CANOES, KAVA, *KASTOM,* AND THE POLITICS OF CULTURE ON ANEITYUM

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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This dissertation explores questions concerning contemporary socio-political formations on Aneityum—the southernmost island of the Republic of Vanuatu—as Aneityum firmly establishes itself on the tourism world stage. "Mystery Island"—the islet just south of Aneityum, receives over one-hundred cruise-ship calls a year, and tourism is the primary way the Anejom population—of approximately 1,400 people— participate in the global market economy. In Anejom—the vernacular of Aneityum island, "cruise ship" is signified as *nelcau*—"canoe", but the word "*nelcau*" signifies more than just the marine vessel, it is also a metaphor for socio-political groups on the island, and the geographical places those groups currently reside or once resided. These geographical and social "canoes" have become the focus of Aneityum's "traditionalist"—*kastom* movement. The Anejom signifier "*nelcau*" is pivotal to both national as well as global economic and political processes on Aneityum, while also being central to local understandings of kinship. Analogous to the way "kava"—the ancestral drink of Vanuatu —is being commoditized for both national and global sensibilities alike, the commoditization of "culture" innovates the way people think about themselves in relation to things and the world. In sum, this work interweaves understandings of global processes with indigenous perspectives, life-worlds, and kinship—to contribute to critical understandings of post-colonial socio-political movements, and the politics of "culture" in a global political economy.

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for Etpok-T
and
Matak-I

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"Despite a discourse of conservation, preservation, restoration, and regeneration, heritage produces something new in the present that has recourse to the past."
Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture* (1998)

"Within the narrative of nation, the heritage discourse…explicitly promotes the experience and values of elite social classes" Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (2006)

I: INTRODUCTION: CANOES, KAVA and ***KASTOM***

This work explores the politics of "culture" on the island of Aneityum—the southernmost island in the Republic of Vanuatu—as Aneityum firmly establishes itself on the tourism world stage. "Mystery Island"—*Niñec,* an islet just a stone's throw south of Aneityum, receives over one-hundred cruise-ship calls a year (pre-Covid-19), and tourism is the primary way Anejom people generate revenue and participate in the global economy. Henceforth, this work interweaves scholarly understandings of global processes with indigenous Anejom perspectives, life-worlds, and kinship—to contribute to a critical understanding of post-colonial socio-political formations, and the politics of "culture" in a global political economy. In Anejom—the vernacular of the island of Aneityum, "cruise ship" is translated as '*nelcau*'—"canoe", but the Anejom word '*nelcau'* signifies more than just a marine vessel, it is also a metaphor for socio-political groups on the island—and the geographical places those groups currently reside or once resided. Today 'canoes' continue to play a pivotal role in Aneityum economic and political life—in novel and innovative ways, and continue to be central to contemporary Anejom values and sensibilities. While I translate '*nelcau'* as "canoe", the Anejom word also signifies "boat", "ship", "coffin", and many other types of "vessels". The geographical and social 'canoes' of Aneityum are the foundation of the '*kastom'* movement on the island—a movement that strives to revive the "traditional" economy, and "traditional" system of governance. The Anejom *kastom* movement is called *Nelcau Anejom*—"Aneityum Canoe" in Anejom, and has been influenced by the larger national *kastom* movement initiated by the Vanuatu Cultural Center (VCC), which started in 2007. The national initiative by the VCC has been supported by transnational caretakers of "culture", such as UNESCO and its partners, and the movement on Aneityum is just one of the many "local" *kastom*

movements that have sprouted throughout the archipelago. These movements could be considered "anti-global", "traditional", or "ancestral" in English, but in Bislama, the *lingua franca* of Vanuatu—these movements are *kastom*.[1]

Canoes, kava, and *kastom* are the main focuses of this work because they are essential terms to understand the processes that are taking place for contemporary Anejom people as they are increasingly influenced by the global political economy. First, 'canoes' are pivotal to both national as well as global economic and political processes on Aneityum, as the vernacular term *nelcau* signifies both 'cruise ship' and ancestral social groups on the island, and hence, 'canoes' are central to understanding contemporary Anejom social groups and their participation in the global political economy. Second, "kava"—the ancestral drink of Vanuatu—is in the process of commoditization for local, national and global sensibilities alike, while the ancestral drink continues to be essential to contemporary socio-political processes on Aneityum. Third, "*kastom*" , as the most marketable part of Vanuatu "culture", and also central to traditionalist movements on the island. *Kastom* has been promoted by the nation-state as an economic and political resource, and on Aneityum specifically, Anejom "culture" or "*kastom*"—exemplifies the way Anejom people have 'innovated' or 'invented' for national and global sensibilities alike. As Anejom people continue to rely on the tourism industry as a 'mode of production', their ideas about themselves in the world are increasingly influenced by a global 'structure of difference' (Wilk 1995). In order for "culture" to be marketable, it must be consumable for the sensibilities of "others." Henceforth, this book explores the global "culture" and "heritage" industry in relation to Anejom perspectives, considering the objectification, and most specifically, the commoditization of "*kastom*" in a neoliberal political economy. While I do not reject the idea of the indigenization of *kastom*, Anejom socio-political formations, or Anejom subjectivities—I argue for something more complicated. For Anejom people, *Kastom* is still *itoga*—'outsider', and to think about one's "*kastom*" is the condition for the possibility of an alterity of oneself, a 'structuring of

[1] In this work I use *underline italics* for Bislama terms, and *italics* for most Anejom terms. In some places throughout this work, I also use *italics* for Latin.

difference' from a perspective that is not one's own. I argue that this colonially imposed process has manifested and continues to manifest novel complete and incomplete subjectivities, and for some, a lethal addiction to "culture" exemplified in the deaths of two of my closest friends and relatives, who will be described in detail in the chapters below.

This book attempts to forge links between theories of the commodification of culture, global political economy, and Foucault's theory of "biopolitics" (2010[1978-79)— to understand contemporary socio-political organization on Aneityum. On Aneityum, and Vanuatu more broadly, while *kastom* is not a direct translation of "culture"—*kastom* is commonly understood in ni-Vanuatu popular imagination as an 'authentic culture' of Vanuatu. While I agree with Labadi that we have reached the level of "post-authenticity" in scholarly debates (2010), this critical understanding certainly has not reached the global popular understanding of the term, and hence, what is imagined as 'authentic culture" is what is most marketable, and easily consumable. Recently, *kastom* has been increasingly sanctioned by the state, as an economic resource for the Vanuatu economy, as services, namely travel and tourism, has contributed up to 60% of national GDP (World Bank). Popular understandings of *kastom* in Vanuatu is regularly expressed as being unchanged, static, and frozen in time—even given the contradictory history of missionization, capitalism, neoliberal globalization, and radical change over the course of the last two centuries. The commodification of *kastom* is following global trends of the global commodification of "culture" in small postcolonial nations, all over the globe.

