanding. Consequently, the Rauto have ways of talking about this aspect of their society and of their history. Metaphors of violence, of annihilation, of sorcery and suspicion all express thoughts and feelings about the conflicts and strains of their social life. When supplemented by actual

accounts of violence these tropes can be seen to represent an intellectual response to the dilemma of having been caught up within this life while simultaneously professing ideals which were the antithesis of it. Perhaps the great dilemma of Rauto existence is contained in the fact that the preeminent symbol of a productive and peaceful social life - the voice of the adepdep - is perceived as well to represent the antithesis of it, that is, to represent anti-structure itself. The following metaphors nicely catch some of the nuances of ambiguity in thought about the voice of the prominent:

Oduk gel ti moi moi
lik osua la ko ma re
amta la rik wiling
uaro ma malanga gerger
apna.

Free translation

The crowd of men come together, their shields resting (on the ground). His (adepdep) eye looks over the hundreds of spears; they appear to be the branches of the gerger apna (tree).

The trope describes one of the most ambiguous, emotionally charged, and potentially violent moments of traditional Rauto social life: the moment when the dawn begins to break after an all night song festival. At Rauto

song festivals a hamlet group or village leader invites a great number of men and women in order that they might either "honor" one of his children prior to the performance of a ceremony for them; receive either pork or live pigs from him as a part of a ceremonial exchange; witness the ceremony surrounding the slaughter of a tusked pig, and/or sing or perform aurang, so that the pigs and taro of the hamlet group leader and of his kin group will multiply and grow. By and large, people are invited to a song festival for a combination of these purposes.

The ethnographer J.A. Todd who worked among the Kaul, a linguistic group located some fifty kilometers east of the Rauto, thought that these festivals were primarily mechanisms for the "redress of wrongs" because, during such events, long standing grudges and feuds would frequently find violent public expression (1935). He was perhaps partly correct in this observation. In any case, Arawe song festivals were and remain "social dramas" which contain political, economic, religious, sexual, and aesthetic elements. The metaphor which I have translated alludes to the relationship between the violent and the political aspects of the song festival.

Throughout the night men and women invited from different hamlet groups, or perhaps a distant village, dance and sing in a group which is separate from that of the

members of the hamlet group which has sponsored the ceremony and on whose ceremonial grounds the song festival takes The different groups will spend the night alternatively competing with each other through song and threatening one another with spears and shields. Men from the different groups will sometimes break off from the mass of dancers performing a circle dance called the agresket, and will form themselves into opposing lines. They will then hold their shields out in front of them and will lean back and point their spears at members of the opposing line. They will then advance to the center of the dancing ground to a point at which their spears will almost touch those of their adversaries. At this point they will usually break off and begin again to dance the agresket, only to continue to repeat this manoeuvre throughout the course of the night. Hamlet leaders will range among the men exhorting them according to their inclination - either to peace or violence. Spear fighting most often takes place just as the dawn breaks after the hostile feelings of the men have been raised to fever pitch by a night of taunts and threats. People told me that they wait for dawn before they begin to fight because at that time they can more clearly distinguish between the faces of their enemies on the one hand, and those of their friends - and quite possibly kin - on the other. In the metaphor it is during this particular moment

that the adepdep admonishes the warriors to stand together so that he might look over and marvel at the number of spears (i.e. men) that he has drawn to his festival. trope the powerful image of the spears of scores of warriors is rendered by invoking the image of a tree (gerger apna) which possesses an extraordinary number of branches so many, I was told, that even if one stands some distance from it the tree blocks out the view of the surrounding forest. By halting the fighting of individual men at the end of the song festival by his voice and order the adepdep symbolically expresses his control over the violence of these men and, as a number of elders suggested, his right to direct this violence himself if he so wishes. The power and drama of this moment of social life is thus in a sense usurped by the adepdep. He claims this power by simultaneously showing himself to be a maker of peace and a war leader.

In the next trope the voice of the adepdep is said to prompt the violence of others as they attempt the attack and annihilation of another village or hamlet:

Free translation

Tir la ko me re
ano kaitektek auna
langano angan
iri kamut.

The men appear and come
upon the place as the mouth
of the red tide flings the
the trees upon the shore.

The mouth of the red monsoon tide (auna kaitektek) is a metonym for the voice of the adepdep. In its violence and in its ability in some cases literally to bury the shoreline in debris the kaitektek serves as an apt symbol of pure force and of destructiveness. Thus, through the use of this analogy, the voice of a leader is equated with annihilation. The trope resembles a number of others in which the Rauto consider the prospect of violence offered by a marauding group of warriors:

Free translation

Tir la ko pane ko me
re langono tir wate
kognas ine pane sowro.

The men come upon us as the rain clouds come up above us.

Tir la ko kupiuk me tir langano uri tir asang. The men appear and come upon us like a waterfall which overflows (when we attempt to catch some of its water with an asang).

In all these tropes the violence of people is compared to the violence of nature - to rainstorms, crashing

ocean waves, and crashing waterfalls. The tropes suggest a kind of violence which cannot be restrained by the usual procedures for the mediation of conflict, such as debate, compensation payment or dueling. These were and are the accepted Rauto means for the containment of violence within a community. Yet the tropes suggest a kind of violence which leaves no room for rational deliberation. Because they associate violence with the speech of leaders, these tropes provide a vivid contrast to those discussed in the first section of this essay which celebrate community and the constructive role of the speech of the adepdep in social life.

A report written in 1949 by the Australian patrol officer S. M. Foley gives us some idea of how the Rauto prepared for the prospect of concerted violence, of the way that they were forced to deal with the frequent drama of raiding and reprisal common to so many traditional Melanesian societies. The report describes the village of Sabdidi preparing for a "pay back" raid expected from the village of Kulawango after a Kulawango man named Kalup had been killed by a group of Sabdidi men:

"Sabdidi prepared to repulse Kulwango in this way. On a hillock some fifty feet high, encircling an area of forty yards in diameter an eight foot high palisade was built wherein temporary houses were built and food was stored. At the perimeter of the stockade three trees were left standing. Twenty feet from the base of these trees fighting tops were built which were made accessible by ladders. Two hundred spears were stacked and shields were placed nearby. Several large lumps of limestone completed the armament. From fifty yards out from the base of the hill all bush was felled . . . and another strip leading to water fifty yards wide was cleared."

tack, the strongest warriors would man the stockade. Young men and women would climb to the fighting platforms and hurl down stones from them. Women with children would climb to the higher branches of the banyan and hope that their warriors could hold the stockade and prevent the destruction of the hamlet residence, the killing of its men, their own capture and perhaps even murder. The Rauto laid the blame for such violence on their own pride and on their inability to tolerate any slight committed against them. Yet, they attributed such violence as well to the strivings of their

leaders, and to the wishes of these men to avenge the slights and wrongs committed against them and their kinsmen and clients. Such statements contain subtle recognition that leaders were and remain a cause of the disruption of community.

According to the Rauto a type of "madness," rara, descends on people during occasions of violence. During these occasions people give expression to a part of themselves which is not normally tolerated within the bounds of community, as is suggested in the following tropes:

Oduk tipaut a keneng

Oule nakum isa sawoi
ko rap a keneng isa
keneng kanes: pu oule
wom oro apkleng omtan
osua alingo kano
amtugu rara pe nowom.
Omrakngong ogo ye
soro omtan osua tangan
rema amtagu rikom re
ma.

Free translation

The men spear and drown the wallaby.

The dog sniffs out and captures the wallaby.

The wallaby speaks thus You dog have taken your old shield and tricked me as I could not see you. Now you will kill and eat me. If you had taken your new shield I would have seen it, I would have run away.

Wom isako omngen keneng wun ino moro You have eaten the wallaby along with its blood.

The first trope, "The men spear and drown the wallaby," invokes a scenario which seems especially striking to the Rauto and which paints a particularly violent picture with words. In this scenario a dog is seen chasing a wallaby - a large marsupial - from its home in the forest and down to a reef just past the shore. Here, a number of men come upon the frightened animal, spear it through and then dunk it up and down in the ocean in order to drown it. The wallaby is a metaphor for a defeated and helpless warrior. In the trope he appears as prey chased by hunting dogs. The warriors who murder him treat his body as they would that of a prey animal. Similar ideas and associations are expressed in the short fable which I have translated above. Again a wallaby serves as a metaphor for a defeated warrior. Yet in the fable the victorious warrior is himself identified with a cunning dog. He is scolded by his victim for having used stealth to capture his prey. The defeated warrior tells the victor that had he taken a brightly painted new shield he could not have hid in the forest as easily as he had. Instead, by waiting in ambush for his victim with an old ruddy colored shield he escaped detection and was able to spring upon and murder his prey. The last

trope suggests a symbolic association between combat and cannibalism. Here a victorious warrior is said to have "eaten" his opponent.

In all of the tropes there appears to be a close symbolic correlation between the nature of a victorious warrior and that of a hunting dog. These associations appear to be part of a system of discourse about an aspect of human nature and about its relationship to a violent aspect of Rauto life. That the hunting dog serves as a symbol of this relationship is not surprising when we consider the way that the Rauto speak about dogs and the way that they use them.

Dogs and Men

For the Rauto hunting dogs are especially important animals for young men, men who in traditional times would have made up the bulk of a community's warriors. Dogs seem most intimately associated with that period of a man's youth in which he begins the intensive cultivation of social relationships with people outside of his circle of close kin. During late adolescence when a man begins to think about acquiring a wife he is frequently away from his village or hamlet for long periods of time in order to perform the round of social visiting called songo, or in

order to hunt. Frequently a youth will combine a hunting trip with his dogs with a round of songo. During songo a boy visits the hamlets of distant kin seeking to be given pearl shells by them so that he can begin to put together a portion of the brideprice needed to take a wife. during these social visits that a youth begins to build a network of guest friends and trading partners. The period in a man's life when he begins to make songo should also be the one in which he begins to build a reputation as a skillful hunter and provider of game.27 A young man's dogs are enormously important to him as he begins to build such a reputation. Later, when he chooses (or a woman is chosen for him) his hunting dogs become important to him as he attempts to secure game which he gives to his future affines in order to establish proper and amicable relations with them.

In short, dogs are an important tool as young men attempt to make their way into full participation in Rauto social life. In this sense the hunting dog is an instrument in the construction of a young man's social identity. Young men seem particularly attached to dogs. If a favorite is killed in a boar hunt, a young hunter sometimes gives up eating pork or some other choice food out of sorrow for the animal.

Despite all this sentimentality about dogs, the

Rauto recognize that these animals possess an unruly and sometimes vicious nature. They are also cunning and thieving. Yet, not all of these qualities are considered to be undesirable. Before the commencement of a hunt, for instance, men try to increase the ferocity of their dogs by placing small amounts of charmed ginger and areca nut in their food. These "hot substances" are said to make the dog's stomach "burn with anger." Interestingly, I was told that in pre-pacification days young warriors would sit together and would chew areca nut and charmed ginger in order to incite their anger, and make them "as quick as dogs" when they went into battle. The metaphor of youth as fighting dog appears to be fairly straightforward here. Elders are especially fond of referring to young men as "dogs" when they leave off their garden work to attend song festivals or songo, or nowadays to take up residence in Rabaul and work as plantation laborers there. This is interesting in that occasionally elders will also refer to wrongdoers as dogs; oule aroti, "there goes the dog" is a phrase which they use when they wish to point out such people. Furthermore, people who feel that they have been injured by a person sometimes imply that they will take revenge against them by saying "I will castrate that dog."

The symbolism of the relationship between men and dogs thus appears to be fairly clear. In Rauto discourse,

dogs appear as a symbol of the unruly and violent part of a person's nature.28 The particularly close association of dogs with young men a category of people who, in elders' eyes, have not yet acquired fully settled habits, implies that they also represent a less fully-socialized aspect of human behavior. The tropes which describe the nature of men who engage in violent acts by identifying them with dogs now appear to take on a somewhat deeper significance. imply that this particular aspect of human nature is anathema to a community.29 We could safely say that in Rauto thought the "firm speech" of prominent people regulates this aspect of human nature and thus protects the community from a strong internal threat. Rauto, however, add yet another caveat to this thought in their traditional metaphors and indeed in their ritual and magical practices. In these metaphors and practices Rauto express their recognition that prominent men and women can pose a serious threat to the internal harmony and to the productivity of everyday social life. In such practices and thoughts these people appear as symbols of the darker desires and rivalries of everyday social life, the very things which they are thought to control.

Leaders and Sorcerers

The Rauto recognize that the powers of the adepdep

can amplify what can be called the uncertainty of social Sorcerers par excellence, leaders were and are life. thought to be able to bring sudden death or a long and lingering illness to their enemies and rivals. Believed to guarantee the prosperity of a settlement by performing taro magic, leaders also possess a number of forms of magic which can destroy the taro crop and bring famine to a community. Leaders and organizers of hunting, fishing and trading endeavors, bigmen also possess magic to insure the failure of these enterprises and, according to popular conception, are inclined to use it if these affairs are led by rivals and enemies. The point to stress here is that in the Rauto view these exhibitions of power sometimes have little to do with a leader's legitimate interest in social control. Rather they sometimes represent an unjustifiable desire to harm people and to behave in a self-aggrandizing fashion.

In day to day life the Rauto spend a good deal of time considering and trying to protect themselves from the ruin which people of rank might cause them. When for instance people make their own gardens and perform magic for them a number of the spells which they chant will be directed to warding off the taro sorcery of powerful men and sometimes prominent women as well. When people go about performing their daily tasks they will carry with them little bundles of "magical materials" which are meant to

ward off the sorcery attacks of men and women of rank. Even a few types of curing magic reveal Rauto concern about the danger presented by the powers of prominent people. A number of the curing spells which I collected represented ritualized attempts to remove the "poison" of a prominent man or woman from the body of an afflicted person.

Typically, the ends of the spells would be a litany of the names of well known sorcerers and leaders. The spells advise them (the leaders) to "be aware of the magic" which is being used to counteract their sorcery.

These ritual precautions and remedies give one a deeper sense of the meaning of a number of tropes which equate leaders with the unsettling and sometimes destructive effects of sorcery:

Free translation

Terma makap. He (sorcerer) kicks sand (upon the place).

Ungup wate parap. The base of the coconut palm is covered with dust.

De pane mlok. The thought appears and is kept in mind.

The first trope ("The sorcerer kicks sand on the

place") refers to the traditional belief that the sorcery of a headman is powerful enough to destroy a hamlet residence completely. This idea is conveyed through the description of a man completely covering a place or group of men with The second trope, "the base of the coconut palm is covered with dust," expresses the idea that a headman's desire for revenge does not end until someone who has committed an offense against him has been destroyed. trope was explained to me in the following way: a man commits an offense against a prominent man or woman and expects immediate retribution. However, revenge is not taken immediately. Enough years pass so that the person who has committed the offense begins to believe that the headman has forgotten the incident and has lost his desire for revenge. At this point the offender's understanding of the plans and feelings of the headman have become distorted. the proverb reference is made to this by the statement that the base of the coconut palm has been covered with dust, the base of the palm being the vision or understanding of a However, while the thought of the future victim of sorcery has become clouded, the vision and memory of the headman has remained clear. He has planned to take his revenge at the moment when his adversary least expects him to do so, and is least prepared to defend himself against the headman's sorcery attack. The reference to the base of

the palm being covered with dust also calls to mind the image of an old and tall coconut palm. The implication of this image is that a great amount of time has passed between the moment when the offense was committed and the moment when the sorcery attack occurred, a span equivalent to the amount of time needed for a tree to grow old and tall.

This trope resembles a number of others which seem to serve as admonitions to those who would forget their "transgressions" (sulu) or who would take the power of the headman lightly. For instance the third proverb, de pane mlok - "the thought rises and remains," reminds people that they must constantly keep the memory of their wrongs (sulu) in mind so that they can behave with the proper caution toward those who might have a motive to sorcerize them.

These two tropes express ideas which introduce a good deal of worry into the lives of people. The gist of this worry is related to a concern which people have with finding friends who will help them dole out compensation payment to someone who has accused them of committing an offense. In interviews and in informal conversation about the reasons for this concern the Rauto indicated their fear of being sorcerized by their accusers. To this day Rauto cultivate friendships and sometimes perform labor for the friend's benefit so that there will be a number of people to turn to when help is needed with compensation payment. I

was told that in the past labor was rendered almost exclusively to those persons from whom one had both the most to fear and the most to gain, people of rank. The logic behind such manoeuvering may seem contradictory, but it was and remains perfectly clear to the Rauto. One reduces one's worries about sorcery by becoming a helper or client of a leading person. By working for him one lessens the possibility that he might seek to harm you. He in turn could offer protection against the depredations of other leading persons since rivals might think twice about carrying out a sorcery attack on a client of a powerful man. Indeed they would fear the sorcery, and the violence of this man.

Here we see that cultivating a reputation as a sorcerer can be beneficial to a person's political career.

Yet, in the Rauto view a leader's powers of sorcery are not always considered to be beneficial to society. People often expressed dismay to me at how a leader's powers enabled him to control the lives and actions of others. They said that this was even more the case in the past when the power of a leader was not held in check by the mission and the law courts. Indeed, the Rauto perceive the exercise of sorcery powers to be morally wrong if these powers are not used in the furtherance of what they consider to be legitimate social interests, that is, the punishment of wrong doers.³⁰

Such thoughts highlight some of the moral problems which many Rauto people see in the successful realization of what can be called the "ethos" of male social/political identity. Being a man of violence, of anger, and of self-aggrandizing tendencies is considered antithetical to being a peacemaker and a guarantor of justice and solidarity. This antithesis, symbolized by the images of amala wauluke, and often thought to be embodied by the person of a prominent leader gives a distinctive tone to the life of the Rauto. It does this by creating an implicit understanding that the structure of what I had previously called community is essentially provisional and therefore liable to unravel.

I think it is clear that Rauto metaphors express an ambivalent assessment of the character of the social actions by which men, especially, enhance their power and reputation. Indeed in the Rauto view, what we would perhaps call social order and social disorder continually give rise to each other as people follow the traditional paths to renown and try "to build their names." That is, the Rauto recognize and live with the dilemma that events which offer the possibility of achievement also sometimes invite violence and/or a general unraveling of the moral underpinning of social life. I would say that this view of life is essentially pessimistic. This is because it implies that persons often work against themselves and some of the

ideals of their society when they attempt to achieve. The most important theoretical point to stress here is that the metaphors which express this belief can be considered to constitute an inquiry into the strengths and weaknesses of Rauto culture. That is, the tropes offer a series of evaluations of how this culture's ideals of conduct and of person allow either for the continual recreation of, or for the undermining of community. Because of this evaluative aspect amala wauluke cannot be considered to be simply a celebration of dominant ideals and relations of power. Nor does it represent a counter pattern of belief which is set against the dominant belief system. It is simply a statement about the nature of the moral dilemma which the Rauto perceive to arise from their own theories and concepts about the person, and about social identity.

CHAPTER IV

Song, Female Initiation, and the Moral Imagination of the Rauto

". . . discourse and objects are not formulas or signs, and even less are they language, but rather tradition, that is, a way of translating the word in its perennity, a manifestation of being in its continuity." -- Maurice Leenhardt Do Kamo

I began this thesis with a reference to the almost paradigmatic idea that the ritual life of traditional societies continually affirms an assumption of adult men; that they represent and embody ideals of cultural life. In this chapter I argue that it would be more useful to consider ritual - most especially puberty ritual - to reflect culturally specific ideas about gender and about human nature. As soon as we do this the idea that ritual always represents a form of "symbolic domination," most especially of men over women, begins to appear less and less tenable. This recognition would have particular importance for the study of the relationship between ritual action and the creation of identity. If we accepted it we would then

expect certain cultures to celebrate formally during puberty ritual the part which women play in forming the social identity of children and the moral life of society. Rauto of southern West New Britain are one of the - perhaps rather rare - Melanesian cultures which does celebrate these The menstrual rite demonstrates how Rauto women matters. are themselves considered to be the producers and possessors of many of the sacred symbols of cultural life. Of course this fact immediately contrasts Rauto ceremonial for children with the initiation rites and puberty rituals of the people of Highland New Guinea - the culture area where most of the recent work on children's ceremonies has been done by New Guinea anthropologists (Herdt 1981 et. al.). What is most significant about the Rauto puberty ritual for women is that, in contrast to the material on Highland religious life, it provides us with an example of how women are perceived to be possessors of and disseminators of central aspects of the moral and religious/aesthetic imagination of a culture. By recounting this example I hope to convey something of the Rauto understanding of the moral power of the speech and song of women. I also wish to outline Rauto ideals of adult female identity.

Some Theoretical Considerations

Collier and Rosaldo have written that in traditional

societies women's puberty rituals by and large celebrate either a woman's newly developed reproductive capacities or her potential "sexual prowess" (1981:278). The authors suggest that women's puberty rituals - and the concepts of gender which they express - should be explained primarily with reference to the marriage system of a particular traditional society. The distinction which they make between a "bridewealth society" and a "brideservice society" is crucial to their interpretation of the character of puberty ritual. They argue that in traditional societies in which a man purchases a wife with valuables (bridewealth) puberty ritual tends to reveal men's great respect for, and in some cases ambivalence about, women's ability to bear children. The two imply that this is so because the offering of bridewealth is in part an expression by a group of their control over, most especially, the labor of the children who will be produced by a marriage. Leaders or elders also acquire a right to the labor of young men when they provide brideprice to them. Thus, elders "buy" the reproductive capacities of women in order to strengthen their control over young men, and to reproduce the strength of the social group which they lead. The onset of puberty provides an opportunity for men to note, through the performance of ritual, that which is most important about women to them and to the society which they control.

According to these authors then the celebration of women's reproductive capacities in bridewealth societies during ritual reveals an inequitous social system in which the labor and the capacities of men and women are controlled by the manipulation of bridewealth payments by elders. In Collier and Rosaldo's discourse bridewealth, puberty ritual, marriage systems, and ideas about gender are all seen to be related and in their relationship to form total social systems.

In contrast, men and women exercise more control over the products of their labor in brideservice societies. Most importantly, in such societies women's reproductive capacities are not controlled by a system which is based on the accumulation and exchange of bridewealth. In these societies a man secures a wife by courting a woman and by simultaneously providing labor and gifts of game to her parents and male siblings. Thus men provide service to their future affines rather than bridewealth.