The word "*kastom"* is derived from the English 'custom', and became a part of the lexicon of Bislama, and other "Melanesian" creoles, such as Tok Pisin in PNG, and English Pijin in the Solomon Islands. This work focuses on the history and contemporary usage of *kastom*, specifically from an Anejom perspective. The *kastom* movements within Vanuatu have a long history, where *kastom* was first demeaned by missionaries as heathen, but then later, *kastom* became a unifying idea for ni-Vanuatu—the indigenous citizens of Vanuatu— to gain independence. Today it has both negative and positive associations, and ni-Vanuatu perspectives are varied concerning the relevance of *kastom* given the

realities of contemporary life. However, no matter varied the perspectives are, there is a common consensus that *kastom* was the "culture" of contemporary ni-Vanuatu ancestors—and that *kastom* still exists as a part of contemporary ni-Vanuatu culture today. Central to the argument of this book is the argument that the objectification, and more specifically the commoditization of *kastom* is a neo-colonial process, a process that continues to manifest novel perceptions of alterity from a perspective outside of oneself. While there has been an 'indigenization' of the concept, as this work will illustrate, this 'indigenization' is still deeply influenced by the global political economy. Ni-Vanuatu, use the word "*kastom*" in daily discourse to signify their contemporary understandings of ancestral culture, and most importantly—to represent the static, or changeless part of of their own contemporary culture to others, especially tourists, or scholars interested in "culture". While *kastom* is commonly understood as something unchanged since the arrival of Europeans, *kastom* is actually what Kirshenblatt-Gimblett calls 'metacultural' (2004)—because it is the condition for the possibility of the production of something novel. On Aneityum island, for example, while the *kastom* movement is "traditionalist", as it strives to 'preserve, promote, and protect' 'canoes'—an ancestral form of socio-political organization, what will become clear in this work is that the movement is creating something new, novel, and innovative. In short, the 'canoes' that are being promoted, are a processes of innovation in light of national political and economic realities—far from a static or changeless culture, even if *kastom* is represented as such. However, even though the ancestral 'canoes' are long gone, there is still something to be said for the importance of 'canoes' in contemporary life. 'Canoes' had political and economic importance in the past, and they continue to be important, but in a new ways. Since "cruise ships" are *nelcau*—'canoes' of Royal Caribbean, Carnival, and P&O are the primary way Anejom people earn revenue. The benefits from these 'outsider' canoes have been uneven, and the consequences of such a change cannot be ignored—two areas that this work will discuss in detail. The Anejom people who are benefitting the most from the cruise ship industry are those who attract tourists into tours or attractions—the majority of which, rely on some kind of "cultural" experience, with *kastom* at the forefront. Those

who succeed in this economy are able to package "culture" into something that is easily consumable for tourist sensibilities.

Given the geographical location of Aneityum island, and the archaeological history of this area, which will be discussed in chapter 2, it is easy to understand how canoes as marine vessels were important to the first people to populate these islands, as these islands were populated by outrigger canoe. Canoes have likely always been important to the 'mode of production' of the ancestors of Anejom people who made a life here, especially on the coastal areas, as they continue to be used for transportation, and also for fishing. One of the most important geographical canoes on the island, especially germane to this discussion is the largest village on Aneityum: 'Anelcauhat'—the "stone canoe", the village across the harbor from Mystery Island. Anelcauhat is the village where major government services are located (police, schools, community house, dispensary), but the name also refers to a pie-shaped division of land that extends into the mountains. This area has become disputed, not just for land, but also for leadership positions. Contestations like this will be discussed throughout this work. Another global phenomenon that is relevant to Aneityum is Christianity, and the novel objects such as the church house, and even material objects like bibles. While the "church houses"—*niom itap* are not *nelcau,* the Kingdom of God is a *nelcau,* and the practices associated with churches can be considered syncretic innovations drawing on the ancestral ideas and practices associated with 'canoes.' The 'canoes' of the *kastom* movement, the 'canoes' of Royal Caribbean, Carnival, and other transnational cruise ship lines, and the 'canoes' of the Kingdom of God, are all different material objects, which all fall under the same pre-existing linguistic category, but all of these examples do share something in common—they are all social groupings best understood as heterogenous innovations drawing on the vernacular signifier *nelcau*—'canoe.'

Like the first people to reach these islands, one priority, at a fundamental level, continues to be to feed oneself and one's family. Production of food was the only way to survive on these islands until very recently, as cargo ships now bring imported goods on a regular basis. However, there is an obvious difference between the food that one produces,

and the food that one purchases—the former does not require money, while the latter does. Imported foods, such as rice, sugar, salt, flour, and canned meat and fish are the most popular products purchased at stores around Aneityum, but there are consequences from the consumption of these foods, not only that one must earn money to be able to purchase them, but specifically, there are health consequences of shifting to imported foods, such as hypertension, obesity, and diabetes. Aneityum, specifically, and Vanuatu in general—are in the midst of a health epidemic, one that is seeing a dramatic rise in non-communicable diseases. While hypertension, and obesity, and clearly important health issues, the one that is seen as the greatest threat from Anejom perspectives is diabetes —'*sik blo suga*'.

The *kastom* movement was intended to remedy these health issues, but as the movement continues, sugar continues to be a major source of calories, paralleling the shift in diet of European populations, correlated with an exploited working class (Mintz 1985). Henceforth, the *kastom* movement strives to strengthen island-based lifeways, such as gardening, fishing, and hunting, specifically emphasizing the importance of planting crops in the ground, for example, taro, yam, and kava. In contrast, money earned from cruise ship activities is used in local stores to purchase imported goods, such as rice, flour, canned goods, or kava at the *nakamal* or local "kava bar." Kava, was domesticated in Vanuatu some 3,000 years ago, and Vanuatu has more varieties of kava than any other place in the world. While Christian churches regularly garden and share food with one another, most denominations still allow for the consumption of kava—and although some denominations prohibit it, both men and women consume the drink in large amounts. While some Anejom people drink alcohol to mark some special occasions, the drink of choice is still kava. However, the supply of kava has been unable to meet the demand on Aneityum, and recently alcohol has become increasingly prevalent. No matter if one is more drawn to the activities of the *kastom* movement or the bling of the cruise ships, how a day ends for both groups of people is surprisingly similar—with kava. Contemporary drinking practices of kava are increasingly similar to the practices of the consumption of alcohol by cruise ship tourists. To make matters even more complicated, the global

demand for the root has skyrocketed in the last decade, and the supply is struggling to keep up even at a global level. Aneityum is a case in point, a decade ago the local supply of kava was easily meeting the local demands, but today the local demand is far from being met. Aneityum is experiencing a kava shortage, one that parallels global shortages. As this work will explore, kava was central to a historical shift in socio-political complexity, as the root was likely re-introduced by other Pacific Islanders, and along with it, a change in political leadership. Likewise, another shift is taking place as Anejom people increasingly change the way they drink kava, and, or drink alcohol instead, shifting away from drinking kava altogether.

As many Anejom people generate revenue from cruise ship activities, it is the responsibility of more *kastom* conscious people to supply them with kava. Henceforth, successful kava growers are some of the most financially prosperous on the island, as they can rely on selling the commoditized form of the drink to thirsty tourists, and tourist industry workers, but this has been a challenge to sustain because it takes 3-5 years for a kava plant to mature. As discussed above, kava is also essential for *kastom* activities, monthly meetings, peace ceremonies, rites of passage, and political ceremonies to install leadership. The current lack of legitimization of political leadership on Aneityum, and lack of kava are following similar courses. Namely, considering the supply of kava is struggling to meet Anejom people's demands, there is also not enough kava to install a chief, and *kastom* kava growers are more likely to sell kava in commoditized form rather than offer the same kava for a *kastom* ceremony, to install a chief, for example. Aneityum recently installed two "chiefs", but this took over a decade to accomplish, and while this long delay was not because of kava alone, it serves as a key example for why the *kastom* movement has been struggling to successfully install as many chiefs as they have wanted, even after more than a decade, the installation of chiefs continues to be the primary goal of the movement, a point that will be discussed in detail in the chapters that follow. The relationship between kava and chiefly leadership on Aneityum illustrates something fundamental about Anejom people's sensibilities. As both *kastom* groups and more tourist oriented groups seek to install chiefs on Aneityum, until recently this was unsuccessful,

and the legitimacy of the newly installed chiefs remains to be seem. Henceforth, this research explores the politics of "culture" specifically in terms of leadership and power. What path will Anejom people take? Whatever path they decided, one thing is certain—like their ancestors, "canoes" are the vessel that contemporary Anejom people have chosen for this journey—in innovative and novel ways.