Collier and Rosaldo argue that in brideservice societies men achieve an essential equality with other men through their acquisition of a wife. To buttress this point the two offer ethnographic examples from Illongot social life which show how "marriage enables a man to become an effective social actor" (1981:284). The main point which the authors make here is that in brideservice societies a

man mainly acquires a wife through his own efforts. not depend on a group of elders or leaders to provide him with the financial wherewithal to acquire a wife. However, he has to provide a woman - usually a classificatory "sister" - to the group which has provided him with his wife. By meeting this obligation and thus completing a direct exchange of women a man begins to form social ties which will be crucial to him in his adult career. As Strathern notes direct-exchange marriage thus "becomes a prototype of men's socially creative powers" (1985:196). That is, the social ties formed by direct exchange marriage represent the foundation of the social life of "brideservice society." Thus sexual access to a woman rather than say, the control of labor and valuables lies at the root of the social life of this type of society. Collier and Rosaldo argue that the woman's puberty rituals of brideservice societies celebrate women's sexuality because the social ties formed when a man gains permanent sexual access to a woman, here form the foundations of social life.

Of course, in both the ideal type examples given by Rosaldo and Collier the influence of women upon the moral structures of society is indirect. Sexuality or reproductive capacity becomes socially important because of the way which men use, appropriate, or react to these capacities. Also, in both these examples, ritual life

appears by and large to be an indication of and in a certain sense a reinforcement of a particular system of economic practice.

In this chapter I argue that Rauto puberty ritual reveals a dialectic between a concept of personhood and the everyday economic practice of women. As women carry out acts of production, of exchange, and of sexuality in their daily lives they produce both a personal (experiential) and a social identity for themselves. The Rauto puberty ritual is an imaginative comment on the nature and cultural identity of women and on how their continual creation of this identity is related to the moral structure of Rauto society. Underlying my interpretation of Rauto puberty ritual is an idea that a philosophy of personhood informs both the economic and the ritual practices of this society.

The Objective of the Puberty Ritual

The Rauto have a custom of offering bridewealth for a woman. Yet, the menstruation ritual performed for a woman does not celebrate her developing reproductive capacities. The ritual is performed specifically to prompt the physical growth of young women, to enhance their beauty and their health, and to form their moral outlook since in the ritual instruction is given to the initiates about their duties and

privileges as women. The rite is performed by senior "big women" for the children of their brothers or patrilateral The ritual also demonstrates the ability and power cousins. of the senior women to influence both the physical and the moral development of children. The prominent women who perform this ceremony are said to honor the young girls, and to "raise the names" of these children. But they raise their own names as well by demonstrating their knowledge of ritual and of song scripts, and by demonstrating (through the singing and the performance of the various aurang) the power of their voices to prompt the growth and to enhance the health of the girls. The expression of self through magical song in puberty ritual is integrally related to the affirmation of the social and cultural identity of senior It is a demonstration that their voices have social, women. moral, and magical power.

Since many of the ritual acts of the woman's puberty ritual allude to the productive actions of women, I must here preface my account of the ritual with a gloss on the role which women play in Rauto economic life.

Gloss on the Relationship Between Economic Life and Concepts of Gender and Identity

Social achievement for both men and women is marked partly in terms of a demonstrated ability to produce

foodstuffs (especially pigs and taro); to contribute to the physical growth and the moral eduction of children; to arrange and to sponsor successfully ceremonies during which major transactions in pearl shell and other types of shell valuables will take place. The Rauto recognize that it is initially through food production that social groups and individuals acquire shell valuables, and subsequently insure that these valuables continue to come into their possession. Wealth is not seen to accumulate mainly from what can be called "finance" - or the manipulation of networks of credit and debt in pigs, shells and vegetable foodstuffs (Strathern, A. 1969:43). In fact, Rauto ceremonies demonstrate visually that successful exchange is the result of successful production - see Chapter V. The taro and pig exchanges which often accompany the elaborate rites of production of Rauto culture primarily demonstrate the abilities of people, and of their social group to produce The same can be said about the payments of pork and taro and of shell money made by a family to those who perform rituals for their children. Wealth then, is seen to be achieved primarily from what Strathern has called the "home production" of taro, pigs and other foodstuffs (1969:44). Because of this fact one does not find in southern West New Britain the long and involved network of exchange relationship which characterizes the economic life

of Highland New Guinea cultures. Rauto possess an ideology of direct exchange. Everything given by a social group or a person is to be reciprocated with an equivalent or an equally valuable gift. Thus, by and large, labor is given in return for labor, pigs are given in return for pigs and shells for shells. The idea of an incremental increase in the quantity or quality of a reciprocated gift is considered a form of aggression. My informants told me that a victim of such aggression would be well within his rights to hire a sorcerer to kill the aggressor. People said that they wished to possess a sufficient amount of shells, pigs, and taro in order to be able to pay for the ritual services provided to their children by others, and indeed to be able to engage in all types of transactions. The verb phrase de nondro and the reciprocal pulu were used in this explanation. The use of the reciprocal (pulu) indicates that an act of equal exchange has taken place. Mluk pulu for instance means the exchange of blows or fists. Prek pulu refers to the simultaneous exchange of shells between two groups during brideprice exchange. De nondro means the repayment of a debt. Tili nondro (literally the nose of the shell money) means the repayment of a gift of shell money. Ilim nondro would normally refer to the completion of a sister exchange between two groups. Thus both the reciprocal and the verb phrase suggest a principle of

equivalence of return. I would say that in Rauto thought, sufficient wealth is thought to indicate or to establish an "essential equality between people."

Importantly, women are key players in both the economic and the ceremonial life of the Rauto. First born or promising young women are instructed by their parents and also by their brothers and maternal uncles in the magical songs and ritual techniques of production. Here I should note that "production" has somewhat different entailments for women than it has for men. In contrast to the neighboring Seng Seng and Kaulong peoples (see Chowning 1980:14, Goodale 1980:124) the Rauto possess a rather marked sexual division of labor. 32 Importantly, women have primary though not exclusive responsibility both for planting and performing magic for secondary crops such as sugar cane, amaranth, sweet potato and yam. Men in contrast, are primarily responsible for the planting of taro, the primary food crop. Women are also entrusted with the day-to-day care and harvesting of the secondary crops. Also, they are entrusted with the planting of various crotons, flowers and herbs which have deep symbolic and religious significance as I discuss in my analysis of female initiation. crotons and herbs are planted most especially in gardens along with the various food crops. Their propagation is in Rauto understanding a not inconsequential aspect of the

production process, as I discuss.

Women are also responsible for food preparation and for garden weeding. Men do the heavy work of forest cutting and garden fencing. Men and women will share the work of cutting forest undergrowth.

Women are also key players in the Rauto exchange They are encouraged to form their own network of system. exchange partners and quest friends. Prominent women are viewed to be important co-sponsors of ceremonies arranged by their husbands or, just as frequently, by their brothers and paternal cousins. Partly because of women's degree of participation in both economic and ritual life the Rauto, unlike for instance the Melpa, do not mark status distinctions between people by using words which refer to gender (Strathern 1978:172). Both male and female persons are thought to be able to develop their social and personal identities through both ritual and economic action. are not thought to be greatly limited in their ability to achieve personhood because of their "nature." Men who do not achieve are not said to "be like women" as they are in I was not surprised to find then that the initiation and puberty rituals of Rauto culture were not concerned with distinguishing "male" from "female" nature in order to denigrate the latter and celebrate the former. children's rituals represent rather an attempt to humanize

young men and women by teaching them about the proper uses of things which themselves symbolize ideals of sociality and of personal and social identity. Indeed each of the acts and magical songs of the woman's puberty ritual introduces one of these symbols.

Though I had listened to my Rauto friends talk about the objects used in the puberty ritual almost daily and though I had seen the Rauto use most of these just as often, I remained unable to understand very much about the significance of these things until after I saw the menstrual ceremony. The ceremony provided me with a context for understanding the meaning of the symbolism of the objects. In what follows I will describe the presentation of each of the symbolic objects which is made to young women during the ceremony and each of the songs which is sung for a particular presentation. I follow each description with an analysis of the symbolism of the thing presented to the female "initiates." In each analysis I relate the symbolism of the presented object to the actions of women, as well as to cultural ideas about the nature of female identity.

The Presentation of the Menstrual Skirt

Once a young woman nears the age of puberty (especially if she is a child of a leading family) her

parents and her maternal uncle begin to arrange for the performance of her puberty ritual. The ceremony will not be performed until the girl's family has amassed sufficient wealth in the form of pigs, taro, and shell valuables to pay for the ritual services provided to the girl. Sometimes if a family manages to accumulate this wealth before the onset of the woman's menstruation, the ceremony will be performed even though she has not yet reached puberty. The ritual may also take place years after a woman has had her first menses. 33 The major part of the ritual will be directed by two "sisters" of the father of the young woman. These women may be either the female siblings of the father or parallel cousins. The two women are usually assisted in their ritual duties by the maternal uncle (atenme) of the initiate and by a large group of the uncle's classificatory female siblings.

The night before the ritual proper the girl is taken to a menstrual hut located on the outskirts of the hamlet settlement or, in coastal Rauto villages, on the edge of the sea. Her aunts and cousins bring her food and drink throughout the night and as well provide her with a special skirt which she is to wear while she sleeps. The skirt, which is called the agosgoso, is constructed from colorful leaves from a wild banana tree which the Rauto call amoi ari. Some of the leaves of this plant are placed between the legs of the initiate "in order to absorb the menstrual"

blood."

The next morning at sunrise the two aunts remove the agosgoso from around the girl's waist. They then dispose of the skirt by throwing it into the ocean. If the ceremony is performed in a bush village the skirt will be thrown into the forest at the outskirts of the hamlet, just past a line of menstrual huts. The initiate, or the initiates, are then brought into the men's house (udiep) of their father's The two aunts then scrape some coconut meat and rub ramage. the oil extracted from the meat onto the initiates' bodies so that their skin will appear "shiny and attractive." the puberty ritual that I witnessed the two aunts (ado) performed the ceremony for two female children who were rather shy. As the aunts oiled the bodies of the two initiates they became embarrassed, especially as their breasts were oiled. This elicited howls from the women who were now coming into the men's house to help in the performance of the ceremony. The embarrassment of the girls also provided the bigwomen with their first opportunity to begin their "clowning." The clowning consisted of women running into each other, uttering pseudo war cries, and pulling on each other's breasts. They also danced around the men's house, bumping into and often knocking people down as they went.

When the clowning of the bigwomen ended, the aunts

began to paint the bodies of the two initiates. Red ocher was brushed onto their hair. The girls' faces were then painted with red and white marks called tinga tinga. a few minutes of this the initiates were taken to the center of the men's house. There their aunts presented each of them with a grass skirt called the yaoli and painted the skirts with the red ocher which the Rauto call agiu. the painting of the skirts the initiates were told that the yaoli was "their own grass skirt" and that they would wear this until the end of their lives. They were also told that the plants from which the yaoli was constructed represented their personal finery (amilmil) and that they should use these plants to decorate their bodies when they attended song festivals. The two aunts (ado) pointed out and individually named each of the plants of the yaoli. plants and leaves have a variety of uses in the Rauto system of magic. For instance most of the plants are used during The aromatic scent of the the performance of taro magic. plants and the burning and effervescent quality of their sap are thought to stimulate "the skin" of the girl and thereby prompt the physical growth of her body.

The implicit message of the aunts' instruction in the names and uses of the plants of the yaoli was that these objects came under the control of women; that their care and reproduction was a privilege of women. In the ritual the

initiates were told to cultivate the herbs and plants around their taro gardens in order to make the taro grow well and in the areas around their houses in order to beautify these spaces. They were also told that when they worked in their gardens or when they attended song festivals they were now entitled to wear these things.

The girls were then shown and told the names of important food plants. They were shown a taro corm and the stalk of the taro. They were also shown two kinds of yams: (maimin, mauwo); the amaranth (karungwa), and sugar cane (awo). They were advised that they should plant and harvest these objects. They were also shown and told the name of the tobacco plant and of the vine from which the betel pepper (kadep) grows. The two aunts then instructed them in the proper way of cutting the taro corm off from the stalk. Women are instructed to do this with a clam shell cutter called an ekit. They are told that should a non-traditional object such as a knife be used on the taro plant, the taro stalk will not produce food.

After the girls were taught the names and uses of the various objects of production and of personal decoration, the ritual song for the first skirt the agosgoso was sung. The ceremonial agosgoso like the one which was thrown into the sea was constructed from the brightly colored wild banana leaf amoi ari. The colors of the skirt

are predominantly dark purple, bright red and yellow. The two ado opened up the skirt and presented each of the initates with her own skirt. One aunt held one end of the skirt's hemp tie while giving the other end to her helper. They brought the skirts up to the initiates' waists and began to swing the skirts back and forth against the initiates' backsides as they sang the first aurang of the ritual, the song for the lelme:

Free translation

lelme, ngapapenwo lelme

Swing the skirt

lelme, lelme

back and forth, back

lelme, ngapapenwo lelme

and forth.

lelme, lelme

After a few minutes of singing the lelme was fastened around the waist of each girl and the yaoli was raised up above their waists. The yaoli was fastened above the waist and one of its leaves was put inside the lelme between the girls' legs. As this operation was performed all the women sang the aurang for the yaoli.

yaoli a yao o yaoli

a ya o a komela a

yaoli

aupu a aupu a aupu

Free translation

Your yaoli skirt,

yaoli

it is yours now.

Analysis of the Symbolism of the Colors of Body Painting

The first few acts of the puberty ritual relate a system of aesthetics to notions of physical development and bodily health. For instance, my informants told me that the painting of the bodies of the initiates and the anointing of their bodies with coconut oil makes them healthy and as well makes their skin pleasing to look at. The pleasant scent of the plants of the yaoli and the bright colors of the other grass skirts are also said to prompt growth and to impart health because they are pleasing to the senses. They are said to give joy, tide adang, to the initiates. The singing of the senior women is also said to give joy to the initiates so that they might grow well. While thought to bring happiness to the initiate, the various songs are said to create feelings of nostalgia in the senior women. women told me that the songs sometimes make them remember those who had sung these songs for them when they were young They say that because of this the aurang "moves the heart" (aurang ogo re wauluke momsoine). Because of these statements it became clear to me that the first few acts of the puberty ritual were meant both to impart physical sensation and to illicit sentiment from the initiates and from other ritual participants. In this way the minds and the bodies of the girls are sensitized and prepared for the

instruction which is to come. I would also say that the beautification and painting of the skin represents a ritual attempt to cultivate outward physical signs of the development of the self and of social identity. The donning of the various "women's skirts" is also thought to accomplish this objective. In order to substantiate this point I will discuss color symbolism in the ritual and the way in which various colors express ideas of health, growth, and personal power. For now I concentrate on the major colors of body painting: red and white.

In the ritual the yaoli and the body of the initiate are painted with red ocher called agiu (magnesium oxide).

This substance is also used to prompt the growth of young boys during male initiation. The red substance is placed on the teeth of the boys by senior men who also sing a series of aurang for the boys during the time of application. The ocher is also used in a number of magical rites which are thought to prompt the growth of the taro crop - see Chapter V. In these instances the color red (dimor) is associated with growth and or physical development. It is also associated with beauty and with sexual desirability.

Indeed, before the days of trade stores, both men and women would try to bleach their hair and their skin red with the red clay agiu in order to give it an attractive cast. Now store bought hair coloring is used to make the hair appear

red. I did not notice any attempts by people to bleach their skin. However, skin with a reddish hue is still considered to be most attractive.

The correlation between the color red and sexuality is made most clear during Rauto song festivals. During these occasions young men and women seek to enhance the beauty of their skin and their attractiveness to one another by painting their faces and bodies with red ocher or with Red is also the color which is most frequently used as a sign that a person has acquired an important bit of ritual or traditional knowledge. For instance children will be painted with a streak of red by seniors after they have seen or participated in a ritual for the first time. ritual mark conveys to the children the right to speak about the ceremony or ritual which they have participated in. Red is also the color which is placed on children or on young men and women when they are in a ritual or liminal state - a time when people are, in the Rauto view, in the process of augmenting the self either with knowledge or ritual power. Indeed, in almost all the examples which I have given, red seems to be associated with increased physical and or personal power. Perhaps this is because in the Rauto forest environment red is frequently the color of things such as fruits or areca nut which are fully developed or ripe34. the puberty ritual the color red appears to express the

thought that the initiates are developing in both body and mind. The body painting and the anointing of the body with coconut also suggest that this fact is linked to the development of the sexual attractiveness of the initiates' bodies, a point I discuss further in my analysis of the next phase of the puberty ritual.

The color white is also used in the puberty ritual. White, like red has many uses and references in Rauto culture. First, it is the preeminent symbol of anger and of warfare. Thus before going into battle warriors would smear their faces with lime powder. Yet, white also conveys the idea of privilege. For instance young daughters of bigmen or women would have lime powder placed on their faces during their period of seclusion. Just before the girl's father would arrange a marriage for his - usually first born - daughter he would construct a special house for her. She would stay in the house, doing no work whatsoever, until the day when her marriage was arranged. The puberty ritual is about the privileges and duties of women. Hence the color white is an appropriate one to express ideas about the power and privileges of women, or at least of certain women.

Menstrual Blood, the Woman's Skirts and the Productiveness of Women

Rauto women told me that the most important part of

the first phase of the puberty ritual was the presentation of the various grass skirts to the initiates. They implied that with the presentation of the skirts the initiates begin to acquire the outward signs of a new status. The wearing of the skirts, especially the yaoli, signifies a woman's acquisition of new duties and privileges. What was most fascinating to me was the way in which complex sets of ideas about menstrual blood on the one hand were related to ideas about the developing power of the initiates on the other hand, through the presentation of the skirts.

Almost all the types of plants and leaves from which the skirts are constructed are also used during gardening rituals in order to prompt the healthy development of the taro crop. These plants were presented to the girls in the form of their grass skirts. They were also presented individually to the initiates when the senior women named each one and then told the girls that they were now entitled to cultivate these plants in their gardens along with taro, yam, sugar cane, and other objects of production. It seems then that the grass skirts - most especially the yaoli - are not only meant to make the young initiates grow well, but are as well a visual indication that the initiates are acquiring a greater ability to produce food. In this phase of the ritual then, the initiates are associated with principles and forces which aid the development of food, and of people. Yet, the lelme and the yaoli are, at least during the puberty ritual, "menstrual" skirts. They denote the presence of menstrual blood and this substance is usually thought to be inimical to processes of human, animal, and plant growth and health. Indeed, during her time of menstruation a woman should not work in her garden. It is said that if she does "wild pigs will smell her menstrual blood," will follow the scent to the garden and will then eat the developing taro crop. Menstrual pollution (karawuong) is also thought to harm a developing taro corm if a woman should happen to step over the taro stalk.

Menstruating women are also thought to be able to harm men, pigs, and old women by stepping over them. The pollution emanating from their menstrual blood is said to harm men by causing respiratory ailments.

A woman's first menses then, marks the fact that she now possesses a power which is dangerous and sometimes destructive. Yet, the Rauto choose to mark this moment with a puberty ritual which celebrates the constructive economic, social, and moral influence of women. One might argue that this paradox expresses the idea that women are influential partly because they are dangerous, especially to men. Yet this does not satisfactorily explain the fact that in the puberty ritual menstrual blood signifies an increase in a woman's personal power while in other contexts of Rauto life

it is thought to lessen the productive powers of women and to diminish rather than augment their other abilities. This paradox is never really resolved in the woman's puberty ritual. The ritual does appear to suggest that the nature of women is partly defined by the fact that they menstruate. Yet the rite also suggests that this fact does not confine women to the periphery of cultural life. Indeed, it places them at its center, as we shall see.

The Presentation of Areca Nut

A. Description

In the following part of the ritual one of the two aunts took up a large bunch of ripe areca nut in one hand and a lime holder in the other hand. The aunt then handed the areca to her helper and began to place lime powder on the teeth of the two initiates. The aunts then turned the initiates' shoulders back and forth rhythmically, and as they did so they pulled areca nut and the areca nut branches across the front teeth of the young women. As they performed this ritual action they sang the aurang for the areca nut (wile). The songs all refer to the harvesting and the proper use of the areca. They were sung in the language of the neighboring Gimi.

Free translation

o komsolei warapmaei

komsoleei klokiaei Harvest the areca (from

komsolei klokiaei its tree).

komsolei abrumyaei Remove the areca from its

komsolei abrumyaei stem.

B. Women and the Symbolism of Areca Nut

Areca nut is perhaps the preeminent symbol of sexuality of Rauto culture. For example, if a woman continually requests areca nut from a man she is thought to be making an informal statement of sexual interest in him. Also, if a person goes up to someone and forcefully pushes areca nut into the other's hand they are thought to be making an aggressive signal of sexual interest. Areca nut is also one of the main objects used in love magic (paisngen). The areca will be charmed and then slipped into the hand of a person in whom one has an interest. The chewing of areca is also said to make a person's eyes shine

and look alert and attractive. Also the reddening of the teeth and mouth which results from continual betel chewing is considered beautiful (kikiwo ambip) by Rauto people. In the menstrual ceremony the ritual act of rubbing the areca nut across the teeth of the initiates can thus be seen as an attempt to adorn the mouth and make it more attractive. The developing sexuality or sexual attractiveness of the woman is clearly one of the things being celebrated with this ritual act.

Areca nut is also a symbol of marriage (wul) or of the establishment of an enduring sexual partnership between a man and a woman. For instance, if a young man and woman are frequently seen together and it is thought that the two have made love to each other, their kinsmen will express approval of the match by providing a "gift" of areca nut to the couple. This gift is made in the following way. older member of the family of either the boy or girl catches the two talking alone together he might go up to them and join their hands together around an areca nut which he holds This act is considered a formal announcement out to them. of marriage. I was told that the gift of the areca nut is accompanied by a formal, almost proverbial speech in which the couple is told that they should no longer furtively have sex in the forest since this is the custom of "dogs and pigs." The elder is then to lead the couple to a house of

the hamlet residence and tell them that they are now to live together there. In this instance areca serves as a symbol of sexual "domestication." The idea that the couple is now to work together to produce food as well as children and also to contribute in a new way to the enterprises of the hamlet is implicit in the elder's act.