The history of Aneityum is important to this discussion because the island was the first to be missionized in "Melanesia," and one of the first to be introduced to the commodity economy. During this encounter, regular contact with both missionaries and traders led to a 'demographic disaster,' as some 95% of the Aneityum population died, primarily from European derived diseases. The population dropped from some 6,000 in 1840 to less that 200 in 1940 (Spriggs 1981, 1985, 2007, and McArthur 1974). Today the population of Aneityum is recovering and has now reached some 1,200 people. While the history of Aneityum over the last two hundred years is highlighted by missionization, colonialism, and globalization, one must also take into account the layers of history that led up to that point.

Pre-European socio-political organization on Aneityum is pivotal to this discussion because contemporary understandings of *kastom* are not surprisingly, falling in line with social groupings and rules of practice that are increasingly sanctioned by the state, via the work of the VCC, and tourist economic initiatives. For example, Anejom people themselves talk about how they were—and continue to be—organized into *nelcau* —"canoes." Canoes continue to be the metaphor for a social group, even though the canoes of the past certainly looked and functioned differently, the most obvious reason is because of the larger population in the past. However, there are many aspects of ancestral canoes that remain in contemporary practice, but the main point that this work will consider is, are these practices self-consciously "cultural" or "*kastom*"—or are these mundane activities, that are practiced for other reasons? Even though the population of each canoe was devastated during the height of colonialism, the places and divinities associated with each canoe remain. While divinities have not been a part of self-consciously "cultural" behavior and actions, the fact that there is still some aspect of

Anejom culture that is not marketed for tourists, creates the condition for the possibility of there being a marketable part of Anejom "culture" in the future. The population of each of these canoes has dropped, but as the population recovers, "canoes,"—as places, marine vessels, and social groups—continue to be significant for Aneityum social and political organization. Henceforth, this project asks: what is an Aneityum 'canoe' today?

Aneityum island is rivaled only by the capital of Vanuatu—Port Vila, for the number of cruise ship visits per year, on average, as Aneityum receives roughly one cruise ship every three days—over 100 cruise ships a year. Likewise, Aneityum social and political formations often prioritize the economic and political interests associated with tourist activity. While this may seem too removed from ancestral canoes, the social groupings that have formed because of tourist activity are still best understood in light of Aneityum's ancestral past. In contrast the traditionalist 'canoes', which appear to be more loyal to ancestral practice, Anejom people still 'edit' and innovate in light of contemporary life on Aneityum and as part of the nation state of Vanuatu. The traditionalist movement relies on ethnohistoric data, oral history, and also scholarly expertise, specifically the findings of Spriggs (1981), and while many Anejom people are critical of some of Spriggs' conclusions, the idea of the "traditional canoe" is still drawn in part from this scholarly literature. Lastly, the conversion to Christianity will be considered, as Christianity continues to be central to Anejom livelihoods. At one point in Aneityum's history, all of the Anejom people were said to be converted to Presbyterian Christianity. This mass conversion coincided with the demographic disaster. Today, as the population slowly recovers, there are now more than a half-dozen denominations on the island (Presbyterian, Catholic, two denominations of Seventh Day Adventist, Assembly of God, etc.). The reason for so many denominations within such a small population can only be understood in light of ancestral canoes, and churches are best understood as having recourse to ancestral socio-political organization. In sum, this research explores contemporary Aneityum socio-political organization, to consider the influence of global socio-political models imposed on Anejom people as a form of 'governmentality' (Foucault 2000) to gauge the level that global influences are permeating

people's lives, and the consequences of ongoing neoliberal globalization. Whether for tourism, tradition, heritage, church, etc, all of these contemporary processes must be considered in light of ancestral canoes, and the layers of socio-political history that preceded them, but also to the power of the state, and the knowledge that "others" have of Anejom people, which have influenced the knowledge Anejom people have of themselves.

Objectification, Commoditization, and Biopolitization of "Culture"

In 2004, with funding provided by the Japanese government through the Japanese Funds-In Trust for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage via UNESCO, the Vanuatu Cultural Centre started the groundwork for a future project called the 'Year of Traditional Economy' (Regenvanu and Geismar 2011:32)—or '*Kastom Economi*'—as it is referred to by ni-Vanuatu today. This was a national project, and 2007 and 2008 were national years of the *kastom economi*, with 2009, the national year of *kastom governence*. Spearheaded by the VCC Aneityum based fieldworkers, the movement quickly gained momentum on Aneityum, and while the movement has been struggling recently for reasons that this work will illuminate, it continues to work toward the goal of reviving a "traditional economy" and "traditional leadership." This project had a number of national objectives, but at the most basic level, the project was to maintain and revitalize living traditional cultural practices while stimulating the generation of cash income—clearly revealing contradictions. In an interview with the former director of the VCC, Ralph Regenvanu—now minister of foreign affairs—had this to say about the project: "The year of the *kastom* economy, is largely about trying to bring governance down to the community level. It's not about state governance, but about strengthening traditional governance" (38). However, as Regenvanu describes, the current issue that the movement is facing now is that as much as government representative advocate for 'traditional leaders and chiefs in state policy making', there is still a questions of *who* the chiefs are—namely, advocates for the movement continue to give chiefs legal power—and intend to call them 'state chiefs,' but this often contradicts the values held by indigenous

communities concerning their own leadership, especially vernacular concepts of leadership.

Germane to this discussion is A. F. C. Wallace's seminal essay on "Revitalization Movements" (1956), where he argued that no matter how much a group professes to revive a traditional culture and do away with foreign cultural systems—there is an 'obvious mixture' of both 'traditional and imported cultural material' (276). This is an important point especially germane to the *kastom* movement on Aneityum, as the signifiers of the movement has two interrelated parts: *ekonomi*—"economy" and *governes*—"governance"—both imported cultural material. Wallace's point opens the conversation to the nuance necessary to broaden our scholarly understanding of such movements. The pendulum of this scholarly debate has swung back and forth concerning 'invention of tradition', particularly in regards to 'traditionalist movements' and the productivity or anti-productivity of such movements in de-colonialization. In sum, this work explores the way objectification, commodification, and biopolitization influences such movements, and moreover, the ways the global circulation of ideas contribute to popular and theoretical conceptions of "culture" and "cultural heritage."