Bringing the couple out of the bush and into the hamlet represents the socialization of sexual energies. This is interesting in that women are said to "tie" men to the hamlet residence by marrying them. Before the time of marriage young men are said to lead "unsettled lives" - see Chapter III p 124. They are said to be like roaming dogs. Elders say this to lament the frequent absence of young men from the village or hamlet and thus their absence from "community business," most especially gardening and ceremonial work. Before the time of their marriage young women are as well permitted freedom to attend many song festivals and to absent themselves for periods of time from work for their family and community. Yet, they too are to begin to lead more settled lives after their marriage. Most importantly they are no longer to paint their bodies, or to adorn themselves with too much finery. The instruction in the use of areca nut in the menstrual ceremony appears to refer to and characterize an earlier phase in the life cycle of a woman. It refers to the time when her sexuality is

just developing, when she is permitted to adorn and decorate her body. The next resonant symbol which young women are presented with in the menstrual ceremony outlines Rauto recognition of the social and cultural significance of women's sexuality. Yet, the meaning of the symbol also underscores Rauto men's ambivalence about the "social power" and significance of women's sexuality.

The Presentation of Fire

A. Description

In the next phase of the ritual the two initiates were taught the proper care of fire. The presentation of fire was done in two ritual acts. Each act was accompanied by the singing of a magical song. First, the young women were sat down on the floor of the men's house. They were then instructed to sit with their legs crossed at the ankle. The girls were told that when they tended a fire or simply wished to sit they should assume this posture. The aunts then had the initiates cross their legs at the knees. It was explained to them that this was the position which people of knowledge assume when they sit. Those who are not considered to be people of knowledge and of understanding are not allowed to adopt the position. If they do an elder might ask them if they know the meaning associated with

their act and what it symbolizes. In this way they will be publicly shamed. The aurang which accompanies this ritual act refers to two culture heroes (Molyo and Alipo) who taught the Rauto this sitting position. By being taught the names of the two heroes during the menstrual ritual and the myths which tell of their deeds, the young initiates acquire the right to sit as these heroes did. As the girls sat with their legs crossed, the two aunts rocked their shoulders back and forth and sang one of the songs for fire:

Free translation

kamse kon Alipo
Put your legs like (the kamse kon Alipo
culture hero taught us sit by the fire as Molyo kamse kon aii
(the culture hero taught langono
us) as elder brother Molyo.

The aunts then placed a small smoldering log by the feet of the two girls. They then lifted the log. One aunt then knocked off some charcoal ash from its burning end with her hands and blew on the end until the embers turned a bright red and were ready to burst into flame. The aunt then placed the log back down on the ground and led all the other women in the singing of the aurang for fire:

Rauto version	Free translation
atrong lomo aii	Make your fire
atrong lomo aii	make your fire
imbir, me aii	first the flame
yaume	comes then the smoke

Gimi version

asol lomo kwona	Make your fire
asol lomo kwona	make your fire
winomelei	It flames
asol lomo kwona	make your fire
asokol melei	your fire is present
	(in your house).

B. Women and the Symbolism of Fire

Fire is a sacred symbol for the cultures of southern West New Britain. I will argue that fire is sacred because of its association with women.

One of the things which fire and women symbolize is domesticity. Indeed, a man once said to me that because his wife tends his fire, she had taken the place of his mother in preparing food and generally in looking after him. In a Rauto metaphor a wife is said to be the fire of a man. More accurately in the metaphor a man's wife is said to be the

burning charcoal called asong which transforms raw taro into food and thus provides nourishment for a man and his children. It is perhaps because of this crucial function of fire that oaths are sworn on it by the people of southern West New Britain. For instance a person wishing to convince others about the truthfulness of his speech will call out ayi nimbir (the fire flames) after he has finished speaking. It is said that if an oath is sworn falsely on it, fire will no longer cook the liar's food properly.³⁵

Women, and fire are also symbols of peace and of discord in Rauto culture. In Rauto discourse the word for fire (ayi) serves as part of a metaphor for sister exchange. The phrase which describes the completion of this exchange is ayi nondro - the return of the fire.

In pre-pacification days sister exchange was often initiated in order to end hostilities between two different residential groups. I was told that the "exchanges of fire" brought peace. The thought that the exchange of women between different social groups "brings peace" is both affirmed and subverted dramatically during the performance of a ceremony when a bride is formally brought to the hamlet of her husband by her ("one blood") brothers, their wives, and a number of classificatory sisters. The description of this ceremony which I provide here does, I feel, give some indication of the complexity of meaning which the Rauto

socio-cultural tradition assigns to women, and to the preeminent symbol of fire. I believe the brief digression which follows to be justified on this account.

The "bringing of the bride" is one of the major ceremonies of Rauto culture. Usually the ceremony will have been arranged months and sometimes years in advance of its In it a great number of men and women performance. belonging to the ramage of the bride will bring her to the hamlet of her new husband. Usually the hamlet will be a fair distance from the woman's home. Upon reaching the hamlet the men and women who have brought the bride will decorate themselves with white and red paint. The men will oil their black ironwood spears and will begin to sing the warriors chant, the agresket, while waiting at the edge of the hamlet. Before the woman is brought to her husband her "sisters" surround her, blocking her husband's and his hamlet mates' view of her. They hold onto their sister weeping that they will now lose her. Another group of her sisters will then rush ahead into the hamlet and will chase and try to hit the men and women of the hamlet with any stick or heavy branch which they can find. The women cut the trunks of the coconut palms and of the houses of the hamlet with their knives and sticks while their men brandish their spears and taunt the men of the hamlet residence. men of the hamlet then rush out at the women while holding

pearlshell valuables in front of them, raised over their heads so that the shells will be in plain view of the marauding and angry women. The men of the hamlet arrange themselves into a phalanx and skip toward the women singing at the top of their lungs that the women should not be angry; that they have presents of pearl shells to make to them for the woman which they have brought. This only makes the men and women of the foreign group sing the warriors chant more loudly, thus emphasizing the ambivalent feelings brought on by the present moment; the feelings of anger, loss and defiance, as well as the desire for peace and for the reward of the shell money. Back and forth the two groups go . . . the women leading the bride into the hamlet and some of their number rushing ahead to chase the men of the hamlet; these men then skipping forward to meet them and show them the wealth which they will use to buy the bride. Finally, as the women reach the center of the hamlet a pig is carried out and thrown in their path. As the bride steps over the pig it is speared by the men of the hamlet. time its last death cry is finished all the singing, weeping, and hostility between the two groups will have They will then go on peacefully to exchange the ended. bride price. Here the bride is a gift which at once offers the possibility of peace and of violence. Women recognize the value and power of this gift. In the ceremony they must



be placated for the loss of their sister. The worthiness of the women's "gift of fire" must be recognized.

The symbolic equation fire = women and peace is illustrated as well in the use of fire by women to stop the fist fighting, or the spear fighting of men. For instance, if fighting should erupt during a song festival and if the fighting is becoming particularly ferocious, it is the privilege of women - usually old women - to stop the violence in one of two ways. A woman can either throw a burning log down between the fighters saying "the fire flames" (ayi nimbir) or she can lift up her grass skirt thus exposing her genitals and shaming the men. More often a woman will simply take a piece of her grass skirt - or nowadays a piece of cloth from her laplap - and wave it in front of the fighters who, duly shamed, are to cease their fighting. In this instance the piece of cloth or skirt is symbolically substituted for the entire skirt.

It is interesting to note that in a traditional metaphor the Rauto also identify menstrual blood with fire. The trope ilim apai ilo ayi ("the marriageable woman's fire") refers to a red colored leaf which is said to have acquired its color when a menstruating woman stepped over it, and bled on it. The word apai suggests that this woman was sexually mature and thus ready for marriage. As the menstrual blood of young women is thought to be particularly

powerful and harmful it is not surprising that this red "woman's leaf" is used during taro ritual to rid the ground of insect pests prior to a taro planting. The leaf is said to burn the insects from the ground. In this example ideas about sexuality and menstrual blood appear to be related and fire seems to be the main leitmotif of this relationship. Indeed, Rauto discourse about fire in general is informed by a system of ideas about the nature of women.

Presentation of the Coconut Frond Basket and of Cordyline

A. Description

The subsequent part of the menstrual ceremony had to do with: (1) showing the young initiates the proper way to hold and to carry their coconut frond baskets. (2) instructing the girls in the names and in the uses of various species of plants in the family Cordyline.

The two aunts first took 2 coconut frond baskets filled with areca nut, lime powder, tobacco, and other items and placed them on the heads of the two initiates. As they did this they turned the initiates' shoulders back and forth while placing the girls' hands on top of the baskets to steady them. They then sang the first aurang for the coconut frond basket:

Free translation

nga sun karei I carry the basket on my head

As the aunts and all the other women continued to sing, the baskets were removed from the heads of the initiates and were placed on their shoulders and the girls were shown how to carry the basket on their shoulders. The initiates were then shown how to carry the baskets under their arms, and then again how to carry them cupped in the joint of their elbows. Finally, they were shown how to swing their baskets backward and forward with their arms. Each of these separate ritual instructions and demonstrations was accompanied by a different verse of the aurang for a coconut frond basket:

	Free translation
abungmea, abungmea	A woman, her basket is
asapmea, asapmea	held underneath
kare tir melse wisna	her arm.

alungmea, alungmea Carry the basket cupped in the elbow joint.

taptapyoa, taptapyoa taptapyoa

The basket is swung back and forth, back and forth.

After this a number of species of cordyline (crotons) were brought out. First a cordyline with a dark red leaf was brought out. This croton is called **anamoi** by the Rauto. The base of this plant was then held to the ground by one of the aunts. She then began to wave the plant back and forth as she sang the **aurang** for it.

	Free translation		
anamoi i wom	The leaf of the red		
melei	tanget		
anamoi i wom	the leaf of the red		
mela	tanget.		

ngasok wom meila	I show the leaf of the	
ngasokon aki	tanget to my cross	
maieng oa	cousin, I ask for a pig	
ino wita ngakarpan	he, my cross cousin, is	
	ashamed. I am angry.	

A second croton, this one possessing a small green leaf was then brought out. This plant is called **ulu** by the Rauto. One of the aunts placed the base of the plant on

the ground and then rocked the plant back and forth as if she was either planting or harvesting the cordyline. The aurang for this plant goes as follows:

Free translation

luei ulu luai The tanget's leaf

keskesko aponmot I cut the leaf, I cut

keskesko the tanget's leaf.

B. Symbolism of Cordyline and of the Coconut Frond Basket

The first act of this ritual sequence - the presentation of the coconut frond basket - appears to have a straight forward enough meaning. The presentation of the frond basket appears to allude to an aspect of a woman's role in Rauto society: that of a dispenser of food and of amenities such as areca and tobacco. Indeed women's baskets are frequently filled with taro, areca, or with the finery which they will wear during a song festival. The basket thus is a container of things which are to be given away. Yet, of course sometimes people do not wish to give things away, especially areca and food. Thus people frequently try to examine the inside of each others baskets in order to see if areca or some other desired valuable is being withheld. An attempt to open up someone else's basket will sometimes cause a bit of a tussle to erupt between people. However,

it is not considered good form to object to someone trying to have a look into your basket. In fact people will often scold someone who is not carrying his coconut frond basket. It was explained to me that not carrying a basket meant that a person did not wish to share his areca and his food with others; that he or she just wished to take things from the baskets of others. Thus the basket is a symbol of reciprocity and of sociality. The presentation of it to female initiates during the menstrual ceremony is a metaphorical statement that people must carry their baskets in order to "give things away."

The part of the menstrual ceremony in which women are formally entrusted with the planting of cordyline and are instructed in the uses of the leaves of these plants, is significant because cordyline are sacred symbols of political and social power in Rauto culture. The songs, and the ritual acts of instruction which mark this part of the menstrual ceremony express the idea that certain women have access to the jural and the moral power which are symbolized by these objects.

The first cordyline shown to the two girls, the anamoi, is a symbol of anger. For instance when men wish to ask their kin for assistance in a feud they will send the red leaf of the anamoi to them. A knot, or a number of knots will be made in the leaf. These indicate the number

of days or weeks which must pass before the assistance is to be given. The song of the anamoi makes reference to a woman who has asked her male cross-cousin (wita) for a gift of a pig. Her cousin is then shamed by his inability to meet this request. An informant told me that in the song the woman expresses her anger at her cousin for denying her request by showing the anamoi to him. The woman's anger is justified by a strong belief that a man should not deny his female cross-cousin's requests for gifts or favors. Crosscousins are often both potential marriage partners and affines. Denying the requests of either category of person is sometimes perceived to be a serious breach of custom and a denial of sociality. Women have the right to point out this breach of custom because of the moral authority which they enjoy in Rauto society. The presentation of the second croton - the ulu - to the girls is a formal recognition of this authority. To explain how this is so I will have to digress a bit and discuss some of the many symbolic uses of this plant.

The green cordyline ulu (cordyline terminalis?) is cultivated around the boundaries of the men's ceremonial house (udiep) - the political and religious center of the hamlet, or village residence. It is a symbol of the political, ritual and moral authority of the leaders of the men's house. Perhaps appropriately then ulu is also the

word for a type of compensation pay which is collected by leaders from people who transgress moral or ritual rules.

In religious life the green cordyline is the preeminent symbol of the authority of warku, a spirit being who is thought to be incarnated in a carved wooden mask during the performance of a song festival called the sakul The Rauto consider warku to be the most powerful warku ino. spirit being which they honor with song festivals. spirit being is especially associated with, and indeed buttresses the control of adult men over the ceremonial production, allocation and consumption of pigs - one of the major symbols of bigmanship in southern West New Britain. The spirit being expresses his demands for pig and other resources by sending the leaf of the green cordyline to people. He will then honor those who accede to his request. For instance a first born or a promising daughter of a man who has honored a request of warku for pigs will be "adopted" by the spirit. To mark this adoption the girl will be painted with red ocher. She will then be taken into the men's ceremonial house where she will stand in the presence of the mask. The man wearing the mask is then said to put his hand on the shoulder of the girl, thus placing her under the protection of the spirit. The girl will then be given the leaf of the green cordyline in order to show that she shares in the authority of warku. She will now be

privileged to see the sacred masks of the spirit beings (kamotmot) which are kept in the men's house. She will also be allowed to aid men when they are making the banana leaf costumes of these masks. The girl is not to be struck by her parents; nor is she to be talked about critically. Those who strike her or talk critically about her will be required to provide compensation pay to the society of men which controls the spirit masks. This girl, who is called an aili, is also said to be able to use the green cordyline to request resources and compensation pay from men. interesting in that prominent or bigwomen in general are said to be able to use the green cordyline for similar The formal presentation of the green cordyline purposes. thus marks a woman for social influence and achievement. is a ritual statement that she is to exercise the moral and political influence of a bigwoman.

Description of the Presentation of Coconuts and a Summary Analysis of the Acts of the First Phase of the Menstrual Ceremony

A. Description

After the presentation of the cordyline a number of coconuts were brought out and the initiates were instructed in the names of the various parts of the nut. They were then instructed in how to plant the coconut and as well how

to bunch them together and to carry them. The instruction was not accompanied by the singing of an aurang.

B. Symbolism of Coconuts

In traditional discourse, and in ritual and everyday use, coconuts are another symbol of domesticity and of the nurturing abilities of women. For instance because of its importance in Rauto cookery, coconut cream is referred to as women's breast milk. Thus, the coconut is associated with the physical nurturance which women provide to their children.

The coconut palms of a family will usually be planted next to its house, in the inner section of the hamlet residence. The palms will thus be close to the place where women tend their fires and prepare food. Indeed, in the Rauto myth which explains the origin of the coconut, a culture hero instructs people to plant the palms close to their houses, so that they will have an easy time harvesting the palm's nuts and then using them for food preparation. Thus was the coconut palm formally associated with the hearths of the hamlet residence.

The growth and/or development of the coconut palm also serves as a metaphor for the maturation of children.

This is seen most clearly during a brief magical rite which

is performed by a woman at the end of the first year of her child's life. The rite consists of her burying a piece of bark cloth underneath a sprouting coconut. The bark cloth will have been used to wrap the head of the new born child in order to elongate it and thus make it aesthetically pleasing to the Rauto eye. The bark cloth then becomes identified with the child. When the child's mother buries the bark cloth wrapping underneath a newly sprouted coconut she expresses the wish that the growth of the coconut palm should aid the growth and development of her child. Also, it is the mother's wish that the child will grow to be tall and strong like a coconut palm. In this example women's duty to plant and harvest coconuts appears to take on a Indeed by being intrusted with somewhat amplified meaning. the "care" of coconuts in the menstrual ceremony, women appear as well to be ritually entrusted with the care of the physical development of children. Speaking both metaphorically and practically one could say that one of the reasons that children grow is because women plant the coconut palm and prepare food with the coconut.

C. Summary Analysis of the First Phase of the Menstrual Ritual

The objects presented in the first phase of the menstrual ritual were almost all objects of production and

of finery. Of course the physical survival of Rauto society depends on the successful reproduction of a number of these objects. Yet, what is most interesting about some of the objects is that they must also literally be propagated and maintained if moral and cultural life is to have a meaning which Rauto would recognize. I say this because these things are the material embodiment of abstract ideas and cultural values. Their use in economic, political, and ritual life represents a way of expressing value and of moving or influencing people. In the menstrual ceremony women are formally entrusted with the care of a number of these sacred symbols and thus in a sense become agents of the expression of the core of cultural and social life. What is most important to note here is the identification of women with the center of cultural life. One could say that because of this formal ritual identification, ideas about the nature and activities of women are celebrated rather than denigrated by the Rauto system of symbolic classification. Also, the formal identification of women with the sacred symbols of Rauto culture during the menstrual ceremony is a statement about the cultural identity of the initiates, a point which I will discuss again in the conclusion to this chapter. For now, I wish to consider the meaning of the middle phase of the menstrual ritual. This phase is marked by the presentation of high

ranking or prestige objects to the initiates. These objects are symbols of privilege and of the political and social influence of individuals and of families.

The Presentation of the "Woman's Shell Money and Other Prestige Items

A. Description

The ceremony proceeded when two different types of shell bead valuables were brought out and were presented to the two initiates. First about twenty fathoms of a blackish or dark brown colored shell money called tili asap (the woman's shell money) was brought out. As the girls sat facing the two aunts, the tili was then placed around their necks by the two aunts. As the aunts made the presentation, they, and the rest of the women gathered in the men's house sang what is perhaps the most beautiful song of the ceremony - the song for the tili:

o tili a o tili a

The tili, o mother your
tili asap wom ina
woman's tili.

lom tili asapo o
tili o asap

A red shell bead valuable called the **tili lua** was then brought out and this also was waved before the young

girls as was the first tili, while the women sang the aurang:

Free translation

tili o tili a tili Oh, mother your red tili, lua wom ina tili your tili lua.

The young women were then shown a necklace made from the quills of cassowary feathers. The Rauto call this necklace the musmusu. As all the women sang the two aunts swung the necklace rhythmically against the grass skirts of the two girls and then placed it around their shoulders:

Free translation

Then some dog's teeth headbands (nilnil) were brought out and were placed around the forehead of each girl. The girls were then both given woven hemp baskets completely covered on one side with rows of dogs teeth (aliwa). The aunts then placed black tortoise shell armbands on the arms of both girls.

At this point the presentation of precious objects to the initiates halted for a few minutes as one of the

aunts began to repaint the girls' faces with white pigment and then to paint their shoulders and backs with the white marks which Rauto call gegeo. In this instance the gegeo serve as a symbol of privilege, or of rank, as the aurang which accompanies the ritual painting of the body attests:

Free	<u>tran</u> :	slat	ion

anei ilo itar

She stays in her house
ama kainei

alone (she won't work,
she won't carry).

o ilim sikonong 0, ilim sikonong,

yo apu o woman,

tarang ama the garden will wait,

kainei anei she stays by herself.

B. The Symbolism of Prestige Objects

The objects which were presented to the young women in this phase of the ritual are called alul - a word I would translate as heirloom. Alul are the prize possessions of family groups. The oldest and most valuable of these objects are individually named. These names and the general history of the use of the alul are known by most of the elders of southern West New Britain. The objects are said to represent the history of the ancestors of specific groups

and are referred to as the "memory of the visage or 'eye' of the ancestors" (nadik sekia amtasek amune). In a sense then these high ranking valuables symbolize the social history and thus the social identity of groups. Perhaps because of this, alul are said to be the "backbone" or strength" of a family group, or ramage. This last phrase alludes to the economic and political power symbolized by alul as well as to the political and economic uses of these objects.

Valuables like those presented to the initiates in the menstrual ceremony are usually the most important items offered in a brideprice. For instance, even a single fathom taken from a famous black shell bead necklace - (tili asap) - is said to be enough to "sever" (kram) a bride from her natal group. A single fathom of a famous shell bead valuable would also be enough to buy the services of a sorcerer if a person wished to have him destroy an enemy. Only objects with a name - and thus a social identity - can buy a woman or the services of a sorcerer. 38

Perhaps because alul serve as symbols of a group's identity, it is thought that though they might be given out for some purpose, they must eventually be brought back to the family which originally possessed them. To re-secure these valuables after they have been given out, a person must offer a gift - usually a small pig - to the family which may have "looked after" his valuable for generations.

The thing is to be returned along with a pearl shell in order to acknowledge the gift of a pig and to assuage any anger which may be felt by the person seeking to re-obtain his valuable. If the holder refuses to return the valuable the rightful owner can have recourse to sorcery.

Technically speaking then, certain alul are inalienable possessions of a social group.

The Rauto refer to a number of types of valuables as "the things of women." For instance the tili asap (the woman's tili) and the tili lua are both referred to in this way. The menstrual ceremony formally marks the right of young women to possess these prestige objects. Indeed, it was explained to me that most of the songs about the alul conveyed the idea that the "initiates" strongly desired to possess these things. Thus the songs (aurang) for the red and black shell bead valuables are meant to conjure an image of a young woman looking with anticipation and delight at the valuables of her mother. When the initiates are presented with valuables such as the tili asap they formally exhibit the wealth of their ramage and immediate family, and thus reassert the identity and the power of their group. Through the possession and the wearing of alul women become quardians and "exemplars" of the social identity of groups.

Women are entitled to use valuables for their own political and economic purposes, as well as to bedeck

themselves with them. Indeed women frequently contribute valuables to the bride price of their sons. I have also heard accounts of women buying the services of sorcerers with valuables, though these accounts were impossible for me to substantiate. Big women (usually the eldest daughters of prominent men and women) inherit valuables from their parents and sometimes from their maternal uncles. They can, however, also acquire alul through the cultivation of trade partnerships with other women and with men. They also receive alul from the brideprice offered for their daughters. 39 These facts confirmed my suspicion that alul were consistently being manufactured and circulated, though Rauto ideology held that these valuables were scarce and non transactable. The use of only a very small number of valuables, those with name (anine) seemed to conform to Rauto ideology.

Yet, my informants told me again and again that valuables were scarcer in pre-pacification days. They also said that because of this people were much less willing to transact with them. All my informants to whom I posed questions about the relationship between social status and objects of value also said that previously valuables in general were concentrated in the hands of prominent families. With the beginning of plantation labor for cash young men, especially, began to find the wherewithal to

"commission" the production of categories of valuables or to buy already existing ones. They then added these to the stock of wealth of their families. Since ceremonial occasions such as the menstrual ritual required the possession and subsequent exhibition of alul I was told that previously mostly prominent families were able to sponsor, or perform such ceremonies. For now I wish to point out that there is indication in the woman's puberty ritual itself that the ceremony was previously mostly performed for the daughters of bigmen, and thus of leading families.

One of the songs of this part of the ritual refers to what the Rauto call the ilim sikonong and the nearby Gimi call an anei. Both these terms refer to a young woman who sometime after puberty was put into "seclusion" by her father. That is, a special house was constructed for her which she was not allowed to exit from during daylight. During the time of her seclusion an ilim sikonong was to do neither garden work nor domestic work. Food was prepared for her and brought to her by a number of female attendants. These attendants also provided the girl with firewood. the ilim sikonong had to leave the house to go to her toilet these attendants would shield her from the view of men by covering her with a pandanus mat "coat" called a parak. This girl was almost invariably a daughter of a bigman. Her seclusion served as a signal to others that she was now

considered to have reached a marriageable age by her father, and that he would now entertain offers of a suitable brideprice. The woman's seclusion was also a signal that her father and family would soon be sponsoring a round of song festivals. During these occasions young men from other hamlet groups would come and sing the warrior's chant agresket, on the dancing ground or plaza, terpen, on the edge of which was constructed the girl's house. The suitors would sing from sundown to sunrise, trying to entice the young woman out of her house with their singing. left the house it was thought that she wished to elope with one of the warrior singers. Usually however the woman's period of seclusion was not ended until a match was arranged for her. The period of the end of the ilim sikonong's seclusion was marked by another series of song festivals and by the slaughter of a great number of pigs. Hence the expense of honoring one's daughter was considerable and was more easily met by prominent families.40

This path to ceremonial renown was not, however, closed to ordinary people - especially if they were successful producers of pigs and taro. Through the sale of taro and pork; the manufacture and sale of desired objects such as bark cloth; the acquisition of magical lore and perhaps the cultivation of a reputation as a sorcerer a person could begin to acquire alul as well as lower ranking

types of valuables. What is most important to note here is that the acquisition of "women's valuables" was and remains an essential part of the successful attainment of high status. This is because of the importance of women's ritual in Rauto society". All of these rituals require the display of "women's wealth." I would suggest here that it is because women are associated with ideals of cultural and moral life that during important ritual events they serve to exemplify the developing renown of family groups. The final prestation which was made to the initiates in the menstrual ceremony underscores the relationship between the establishment of renown and the reproduction of ideals of sociality. It also alludes to the part which "big women" play in this process.

Presentation of the Paidela

A. Description

In the final presentation of the menstrual ceremony each of the two ado (aunts) took the curved pig's tusks ornament called paidela and placed it around the neck of one of the initiates. The ado then raised the paidela up to the mouths of the two girls. Each aunt then took one of the paidela and placed it on the back of the initiate whom they were looking after. They then rhythmically twisted the

torso of each of the girls as they sang the aurang for the paidela:

Free translation

paidela pane Bring the tusks to your

ya gronso mo mouth, secure the tusks at

augopme their base.

ya gronso mo Secure the tusks,

lepesme they curve sharply.

After singing the aurang, the aunts instructed the initiates in the names of each of the different parts of the ornament.

B. Women and the Symbolism of the Paidela

The paidela is worn more often by men than by women. It is often worn by men when they wish to express anger. Thus, during a song festival and/or prior to spear fighting men will challenge each other by putting the paidela up to their mouths while brandishing their spears at one another.

Big women - ilim kairakrak - don paidela during the aggressive action of "routing the men" after the birth of a child. They will also wear the ornament at ceremonies held to honor their children or the children of their kinsmen. They wear them as well when they bring a new bride to a

distant hamlet - see pp 164. During these times they will also act extremely aggressively toward men. They will for instance sometimes chase them with sticks or spit betel nut on them. These self assertive acts as well as the wearing of the ornament will emphasize a woman's economic, and in some cases, ritual contribution to ceremonial occasions.

One of the most important contributions which adult women make to ceremonial occasions is that of the pigs which they have raised. Indeed, no ceremonial work can go forward without a contribution of pigs. Women's right to wear the paidela is secured in a sense by their ability to produce The ability - possessed by women as well as men - to rear the valued male tusked pig is particularly highly esteemed. This is partly so because such pigs must be cared for and fed for many years. In fact it takes from six to ten years to produce a pig whose tusks can be made into paidela. Beside the effort involved in producing foodstuffs for the animal, its "production" involves the performance of difficult ritual work. The work consists partly in the performance of a cycle of song ceremonies. Here I wish briefly to describe this song cycle, most especially its culminating moment. In this way I hope to show how women receive recognition as important political and economic actors by being presented with paidela.

Before the beginning of the ceremonial cycle the

sponsor and other ramage group members will mark a number of small pigs for eventual slaughter. The cycle will not commence, however, until after the upper canines of a number of the male pigs are removed so that the lower tusks can grow unimpeded and eventually assume the valued circular Special song magic (aurang) will also be performed upon the pigs at this time in order to hurry the growth of their tusks. A row of stakes to which the tuskers and the other pigs will eventually be tied will then be driven into the ceremonial ground of the hamlet. The hamlet leader and his wife will invite the members of another hamlet group to this opening ceremony, the general form of which has already been described. (see pp 113-116). It is said that certain of the songs performed during the ceremony "hurry" the growth of the small pigs. The singing of this category of song - also called aurang - will be led by the sponsors of the ceremony. After the performance of this initial song festival the family sponsoring the cycle will periodically arrange for the performance of other festivals. Also, in between the time of the initiating song ceremony and the culminating one, the sponsor, his wife, and perhaps a few other men of the hamlet will often sing aurang for the pigs by themselves. During this intervening time Rauto say that the drums of the group sponsoring the cycle "stand up" in the ceremonial ground (nadiko kowom titir pe terpen). This

means that the drums of the hamlet group are continually in use during this time.

Finally, after perhaps as many as six or seven years from the inaugurating song festival the ceremony to kill the tuskers will be held. The ceremony will usually be held simultaneously with a number of ritual events such as initiation, circumcision, or the menstrual ceremony. Visiting groups will arrive and will dance in the "presence" of the tusked pigs and the other pigs which will now have been tied to the stakes which were placed in the ceremonial ground of the hamlet years before. The song festivals immediately preceding the slaughter of the tusked pigs will be held every night for perhaps as long as a week.

After the killing of a tusker the teeth will be removed by a man chosen by the pig's owner. This man will then fashion the paidela from the curved pigs tusks and will place it around his neck. He will then join a group of his kinsmen who wait armed with spears at the edge of the hamlet. Each spearman will then rush to the center of the hamlet to a place where the trunk of an areca palm has been placed into the ground. Upon rushing the tree each spearman will plunge his spear into it. The warriors will then array themselves in a line directly facing the members of the hamlet. They brandish their spears while placing the newly constructed paidela up to their mouths. After a few minutes

of this posing the men will place their spears on the ground. They will then present each paidela to its rightful owner by placing it around the owner's neck. The paidela can be presented to a female owner of a tusker as well as it can be presented to a male owner. This ceremonial act will then mark the successful culmination of perhaps years of effort of feeding and caring for the tuskers; of performing aurang to hasten the growth of the pigs; of sponsoring song festivals in anticipation of the eventual slaughter of the The initiation and completion of this cycle of ceremonies will then force the groups which have attended them to initiate their own ceremonial cycle in order to pay back their ritual debts. Of course, all those who have attended song festivals during the period of the cycle will have received vegetable food and eventually pork from the cycle's sponsors. These economic debts will also have to be repaid.

The paidela is then a symbol of the ability of people to raise and transact with pigs. It testifies to the ability of men and women to form networks of debt and obligation. Yet, with its mock violence, the ceremony in which the paidela is presented to its owner emphasizes the ambivalent nature of the ideas symbolized by this object. Also, as both Goodale and I have noted, the song festivals preceding the slaughter of the tuskers are themselves

sometimes violent affairs; though they are perhaps more often socially constructive events.

Goodale argues that for the Kaulong of Southwest New Britain the pigs tusk ornament symbolizes the aggressive anti-social aspect of the self (1985:241). Yet, in the Rauto view, it symbolizes as well its socially constructive "network building" capacities. Indeed, the ornament visually "encodes" these "two sides" of the self for the cultures of southern West New Britain. It is crucial to note here that the symbolism of the paidela represents an insight about the nature of socially influential people which appears in many forms of cultural expression in southern West New Britain. This is the notion that powerful people represent and express in their words and deeds both sociality or community, and what I earlier called anticommunity - see p 112. Indeed one of the major points of my argument so far has been that in Rauto thought the development of personal and social identity, and hence the achievement of renown involves the "cultivation" of both these aspects of the self. The ritual presentation of the paidela during the menstrual ceremony is a sign that the young initiates are acquiring both a personal right and a social duty to cultivate these two aspects of themselves. Thus women, or at least some women, are ritually accorded the right to act "aggressively and competitively." At the

same time they are reminded of their role as caretakers and as producers of pigs; thus of their role as important transactors of wealth and forgers of social networks.

The Concluding Phase of the Women's Puberty Ritual

After the presentation of the paidela the two initiates were taken down to the shore and a few steps out onto the reef. Here their aunts handed them some pronged fishing spears and made them make a few castes with them. The implicit message of the instruction was that young women should spend some of their time fishing and combing the reefs for food in order to provide for themselves and their The initiates were also shown how to bathe away families. their menstrual blood and how to adjust their fiber leaf skirts if they wish to urinate or defecate without exposing The ado then made the only direct reference to themselves. either a woman's reproductive capacity or to her sexuality which I observed in the ritual. The aunts told the initiates the Rauto word for the vagina and the word for the breast. The young women were told that after they gave birth to a child they should feed it with the milk which would issue from their brests. Nothing, however was said about the function of the vagina.

The women then formed a procession back to the



ceremonial house. On reaching the house the aunts took the initiates around it and informed them of the names of its external sections. When the aunts and initiates arrived back at the entrance the other women threw a number of pandanus mats down before them. Others opened up a number of other mats and placed these over the heads of the girls, thus shielding them from the view of onlookers as they entered the ceremonial house. Once inside, the ado instructed the initiates in the names of the inner sections of the house. This bit of instruction is another example of the privileged status of female initiates. The initiates formal introduction to the secrets of the men's house represents one of many claims which prominent women make on the ritual and religious knowledge of men. The "possession" of the ceremonial house for the entire course of the ritual by women, is as well a symbolic statement that their ritual activities deserve as important and as central a stage as do the ritual activities of men.

The ritual for female initiation is then a collective expression of ideals of female identity and privilege. It is also a ritual which outlines and reaffirms a relationship between different generations of women. This relationship has a number of aspects to it. Its spiritual and emotional aspects are conveyed by the songs which the Rauto call aurang. The songs and action of aurang represent

a high expression of the word, or speech of women. They convey a feminine perspective on woman's relationship to a socio-cultural tradition. They also are an expression of the personal power which gives particular value and meaning to that tradition and which actualizes it. As Leenhardt might day, the woman's aurang "unites concept (or tradition) with action."

A Note on Male Initiation

Male initiation is also a collective expression of power. During it the community of adult men sing aurang in order to prompt the growth of adolescent boys. The ceremony also involves the blackening of the teeth of the boys with a red clay-like soil (tovoi) which probably contains magnesium oxide. I was told that the clay also acts to aid the physical development of the boys.

A family which wishes to have its child initiated will usually ask one of the boy's maternal uncles to perform the ritual and to minister to the needs of the boy during the period of the application of the clay. The ritual will usually not be performed until a number of families are prepared to have their child initiated - but there is no hard and fast rule about this. I have heard of instances in which only two children were initiated during a ceremony. Also, there is no rule that only boys can be initiated in

this way. I knew a number of women who had their teeth blackened. This was the first hint that I received that "male initiation" had rather little to do with the creation of a specifically "male nature" or a specifically masculine identity.

After the beginning of the ceremony the children are taken into the men's ceremonial house by the elders who then shut up the house. The initiates are made to chew unripe banana, sugar cane and also lime powder. This is thought to make the clay adhere to the teeth. The clay is itself placed in a bit of bark cloth which is then placed around the mouth and head of the initiates. Occasionally the wrap is taken off in order to allow the initiates to take water from a bamboo tube. The bamboo is placed at the back of the mouth so that no water will touch the initiates' teeth. The initiates take no food during the time of their seclusion and spend most of their time lying on the tree sapling beds of the men's house. The aurang is performed at the initial application of the soil to the teeth. The songs refer to the attractiveness of the dark color of the teeth. also compare the color of the soil to the dark rain clouds of the monsoon season:

Free translation

eket antim
waskup eket waskup

The bark of the **eket** tree holds (the soil fast) ...

keto antim tovoi
antim rumok me
tongow leman
sokokrot leman
kilim

Its sap is the color of the rain clouds. The sap of the tree holds fast. The soil holds fast. The mixture bubbles; the boys teeth glisten.

During the course of the initiates' seclusion the elders inform them of certain of their moral responsibili-They are told always to share their food and never to hide any of it. They are told not to steal or to try to seduce women. They are also asked to confess whether they have already committed any of these transgressions. Rauto believe that should the initiates not make an honest confession the tovoi will not adhere to their teeth. Also. if they commit any of these transgressions after the application of the soil their teeth will also begin to Thus besides being a mark of physical attractiveness stained teeth are, at least for adolescents, a sign of moral rectitude. The beliefs which give meaning to the teeth blackening ceremony also again reveal a relationship between the Rauto concept of moral development and their concept of physical development. In Rauto thought physical growth is thought to be related to the practice of activities which are socially esteemed. In male initiation,

as in female initiation, the color red consistently symbolizes the complex conceptual relationship between the physical and the moral.

Goodale writes that for the neighboring Kaulong, white teeth signify "agressivity" which is somehow "ambiguously human" or almost animal-like (1985:234). notes that for the Kaulong pigs, children, and demons of the forest are thought to have white teeth. These different beings are known for their aggressiveness and "incomplete" humanity. Thus, the teeth reddening of Kaulong initiation is a type of ritual humanization of children. have a number of similar conceptions about the "meaning" of This explains, to a degree, the connection red teeth. between teeth reddening and the moral teaching which goes on during initiation. However, black, or more properly red, teeth convey other sorts of symbolic messages as well. As I have written, red is the color which marks physical and moral maturation, or increase. The color is also associated with the concentrated human power which is expressed during song festival and during ritual occasions. symbolizes the heat and force of anger (see p 172), as well as of sexual attractiveness (see pp 151-152).

During male initiation adult men invest their strength (nara) in the initiates. This is symbolized when the adults ritually <u>redden</u> the boys' teeth. The teeth

reddening and the accompanying aurang concentrates the moral, and the physical energies of the young. Indeed, one of the underlying themes of male initiation is that the initiates are ready to "increase" both physically and morally because of the ritual actions and songs of their seniors. Thus, they are becoming ready and able to invest themselves powerfully in the relationships and in the spiritual and physical tasks of the world.

I should note here that initiation should be seen in relationship to the achievement ceremonies which a boy's father or grandfather will arrange to be performed either just before, or just after the boy's initiation. ceremonies may mark a number of different accomplishments. For instance, a prominent man may sponsor a feast to celebrate his son's first public performance of taro magic. Or, he may arrange for his son to don the costume of the spirit being, called komotmot, for a first time and then hold a small feast to mark the occasion. Also, sometime after a boy's initiation a father may send him to live and work with a distant relative for a period of time. leaving, the boy will be given pearl shell valuables by his host which he will put aside as a portion of his bridewealth. Upon the son's return, his father will again hold a feast to honor him. Through the sponsorship of these achievement ceremonies parents serve notice that their sons

have their own strength and will someday take their places.

Initiation constitutes, in part, a parental attempt "to
assist" the physical and social development of a boy, but it
is not the only such assistance which is given.

At the end of their week of seclusion the initiates are spirited away under cover of darkness into the forest. Here they are to hide from the view of women for a period of time. Should they see and be tempted by a woman now, their teeth will not stay black. There is then an indication in the rite that Rauto consider women injurious to the developing physical and moral capacities of boys. Yet the idea is nowhere near so thoroughly elaborated as in the men's cults of the New Guinea Highlands. The idea remains understated, or merely implicit.

The small number of activities and songs associated with male initiation indicate that the symbolism of the rite is not as rich as is the symbolism of female initiation⁴³. The nature of male personhood and achievement receives much more profound comment in the metaphors which I have described in Chapter II. In the following chapter I describe the complementarity of male and female power and personhood. The chapter discusses Rauto rituals of production.

CHAPTER V

Participation, Song, and the Taro Ceremony

miru pe oduk ogo nadiko tarang la ko gel amtami la kesine mlok lang malang we gaze at their large gardens, they appear to our eyes as does the flat and straight surface of the open sea

Most ethnographers who have carried out fieldwork in rural Melanesia know how important garden work and ritual are to the life of the Melanesian. They have witnessed how major portions of each day are spent either working, or socializing in gardens. They have observed how much of village ceremonial life is centered on the production and the distribution of the garden crop. A long line of ethnographers beginning with Malinowski have attested to the rich symbolism which is attached to the activity of gardening. They have shown how the Melanesian garden is often a potent metaphor for central concerns and concepts of existence. Indeed, if as is often said, Melanesians "live on the ground" - meaning that they are concerned with practical matters such as gardens and production - the

ground which they live and work on, most especially garden land, has an aesthetic and emotional resonance which thinkers as diverse in general outlook as Malinowski and Leenhardt could not help but notice.

Perhaps more than any other spot on the Melanesian landscape, the garden symbolizes the meeting point of human will and natural process. It is a spot where people invest their energy, power, and being in an attempt to forge a relationship between themselves and nature. In this relationship they do not try to dominate nature; they try to coax it; to make it more amenable to their own plans and purposes; to enlist it in their cause.

In Rauto productive life the setting up of this relationship with nature is, as well, a celebration of the aesthetic of space and of the nature of the person. The activities and songs of Rauto productive life create a "lived space" by forging a participatory relationship with land. This represents as important an experience of personal enrichment and of social intensification as does the investment of personal power in the lives of young men and women during initiation ritual. As we shall see, the symbolism for gardening ritual is modeled in part on the symbolism for male and female initiation. As in initiation rites for children in garden ritual men father, and women mother, certain nascent potentialities of themselves and of

the objects of their activity. They invest in the garden some of the same symbols of growth, power, and being which they invest in children during initiation. In the process they create a meaning about themselves and about the space in which they live and work. They create an aesthetic of place and a philosophy of person. In political life this philosophy of the person is male. In ritual and productive life it is a synthesis of Rauto ideas about male and female personhood. In all these forms of expressivity and of social action human agency is represented by speech and song; phenomena which are "properly manifestations of being," what Leenhardt might have called parole.

Leenhardt perceived that for the New Caledonian, speech would create an "experiential landscape" by bringing a person into a relationship with others and with space, and "processes of the natural world" (Clifford 210). Speech or parole was, among other things, the aesthetic experience of participation and the means to create that experience.

Leenhardt thought of the experience of parole as "aesthetic perception" which was an "immediate grasp of emotional ensembles" or relationships (210). His understanding of these matters offers a good starting point from which we can begin to consider aspects of Rauto ritual life.

Both Rauto initiation ritual and garden ritual are contexts for the expression of speech (amala) and of song

(aurang). In both ritual forms of action speech and song initiate relationships and create the experience of participation. In both forms of action they create an experiential landscape which is also an aesthetic space. In initiation this space exists solely between persons. Garden ritual brings people and groups into relationship. However, it also creates an aesthetic space between person, or groups, and cultivated land. The experience of this relationship is continually created and performed during Rauto rituals of production. This chapter deals with Rauto ideas about the moral and aesthetic character of this relationship, and about how these ideas are related to attitudes about work, agency, and the use and misuse of power. Most of all it is about personal expressivity; its necessity and danger for Rauto society.

Ritual and Work

The symbolism and character of Rauto rituals of production are shaped in part by a system of concepts about the nature of work, and of person. These concepts are a central part of Rauto moral life. In garden ritual as in initiation ritual they are expressed in relation to a system of aesthetics, and of emotion. The garden or rather certain types of gardens, called tarang, visually represent this

relationship. The tarang symbolizes the realization of a moral and of an aesthetic ideal; an ideal which is the highest end of physical labor.

A tarang is a large garden which is prepared cooperatively by several different family groups or ramages. The preparation of a tarang is a special event. More often a single residential group will work under the direction of a ramage group leader (adepdep, or towro) who will also almost invariably be a lead garden magician (sanger ino). And, indeed, often a single nuclear family will work by itself to cut a garden in the rain forest. A tarang is a song garden. That is, it is the only type of garden prepared by the Rauto which is prepared along with the singing of the magical songs called aurang. The great majority of the procedures of garden ritual are also performed most often only for a tarang. Much less ritual attention is given to smaller gardens. A constellation of ideas about the meaning of cooperative effort and of song magic informs this decision. The son of the major garden magician of Wasum, put some of these matters into perspective for me after his father had told me the myth explaining the origins of the magical system of song which is used in taro production:

"Before men were given knowledge of taro magic by the culture hero (oklo wate)

Tuktuk, they subsisted on bananas and yams and just a few taro. The magical system given to our ancestors enabled them to concentrate their efforts on taro production. It made them able to produce large gardens and to work together to do so. We work together now and eat following behind the lead of the garden magician (sanger ino); this is good. See how large and beautiful our gardens are."

As is suggested by this passage, and by the Rauto proverb which heads the beginning of this chapter, the sight of a large garden is extraordinarily impressive to the Rauto eye. It is impressive in more than an aesthetic sense; it is also impressive in a moral sense. It is an indication that groups have been able, at least temporarily, to put aside suspicion and factionalism in order to pool their resources of labor under the direction of a leading garden magician. Song magic (aurang) and large gardens called tarang thus imply, and create or reaffirm relationships - relationships between groups, between person and space, and between person and what Rauto refer to as the children of their gardens, taro. Small gardens prepared separately and without song magic symbolize fewer and less dramatic

relationships. As in initiation ritual aurang connotes participation in manifold relationships. In this way it marks a moral space between people.

young women and men, flourishing and large gardens - are the product of manifold relationships. These relationships though spiritually established through aurang are materially reinforced through the exchanges of labor, shells, and foodstuffs which accompany aurang. However, in Rauto thinking, as in our own, relationships can be overbearing and exploitative. It is for this reason that the preparation of gardens called tarang is an exceptional event. Rauto recognize that aurang can sometimes be as much an expression of the ambitions of leaders, as it can be an expression of an ideal of community.