Before one can understand the *kastom* movement on Aneityum, it is first necessary to understand how scholars understand 'objectification'—to equip us with the theoretical equipment necessary for this voyage. The concept of objectification brings us back to Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Spirit* (1977[1807]) and Marx's materialist appropriation and inversion of the Hegelian dialectic (see Miller 1987, 2010). In anthropology, objectification is central to the idea formulated by Durkheim and Mauss (1963[1903]) of collective representation (Keane 1997). Objectification is also central to Bourdieu's 'theory of practice' (1977, 1990). For Bourdieu, one's entire subjective experience of the world—one's *habitus*—is a dialectic between objectification and embodiment. From a phenomenological perspective, one touches things and the things simultaneously touch oneself. In Bourdieu's own words, "…the mind born of the world of objects does not arise as a subjectivity confronting an objectivity: the objective universe is made up of objects which are the product of objectifying operations structured according to the very

operations that the mind applies to it. The mind is a metaphor of the world of objects which is itself but an endless circle of mutually reflecting metaphors" (1977:91). One's embodied subjectivity is a continuous and ongoing dialectic between generative structures of one's *habitus*, an entanglement of subject-objectification. This is a description of objectification in the phenomenological sense of the word—in line with Munn (1986) and Miller (1987, 2010). In another sense, objectification is also visible in colonial and post-colonial contexts, when forms of identification are made by outsiders, as Thomas argues, "…things to which people attach no particular importance themselves can be regarded as locally distinctive or as resonant of national character by others" (1991:163), namely, indigenous appropriation of European materiality into ontological categories of indigenous lifeworlds.

In the past, theories of objectification of identity have often privileged positions of power, but clearly the process of objectification works both ways. For example, Pacific Islanders have been profoundly affected by their relationships with Europeans, but colonialism did not have a 'uniform' impact on the colonized, rather there was a mutual entanglement, even if this was uneven or differentiated (Thomas 1991:205). Likewise, Kaplan's historical analysis of social movements in Fiji (1995) illustrates that the best analytic strategy, which combines attention to indigenous history making and colonial power—expressing plural articulations. Beginning in the early eighties there was a burgeoning interest by Pacific scholars in the 'politics of tradition,' at the forefront were works on *kastom* in Melanesia (Keesing and Tonkinson 1982), and identity in Hawai'i (Linnekin 1983)—virtually coinciding with seminal works by Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983) and Anderson (1983). However, not all of these works have been sensitive to what Thomas and Kaplan argue above, and what has now become standards in the field. This was problematic for anthropologists who tended to side against national proponents of tradition, for example Philibert (1986), Babadzan (1988, see also 2000), Hanson (1989), and Keesing (1989)—especially when they relied on the terms such as invention, fetishization, or folklorization in the making of Pacific nations (see Jolly and Thomas 1992). In response to Keesing, in particular, anthropologists have been accused of

paternalism and racism (Trask 1991). This is unfortunate because at the same time valuable theoretical ideas were being overshadowed, such as Linnekin and Poyer (1990) who sought to develop a comparative framework to contrast modes of identity construction, a process that certainly began before European contact and continues in post-colonial nation building. Unfortunately, much of this work has been seen as an attack on the authenticity of indigenous political claims to land, or government representation, and has occasioned bitter debates between scholars and indigenous activists.

Much of the work on the 'politics of culture' in the Pacific during the eighties broadly presumed that objectifications of culture were affirmed and upheld by the peoples concerned. In contrast, works by Thomas (1992) drew attention to the ambivalent and negative attitudes toward reified customary regimes. Cultural objectification can often be seen as a reactive process, drawing attention to neglected reifications of custom, indigenous ways, and traditions—from 'pagan' enclaves of otherwise Christian nations of the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to minority assertions of identity in Australia, New Zealand, and Hawai'i (Thomas 1992:214). Dovetailing with this work is Jolly (1992a) who illustrates how the political rhetoric of nationalist politicians, or 'local bourgeoisie', counterpose narratives of those living in *kastom* villages, far removed from the urban elites. Much of the interpretation in literature before this point tacitly assumed that the people concerned had a positive attitude toward the reifications of indigenous tradition or custom that they present, and negative or ambivalent attitudes toward the customary or the traditional remained largely invisible—however, as Thomas and Jolly contend, it is clearly possible to take a variety of stances toward reification. In sum, it is important to consider objectification as a 'diacritical and oppositional process', and 'though not a matter of mystification or political manipulation—objectification is irreducibly political' (Thomas 1992:222). The edited volumes by Lamont Lindstrom and Geoffrey White embraced this point without being antagonistic toward nationalist movements, but rather encouraged leaders to think critically about their post-colonial situation—namely, how cultural policy is being developed in Melanesia (1994), and the innovations of traditional leadership in post-colonial Pacific states (White and Lindstrom 1997).

Since the heated debates in the eighties and nineties scholars have now turned toward the historicizing of 'tradition' and 'culture' in the Pacific and into interweaving understandings of global processes with indigenous perspectives and life-worlds. Especially in the southwestern Pacific, this process made it possible to realize that the concept of *kastom* was undoubtably of high importance, coined by indigenous populations themselves to accommodate and appropriate colonialist visions of 'culture' and 'tradition' (Rio and Hviding 2011). The widespread discussion of *kastom* revealed the indigenous concept as signaling a pre-existing understanding of 'cultural heritage.' Lindstrom argues that *kastom* can translate directly into 'cultural heritage' (2011), which indicates how the concept of *kastom* itself grew out of an indigenous understanding of 'culture' as pressed upon them from their colonizers (Rio 2011). Notably, likely due to UNESCO's presence in the region and their relationship with the national museums, such as the VCC for example, indigenous concern for *kastom* has perhaps been especially sensitive to the recent preoccupation with 'cultural heritage', which exemplifies how *kastom* is continuously gaining importance in novel and innovative ways (Akin 2004, 2013: Lindstrom 2008). As Hviding and Rio argue, indigenous concepts of culture are undergoing historical developments and are adapting to particular political and socio-economic circumstances —namely, 'to the compartmentalization and stratification entailed by modernist or capitalist economies and post-colonial state building' (Hviding and Rio 2011:10).

As 'cultural heritage' is now considered a cultural resource in the "developing" economies of the Pacific, and tourists are now flocking to remote Pacific islands to witness indigenous rites, such as the *Nagol* (land diving) on the island of Pentecost, Vanuatu (Jolly 1994), other islands across the archipelago are realizing the economic potential of cultural tourism, and Aneityum is a case in point. It is helpful to consider how the popular imagination conceives of "culture" or "heritage". An excellent example of cultural representation in the Pacific that continues to be avidly consumed by global consumers is the Disney film *Moana* (2016). The notion of culture and heritage found in the film is one perpetuating a bounded, static, and isolated Pacific culture, one in which the Polynesian noble-savages of a remote Pacific island are saved by a hyper-masculinized and obese

Polynesian demigod who teams up with a young beautiful Polynesian princess to save their island from environmental collapse. This notion of "culture" is far removed from how scholars are conceptualizing culture, and contrasts narratives that contemporary anthropologists, archaeologists, and indigenous communities alike have concerning Pacific island culture prior to European contact. This film is an example of what Wilk calls the 'structure of common difference'—which celebrate particular kinds of diversity while submerging, deflating or suppressing others' (1995:18). The continued popularity of the film, and its success in the global market place is representative of how the film 'destroys genuine difference,' while simultaneously constructs a familiar, easily consumable difference in order to reproduce itself (Williamson 1985)—in turn perpetuating popular conceptions of culture and heritage for a global audience.

The film *Moana* is the perfect example of how scholars are *not* thinking about culture and heritage. In contrast, a better film from the Pacific that illustrates how scholars *are* thinking about culture, would likely be the film *Trobriand Cricket* (1975), which is an example of a cultural practice with colonial roots being appropriated by an indigenous community to better suit their system of values. In understanding the relationship between heritage and culture, Laurajane Smith argues, 'heritage is a cultural process that engages with acts of remembering that work to create ways to understand and engage with the present' (2006:44). Rodney Harrison differentiates between the analytical terms: "official heritage"—the 'set of professional practices that are authorized by the state and motivated by some form of written charter', and "unofficial heritage"—a broad range of practices that are represented using the language of heritage, but are not official forms of legislation' (2013:14-5). However, objects, places and practices can fall within both of these analytical terms, as official or unofficial heritage status has nothing to do with the qualities of the 'thing' itself, but rather, are 'defined by values ascribed by those who hold positions of expertise and authority and whose viewpoints are recognized and acted upon by the state' (15). Recently there has been a shift in both critical heritage studies and in heritage policy—to thinking about heritage as a discourse and a system of values. Although notions of culture or heritage do become 'things' through the process of

objectification, critical heritage theory constantly works to 'destabilize' the objectivity of heritage, namely one can understand what heritage is or does because heritage is discursive, but heritage itself is not an object—in a sense, all heritage is 'intangible' (Smith 2006:53-54). Although much intangible heritage is unofficial, UNESCO has even taken steps to make intangibility official as well, but the protection of intangible heritage has been a convention full of contradictions.

Despite their long term concern for 'tangible' heritage, UNESCO now has a long-term concern for intangible heritage, following issues raised by non-Western delegates at sponsored meetings, UNESCO initiated a sequence of measures to address intangible heritage (106). In 2003, UNESCO adopted the '*Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage'.* Officially, UNESCO recognizes tangible heritage, natural heritage, and most recently intangible heritage—although there is clearly an arbitrariness and interrelatedness between the categories, for example, natural heritage is heritage by virtue of human relationships with the "natural." As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett argues, even though the UNESCO measures are 'intended to safeguard something that already exists', what they are actually doing is simply building the capacity for something new—'metacultural production' (2004). This is especially germane to the concept of *kastom*—because *kastom* is a form of official 'intangible culture heritage' as determined by UNESCO and their partner in Vanuatu, the Vanuatu Cultural Centre (VCC).

As the *kastom* movement continues on Aneityum, so does the 'metacultural production' of leadership positions and state sanctioned *kastom* practices, as will be illustrated in the chapters below. However, as former VCC director Ralph Regenvanu points out, many of these leadership positions are contested by indigenous communities who dispute the installment of their community leaders into state sanctioned positions, and this has long been the case on Aneityum. This example brings us back to Wallace's argument concerning the 'mixed' reality of revitalization movements—and this is especially true today in efforts at post-colonial state building. The conversation continues regarding the ways communities return to 'traditional' systems of social organization when the structure of these polities has completely changed. Is it any surprise that

Anejom people contend the notion of a state sanctioned "state chief"—when this is the language of the neo-colonizer, and categorized as 'outsider? The '*kastom'* movement on Aneityum can easily be considered another example of the 'invention of tradition', supporting earlier literature on the topic from the Pacific and beyond, but the situation is more complex than that and it would be a shame to end the discussion here. As Regenvanu is explicit in the interview above, not everyone is supporting the reified concepts of culture sanctioned by the state—these forms are contested, which leads us to the question of why?—and the answer is not as simple as 'invention.' The exploration of this movement on Aneityum demands a sensitivity to the plural articulations and the negotiation that is being made between indigenous communities, post-colonial political structures, and the neoliberal global political economy.

Central to the argument in this work is that 'cultural heritage', and likewise *kastom* in Vanuatu, and Aneityum specifically—is a 'transformative agent' playing a role in creating new forms of complete and incomplete subjectivities—a process that has been described as a 'heritage consciousness'—a process that fundamentally re-orients and 'edits' cultural practices to contemporary political and economic priorities (Scher 2016, see also 2007). This is visible in the urban enclaves of the nation where ni-Vanuatu depending on "culture", "heritage", and, or "*kastom*" to generate revenue, especially when they struggle to feed themselves and their family members. This work focuses on Aneityum, where Anejom people are increasingly dependent on the generation of revenue from the cruise ship tourist markets, where many offer cultural tourism 'tours'—the most successful of which are nicely packaged like the film *Moana*—creating the appearance of something exotic in a 'structure of common difference' that is easily consumable for tourist sensibilities. Likewise, even VCC fieldworkers depend on these markets, while they may not interact with tourists directly, they work to preserve, protect, and promote *kastom*—one of the most marketable commodities that the nation of Vanuatu has to offer.

While this work focuses specifically on the nation state of Vanuatu, other nations in the Pacific, specifically those who have been categorized as "Melanesian", and speak

creoles, such as Tok Pisin, English Pijin, and Bislama—have related ideas of *kastom*, which are broadly associated with "heritage", "traditional culture" and a culture before contact with Europeans. It is beyond the scope of this work to explore all of these connections in the Pacific, but what this work does attempt is to understand why postcolonial nations across the globe are following similar trends. For example, Scher argues that through nation branding, and cultural and heritage tourism, 'Caribbean governments are encouraging local populations to consider their actions and behaviors, both public and private, as self-consciously cultural' (2014). I argue that this is not limited to the Caribbean, and clear parallels can be drawn in contemporary Vanuatu society, as national branding centers on *kastom*—the government of Vanuatu, specifically through the work of the Department of Tourism, the Vanuatu Tourism Office, and the Vanuatu Cultural Centre—encourage local populations to consider their actions and behaviors, as self-consciously *kastom*—specifically as an economic and political resource.

Through the work of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, whose aim it is to 'preserve, promote and protect, cultural heritage', it is also an explicit part of the economic development of the state. As Laurajane Smith has argued, the commodification of cultural forms is a kind of 'governmentality' (2006), one that has become imperative in the contemporary climate of neoliberal globalization. Given the dwindling options for the generation of revenue, national cultural heritage—specifically *kastom*—has been central to the tourism economy in Vanuatu. It is the product of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, tour guides, marketplaces, you name it—everyone is encouraged to sell the national product of *kastom* to the demand of tourists visiting the islands—a tourism industry that encompasses tangible and intangible worlds. Central to my argument in this book—that these trends are increasingly being reconfigured to the increasing hegemony of the economic order of globalization. In the age of neoliberalism, as the state strives to preserve its sovereignty and governance of the given population, the objectification and commodification of *kastom* for political and economic reasons is a way to preserve Vanuatu sovereignty and centrality for the ni-Vanuatu population. Through funding from transnational organizations, such as UNESCO and its partners, for example, cultural heritage is a

major source of the generation of revenue. Under national branding initiatives for cultural tourism, and the expansion of *kastom* for political and economic reasons, there has been a number of uneven consequences for ni-Vanuatu broadly, and Anejom people specifically, which this book with illustrate. The intervention of the state in the daily life of ni-Vanuatu is a part of the "biopolitization" of culture (see Scher 2014).