The Early Stages of Gardening and Ideas About the Labor of Men and Women

Work for the preparation of a tarang and for the performance of the songs and rituals called aurang begins when a leading garden magician - accompanied by several young helpers - marks out a section of forest for cutting and preparation. As the sanger ino walks through the forest he will blow lime powder along the edges of the sections of

bush which he has chosen for cutting. The lime will serve as a marker for his hamlet mates. By it they discern the area of forest which is to be cut.

The climate of rivalry and suspicion which informs intergroup relations and which can undermine some of the objectives of the performance of aurang, is revealed by the first magical act of gardening ritual. The sanger ino's helpers will seek out a variety of tree which the Rauto call aku. At the base of each aku tree that they come across they will dig two small holes. They will spit a spray of ginger into one of the holes and blow a bit of lime powder into the other. It is said that the taro sorcery of rivals is most often performed at the base of the aku tree. lime and ginger are thought to burn the sorcery from the ground. As an added precautionary measure the earth which has been excavated from the base of the aku tree is placed in a basket. It is then brought to a stream, or in coastal villages down to the ocean, where the tide can carry it away and thus disperse the destructive power which is contained within it.

A few days after the performance of this initial fumigation rite, the sanger ino will direct a number of the unmarried and the widowed women of the ramage to go through sections of the bush, and to thin out some of the undergrowth. This may require a week or more of sustained

labor. After the bush is initially thinned out by the collective work groups of women the ramage's married couples mark out and begin to prepare their own sections of the garden. Thus, they perform a second cutting of the underbrush. The man of the couple will then axe down the trees which are left standing on his plot.

If a hamlet leader decides to perform aurang on a section of virgin bush, the procedure for clearing the forest can be much more involved and the work much more difficult. In this case all of the adult men of one or more residential groups will combine their labor in order to perform the difficult task of cutting virgin timber. The cutting is one of the most dramatic moments of productive life. The Rauto possess a myth which relates how a young woman met her death while cutting virgin forest.

As people cut the forest they sing the genre of mourning song called akailes which is associated with this myth. By doing this they sing to the death of this woman of the forest and to the death of the many generations that existed during the life time of the forest. Men and women sing out of sorrow and remembrance of the past, yet they as well sing for the possibilities of the present; possibilities which are being prepared by their combined efforts. Thus as men and women sing the akailes together so too do they together begin to carve a garden out of the

rainforest. Their combined labor prepares a home for taro - a plant which Rauto men and women sometimes refer to as a child.

The trees and cut bush will then be left to dry for a number of weeks, or perhaps months. When they have dried out sufficiently the sanger ino will order the gardens to be fired. As women work to place the burning vines, leaves, and tree branches into small piles men will use their axes to split and section off the middles of the tree trunks which lie scattered about the garden site. The tree sections will serve as markers for the separate garden plots.

Gardens and People

The Rauto garden, and the forms of social action which take place in it, embody a number of conflicting ideas and values. The garden is a place where Melanesian ideals of openness and hospitality on the one hand, often clash with fears of personal and social vulnerability on the other.

Gardens are for the most part places of escape for the Rauto. Preparing a garden separately, away from the site of the main garden of one's descent group guarantees a degree of "protection" from the view of hamlet or village

mates. In such places food can be harvested and prepared secretly and thus need not be shared with others; one can escape for a short time the social demands, concerns and frequently, animosity of village or hamlet life. The garden is a place where one can put a degree of physical and emotional distance between oneself and others without resorting to an outright declaration of animosity. It was my observation that this was one of the major reasons that people spent such inordinate amounts of time in their gardens." (See also Jorgensen 1988 for a similar discussion of the significance of Telefol gardens).

Gardens are also places which actually mark the physical and emotional distance which exists between different residential groups, or ramages. People belonging to different residential groups generally avoid visiting each other's garden sites for fear of being accused of working taro sorcery on them. These beliefs about taro sorcery are part and parcel of a general status rivalry which usually marks the relationship between different yet proximate kinship groups in Arawe. As the attractiveness and strength of children are a point of pride for families and are the subject of much ritual attention so is the health and abundance of a group's taro crop; thus, one of the most effective ways to detract from the reputation of a group is to visit damage upon its gardens. Headmen usually

spearhead intergroup rivalries including those of productive life. They are especially feared as taro sorcerers by those who do not belong to the factions that they lead. They are the individuals who are most often accused of working taro sorcery.

These traditional concerns are emphasized all the more by the preparation for the performance of an aurang. One person told me that the aurang could serve as an excellent way for a headman to gain access to the gardens of a rival group and there to sorcerize them. Such thoughts brought into focus for me the fact that Rauto gardens are places where life as it is actually lived confronts powerfully articulated and strongly held ideals about how life should be led. It is a place where intense feelings of relationship between people, and between person and land, are contrasted with the social and emotional distance which results from distrust and feelings of vulnerability.

In many ways the aurang which is sometimes performed for taro production transcends the dichotomies which I have been speaking about. It does this by relating a system of sacred symbols to a mundane and occasionally mean reality. In the process it temporarily at least transforms the nature of Rauto perception of this reality. The Rauto's performance of aurang can be explained just as much by the fact that it does effect this transformation in perspective,

as by the explanation that it garners prestige for the sanger ino or that it makes for a particularly healthy taro crop. I now turn to a consideration of the nature and meaning of this perspective.

The Arrangement for Taro Exchange

Before aurang can be performed the headman who conducts the ritual must arrange for the ceremonial gifts of taro which accompany the planting phase of the ritual. sanger ino will ask one or as many as three or four other headmen if their groups will be willing to participate in the ritual and to engage in taro exchange. If the offer or offers are accepted the sanger ino will request that each family of his group donate a portion of their taro harvest to a family of the visiting group. The visiting family will then do a good deal of the labor of taro planting for the group which has offered them taro. They will also be expected to pay back the gift which is offered to them. the group which receives the gift lives near the host group they will almost certainly bring some of their taro along to be planted. Thus, they will place some of their taro under the ritual care of the sanger ino who sponsors and performs the aurang. Also, if several groups have combined their labor to cut a section of bush they will almost certainly

make their gardens together, and thus will place their taro under the care and protection of the sanger ino. During my stay with the Rauto this had occurred once at the beginning of my field work. A subsequent poor harvest of taro had then eventuated in sorcery accusations being leveled against the head garden magician. After these accusations the groups involved again made their gardens separately.

Before the exchange the group which provides the gift of taro will stand a series of sticks in the ground. The sticks will be placed in a straight line at intervals of from three to four feet. The sticks will usually not stand more than three or four feet high. Harvested taro will be heaped carefully between every two sticks. This taro represents the actual contribution of separate family When the heaping of the taro is complete usually a groups. day or two before the performance of the aurang for the gardens the song and dance ceremony called the agresket will be held - (the general form of this is described on pp 115). Men and women will dance the agresket and the augosang in the presence of the harvested taro in order "to honor" it and to acknowledge the importance of the gift which is about to be given.

Construction of the Taro Effigy

Two days before the aurang is performed the sanger

ino will disappear into the forest with his helpers in order to collect the necessary magical plants and substances which will be used during the rite. The gathering will last for a full day, as each of the plots of the tarang must be afforded a separate bundle of magical materials. The plants of which the magical bundles are composed are the basic plants of Rauto ritual and religious life: ginger, coleus, lemon grass, wild banana leaves, ginger species. Their appearance in the taro ritual is but a first indication of the analogy which the ritual presents with female initiation.

This first impression is confirmed by a subsequent act: the fashioning of a large effigy of the taro plant itself, cut of some of the materials gathered for the magical bundles. The effigy, which stands about five feet high, is also fashioned from a number of plants and flowers which young women especially use as personal finery. It also contains within itself almost all of the plants and flowers which are used to construct the special skirts which are presented to young women during female initiation. The effigy is even provided with its own banana and croton leaf skirt. The skirt is constructed from the same type of red and yellow streaked banana and croton leaves from which is fashioned the adult dress of female initiates. The effigy is, in effect, "the woman" of the garden. Or rather it

represents in a rather straightforward way, the productive powers and abilities associated with women, see pp 154.

The effigy is placed in a small wooden box (lungio) which is especially constructed for it. There it sits enthroned on the edge of the garden until the commencement of the ritual proper. All around it will be the magical bundles which will be used by the sanger ino, the next day.

The First Series of Aurana

On the morning of the aurang the men and women of the visiting ramages greet their host; the women then walk toward the heaps of harvested taro. Each women separates the taro offered to her from its stalk and then places it in a large food basket; the stalks being placed on the top of The first act of the aurang then takes the taro corms. place. Two small trees of a variety which Rauto call sengaseng are placed on either side of the entrance to one of the paths leading into the garden. The tops of the two trees are lashed together to form an arch. The entrance to the garden will now be referred to as its door (ino somta). The garden then becomes symbolically, a house. The garden's door is then charmed by the sanger ino by a spray of ginger, areca nut, and saliva which issues from his mouth in a great billow. The arches of the door are then said to present a

barrier to any taro sorcery which might adhere to the stalks of taro which are now carried through the door. The women carry the taro stalks through the garden door as they sing the special song for the door.

The taro stalks are carried to the center of the garden. Here, the sanger ino and his helpers paint the bottom of each stalk with a mixture of red ocher (magnesium oxide), the sap of the areca plant, and of the plant adi, as well as of various ginger species and of a variety of wild banana. As the magician works he and all the other men and women present sing the various aurang for the painting of the taro stalks, and for the preparation of the various herbs:

Free translation

awore a wo amote Let us paint the taro a yamote a e ao let us paint the taro.

pongponge a, wo Let us paint these pongponge a enormous stalks of taro.

le urtong a lele

We prepare the basin (to

urtong a le le urtong

hold the blood of the

a lele urtong a le

areca) We wring the areca.

wo lugu isin

My taro

lugu isin akate

my taro akatei

na ewine a wo

and its shoots.

wine pe oo wa lugu isin auring

na ewine

The shoots of my taro my taro auring and its shoots.

amoli ko mai kupo wo amoli ko mai kupo We wring the blood of the areca palm (and bath our taro).

amoli ko mai repo wo amoli amol kol mai repo We place the blood of the areca in the areca bark bowl (and bath our taro).

ina risngong a
iwo risngong a
ina risngong a

My mother bathes me my father bathes me my mother bathes me.

The symbolism of this phase of the ritual is clarified by the songs which are sung during it. In the words of one of these songs the sanger ino, his helpers, and indeed all the men and women who take part in the rite are called the fathers and mothers of the taro. Their songs and ritual activities are understood to represent some of the same concern and care which people show their human children. Specifically, the ritual manipulations and especially the "bathing" or painting of the taro stalks are

thought to bring protection to the taro from the sorcery of others. In the last song of the sequence the taro stalks are heard to answer the songs and activities of their mothers and fathers by noting how they are being bathed and cared for. And, a number of men and women told me that it was important that the taro felt itself to be well looked after, else the corms might decide at some point "to leave the house of their parents." If this should come to pass - i.e. if there is a poor taro harvest - the sanger ino must try to call his taro children back to their home. He does so with a song that is sung just prior to planting.

Free translation

wo la mare
I call to you
siasa ka ko wuwu
(you are gone). You
lo mare
must rise and come.

owie, isin nukrus la Alas, the taro is finished.

ngado la mare I call to it, my debt (to

ngado wulwul lo mare other ramages must be

repaid).

asokol me

The ember of my fire come

yau me

the smoke of my fire come

lugu wiling me

my fighting spear come

lugu isin me

my taro come.

The song refers to the sadness and anxiety felt by the sanger ino after a poor harvest. The performance of the aurang for planting provides an opportunity for the magician to plead with his taro children to return. He reminds them of the many debts which he and his ramage must repay with The last stanza of the song is a moving statement of the relationship between person and taro. In this stanza the most sacred symbols of Rauto culture are mentioned. These are fire, smoke, and the fighting spear. Fire and smoke are symbols of the hearth, of human habitation, of women, commensality and conviviality - see pp 162-168. The fighting spear represents, among other things, the strength needed to protect and perpetuate these values. the song taro is identified with these sacred symbols. The song expresses the notion that taro is as important as these things; thus that its existence is inseparable from the existence of the person. The aurang also represents an invitation to the taro of other ramages, to leave its own garden, and to find a new home. The song is thus itself also a bit of taro sorcery.

The Aurang for the Taro Effigy

At the conclusion of the painting of the taro stalks the women will gather them together and carry them to the appropriate plots for planting. They will then return to the edge of the garden to the site of the taro effigy, and there wait for the sanger ino. He, at this time walks to each of the plots of the garden and places a magically charmed green coconut in a hole near the center of each plot. He implores the garden to drink of the coconut milk, and then to provide the taro with more of the liquid as it grows. As he and his helpers finish these minor rites, he signals to the participants to begin the aurang for the taro effigy. The singing commences as he begins to walk toward the effigy itself:

ale more o alu more
ale more salamit tarang
ale more o ale more
ale more, e woronge

ale more o ale more
ale more
o koke nel aumo
a la mare
o koke nel aumo

Free translation

You must come and paint me; I must go to the tarang now, you must paint my visage.

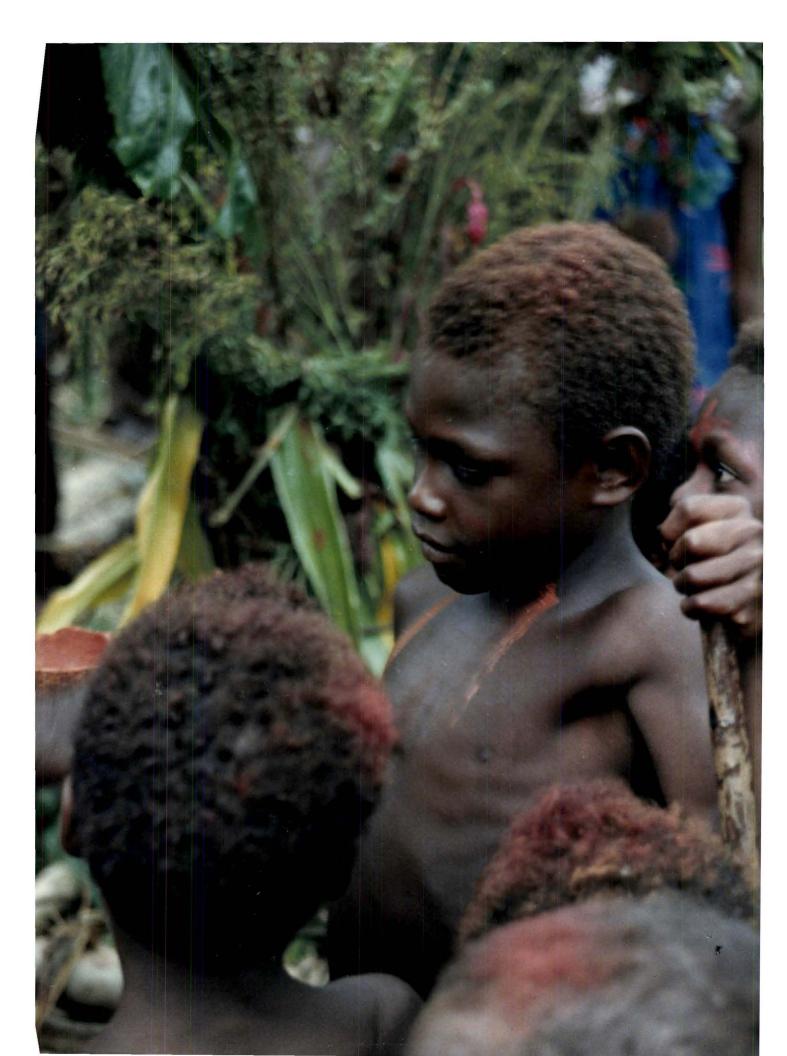
You must paint my finery, and my banana leaf skirt. I call to you to come (drink at the breast of this flower).

The sanger ino approaches the effigy and begins to paint it with red ocher. As he does so he instructs those

who have not seen the ritual before in the names of the various plants from which the effigy is made. He also informs them that the effigy has a name. The name is sometimes used to refer to the entire system of taro magic which is possessed by the garden magician. After the painting of the effigy all those who have not seen the ritual performed previously are also painted with a streak of red ocher.

My informants told me that the figure was the "mother's milk" of taro. Indeed, the sap of the varied plants of the figure was actually called "mother's milk." was also told that the figure was the "mother" of the taro. Indeed, in the aurang the figure calls to its children to come and drink at its breast. The point which is made here is that the magic of the sanger ino is the sustenance of the Through his magic he participates in the taro plant. productive principles and powers which are most especially associated with women. The taro figure, the embodiment of the sanger ino's magic, mediates the relationship between person and taro. In creating this figure the sanger ino establishes a relationship between person and taro which is modeled on the relationship between mother and child. ritual humanization of taro during aurang brings it, and nature itself into a relationship of reciprocity and of affection with people.





The Planting of the Taro Figure

The effigy and the bundles of magical ingredients which are arranged before it are then charmed by the garden magician. Some of his words may be as follows:

Free translation

kambombo, kambombo Rise up suwil kambombo the river suwil rise up pulie kambombo the river pulie rise up anu kambombo the river anu rise up alinpit kambombo the river alimpit rise up wun alinpit mukap The river alimpit you, anu, mukap mukambombo and the river anu rise up wunie nado isin, with my taro as the uri ino la tir spring flows upward. pe oro la ko la Taro rise in my garden. ko la ko It rises in the garden la tir pe oro la as does the fount of a langono uri ino amta spring. The taro enga enga pipse rise, taro rise. isin pipse The taro auring rise auring pipse the leaves of the taro sit (majestically). The songom gua, lo woman gua isin tengen ngat tuber breaks the ground. The taro rises as does the sago palm.

The spell symbolism is itself an expression of Rauto concepts of growth, generation, and health. Time and again in ritual life the symbol of water or of effervescent and fragrant liquid - such as the sap of various ginger species is invoked and used to promote health and growth, see p 147. In the spell the sanger ino's magical power seems metaphorically akin to the power of these elements. Indeed, the spell makes implicit reference to the magician's control over these elements; elements which are a constitutive part of the taro effigy; elements whose power is embodied by the effigy. Yet, its qualities, characteristics and potential for prompting growth remain inert until men and women call it, the magical bundles, and the taro of the garden to existence through song and spell.

"call to existence."⁴⁷ During it the sanger ino instructs the young men of his ramage to lift the effigy off the ground and to begin to carry it to the center of the garden. Four men are needed to lift the object. Two men position themselves in front and two in the back of the box (lungio) of the effigy and place the tree saplings which protrude from either side of the box on their shoulders. They then form the head of a procession into the garden. The men of the different ramages sing the series of aurang for planting the figure in deep booming voices as they move into the

garden. Women and children meanwhile rush ahead of the procession and dance before the effigy while waving colorful crotons and sweet smelling herbs at it. A number of pandanus mats are thrown down before it, forming a sort of carpet for the procession. The women and children answer the singing of the men with their own high pitched melodies. Before the procession arrives at the center of the garden, the sanger ino rushes forward with three or four men who have in hand their taro digging sticks (kepe). He instructs them to begin to dig the hole for the effigy. The series of aurang which are sung now are, in part, an invocation of two spirits whose power is thought to aid the taro in its growth.⁴⁸

When the procession arrives all crowd around the effigy's hole as it is taken out of its box, and held above the hole. The effigy is swayed back and forth as the aurang invoking the power of the spirits is sung for it at the very top of everyone's lungs. The singing of the women now becomes the voice of the figure. The women sing a song which tells the mothers and fathers of the effigy "not to cry or worry, as it is now firmly entrenched in its house," the garden. When the object is firmly secured the sanger ino's helpers encircle the object. They raise their hands above the top of the effigy symbolically pulling the object upward; thus they encourage the growth of the taro which is

their, as well as the effigy's children.

Before the magic of planting was performed at the aurang which I saw the sanger ino, while still in the presence of the effigy, spoke to all of the participants of the ritual. He told everyone assembled that he had not been responsible for the taro blight which had in the previous year ruined much of their crop. He said that he wished no harm to anyone. He then began to speak of his father and of others who had lived in times past and who had performed this ritual. He talked of how they had handed down their knowledge of it before they had died. As he uttered these words he began to weep, as the memory of those whom he had known in the past and who were now dead overwhelmed him. Except for the sound of his weeping the garden then became completely quiet. The old men and women cast their heads down and seemed to turn inward as they thought back to the past with sorrow and nostalgia. The young too cast their eyes downward as they observed the solemnity of the moment. The sorrowful character of this moment presented a sharp contrast to the exuberance and almost defiant expression of human power which had characterized the preceding phases of the rite. Yet, it seemed to be in keeping with the undertone of caution and pessimism which colors Rauto perceptions of the nature of person, and of power. That the sanger ino would himself allude to the ephemeral nature of









people in the context of a ritual expression of his own strength implied that he understood this strength and power to be evanescent. By alluding to those who had performed the ritual in the past and who were now dead, the sanger ino also made reference to his own ephemeral nature, and to the eventual fate of all those who were present at the ritual.

Planting Magic and Taro Exchange

The ritual concludes with the aurang and the magical activities for planting and for taro exchange. phase of the rite the magician proceeds to the center of each garden plot accompanied by three or four young men and women, who carry the magical bundles. At the center of each plot he plants one of these charmed bundles. He does this by first sitting on the ground and waving the bundles back and forth just above the hole which has been prepared for it. As he manipulates the bundles he spits a billow of ginger onto it and into the hole in which it will be placed. When the bundle is planted he recites another series of spells over it. In these spells he exhorts the taro to appear above the surface of the ground, just as a "fish jumps suddenly and spectacularly from the depths of the sea and breaks past the surface." His apprentices then perform a spell which urges the taro stalks to anchor themselves to the ground.

At the ritual which I saw, when the sanger ino got up to leave each garden plot and to proceed to the next, men from the visiting ramages would walk up to the plot and plant the taro stalks which had been carried there. They planted the stalks in a clockwise movement around the bundle of magical materials. The most prized variety of taro, that called auring, was planted closest to the magical bundle. Those less prized were planted further from it. As the men planted, their women threw a few pearl shells down as a partial payment for the taro which they would be taking back to their homes. They and their men also sang the series of aurang for planting, and for taro exchange:

Free translation

kiropo la nakiropo lage kiropo

wo gilo le lona lage wog ilo lona

The covering of the taro is firm. We shall fill up our baskets with it.