Foucault's earlier work, *Discipline and Punish* (1975), which lays the foundation for his later work on biopolitics and neoliberal governmentality (see Foucault 2000), shows how technologies and institutions of the state, converge to create a system of disciplinary power. Foucault follows Nietzsche, as well as existential phenomenology in bringing the body into the focus of history. Specifically, the body has become the object of techniques and deployment of power. The disciplinary techniques in *Discipline and Punish,* reveal how disciplinary techniques produce "docile bodies", specific to Vanuatu are workers and schoolchildren, who continue to be subjects to disciplinary power in order to make them productive, and easier to control. The human body continues to be the object to be optimized, calculated, and improved. The impact of this type of discipline and punishment lies in its ability to reveal the processes of subject formation, categorizing subjects in relation to each other, based on the economic and political reproduction of the legitimizing principles of the state.

Drawing on Foucault's theory of 'governmentality', which builds on his earlier understanding of power, where his analysis focused on the techniques and practices of institutional power, such as the prison, the hospital, and the school. The notion of governmentality adds an important dimension to the power of the state. Specifically in the age of neoliberalism, state government strives to legitimize its own power through forms of knowledge. The practice of government involves reasons why those who are governed should do what they are told to do, implying that the population can question this governing, it points to principles of legitimization and procedures for governing. In the lecture series *The Birth of Biopolitics* [1978-79], Foucault moves to the analysis of neoliberal governmentality—governing with specific technologies of power, and although neoliberal governmentality is not simply economic, it does have the objective that

capitalism continues to run smoothly. Most importantly, neoliberal governmentality produces subjects within a specific population—economic subjects structured to necessitate competitiveness and self-interest, and continue to reproduce then. Another central tenet to this work, is that neoliberal subjects make rational choices based on economic knowledge, namely, subjects invest in the capitalist economy based on their economic knowledge, with the idea that their investments of time, and specifically labor, will lead to a significant return. Applying these ideas to the nation state of Vanuatu, where cultural tourism, and more specifically *kastom* tourism has been central the neoliberal governmentality of the state. *Kastom* is the national culture being marketed as a commodity, and the state of Vanuatu as the vendor.

19th Century Political Economy—in 21st Century Aneityum

The year 1963 likely does not have any special significance for indigenous Pacific Islanders: "Melanesians", "Micronesians" or "Polynesians alike. As elders recall their island histories, that year probably does not stand out for any particular reason—at all. But, for scholars of the Pacific, 1963 has been burned into many of our minds, because what happened that year was something of a gift—and a curse for "Melanesianists" and "Polynesianists"—and well, for "Micronesianists," they were mostly spared from the repercussions. For those who do not know—or for those who have intentionally erased it from their memory—1963 was the year Sahlins accepted a 'generous scientific gift' from the 'natives' of the Pacific Islands, which we actually gifted to ourselves—one more than a half-century later, we are still trying to pay the debts.

Since this gift we have been battling to understand Pacific leadership—and as much as we critique Sahlins' typology of the 'Melanesian big-man' and the 'Polynesian chief', we are still using those terms in anthropological discourse. And, we are not the only ones using those terms, which are now a part of the daily vocabulary of Pacific island creoles, such as *Bislama, English Pijin*, and *Tok Pisin,* for example—terms that have been emphasized in revitalization and traditionalist movements. Spare me a moment for a quick review: Sahlins described two stereotypical leaders, one Polynesian, based on

ascribed status; the other Melanesian, based on achieved status—the 'advanced' Polynesian chief contrasting the 'underdeveloped' Melanesian big-man. I will reprieve you from all of the critiques here, but put simply, so-called "Melanesia" is not a homogeneous cultural area—in fact, the linguistic and cultural diversity of the geographical area of "Melanesia" is higher than any place of comparable size anywhere in the world. It is highly problematic, therefore, to even joke that there would be one type of leadership in such a diverse place. Furthermore, this typology marginalized the indigenous Pacific Islanders of "Melanesia" as being less than, and simply put, not "Polynesian." This relationship parallels the racially motivated classification Dumont d'Urville proposed in 1852, where he divided Oceania into 'two distinct races' based on the color of their skin, physical appearance, and reception of Europeans—among other convoluted logics. He found the 'black' Melanesians 'disagreeable' and 'generally very inferior' to the 'copper-coloured race' of 'Polynesians' and 'Micronesians' (see Douglas and Ballard 2008). Shockingly, this preference is still being perpetuated in popular culture, and this 'heritage' has a new life in the imaginations and sensibilities of tourists who choose the Pacific as their 'cultural destination' of choice (Kirsheblatt-Gimblett 1998).

Critiques of Sahlins' typology are well known in Pacific scholarship, and in line with what has been discussed above—the geographical area of Melanesia posed the most problems. In the *a priori* categorization of Pacific leadership as either Polynesian or Melanesian, the leadership systems of New Caledonia, Fiji and much of the coastal areas in all of Melanesia were 'annoying exceptions' for this model (Douglas 1979)—they just did not fit. It is now clear that ascription and achievement are not polar opposites, and both are commonly used together in the social organization found in the Pacific. It is also important to take 'European contact' into account, as it is likely that hereditary rank and chieftainship were more widespread in the past, especially in island and coastal areas where Austronesian languages are spoken (see Spriggs 2008). This makes sense considering how the Pacific was populated, as we know, Lapita peoples who spoke Austronesian languages arrived on the scene around 3,300 years ago and had a different form of social organization in contrast to the well established ancestral populations of

Near Oceania. The social organization of Lapita peoples has been described as 'heterarchical' (Kirch 2017)—a term scholars dissatisfied with Service's 'band-tribe-chiefdom-state model' (Service 1975) have used to examine sociocultural complexity, and the reexamination of the epistemological assumptions of hierarchy (Crumley 1995). Scholarly tropes of 'hierarchy-as-order' are still widespread, especially in consideration of 'social complexity', which makes it difficult to recognize 'patterns that are complex but not hierarchical.'

It is unfortunate that many scholars have given up Sahlins' and Service's interest in the terms that are more appropriate, such as 'social complexity'—because when one moves beyond the flawed typologies, the general idea that they were getting at is in line with multiple lines of archaeological and anthropological evidence in the Pacific. When one follows the path of how the Pacific was populated, there are clear changes in social complexity, likely related to the cultural innovations that were needed to reach such remote destinations, and adapt to new environments. Henceforth, it is important to ask why we need leadership, and how do leaders earn legitimacy? Following Blanton (1998), it is necessary to explore the diverse forms of 'corporate political economy'—and move beyond the privileging of individual self-aggrandizement, accumulation of material wealth, and self-interest. This was one of the most troublesome parts of Sahlins' description of the big-man: "…thoroughly bourgeois, so reminiscent of the free enterprising rugged individual of our own heritage" (1963:289). Political systems do not always depend on the control of material wealth: in reply to Sahlins' nonsense rhyme, 'Rich man, poor man, big-man, chief'—Lindstrom responded: 'Doctor, lawyer, wise man, priest', to illustrate the ways knowledge, for example, can be used to legitimize leadership positions in southern Vanuatu (1985). Translations or glosses of vernacular terms for leader often indicate the importance of knowledge control, and it is useful to consider knowledge related to something that most if not all Pacific Islanders deem essential to their livelihood: land. In this example, the most valuable types of information on Tanna are often controlled by leaders, and include: histories of land tenure, names, and boundaries (297). Other details such as resource distribution, soil types, and productive

capacities such as garden sites are important, but this knowledge is often shared freely by elders, men, women, and children alike, while the information mentioned previously is the more politically significant information. It should be no surprise that land is central to people's value system in an ocean full of islands. Following Lindstrom's lead, leaders can also find legitimacy with all sorts of valuable knowledge, such as curing illness, resolving disputes, philosophical aptness, communicating with divinities, technical knowledge related to gardening, fishing, hunting, etc.—the list goes on. The point being, legitimacy can be found in places other than just material wealth.