We have harvested all the

We have harvested all the taro. We shall cut it off of its stalks and fill our baskets with it.

long long wiso,
wisa ei wo long
long koyo ai

You and I work underneath these (gigantic) leaves of taro.

ya omo a omo
e winsomo
ya omo e winsomo
ya omo a omo
e windring

We have planted the taro effigy (and the magical bundles). The taro is enclosed in the ground.

ko adeng mese wino sukil ilit awe ino deng mele ko adeng mese wino o sukili itit awe

The little girls cry (as they carry the taro up the hill called awe). It is so heavy (it hurts their heads).

One of the songs alludes to how the sanger ino's magic managed to produce taro corms whose surface was not ruined in any way by insects or by mold. The last song describes a group of young girls struggling up the side of a hill called awe and crying because the taro corms are so large and heavy. The song refers to the ample character of the gift of taro which is offered to the visiting ramages.

After the planting was completed, the women of the visiting ramages carried off the huge baskets of taro to their homes. That night the bigmen of the village honored the newly planted taro by calling for a song festival of the spirit beings called kamotmot. Thus were the gardens placed under the tutelary care of these spirits. A prohibition

upon visiting the gardens was then called by the sanger ino in order to allow the magic which was performed in the garden to take hold.

Encompassment, Participation and the Garden Magician

In sponsoring and leading the performance of aurang the sanger ino orchestrates the collective participation of people in garden land. In the ritual the sanger ino also mediates the relationships between groups through an act of encompassment. He acts on behalf of these groups, directing their spiritual and actual physical strength toward the accomplishment of ends which are closely bound to the life of person and of society: the securing of physical sustenance, and the initiation of events of exchange.

The symbols which define the sanger ino's act of encompassment have deep political, as well as spiritual meaning. The symbols define his power in terms of principles by which the Rauto understand the maintenance of life and of growth. The symbols also define the sanger ino as the head father of the garden. Yet, he is a father who has at his command powers and skills of production which are usually associated with women - see p 154. Thus, in the ceremony his magic (symbolically represented by the taro effigy) is called the mother's milk of the garden. Through

his magic the sanger ino gives life to the garden and to those on whose behalf he acts. The ritual depicts him as a nurturer of taro, of land and of people. The Rauto possess a proverb which expresses their view of the importance of the garden magician. The metaphor translates as "we eat following or walking behind the magician" (mignen nes oduk sanger ino). The metaphor alludes to the moment during gardening ritual when the sanger ino has finished planting his bundle of magical materials in the center of a garden plot. As he moves to the next section of garden, men enter the plot and begin to plant their taro. The metaphor implies that it is only by following the magician in this way that people can secure their food.

The sanger ino receives little direct material benefit by leading the ritual which asserts that he is both father and mother of the garden. He does however earn the right to ask those for whom he has labored, to contribute part of their crop for events of ceremonial exchange — events which garner prestige for him and for his group. Just as importantly, prestige accrues to the person of the sanger ino because he comes to represent and to embody ideals of human capacity and agency during his performance of aurang. The aurang is, among other things, a public recognition of his ability to produce sustenance through the sheer force of his person and through the collective force

of those who participate in the ritual with him. During the course of the performance of aurang his word, song, and magic becomes a manifestation of their, as well as of his own being.

CHAPTER VI

Images of Time, Person, and Place

The most important truism of cultural anthropology is the idea that meaning is represented by the objects which people create, by the spaces which they inhabit, and by their perceptions of the nature of time and activity. Meaning is expressed as well by a people's discourse about these fundamental matters. We know that quite often this discourse is shaped by central cultural metaphors. Thus, to take but one example from the anthropological record, in Marquesan culture the concept of tapu gave form and cogency to discourse about space, time, the person and activity. Dening writes that tapu was "the fundamental categorizing principle of the physical environment, of personal space, of social class, of events and action, of cultural time. was the organizing principle which gave everything else meaning and about which there could be no agnosticism. It was not only a map of the space within the Marquesan's world, it also marked the boundaries of their world"

(1980:89). Thus, when Europeans came and openly mocked the symbolic division of the world, of space, time and the body, into the categories of common (meie) and tapu, the Marquesans glimpsed the cultural boundary of their world. They perceived that their own discourse about meaning in the world had come into conflict with a type of discourse which expressed meaning in unfamiliar, and as it turned out, in threatening terms.

Dening's work is one of a number of recent ethnographies which use the concept of cultural metaphor in the description and analysis of meaning (Wagner 1978; Kirkpatrick and White 1985 et. al.). These studies share a common concern with explaining the forms of discourse and expressive culture which people use to describe their experience, and to "draw the separate parts of that experience together" (Dening 1980:86). The new emphasis on metaphor is of course a consequence of an epistemic shift in anthropology from the study of structure and function i.e. the study of the function of social structure - to the study of meaning. Another way of putting this would be to say that anthropologists would now rather talk about metaphors than models. Models are "objects of an observer's knowledge" (Dening:87). They are "static, structured and simple," "and are perhaps only "marginally related" to the experience of the people which they describe (Dening 1987).

In contrast metaphors are objects of a people's cultural knowledge and as such they are, as Dening writes, "an instrument of daily understanding" (87).

We have seen that the metaphor of the person is an instrument of understanding for the Rauto. In this chapter I show how it structures aspects of their understanding of time. Before I go on to this discussion I feel it would be useful to indicate how my approach differs from that of a number of scholars who have written on either the topic of time, or of person. I argue here that the metaphors and analogies which these scholars use to speak about time and person can tell us only a little about Melanesian forms of discourse.

Time's Cycle and The Concept of Office

Two generations of scholars, strongly influenced by Durkheimian epistemology, have identified a relationship between culturally specific concepts of society on the one hand, and concepts of time on the other. The concept of society lies at the root of the notion that "time is but a metaphor for social structure" (Evans-Pritchard 1946:104); or, that perceptions of time are products of the history, the structure and the activities of social groups (see Bourdieu 1976:219, Burman 1980:251, Reason 1979). These

interpretations remind us that Durkheimian metaphors imply that society has an existence which is somehow distinct from that of the individual, and that concepts of time and space are grounded in the individual's experience of this external entity. I note this because the distinction between society and individual is an integral part as well of a type of discourse about personhood.

Lafontaine (1985:132) and Fortes (1973:287) argue that personhood is a state which is conferred by society upon people when they assume an office or role within the social structure. As Marilyn Strathern has pointed out, this interpretation is related to the idea that "office holding and office conferment mark out the operation of society" (In a public lecture 1988). In this view "personhood" can be called a social category. Like the concept of time, the concept of the person is said to be grounded in an experience of the social order. statement which Mauss and Evans-Pritchard would have most probably approved, Lafontaine even writes that concepts of the person relate "mortal, transient human beings to a continuing social whole" (138). Lafontaine asserts that in societies such as the Gahuka Gama of New Guinea which appear to lack the concept of "office," society "barely exists beyond the interaction of living individuals" (1985:139). In such a society no concept of the person as a particular

ideal of moral being is necessary (1985:139).

One is immediately reminded here of the Durkheimian image of the person as "homo duplex." In this interpretive image the soul, or conscience is that part of a person which connects him to the collectivity (Collins 1985:60). The ego, or self, represents the experience of and the desire for the "material world" (61). What raises people above the level of beasts in this view is their connection to the collectivity, and their ability to form a concept of this collectivity. It is this ability which enables people to acquire a moral sense, "conscience," and thus to define the rights, duties and offices of society. I think it would be fair to say that for Lafontaine, a society which lacks the concept of office is rather unadvanced in terms of moral life. As others have pointed out, the model which forms the basis of this conclusion is derived at least in part from the "social and educational ideals of the democratic state"; from the idea that citizenship, and its attendant duties for the collectivity constitute a main center of moral life (Carrithers 1985:241). I would argue that a particular notion of time also rests at the core of this interpretation of person and of society.

For Lafontaine, as for Durkheim and Mauss before her, the values and practices of the collectivity precede the life of the individual and they are phenomena which

outlast the individual. Rituals of the life cycle confirm this, as do ceremonies during which political authority is reaffirmed, or political office conferred. These events are thought to "confer personhood" by Lafontaine. They do so, at least in part, because they have the character of an historical recurrence.

The epistemology which gives meaning to this point of view (variously represented in work on a number of topics, by Durkheim (1965), Turner (1967), Lafontaine (1985) et. al.) appears particularly suitable both to express and to describe a cyclic understanding of the nature of time-what Stephen Gould would call "time's cycle." Gould notes that a view of time as a cycle can give meaning to a moment in the time of an individual life, or to a moment in the life of a society, or of a world, by relating this moment to a tradition (or process) which is constantly recreated as it is evoked (1987:14). When there is only narrative; when each event in the life of a person, of a society, or of a world is thought to be utterly unique, time can lose much of its meaning, because it is undefined by value and by process."

The major observation which I make in this chapter is that discourse about the relationship between person and the metaphor of time need not refer to notions of a social office, or of a social tradition, or of society itself.

Rauto symbolic representations of both "time's cycle" and "time's arrow" are shaped instead by concepts of agency. This is not surprising since we know that the Melanesian view of the person as the embodiment of human agency defines the meaning of a number of symbolic forms and social practices. Thus we know that in Melanesia initiation ritual is often performed in order to cultivate effective human agency (Herdt 1982; Poole 1982); that mortuary ritual is a celebration of agency (Jorgensen 1988:6); that the activity of production, and the products of human labor are infused with meaning by human agency (Kahn 1985; Tuzin 1978; Malinowski 1978).

For the Rauto, productive activity and the agency which assures the effectiveness of this activity, both imposes a vector of history upon time and structures it into cycles. Images of time as a cycle are expressed by the metaphors of the Rauto calendrical system. Narrative images of the progress of time are expressed in Rauto notions of space, and of place. This chapter consists of a discussion of these different images of time, as well as of the relationship which obtains between them. The final section of the essay I discuss this relationship as I consider, albeit briefly, the meaning of the rites which the Rauto perform for their dead. Here I broach the subject of the relationship between the Rauto experience of time and

their notion of social continuity.

Agency and the Rauto Lunar Calendar

In chapter II I showed how concepts of activity and agency are essential aspects of the Rauto definition of the person. A person is a being who through action, speech, and ritual acumen creates the material basis for life. Through the performance of aurang a person is also thought to shape the moral and the physical nature of other human beings. Aspects of the Rauto experience of time reflect this definition of the person. The Rauto lunar calendar represents one aspect of the experience of time. The names of the lunar months are themselves descriptions of the characteristic activities which are performed during different times of the year. The descriptive names are images which relate the experience of time to the activities of the wider world and, to a culturally specific concept of human agency.

A. "The time of preparation."

Aileng (September): "Prepare your shell money."

For the Rauto the year can be said to commence during the time in which people begin to prepare for the end

of the rainy season and to plan for the activities of the ceremonial season. The dominant theme of discourse about the three lunar months of this period is the theme of social and economic preparation. In discourse the months previous to the "time of preparation" are characterized as a time of "no activity" as I shall discuss shortly.

The first month of preparation is called aileng, which is said to mean "count you shell money." Aileng is said to be "the time for taking inventory of ones resources." It is also designated as the proper time to make visits to the hamlets of kin who owe you shell money and to request that they make good on their debts. aileng is also marked as the time for "the evening up of debts." A specific image serves as a symbol of this month. This is the image of a person sitting in the plaza by the door of his or her house stringing and generally preparing shell bead currency for the trading season which is to come. The preparation consists in piercing the center of small nasa shells, and then stringing them on a thin cord of hemp. The shell bead currency is then stretched out on a board of wood and is filed down until it is a size which is aesthetically pleasing to the Rauto eye.

B. Adunglo: "Preparation of Pig Nets and Canoes."

Adunglo is the month when the hunting and, in

coastal Rauto villages, the fishing nets are taken out of the various ceremonial houses and are repaired. They will then be magically charmed by the hamlet leader (adepdep) whose kin group constructed and owns the nets.

However, for people of the coastal Rauto villages, the image which best characterizes this month describes how the large trading and fishing canoes are taken from their place of storage behind the ceremonial house and are drawn down to the shore. A second characteristic image which Rauto use when speaking about this month describes the celebration which follows upon the construction of a new canoe. The image describes how in this celebration the owner and builder of the canoe is doused with seawater by the women of the hamlet. It also describes how the canoe is then paddled to other hamlets and shown to the people of these places. At all the stops of this journey tobacco, shell money, areca nut and pandanus mats will be heaved into the new canoe by the people of the various hamlet groups.

C. Awom tir: (November) "You Climb."

This month is a month of "anticipation" as well as of preparation. During awom tir Rauto check the progress of the taro gardens which they will have planted toward the end of the previous dry season. The voyaging, trading and

social visiting of the dry season are impossible without the produce of the gardens. Indeed the gardens must bear if trading and guest friends are to be received properly and if voyagers are to be able to make initial gifts of food to their hosts in return for offers of hospitality. The full commencement or even the planning of ceremonial activity is also impossible without the prospect of an ample and continuous harvest.

The main taro crop will have been planted during what we would call the previous January or February. main gardens should begin to bear a month or two after awom tir. During awom tir people will wait with anticipation for a sign that the taro stalks have produced corms. garden magicians (sanger ino) of the various Rauto hamlet groups will be particularly sullen during this time as they worry about whether or not their magic was effective enough to secure the formation and growth of the corms. During this month the sanger ino sometimes instructs the young men and women of his hamlet residence to climb to the middle branches of the trees which surround the taro gardens in order to see if the top of the taro corms are yet protruding from the ground. This will indicate that the corm has formed and thus that the taro stalks have "produced food." Awom tir is thought, as well, to signal the ripening of the nuts of the canarium tree (ngaul). In fact, the central

image of speech about awom tir describes young people climbing the canarium tree to knock the nuts down, and then gazing toward the taro gardens and seeing the tops of the taro tubers protruding from the ground. Should the gardens prove to have produced, people will begin to prepare for ceremonial and for trading.

D. Naulong, naulong akap: December, January ("You as well?")

The ceremonial season is heralded by the month which the Rauto call naulong. In fact the Rauto designate two consecutive months by this name.

The metaphoric image which symbolizes these two months can be called the image of the return. It is said that during naulong people who had been living in small encampments in the forest during the rainy season return to the ceremonial ground (tanu) of their ramage and congregate in a large settlement. Yet, this image is also a symbol for the general exuberance and activity which are thought to characterize these two months.

The image of "the social visit" also figures prominently in Rauto descriptions of the character of naulong. People are said to "travel from hamlet to hamlet" and from "house to house" to exchange gossip, news and

plans. The Rauto also call these two months "the time of happiness" since they are associated with the song festivals and the rituals of the ceremonial season. It is even said that during this time the creatures of the forest are as restless and as energetic as people. They too are said to travel "to and from."

The central idea expressed by descriptions of naulong is that human agency is most efficacious during this Thus, the Rauto say that human labor brings its greatest return during naulong. This idea has practical consequences as the period toward the end of naulong is one of the most labor intensive times of the year. The largest taro gardens will be prepared and planted now. Elders told me that naulong was also the best time for hunting and fishing expeditions. They said that since the fish and animals were "happiest" and most active during naulong they could be spotted and caught with less effort. Naulong is also considered to be the most propitious time to initiate children and to perform the aurang for the taro gardens. Two thoughts lie behind this preference. The first is the idea that children and plants "grow quickly" during naulong. The second thought is that the personal power (nara) of people is now at its peak. Rauto express this idea by saying that "their skins are hot" during this time, and that therefore, any activity which they undertake has a good

chance of succeeding - see Chapter II p. 60. Thus, the songs and ritual activities of initiation and of taro production will be particularly efficacious and effective in prompting the growth of crops and children.

We see then how, in discourse about naulong, human agency is related to the quality of time. In this sense naulong is a metaphor both for the waxing of personal energy and for the revitalization of social life.

E. Images of the Harvest: (aiei) February (malenge) March.

The two months which follow naulong are aiei and malenge. The images used to characterize the months refer to the activities of harvesting, food preparation and food exchange.

Aiei takes its name from a type of yam which is harvested at this time. During aiei people are said "to walk through the gardens" and find that the yams are ready to be taken from the ground. It is said that after people observe the growth of the yams they will "look toward the taro gardens" and see that it is almost time to begin a second taro harvest. The thought which informs this image is the notion that the maturation of the yam tubers hastens the growth of the taro. During the next month (malenge) the

taro will be ready for harvesting. A verbal image used to depict the characteristic activities of this month describes how women peel the taro and prepare the stone ovens to cook the taro corms. A second image describes a ceremonial exchange of taro between two different kin groups. More specifically, the image describes how the women of a visiting kin group walk up to a pile of taro which is offered to them and begin separating the taro stalks from the corms. They then are said to fill their coconut frond baskets with the corms.

F. Images of death, sorrow and the frustration of human effort: (asiwu) April, (anamak, alang) May, (anamak sadi) June, (alo) July, (alo sadi) August.

The return of the rainy season is heralded by the month which the Rauto call asiwu. This is the time of "high seas." Indeed, during asiwu the sea becomes violent, rushing onto the shore and appearing "to consume it" as "fire consumes a burning log." Heavy rains and violent offshore winds also mark this time. Characteristic descriptions of the month tell how the tall trees of the forest are uprooted by the strong winds, and of how they "land in the middle of the paths which connect the various Rauto hamlets."

In Rauto discourse the following two months,

anamak alang and anamak sadi, symbolize the frustration of human effort. Hamlet leaders told me that any endeavor which they directed their younger kinsmen to undertake during this time was almost bound to fail. Thus, appropriately anamak marks the end of the communal hunting and fishing expeditions of the dry season. Indeed, it is said that now the forest is empty of game, and the sea devoid of fish. It is also said that labor brings little return, that if taro is planted the corms, when harvested, will be extremely small. Thus, only small tracts of land are prepared for planting and gardening work in general begins to slow.

Anamak is also the time when families begin to leave the hamlet settlement to take up more or less permanent residence in their garden houses. During times of famine they may also take up residence at encampments where they will process sago. Not surprisingly then, images of social dispersal also inform Rauto descriptions of these two months. The two months are called "the time when people leave."

The final two months of the lunar calendar mark the nadir of the Rauto year. These are the months alo, and alo sadi, roughly July and August. Alo is the word which women keen at mortuary ceremony when they first come to view the body of a dead kinsman. They also cry out the word when

they say farewell to a kinsman or friend who is about to leave on a long journey. The word is closest to the English word "alas."

Rauto use the phrase "the death of a person" when they refer to alo. Indeed, I remember people telling me that alo was "the time of death" and that many people die during this month. Since the rainy season is sometimes a period of severe food shortage there is probably a factual basis to the Rauto observation about the character of alo. There is as well a general feeling that alo is an unlucky time, that it is for instance a period when people are prone to injury. I remember a hamlet leader telling me one day how, during alo, he would council his followers and helpers not to carry out heavy garden work since he feared that they would sustain an injury. He went on to say that alo was a time when young men and women acted like old people by sitting close to the cooking fires, and by rarely venturing out and being active.

Time, Person and the Imagery of the Lunar Calendar

The world described by the Rauto lunar calendar is a world of work and celebration. Effective productive ability is one of the highest values of this world since production renews and sustains life. The images of time expressed by

the calendar cannot be considered apart from this understanding of the importance of activity, and most especially of productive activity. Thus, we see that the Rauto use positive images to describe the intense ritual and productive actions of the ceremonial season. In contrast, the monsoon season is described through the use of negative images of inactivity.

The year can be said to begin when sustained social activity resumes toward the close of the rainy season. The tropes which describe the preparation of shell money, the ceremonial retrieval of the fishing and hunting nets, and of the trading canoes and the observation of the state of the taro gardens, paint a picture of a society which is reawakening from the slumber of the rainy season.

The similes which describe the ceremonial season which follows make it clear that Rauto believe the period which they call naulong to mark the crescendo of the yearly cycle. Naulong is a time of both increased ceremonial performance and intense physical labor. The intensity of experience during the ceremonial season - an intensity which is marked by the images of social visiting, ceremonial, hunting, and general social effervescence - is partly due to the belief that human agency is most effective during this time. The social renewal of naulong is thus a sign that the efficacy or agency of individuals has reached its apogee.

Both society and the individual survive because of effective agency. The similes which describe the activities for the months aiei and agri, make an implicit, or inchoate reference to this belief. At the very least they follow logically from it. The tropes first describe a harvest of taro and yams. They then describe a ceremonial exchange of taro between two different hamlet groups. In social life the ceremonial exchanges of taro described by the similes serve as proof of the productive abilities of groups and individuals. They are an expression of the competition which often marks the relationship between groups. Yet, the exchanges are also an expression of the principle of equivalence, a principle which forms the basis of social life - see pp 141-142. As groups satisfy old obligations and sustain new ones during these, and other types of exchanges, time itself is structured in rhythms of production and reciprocity. Thus, productive activity culminates in the social exchanges which accompany harvesting. In these exchanges people take a product of their agency - food - and uses it to forge or to renew social relationships.

The relationship between activity and the human metaphor is again recalled in the images which the Rauto use to describe the rainy season. Time can be said to "run down" as human efficacy or agency lessens during the months

which are called **alo**. The weakening of human agency and the lessening of individual and social activity are described through reference to the death of a person.

The lunar calendar then marks a number of structural transformations of time. Yet, these transformations are themselves metaphors for the continual waxing and waning of individual power, and of the intensity of social activity. The lunar calendar reveals that the temporal order is a reflection of the human order, that time is worthy of note and characterization because it refers to the nature and activity of persons.

Time, Agency and Environment

The Rauto also possess a second informal system of time reckoning. They use this system most especially to meet the need for allocating appropriate amounts of time and labor to gardening activities. In this second system, time is again characterized by allusion to human agency, and to productive activity. The system notes the flowering sequence of a number of trees of the rain forest. The flowering of one of the trees will sometimes be correlated with a specific lunar month. Thus, naulong sadi, the second month of the ceremonial season, is sometimes also called umdum amta alwos (the buds of the evodia have swelled and

flowered). The Rauto do not however usually identify a specific month by the flowering of a specific tree. The flowering cycle is more a mark of different agricultural and meteorological seasons, then it is of specific months. The Rauto monthly unit is thus exclusively lunar. The entire cycle is as follows:

- 1. Aiwop Pterocarpus indicus is flowering. The period from the end of August to October, when the rainy season begins to end. Hamlet leaders direct the cutting of new bush. Garden labor increases in intensity. The period is roughly correlated with the months aileng and adunglo.
- 2. Umdum evodia ellergana is flowering. The ceremonial season, roughly from January to the end of February or beginning of March. The most labor intensive time of the year. The largest gardens of the year are prepared for planting. People hurry to finish their taro planting before the flowers of umdum fall to the ground. The flowering of the tree is said to hurry the maturation of previously planted taro. It is also said to hurry the growth of taro planted during this period. Taro planted now will be, upon harvesting, of an impressive enough size to use for ceremonial exchange.

3. Vekiau - erythrina indica begins to shed its leaves, sprout red flowers, and then begin to grow its leaves back as the flower petals fall to the ground. Usually the period from June to August. The flowering cycle of the tree, and its loss and regrowth of leaves, usually takes place during the months called alo and anamak. The taro planted now will be small when harvested. Garden work is now curtailed. 51

The period of each flowering cycle both determines, and marks the intensity of labor which is carried out within the period. It is not surprising then that in metaphor the environment is spoken about as if it possessed both agency and directing power. Thus, the Rauto say that the flowering of a particular tree either encourages, or stops people from working in the gardens.

As I have noted above, Rauto also say that the flowering of a particular species either "hurries" or slows down the maturation of the taro crop and, as well determines the eventual size of the taro corms.

These statements become all the more interesting when we reconsider some of the metaphors which are used to describe the character of the environment during certain

months. The propitious months of Naulong, for instance, are characterized as a time when the environment is filled with energy and signs of activity. During naulong the landscape appears to be steeped in an imminence of power and agency. The metaphors which describe the unpropitious time of alo and anamak convey a perception that the environment, like the people who live in it, is unproductive and because of this, menacing to people. The environment itself then is spoken about in terms which take their meaning from ideas about the person. Its energies are thought to wax and wane as do the energies of people; its character is thought to change as it becomes either more, or less amenable to the plans and purposes of people. Its own "purpose" and power is discussed in human terms, in terms which refer to the human capability to work and to produce. 52

Time, Place and Agency

The concepts of agency and person which give meaning to Rauto discourse about the yearly cycle are part of a philosophy of time. As we have seen this philosophy is an expression of a system of concepts which define personhood in terms of the ability to shape the nature of the world by producing in it. In Rauto understanding the quality of time during the different phases of the yearly cycle is related

to this ability. Rauto concepts of place also reflect the belief that productive human agency shapes the nature of time. I refer most especially here to the concepts ano (place), and tanu (ancestral place). Yet, in discourse about these concepts a different though related aspect of the traditional Rauto understanding of time receives expression. Discourse about place has the character of narrative; it represents a culturally specific understanding of the progress of time, what Gould calls "time's arrow."

Rauto people use the term ano to describe the present, or the former place of residence of an extended family group (rip). Ano is also used to describe any place in the landscape which is named. Tanu in contrast would be glossed most accurately as ancestral place. That is, it is used as a term for a spot which was first cleared of forest, and then resided on by a kin group's apical ancestor. A family group may change residences many times during the course of its history, and thus may live in many different ano. Yet, a group will usually not claim to have more than one, or two ancestral places.

In discourse ano and tanu are both frequently metaphors for a community, or for the bonds of kinship.

Thus people will often be identified with the main place of residence of their kinship group, and will be referred to as the people of this place (e.g. oduk arawai ino - those of

the place called Arawai). The "origin spot" of a group will also be referred to as itar wate. Itar is the word for a family house (i.e. the house of a married couple) and is, in this case, a metaphor which expresses the idea of kinship relation. The concept is that all the residents of a place are descendants of "the same house"; that they can trace their descent back to an ancestral married pair. Wate is the word for both origin and base. The phrase itar wate (the base of the house) refers to the place of a group by alluding to both the bond of kinship, and to shared residence.

Goodale notes that the typical activities which are performed at the hamlet residence - forest clearing, house building, planting of food producing trees, ceremonial exchange - mark the spot as the consummate seat of productive social endeavor for the neighboring Kaulong (1985:231). The historical memory of the people who created the hamlet and sustained it through productive activity is literally inscribed on the Rauto hamlet grounds, and on the topography of the nearby forest. This memory is partly contained in the knowledge which Rauto possess of the personal names which are given to the food bearing trees which grow on and around the outskirts of the residence.

Many of the trees will bear the names of the people who planted them. These names will be remembered by elders,

though the people who planted the trees may have lived generations before. Besides providing a record of the activities of people and the usufruct rights of groups, the names also symbolize the identity and agency of people. This is seen most clearly in the symbolic significance which attaches most especially to the coconut palm.

Many of the coconut palms of the hamlet and surrounding forest have been planted in order to mark the birth and physical development of children. The planting of a sprouting coconut for a child usually takes place early in the child's second year of life. The coconut is planted along with a section of barkcloth which will have been used by the child's mother to wrap its head. The wrapping gives the skull an elongated shape which is considered to be beautiful by the Rauto. The palm which grows from the sprouting coconut will subsequently bear the name of the child and, indeed, will be seen to embody something of the child's strength, or soul stuff (ino nara). The strength and growth of the palm serve as metaphors for the maturation, and waxing strength of the person for whom it is named. Years, perhaps even decades afterward, when the palm has matured, one of its coconuts will be planted by its human namesake to mark the birth and development of one of his own children. The names and the descent of the hamlet's coconut palms sometimes serve as well then as a genealogy

for the residents of the hamlet.

Human agency is of course not exercised solely on the hamlet grounds. Old garden sites and sago camps, former hamlet sites, places in the forest where someone has planted a breadfruit, or canarium tree, all bear the imprint of human activity. These places are named and their names provide a record of human movement over the land over time. Elders know hundreds of these place names. As they recounted these names to me they spoke of the people who had lived on the land before them; sometimes they spoke as well of the events and activities which had given a place its name. As I listened, I realized that this recitation of place names had the quality of a social, or historical narrative. The Rauto use an image which is at once a metaphor and part of a memory system to help them to recite the names of the places of the landscape accurately. This image depicts the landscape as a series of paths which lead to and from former or current places of residence or activity. To remember the names of these sites elders said that they "had to walk" along the various paths. And, indeed as I sat with the elders in the men's ceremonial house, the sequence of place names was recited to me as if the elders were taking part in a journey, or imaginary walk through the many paths of the land. Elders would name a place, tell me its "story", and then say that they would now "walk on to the next place," and tell me its "story."

Later, when I went to view a number of these sites for

myself I found that many had no actual paths leading up to

them, although perhaps they had in the past. In any event

the paths mentioned by the elders were part of a mental map

of the landscape which was at once a part of geographical

and historical knowledge.⁵³

There is, I feel, a relationship between the image which the Rauto use to describe their land and a major theme of Rauto expressive life. In expressive culture (e.g. metaphor and mythology) the theme of a journey through the landscape is often a symbol for skillfulness, wisdom and/or productive accomplishment. In a trope for instance, it is said that the speech of a wise and persuasive person "goes around the landscape, visiting all the named places of the land." As I have mentioned in a previous chapter, the reference to the many "places" of the landscape is an allusion to the points or thoughts conveyed by a person's speech. Someone whose speaking and thinking are considered to be neither wise or persuasive is someone who is unable to make either his speech, or his thoughts "go around all of the landscape." The speech of such a person is said only to go a short distance around the land, and to miss stopping off at many essential places. In other words, this person sees only very few of the many facets of a given subject.

A number of Rauto myths are given a narrative structure by this same metaphor of a journey through the landscape. One sees this most especially in stories which tell of the creative activities of culture heroes (oklo wate). Often in these stories a culture hero will travel through the land (always from east to west, thus following the course of the sun), and will stop at various places along his, or her route. Each place which is visited by the hero subsequently becomes associated with one of the creative acts which he performs on it, or with an event which occurs while he visits the place. I have presented one of these myths on page 83; this is the story of the origins of taro magic. In the myth the demi-gods Tuktuk and his sister walk westward together singing the aurang for taro, and planting their magical bundles. In another myth the demi-gods Aiung and his sister travel westward along the coast and continually cut little islands off from the mainland, thus improving the fishing grounds of various groups. Like the demi-god Tuktuk, Aiung only provides benefit to the groups which he favors. That is, he provides islands for those groups which call out "civily" to him and his sister during the course of their journey.

One of the points which is made by the taro myth especially is that the creative activities of the culture heroes literally inscribe their identity onto the face of

the land. The second point which is made is that the places which are identified with the acts of these beings are themselves symbols of productive accomplishment. In the taro myth the culture heroes travel from place to place. planting their magical bundles of ginger, coleus and lemon grass on the land of the groups which they favor. journeying, and the ritual activity of the heroes renews the fertility of the land. The knowledge which is given to the two fatherless - hence powerless - boys marks the transmission of ritual and productive ability from the divine to the human realm. The myth suggests that the responsibility to renew the fertility of the land now falls on the shoulders of people. By preparing gardens, and by performing the proper rites of production on them, people imitate the actions of the culture heroes. This point is made explicit in the myth when the demi-god tuktuk has the young boy take his place as he entrusts his knowledge of taro magic to him. To this day Rauto garden magicians are thought to be the heirs of the culture hero and his young apprentice. By moving over the land in order to cut the forest and to prepare gardens people as well take part in a journey of productive accomplishment.

For people, the investment of self in the places of the land through productive activity - e.g. the planting and cultivation of trees, the building of a hamlet residence,

the preparation of gardens - is, as I have argued, part of a process which establishes an aspect of social and personal identity. The "humanization" and improvement, in terms of productive potential, of the land which results from this process is part of the historical accomplishment of the Rauto people. The anthropomorphic symbolism which attaches to the places of the land marks this historical accomplishment. It also relates the narrative of time to the rhythms of human activity, and to the rhythms of the human life cycle. In this sense it joins time's cycle to time's arrow. I say this because in Rauto understanding human agency has the quality of a recurrent restorative Indeed elders told me that land which has had gardens planted on it previously is more fertile than is the land which lies underneath virgin timber. The head garden magician of Wasum said that he knew that land which he had previously worked his magic on, and which was not "cluttered" with huge trees was "soft", "moist", and fertile. He considered previously unused garden land to be "too tight" and hard, and "too dry" to yield a satisfactory taro crop. When I suggested, perhaps somewhat insensitively and obtusely, that the exact opposite was in fact the case; that virgin land would yield a larger crop, he responded as if he did not know what I was talking about. My way of thinking about land use and soil fertility was foreign to

him.

Thus, though people may eventually perish, the accumulative effect of their productive work and their ritual activities and songs, contributes to the preparation of a fertile and thus suitable abode for human life.

Ancestral Place, Time and the Rites of Death

Adult Rauto can name up to six generations of their They recognize that others lived before the first of these generations, but they retain no memory of them. Rauto designate those whose lives were lived in the time which exceeds the grasp of historical memory, ausen. They refer to the time of ausen - the eternity of the past by using a metaphor which describes the sea breaking on the shore without end, and drawing into itself the memory of those who lived and died, as if they were the sands of the shore. The metaphor is only one of a number of sayings which indicate that the Rauto have a keen perception of their own mortality. Rauto perceive allusions to their mortality in the gloom and inactivity of the time which they call alo; they perceive an allusion to it in the sight of an abandoned hamlet residence whose dancing plaza is overrun with forest grasses and shrubs. 54 Most of all, however, evidence of mortality is provided by the presence of the

dead. To this day the ancestral places (tanu) of the "bush" Rauto, Gimi, and Kaulong house the skulls and bones of the dead. Yet, for the Rauto the bones of the dead, and the tanu which house them symbolize the power of the living, rather than of the dead, and death itself provides an opportunity for these people to celebrate principles which sustain life. The reason I wish to discuss the rites for the dead here is that they express the understanding that historical time consists in the continuity of human productive effort. The tanu, or ancestral place is literally a theatre where this understanding of the nature of time is expressed; indeed it is performed there.

After the trials and vicissitudes of life people should ideally be buried in the ground of their ramage group's tanu. When people are buried in their tanu it is said that they are "returning to their origin place" and are "joining their ancestors." The rites and the pig killings which take place during, and just after burial are performed out of remembrance for the newly dead. Yet, they also serve as a form of remembrance for the ancestors. Indeed, the initial rites for the dead are said to be performed before and for "the eyes of the ancestors" (timulmul pe amtasek).

Just after a person's death a number of messengers will leave the tanu to spread word of the death. The messengers will travel to the residences of kinsmen. When

they meet these kinsmen and speak of the death they will take a fathom of shell money from their coconut frond baskets and will hold it out in front of them. The showing of the shell money is said to confirm the truth of the messenger's statement. Its real import, however, is to express the idea that the life of a person has meaning and value. To announce someone's death without showing a valuable is to belittle the life, and the death of this person. The Rauto say that the death of a dog or a pig can be announced without an accompanying sign. The death of a person requires something more.

Those who receive word of the death will then come to mourn the body of their kinsman.

As in many other Melanesian societies, so in that of the Rauto, death initiates an elaborate cycle of ceremonial exchange and of ritual activity. The acts of exchange and of rite especially involve the reaffirmation of a relationship between the patrikin and the matrikin of the deceased. Thus, I was often told that the death of a person means, among many other things, that the matrikin must receive their compensation pay (ulu). As each group of kin of the matriline arrives they are given pearl shell valuables and food. These kin then give back a smaller number of valuables to the patrikin to compensate these people for the energy and resources they have expended

looking after the deceased just prior to his death, and for preparing for the rites of death. The difference in the amount of gift and counter gift - which is the profit realized by the kin of the matriline (ingen ino) - is what is properly called ulu. The ulu is offered as compensation for the grief which the matrikin feel and demonstrate by crying when they come to view the body. The pay is also a final recognition that the matriline was responsible for giving issue to the deceased.

As the social relationships between the different ramages are invoked through this series of exchanges some of the resources which the deceased used to form relationships during life are destroyed. Thus, a number of his taro stalks are cut with a knife and ruined; some of his coconut palms are cut down, and sections of the fishing and hunting nets which he used in life are torn. Also, the house which he lived and died in is destroyed. If he is a bigman, the men's ceremonial house which was built and presided over by him is taken down. In pre-pacification days his wife and perhaps, if his family did not wish to look after them, his small children would be put into the grave with him.

While the exchanges of death reaffirm the meaningfulness of time by relating a moment in the individual's life to a recurrent event in the life of a society, the destructive actions which precede burial are an

almost vengeful representation of the narrative of time. These acts express the conviction that time is a destroyer. They refer to how time sunders relationships between people, how it destroys many of the things which are a product of the labor of a person, how it appears to obliterate personal history. However, the meaninglessness of the narrative of time is denied for a second time in the rituals of secondary burial. During these events time is once again given meaning through human action.

Time, Agency, and the Dance for the Dead

The series of destructive acts which are performed before burial appear as a symbolic attempt to erase the mark which the agency of a person has made on the world. There is also the sense then that the things which are destroyed are manifestations of the person's being. Their destruction represents a perception that they draw their power from the life of the individual, and that they should perish with that life. Yet, most of the possessions of a person will survive his death. His shells and heirlooms are taken by his sons or by other close patrikin. Many of his fruit and palm trees - resources which bear his name - remain to be used by both matrikin and patrikin. His children remain "to take his place" and his bones remain to be honored by the

individuals who benefit from the resources which were left to them by him, resources which symbolize the power of human agency to sustain life.

The first phase of the rites of death are completed about a week after the burial. 55 In a gathering before the grave site the patrikin of the deceased exchange baskets of food with his matrikin and with his affines. A small fire is then built on the grave mound and a piece of pork is thrown into the fire and is consumed by it. This is done so that the dead person can smell and savor the aroma of burning pork for a last time. My informants also told me that the fire on the grave serves to dissipate the pollution which emanates from the site. The rite and food exchange will also mark the end of a prohibition on garden work for the close kin of the deceased. Prior to the enactment of the rite the smell (malmal) of death is said to cling to the bodies of these kin - this smell is thought to be injurious to the garden crop. A whole series of mourning prohibitions do, however, extend well beyond this time. 56

There are three main phases to the rites of secondary burial which follow. The first of these follows closely upon the exhumation of the skeleton. The exhumation itself is performed some four to six months after the initial burial. During it the skull, jawbone, ulna, and hand bones are unearthed by three men who are paid

handsomely for their efforts. They clean whatever flesh remains on the skeleton and then bring the bones out of the hamlet and into the forest. The men will hang the bones on the forked branches of a tree which the Rauto call sengaseng. When the pollution which emanates from the skeleton is thought to have lessened the bones are brought back into the hamlet and are installed in a newly built men's house. A song festival is then held to mark the introduction of the bones into the men's house.

For most of the festival the genre of song called agresket is sung and danced (for a description see pp 115-It is only toward the middle of the night that the dance for the dead is performed. The beginning of the dance is signaled when two men walk to the head of the dancing plaza where the bones of the dead are placed, hanging from the branches of the sengaseng. The men take the jaw and the hand bones from the tree. One will take charge of the jaw, the other the bones of the hand. Each places a bone in the hollow of a pearl shell. They then take the pearl shells into their hands and perform the dance for the dead. two dance from one end of the plaza to the other while holding the pearl shells and the bones out in front of them. The women of the matriline meanwhile array themselves on either side of the dancers' paths and wave crotons and herbs at the bones as the dancers go past. The dancers will stop

periodically and will return the bones to the branches of the sengaseng. At this point the agresket will begin again and the dancers will rest at a spot close to the tree where the bones hang. They repeat the dance for the dead a number of times during the night. As the dawn begins to break the bones are returned to the ceremonial house and the festival ends, as it began, with the warriors chant (agresket). The dance for the dead may be repeated a number of times in the coming weeks or years. Whether it is or not greatly depends on the amount of resources which are possessed by the family which sponsors the ceremonial.

The major event of the cycle occurs when the bones are painted with red ocher. This may take place as many as ten or fifteen years after exhumation. Those who paint the bones also put a streak of the red ocher across their chests. A streak of red is also placed on the chests of the men who are chosen to dance with the bones. The paint is said to be suffused with the spirit of the dead. A number of people said that after painting themselves with the ocher they could feel the spirit of the dead person come upon them.

During the course of the song festival the painted dancers carry the spirit of the dead person on their bodies, and in the bones which they hold. As Leenhardt might say, they participate in the time and the being of the dead.

Close kin of the dead will sometimes weep as they think back to the life which is symbolized by and contained in the bones and on the body of the dancers. For a moment the dancer creates an image of the dead person. After this ceremony some of the matrikin may take the bones back to their own hamlet in order to look after them and to be close to them. They will however eventually be returned to the home village or hamlet and, in a final ceremony, reburied.

The bones of the dead symbolize the past agency of the deceased. Thus, the jawbone is honored because it represents the voice of a person; a voice which spoke taro magic, strong speech, and which once spoke of giving gifts of taro to others. The hands are celebrated because they gave gifts of food to others and because they produced and handled food. The dances for the dead thus celebrate a principle - human agency - which gives the narrative of a person's life meaning for himself, and for others. The dances are a denial that time simply destroys ideals of person and agency. They affirm that these ideals endure.

The cycle of ceremonies for the dead also celebrates the social relationships which sustained the individual economically and spiritually in life and which were in turn sustained by the individual's own activity. The dances especially mark the culturally important relationship between a person and his matrikin. The concept of the

person as the embodiment of agency which is literally performed during the dance for the dead allows the Rauto to grasp the element of value in, and the cyclical aspect of, what Stephen Gould calls "deep time." The concept emphasizes the common accomplishment of different generations. It thus affirms the enduring element of value in the time of an individual's life and death, as well as in the life and death of generations. Yet, it also establishes a concept of uniqueness for specific acts and specific lives, especially for the lives of people of productive accomplishment. It mediates the relationship between time's arrow and time's cycle.⁵⁸

Conclusion

Maurice Leenhardt's ethnographic encounter with the people of New Caledonia was marked by his sustained attempt to understand notions of the person, and of being. studies of language, myth, and ritual he represented the New Caledonian concept of being through a discussion of the meaning of do kamo - a term which he alternately translated as person, personage, or "the living one" (24). Speech, or "word" was the manifestation of do kamo; it was the manifestation of being. It was also a mode of inventing or reinventing social tradition; of establishing relationships with groups and individuals; of establishing a relationship of participation with the land; of establishing the cycles and rhythms of exchange, and of time itself. When considered together, do kamo and word - the structure of the person, and its form of manifestation in the world outlined a concept of being.

Leenhardt's fundamental insight about the relationship between "speech" and the structures of the person lies at the heart of my interpretation of Rauto

religious phenomenology, and of its relationship to person concepts. For the Rauto, as for the New Caledonians of Leenhardt's time, speech (amala) and song are manifestations of being which create the moral and physical preconditions for social and for individual life. Here I refer to the Rauto understanding of amala and of song as manifestations of power and of person. The Rauto do not articulate the idea that "exchanges" or other economic or political acts are also speech, or "word". They do, however, recognize that such acts frequently have a power which is equal to the power of speech and of song.

The analysis which I have carried out in the thesis centers around events - such as the rituals in which aurang is performed - during which men and women "display" their speech. Thus, chapter II outlines the importance of concepts of speech, and of human agency in giving form and meaning to everyday interaction. Chapter III discusses traditional Rauto ideas about the political significance and effects of the speech of leaders. Chapter IV discusses the cultural and moral significance which the ritual songs of women, and of men take on during rites of initiation.

Chapter V discusses Rauto notions of the power of ritual song and speech to secure the growth of food, and thus to nurture life. The end of chapter VI describes how the celebration of the principles of speech and human agency

during mortuary ritual, mediates Rauto concepts of time as cycle, and as narrative.

I do not claim that the thesis is an exhaustive study of either Rauto symbolic forms, or of concepts and representations of the person. If I had wished to represent such a study I would have included chapters on the representation of person concepts in myth, in life history narratives, and in discourse about emotion. In concentrating directly on events during which the formal discourse of ritual song or speech is used I attempt to clarify the symbolic relationship which exists between religious phenomenology and concepts of agency. My conclusion, that in many contexts action, speech, and person are not differentiated resonates with Leenhardt's argument about New Caledonian concepts of the person (Clifford:215).