As social complexity increases, it is common for scholars to associate hierarchy with unequal access to wealth, status, and power, but less attention has been payed to "communalism"—namely, the value placed on 'a local community, larger than the nuclear family, that forms the basic unit of production and consumption, and that is characterized by cohesiveness and solidarity" (Coupland 2009:78). Increased social complexity does not always mean more vertical social inequalities, but rather, as the term 'heterarchy' implies, there can be horizontal complexity that increases levels of communalism. This is an area that is lacking in emphasis concerning the social complexity of Pacific leadership. When one considers the history of how the Pacific was populated, and the level of cohesiveness required to travel on an 'outrigger' or 'double-hulled' canoe for long distances, a leader's ability to positively motivate, create community, and keep the group in good spirits would have been essential. If a leader was overly authoritative or coercive, what would keep someone from abandoning ship? Likewise, today there are corollaries, while feasts have been portrayed as 'prestations' for the aggrandizement and self-interest of authoritative leaders—another perspective would consider feasts as a strategy leaders use to materialize communalism, and to find legitimacy as a nexus of social relationships. As Coupland argues, for Northwest Coast "Plank Houses"—with increased hierarchy came increased communalism, which contrasts what is commonly represented in the scholarship of the Pacific islands. Recently there has been a revival in kinship studies, which has expanded to include analyses of the 'house,' an analytical term that has recently played an important role in understanding

social complexity and the process of kinship. In what ways can the literature on the 'house' help scholars working in the Pacific understand social complexity, leadership, and membership in socially defined groups?

The term 'house' should not be confused with the 'household' since the two need not coincide. The 'house' is a useful analytical tool that is often a direct translation for distinct vernacular terms and concepts referencing fundamental units of group association and personal identification, and as this book will illustrate, the concept of 'house' can help one's understanding of Aneityum 'canoes'. The 'house' concept can be applied to 'virtually any type of kinship-defined social organization, whether based on sibling ties, lineal or bilateral decent principles, or cognatic networks' (Helms 1998:15). The "house" is pivotal to understanding the legitimization of leadership roles in kin-based societies where physical force or coercion is not normally condoned, and is used to explore legitimizing principles of political authority in these instances. Helms argues that there is often legitimizing power contained in the concept of cosmological origins—things and beings that came first often hold ultimate primacy, and when leaders have access to this ultimate primacy of the 'house' for example—this plays a signifiant role in their legitimization as leaders.

The analytical term "house" was first introduced by Levi-Strauss in *The Way of the Masks* (1982) building on the ethnography of Franz Boas and Alfred Kroeber. The theoretical transformation began with Boas, who was stumped in how to classify the social organization of the Kwakiutl of the Northwest coast. The Kwakiutl posed complex problems for Boas that were left unresolved because Kwakiutl "tribes" were neither strictly patrilineal nor matrilineal, and while they were theoretically following agnatic principles, the reality of how the "tribes" were formed came closer to a cognatic system of succession. Boas ultimately resided in using the vernacular Kwakiutl term: '*numaym'* because it was such a peculiar form of social organization, and Boas settled on the conclusion that the Kwakiutl were doing something unique. However, one clue that was significant in Kwakiutl notions of the *numaym* was it was shaped by 'supposed descent from a mythic ancestor who built his home in a definite place' (Levi-Strauss 1982:164)—

hence, the role of 'place' became the focus, while decent was deemed secondary. Levi-Strauss began to see patterns in the social organizations around the world—examples from Africa, Indonesia, Melanesia, Polynesia, Europe, and America that did not fit in existing models of kinship. This is where Levi-Strauss found the term "house" (172) translated from the vernacular term for house in Yurok, from Kroeber's ethnography. Levi-Strauss defined the "house" as a "corporate body holding an estate made up of both material and immaterial wealth, which permeates itself through the transmission of its name, its goods, and its titles down a real or imaginary line, considered legitimate as long as this continuity can express itself in the language of kinship or of affinity and, most often, of both" (174).

For Levi-Strauss the 'house' was a new type of kinship, and groups that fell into this type were referred to as 'house societies.' However, the idea of 'house societies' is problematic because 'houses' are loosely structured, with a flexible application of rules, often incorporating freedom of choice in residence and other arrangements in the formation of social groups, and sometimes they are not 'houses' at all, as in Aneityum 'canoes'. Houses often reveal the importance of individual autonomy, and the way persons activities and groupings are continuously in the process of being constructed, rather than defined in advance by some pre-give structure (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995:17). Houses are not just about sleeping together, but rather living together, eating together, and dying together. Although Levi-Strauss has helped illuminate these loosely structured "societies," one must be wary when this is typologized into something called a "house society"—then the usefulness of this approach will be sharply diminished. It is then necessary to move away from the 'house' as a rigid social type, and explore the 'house' in vernacular terms, as an indigenous category for a social group (37)—one that is lived and experienced as a dynamic entity, and not merely a static ideological or material structure, and this is certainly the case for Aneityum "canoes"—*nelcau*.

We should resist the notion that 'kinship' is defined by some rigid model or structure because 'kinship' and the formation of social groups is a process (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995: 45). Using the 'house' to aid one's investigation will allow for ways in

which kinship and the house are thoroughly intertwined as one process. Levi-Strauss used the term 'house' as a contribution to a narrowly conceived theory of kinship; he concentrates his attention almost exclusively on the house as a social grouping, hence, never fully exploring the potential of his own argument. Building on Levi-Strauss' definition of the house stated above, scholars have found there is more to the phenomenon of the 'house'—simply put, it is an ordinary group of people concerned with their day-to-day affairs, sharing in production and consumption, and living in a shared space, however that is defined. Hence, the importance of research of everyday life, which has the potential to balance and be incorporated into studies of ritual and ideology, for example. There is theoretical value in thinking about 'houses' together with the people who inhabit them, as mutually implicated in the process of living. Bodenhorn, for example, in her analysis of the Iñupiat 'house' (2000) illustrated the way that children are even involved in this process, and are not passive recipients, but themselves initiate them. For the Iñupiat, personal autonomy and the rejection of pre-given ties of dependance mean that 'relatedness' or 'kinship' is constantly under construction. As this work will illustrate concerning Aneityum naming practices, the personal autonomy of children is essential concerning what 'canoe' one belongs to.

As Carsten argues (2000), in more recent studies of kinship there is the realization that the boundaries between biological and social, which were crucial in the study of kinship in the past, have been distinctly blurred—if they are visible at all. Using a term such as 'relatedness' in opposition, or alongside notions of 'kinship' signals an openness to indigenous idioms of being rather than a reliance of pre-given definitions. This point dovetails with Sahlins' definition of kinship as a "mutuality of being" (2013). These are radically different notions of kinship to what Schneider (1984) considered an anthropological reification of European folk concepts of essential blood ties originating in Morgan's categorization of 'descriptive' and 'classificatory' kinship (1870, see also Trautmann 1987). Schneider's critique of the concept of "kinship" rested on a his reformulation of his original ethnography of Yap, and although he did not use the term 'house' in his analysis, his "critique of kinship" provides an excellent example of how

'houses' persist over time. As Joyce argues (2000), the Yapese concept of '*tabinau'* for a social grouping falls into the category of how scholars understand 'houses.' In consideration of Yap's archaeological and linguistic history, multiple lines of evidence are pointing to the likelihood that Yap was colonized by Lapita peoples, which ironically ties Schneider's analysis and 'critique of kinship' into supporting the argument that the 'house' is actually an essential analytical term in critical kinship theory, and one that is essential in understanding the contemporary processes of Aneityum 'canoes'.