I have not only established this notion through a discussion of the contexts in which formal speech is used. I have also shown how Rauto interpretations of these contexts are embedded in key metaphors. The metaphors have provided me with a way of portraying both "a style of action and of understanding" (Rosaldo 1980:22). In my analysis of these evaluative speech forms I have shown that the Rauto have many different ways of talking about, and of conceptualizing the person. I have thus indicated that their lives are not governed by a single monolithic ideology

and that their moral imagination consistently focuses on dilemmas which arise out of their many theories and constructions of the person. It is in expressing this insight that the thesis makes, I feel, a number of contributions. One of these is to extend the discussion which Melanesianists have recently been carrying out, about questions of "order" and of "disorder," of both the epistemological and of the social kind (Brunton 1980:112-128; Errington 1986:99-117; Jorgensen 1988b; Robbins 1988).

I would like here to substitute the terms participation and entropy for the terms order, and disorder. I do so because participation and entropy indicate the idea of process, as well as describe an actual physical state. Order and disorder are simple descriptive terms which appear, as has often been said, not to be particularly useful in explaining either Melanesian expressivity, or Melanesian social arrangements. I believe that much of Melanesian social and cultural life can be seen as a dialogue - carried out daily through social and individual action - between a principle of participation, and a principle of entropy or dissolution. Let me be more specific here.

The vast literature on ceremonial exchange and on ritual in Melanesia, reveals the enormous effort which is expended by people in preparing for and carrying out

ceremonies of symbolic and social regeneration (see
Strathern 1971; Weiner 1976; Herdt 1982 et. al.). What
these ceremonies reconstitute or define is not "social
order," whatever that may be for Melanesians; it is persons.
The Melanesian work ethic - an ethic which would, as Dan
Jorgensen writes "put Weber's Protestants to shame"
(1988b:24) is actually directed toward, and prompts the
establishment of participatory relationships between
persons; between groups; between person and land. In
establishing such relationships these activities express a
view that persons' lives are a reflection of the lives,
actions and beliefs of others; that life is "lived plurally"
(Clifford 1982:X).

Yet we also know that Melanesians, like ourselves, possess beliefs and values and perform actions which show a singular unconcern with establishing "participatory" relationships between people, or even with maintaining "sociality". We also know that frequently in Melanesian societies persons who possess attributes and powers which can disrupt sociality and thus sever relationships, and which can subvert the general "order" of things are evaluated positively as "men or women of power" (see Chowning 1987:171; White 1985:346; Read 1959:427). Indeed, the possession of disruptive power is sometimes an integral part of the very definition of an influential person. It is

just here in Melanesian constructions of ideals of character, of power and of person, that we can begin to discern the existential dilemmas as well as the obvious power and paradox of Melanesian life ways. By listening to Melanesian discourses about persons, we can begin to decipher a continual dialogue between dynamically related principles of social and cultural life: the principle of participation, and of entropy.

Much of Rauto ritual life, and many of the metaphors and songs of this people are both part of an ongoing dialogue with, and a constitution of, the "order" of things. I have argued that this dialogue is also about persons. I have implied that the various theories and constructions of the person which are expressed by it sometimes "pull the rug out from each other" (Jorgensen 1988b) in ways which illuminate an aspect of the Rauto moral universe. It is significant that this dialogue is carried out, in part, through metaphor, since we know that a metaphor by definition pulls the rug out from or obviates "a taken for granted meaning by dissolving it into something else in an illuminating way" (Wagner 1978:32).

In the process of obviating a number of realities
Rauto metaphors reveal the complexity of Rauto belief.
Thus, the metaphors which I have written about in Chapter
III associate leaders with order, social continuity and law,

and then obviate such assertions by associating them with the entropic processes which are represented by warfare, illegitimate sorcery practices and social rivalry. Further, these symbolic obviations are expressed through the portrayal of events which serve as the most dramatic foci of cultural and social life. These events are evoked through verbal images which illuminate aspects of the relationship between entropy and sociality in a way which shows the effect which this relationship has on an overall style of social living.

images of women which are evoked by the acts of the menstrual ritual are part of a dialogue about participation, and ideas of "disruptive power." The ritual portrays women as possessors of qualities and powers (symbolized and embodied by their menstrual blood) which are destructive and which therefore must be controlled or ritually ordered. Yet the ritual obviates this idea by ultimately portraying women as exemplars of key principles of moral life. The ritual also associates women with the principles of growth and life which are necessary for the spiritual and physical creation and maintenance of persons.

These and many other formal expressions of paradox which I have outlined in the thesis are often mediated by a particular understanding of speech - the manifestation of

being in the world. Thus in the menstrual ceremony, ritual, speech, and song form a relationship of identity, or of participation between different generations of women. Yet, the speech of "bigwomen," like that of bigmen - though to a lesser degree - can also have a disruptive power which is feared. Indeed, if speech creates or prompts the experience of participation for Rauto people, it can just as surely prompt entropy or dissolution. The dialectic between these two aspects of speech is itself an integral part of the manifestation of personal being in the world. That is, it is an integral part of many forms of cultural and personal expression. It is both the leitmotif and the expression of personhood.

In making this final observation I restate

Leenhardt's seminal insight that a particular attitude

toward language forms the core of much of the cultural and

social life of Melanesia. Leenhardt perceived that speech

was one of the central metaphors of New Caledonian culture.

By understanding the meaning of this concept for the New

Caledonian, Leenhardt also hoped to come to an understanding

of other aspects of belief and practice. For instance his

discussions of aesthetics, of history, and of tradition and

mythic landscape owe much to his conception of parole, or

word (see Clifford 1982:208-212). By coming to terms with

the meaning of the metaphor of speech, Leenhardt sought to

portray a Melanesian philosophy of person, and of expressivity.

Here the various understandings of the power of speech expressed by peoples such as the Trobrianders, (see Tambiah 1968:175-206; Weiner 1986:161-191; the Daribi (see Wagner 1978:55-63) the New Caledonians, and the Rauto might provide us with some clues as to how we could begin to talk about a "Melanesian" philosophy of the relationship between speech and person. This thesis is meant to be a contribution to, and an impetus to this endeavor.

<u>Notes</u>

- 1. Ngong is a possessive suffix which is used in terms for male ego's female cross-cousin. The term indicates the sense of possessiveness and playful affection which a man is permitted to feel and demonstrate for this relation. A man is also permitted to have what could be called a joking relationship with his male cross-cousin (vita). In contrast, he should not be seen speaking alone or laughing with either his own brother or sister. Relationships between one-blood cousins though marked by a degree of mutual support should also be rather circumspect in nature.
- 2. Ideally, a man should also teach his sister's son his best magical spells. He is required by custom to do this whereas he does not have to instruct his own son in ritual and magic.
- 3. Reciprocally, sister will also be an important cosponsor of and a key performer during the achievement ceremonies and the ceremonies of the life cycle which are held for the children of her brother. Sister is usually assisted in her ritual duties to brother's children by her own and by the children's matrikin. Often these are also sister's affinal relations. That is, they often belong to

the group which sister has married into, which is - because of the preferred strategy of MMBSS marriage - often the natal group of her mother.

- 4. In discourse, amala is distinguished from kanes, a word which has more of the sense of the English term "talk". To talk about something is kanes pe angan.
- 5. Jorgensen (1988) points out that the conception of ritual symbolism and knowledge as political ideology looses force when we take into consideration the secrecy and paradox which often distinguishes knowledge and ritual systems in New Guinea.
- 6. In religious discourse anine has a number of different meanings. First, anine is the Rauto word for ghost, an entity which is considered the surviving component of an individual's personality. Anine is also the word for an aspect of the person which is thought to be capable of leaving the body during sleep. Rauto sometime say that dreaming results from the anine leaving the body and walking about on a round of adventures.

The word anine is also used in a figurative sense to express surprise at the unexpected appearance of a person.

Thus if I surprised someone by unexpectedly appearing for an

interview, I would sometimes be asked if I was an anine or if I was "keneinom" or substance (ko aninom o ko keneinom?).

- 7. The two men who made this statement to me were, however, concerned that their culture (lai; in tok pisin, kastom) was "being lost." They were both middle aged and had seen a good deal of the outside world. They perceived that the values of that world were incompatible with some of the values of traditional Rauto life.
- 8. I have chosen to translate **momso** as heart for reasons of style. However, the word is actually the name for the liver.
- 9. In his 1982 work Clifford notes how Leenhardt objected to the use of the word mystical in Levy-Bruhl's descriptions of the mentality of traditioal peoples (see pp 202-207). Leenhardt preferred to use the word mythic. For Leenhardt mythic consciousness "circumscribed immediate emotional experiences" in ways "that discursive language could not express" (Clifford 1981:202). This type of consciousness "grasps complex emotional states through juxtaposed image" (204). These images "form a language of emotions" (204). Where Leenhardt came to perceive mythic consciousness as representing a type of discourse about and understanding of the world which was held in certain contexts by western

peoples as well as by Melanesians, Levy-Bruhl emphasized that the "primitive" and the "modern" mentality were separated by a vast divide. Neither did he perceive, as did Leenhardt, the positive emotional, and social benefits which accrued to the individual who lived within and through what Leenhardt came to call mythic consciousness. Levy-Bruhl often spoke as if the "primitive mentality" simply confused various concepts and categories.

I use the term mythic in my own description in order to emphasize that the Rauto concept of momso is given meaning by a language of emotion; a language which describes experience according to the assumptions of a different system of belief. Also, I use the term because the experience of participation which takes place during initiation rite and during Rauto rituals of production is partly explained by beliefs about the heart. This experience is primarily an emotional experience, during which a person invests his being in others.

- 10. Goodale notes that for the neighboring Kaulong, the development of the enu is thought to be related to the development of certain physical characteristics (1980:127). She translates enu as self.
- 11. Todd (1935:94) also notes that this was a common practice of the Kaul.

- 12. See Strathern (1975a:347-56) for a discussion of Melpa ideas of shame and skin. See also Read (1955:232-282).
- 13. Amune is also the Rauto word for mark, and for footprint (kamla amune).
- 14. The requests of overly importunate people were only rarely turned down by their kinsmen. I frequently saw people give away some very valuable things simply because they were asked for them by kin. It was rather frustrating for me to see the gifts which I had given to friends and key informants being taken from them in this way. It became apparent to me rather quickly that Rauto concepts of giving and receiving were rather different from my own. People often said that they were ashamed to turn down a direct request, especially for food. In order to avoid such requests people would most often try to keep their possessions out of the sight of others.
- 15. In considering this, I recalled the distinctionn between Kant's and Aristotle's notion of "the good man." Kant himself pointed out (1964:13) that for the Greeks a primary moral question was, "what is human excellence" (arete). Kant's primary question in contrast was what quality makes an action or a person good in an absolute

moral sense? His answer to this question was "a good will."

"The good will is not good because of what it effects or accomplishes"; "it is good only because of its willing, i.e., it is good of itself" (1969:13). Rauto certainly understand the concept of good will. However, in their metaphors, rituals, and everyday actions, they celebrate agency or effectiveness more than they celebrate the concept of good will. The value of "effectiveness" is a more integral part of their definition of the person and of the "excellent man" than is the concept of good will.

- 16. Schiefflin notes how assertiveness is also a highly valued personal quality and defining aspect of Kaluli male identity (1976:118). For the Rauto, it is as well an important aspect of female identity. Indeed, women are encouraged, from an early age to act aggressively toward boys and men. They, by and large, take the initiative in courtship, often pursuing their chosen men with sticks (called rege) if the men should prove to be, initially unwilling. Women's ceremonial and economic life is also marked by a certain "assertiveness" see Chapter IV.
- 17. I follow Kirkpatrick and many others here in viewing personhood as being defined by socially valued "images of humanity" (1985:10). I discuss Rauto concepts of

self, the personal experiential aspect of human beings, in Chapter II and in a separate paper (see 1988).

- 18. These metaphors are a reflection of men's control over the political life of Rauto society. In Chapter IV, and in a separate paper (1988c), I consider the public discourse of Rauto women. One aspect of this discourse is represented by a number of songs which are sung by senior women to young girls during the woman's puberty rite. The songs highlight the role which senior women play in forming the social and moral identity of children and in reproducing the moral structures of social life.
- 19. Strong speech is speech which either has interpretive power, that is it says something in a way which is considered to be profound, or it has sufficient persuasive power to inspire people to act in what is considered to be a socially positive way.
- 20. According to Bloch formal speech is a restricted code of communication since it limits the expressive potential of language. That is, it uses only stock phrases and stereotypical verbal images to convey its message. By relating a current and specific event to the conservative meaning of these images, formal speech "merges" past with present, and inhibits the utterance of speech which would

describe specific events - and indeed the nature of things - accurately.

One could argue just as easily that proverbs and metaphors do say something about living cultural realities. Indeed a number of writers argue that culture consists of a system of related metaphors, and that it is primarily metaphors which gives form and cogency to cultural experience (Wagner 1986:1-13; Lakoff and Johnson 1980:3-9; Dening 1980:86-94).

- 21. Bourdieu essentially defines traditional societies as societies in which there is only one socially recognized way of speaking of and thinking about the world (1977:164).
- 22. Of course, many writers have questioned the idea that practical economic action and communication can be considered apart from ethics, religion and world view (Sahlins 1976; Dumont 1977; Weber 1978:576-634).
- 23. Though it is a formal and named genre of speech, amala wauluke is rarely used during oratory or other types of political discussion. My informants made it clear to me that the tropes had no function. They looked on them as commentary rather than as instrument.
- 24. The word adepdep means preeminent, or leading

bigman. A hamlet, or a kin group leader with less influence is called in contrast simply elder brother (towro). Men of influence who are not however leaders, are called aieng amto ino. The phrase translates as "the adolescents belonging to the inside of a place." The phrase is usually used as a euphemism for elder. It can however be used to describe a middle aged man who aspires to leadership, yet who is clearly subordinate to other men.

- 25. Prominent or big-women cultivate trade partnerships as do men. They are also skilled in the rules of ceremonial exchange and they are viewed as important co-sponsors of ceremonial events.
- 26. All the groups of southwest New Britain from the Arawe islands in the west, to Gasmata in the east, refer to themselves as Arawe.
- 27. It was my observation, however, that the most effective hunters were young married men from 25 to 35 years of age.
- 28. Rauto metaphoric discourse about dogs appears to be essentially similar to that of the Homeric Greeks. In both these discourses the dog appears as "a piece of unruly nature next to man or within him" (Redfield 1975:194). In both Rauto and Greek metaphors the dog is a symbol of the

warrior's predatory "instinct" (193). Finally, in both forms of discourse "the dog is the emblem of the imperfectly socialized" (195).

- 29. I follow Redfield here in speaking of community as a "structure of cooperation," and at least sometimes resolvable conflict (1975: 187).
- 30. Rauto consider the unjustified exercise of sorcery powers to reflect what they call bad way or bad manner (lai sulu). Although their attitudes about sorcery have obviously been shaped to a degree by mission teaching, the Rauto distinction between the "legitimate" and the unjustified, insidious use of sorcery powers is, as far as I could tell, traditional. Sorcery is considered an important weapon of social control for leaders; it helps them punish thieves, or wrongdoers in general. There is, however, another aspect to the Rauto understanding of the concept. When sorcery is perceived as being practiced for pecuniary gain, or to attain an obvious political advantage over people, or to satisfy a desire for revenge because of a perceived slight, it is referred to as a bad thing (angan soulu); as a practice which is morally repugnant.
- 31. The dual aspect of a headman's social persona was

forcibly brought home to me when a man conveyed a traditional "story" to me about the nature and actions of leaders. The story tells of what is alleged to be typical behavior of a leader after someone he has sorcerized has died. It is said that the adepdep will always attend the mortuary ceremony of his victim and while doing so will show much solicitude to the dead man's kin. Ideally he should throw himself upon the body and wail and weep until he is exhausted. Afterward, however, he is said to dress up in his best finery - barkcloth, curved pigs' tusks ornament, stone and shell valuables, and his dog's teeth necklaces. He is said to go to a deserted spot in the rainforest and there to rejoice in the death of his victim by dancing up and down and generally whooping it up by himself. fable conveys a rather cynical view of the nature of leaders.

- 32. Also, unlike the Kaulong and Seng Seng, the Rauto are <u>intensive</u> horticulturalists. Over 85% of their subsistence is gotten from their garden crops.
- 33. A number of informants said that this was a traditional practice. If this is true it indicates that Rauto have always had a rather more relaxed attitude toward menstrual blood than have the neighboring Kaulong (see Goodale 1980:131). I cannot, however, discount the

possibility that missionization has significantly altered practices such as female initiation, which are given meaning by beliefs about menstrual blood.

- 34. Gell makes a similar observation about why the color red symbolizes increase and growth among the Umeda (see Gell 1975:327).
- 35. Apparently this idea extends throughout this culture area (see Goodale 1985:233).
- 36. The word apai is also used to refer to a first born daughter, or a woman in seclusion.
- 37. The myth tells of the adventures of a last born child who has like many another character in Rauto myth lost his father. Being physically unable to provide as much for his mother as his older brother, he decides to compete with the brother by inventing a long bamboo blow gun. His invention subsequently becomes a great success. Everyone wishes to borrow it to shoot birds and flying foxes. The hero keeps the invention hidden on a small island just off the coast. One day a bigman persuades the boy to take him to the island and show him the blowgun. The bigman steals the invention and leaves the boy stranded on the island. The boy then fashions a small raft and launches himself toward the shore. As he drifts in, a shark attacks his

raft, chewing bits of it off and then, finally, bits of the boys body. Finally, only his head is left bobbing on the waves and singing for his elder brother.

The brother spears the head as it comes close to shore. The head tells his brother to plant him near the plaza of their mother's house so that the nuts of the coconut palm will fall close to her. Thus could the younger brother continue to provide for his family.

- 38. One type of alul is also used to settle disputes over land. This is the stone valuable called mokmok (eye pupil). The mokmok stones are the only valuables whose origins are accounted for by myth. They are said to have been fashioned by a culture hero who hid them in specific parts of the forest. They are said to have been discovered by the people who first cleared a specific tract of rain forest. Henceforth the mokmok served to symbolize a group's rights to particular plots of land. Thus, they anchor a social group to a particular territory.
- 39. Women receive the major portion of the brideprice which is offered for their daughters. However, they then must redistribute much of this to members of their own cognatic descent group.
- 40. The custom of secluding a daughter was borrowed from

the Kilenge, a group who reside on the far western end of the island of New Britain. The Rauto gave up the custom because they said the cost of performing it was too great for them.

- 41. Another elaborate ceremony is performed when a first born daughter is brought by her parents to the place of her mother's consanguinal kin. As in the rite of female initiation, during the ceremony the girl is bedecked with finery and with "woman's wealth." The daughter of a bigman is also bedecked with these items when she is brought to the hamlet of her husband just prior to the exchange of her brideprice see pp 29-31 of this chapter.
- 42. Women who have their teeth blackened do not go into seclusion with male initiates during this period. Rather, they stay isolated in their parents' homes.
- 43. I must qualify this remark with the statement I did not see a performance of male initiation during my period of fieldwork. One was held during this time in a neighboring village, however I found out about it only after it was performed. There may indeed be much more to the ritual than my informants led me to believe.
- 44. Joel Robbins (1988) provides a perceptive discussion

of why Melanesian gardens sometimes symbolize people's deep desire to "keep to themselves."

- 45. Even those belonging to the sanger ino's faction sometimes fear his taro sorcery. This is especially the case for those who are not close kin of the sanger ino and who have entered into disagreement with him.
- 46. One of the groups which was supposed to participate in the aurang which I saw in March 1986, declined at the last moment to take part in the ritual, because they feared that their taro would be sorcerized by the sanger ino.
- 47. This phrase is, of course, from Leenhardt's book <u>Do</u>

 <u>Kamo</u>. It is offered in the context of a discussion of the concept of **parole** (pp 137).
- Wilmuk. After the planting of the taro he is said to leave his watery home and enter the garden. Once there he attempts to prompt the growth of the taro. The second spirit is the demi-god Tuktuk. In myth he is the originator of Rauto gardening magic.
- 49. In his 1988 work Gould shows how the development of the science of geology was greatly influenced by the desire

to discover a recurrent pattern in the geological history of the earth. As Gould makes clear, the desire was motivated by a system of moral and aesthetic values which was resonant with meaning.

- 50. The Rauto word for time is aisen. The word literally means both, "how much" and "how many."
- Panoff (1969:153-165) writes that the Maenge of East New Britain discuss the yearly cycle, and the months of the cycle, primarily in terms of the flowering sequence of the trees which I list here. Panoff also identifies the flowering sequence of a number of other trees and creepers as marks for the passage of the year.

The Rauto in contrast do not, in their own words,

"worry very much" about all the phases in the flowering

sequences of these trees and creepers. If they wish to

orient their productive activities it is enough for them to

know that one of the trees which I have mentioned here has

either flowered, or has begun to lose its flower.

The Rauto posses a number of other informal means of marking the passage of time. For instance they posses numerous terms which describe different times of the day and of the night. Like the Maenge of East New Britain, they

also mark the seasons by the position from which the sun rises, and into which it sets during the course of the year.

- 53. These concepts of land and of landscape appear similar to those of many other Melanesian groups see for instance Clifford (1982:169), Schiefflin (1976:182), Feld (1982:150) and M. Rodman (1987:34-40).
- The Rauto possess a metaphor which describes this scene. The metaphor is as follows: Oduk tituk ye likano uipot pe apna. (The people have died, grass begins to grow in the plaza of their hamlet).
- In pre-pacification days the body, hair and face of the corpse were painted with red ocher prior to burial. The paint was said to identify the ghost of the dead person.
- 56. For instance, close kin should give up eating pork, or some other choice food out of remembrance of the deceased. They should refrain from washing, sometime for as long as a year after the death. They should refrain from going to song festivals, other than those which honor their dead kinsmen. When these prohibitions are lifted they remove the black paint which serves as a sign of mourning.
- 57. I remember once taking a Polaroid snapshot of a Rauto bigman. As the picture began to take shape one of the

daughters of the bigman came up to me and grabbed the photo. She said that now that she possessed an image of her father it would not be necessary to take his bones from the grave after he died. She did not now need to have the dance for the dead to invoke an image of her father. The bigman, being both a defender of custom and someone trying to keep up with the times, suggested that the photo be substituted for his bones during the dances.

58. I only witnessed two phases of the mortuary cycle during my period of fieldwork. I saw the rites of death and of burial, and I saw one of the dances for the dead which precedes that held for the painting of the bones.

Since the decline in the frequency of patrols after independence the rites of secondary burial have begun to be performed more frequently in parts of the Rauto and Gimi bush. No doubt hearing of this the New Tribes Mission has endeavored to establish itself in many of the linguistic groups of southern West New Britain. The first order of business for this evangelical group is always the disruption of the mortuary cycle.

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