Recent 'house' studies reveal the relationship between agricultural production and social organization. For example, Acabado illustrates how environmental pressures in the northern Phillipines motivated Ifugao houses to share water sources and work together to pool resources (2013). This case corresponds to the 'self-organizing' model, a term used by complexity theorists to discuss how order is generated by events within a system, rather than by outside influences. Ifugao houses made it possible to produce food surpluses and offered opportunities for populations to engage in other cultural activities (166). These processes permitted population growth, as the limits of growth were being determined by limited water supply. The Ifugao house reveals webs of relationships—and illustrate how 'houses' often favor cooperation and autonomy rather than centralized management. The Bwa of Burkina Faso are also relevant to this discussion; Bwa houses are divided into three endogamous socioeconomic groups: farmers, smith/potters, and griots (Dueppen 2012, from Capron 1973). Farmers comprise roughly 85 percent of the population, while the smith/potters are craft specialists, and the griots are musicians that entertain at social and economic events and also produce leather products for the village community. Central to all of these socio-econmic groups is the *Do* religion, which is central to communalism. Bwa houses articulate socio-professional differentiation, which creates interdependence and social complexity that is rooted in early sedentary life (Dueppen 2012:12-13). Paralleling the emphasis of continuity of place is the 'landscape approach,' which highlights visible forms of affiliation in houses of the Society Islands, for example (Kahn and Kirch 2013), revealing shared labor and ritual practice. This approach reveals the way social and economic investments in the house estate allow for certain houses to

grow and prosper vis a vis others. Embedded landscapes replete with physical dwelling structures, and ancestral temples and lands for the main loci for the corporate actions of members of the house. This example reveals how houses can act in relation to other houses, to gain prominence over others, which is especially informative for understanding social change. In as diverse geographical areas as Asia to Africa to Oceania, the importance of place is emphasized time and time again, and will be essential in understanding the contemporary dynamics of Aneityum 'canoes'.

Borrowing the Maori concept of '*hau*'—as "the spirit of things" Weismantel emphasizes the continuity of house, is sedimented in its materiality, but also the *hau* of the house—as a site of action, and an embodied understanding of the past (2014). This parallels Maya social organization, where the ancestors may be considered the true owners of the land, and that people owe its continued fertility to the ancestors or spirits who first lived there, and to who periodic offerings must be made (Gillespie 2000). Continuity is demonstrated by actions that create an identification or feeling of similarity between people of today and those of the past. The house as a social grouping endures through time, continuity being assured through the succession and replacement of human resources, but also through holding onto a fixed or moveable property through the transmission of names, titles, and prerogatives integral to the house's existence and identity (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995). Models of descent say little about the mechanisms that link groups together into networks encompassing different levels of society, but 'houses' clearly do, as Aneityum 'canoes' will also reveal.

In consideration of what has been discussed in this introduction, it should seem strange that Pacific scholars are not utilizing the concept of the 'house' to understand social organization in all areas of Oceania—it is clearly not emphasized enough in Pacific scholarship and beyond. There are some instances where this concept has been used and it has proved productive, such as Kahn and Kirch (2013) discussed above; and Rodman (1985), who does not use it in Levi-Straussian terms, but at the same time argues that the houses of Longana, Vanuatu are symbols of kinship that articulate land and people, and reveal links between matrilineal and patrifilial groups. Until today, the use of the term

'house' is still in its infancy in the Pacific. The 'male cults' of northern Vanuatu would certainly benefit from engaging this literature (cp. Allen 1984), and Lindstrom's analysis of naming, 'name-sets', and 'nomination' on Tanna, Vanuatu (1985, 2011b, see also Wood 2016) are clearly articulating processes of kinship that parallel how scholars are describing 'houses,' but likewise, Lindstrom does not utilize the 'house' literature—sometimes preferring the term 'corporation' instead, which is troublesome to say the least, especially given the rise of neo-liberal concepts of self, and participation in the global political economy. What gives, are we are still negotiating the hegemony of the coercive authority of Sahlins' big men and chiefs? 'Houses', and likewise the 'canoes' of Aneityum, continue to be relevant, even given the rise of neo-liberalism and the hyper-capitalistic activity that tourism has brought to the island.

One possible reason for the absence of 'house' literature from the Pacific may be due to the difference in indigenous categories for social groups. On Aneityum, (as on Tanna, the island north of Aneityum) the vernacular terms for social groups are *nelcau*—"canoe" in Anejom. Likewise, many of the processes that Anejom people describe of pre-European contact Aneityum social organization do parallel scholarly descriptions of 'houses.' It would be easy to argue that any pre-European form of social organization would have been obliterated when mortality rates were as high as 95-97% post-European contact (Spriggs 2007). But is it any surprise that 'canoes' are the now the central focus of the *kastom* movement on the island? While this post-colonial movement has been plagued with contradictions and limited success, maybe there is a reason why Anejom people are not accepting what the leaders ('*natimi alpas*'—"big men") of this movement are proposing. The 'traditionalist' movement has been trying to install five chiefs (*natimared*) into office since the beginning of this movement, which started in 2007. In the past, Aneityum had seven chiefs, and while today there are two, it has taken more than a decade to finally install one chief, and then the other into office. Historically there were seven 'canoes' on Aneityum—today there are nearly that many Christian denominations, in a population of around 1,400 and growing. Maybe the 'canoes' of Aneityum are revealing themselves in 'houses' after all: the '*niom-itap*'—"the sacred houses" (of God)?

This work intends to problematize the reproduction of social evolutionary types, influences first by Morgan, and later Marx and Engels—what Foucault would call 19th century political economy. The trouble is, that there is a delay in the popular understanding concerning "culture", and while scholars may have moved past the rigid socio-political stages of social evolutionary theory—this is ripe in the popular imagination. While 'houses' might be a better way to understand both ancestral and contemporary socio-political organization, big-men and chiefs are still the norm in the popular imagination, and scholarly imagination alike.

Kastom and Method

In 2004, I was stationed on Aneityum as a Peace Corps volunteer (PCV). I had committed two years of my life to serve Vanuatu, but two years quickly turned into five, and some seventeen years later, Aneityum island, and Anejom people are still the focus of my work as a scholar. The first two years of my PCV service I was a mathematics teacher at the island's only junior high school, after which I served for three years as a volunteer for the Vanuatu Cultural Centre (VCC). During the three years I volunteered for the VCC, I was stationed on the island of Aneityum and collaborated with VCC fieldworkers, Philip Tepahae (who I will refer to as Etpok-T for respect) and Frank Inhatasjinjap (also referred to as Matak-I for respect). We produced numerous short films on music, dance, games, and food, and published one book of '*kastom*' stories. I was actively involved in the promotion of the '*kastom economi*'—when the national movement officially commenced in 2007. I was a participant at its conception, and have continued to follow its progress over the years. With my fieldworker counterparts, we were all 'cultural heritage' workers, working to preserve and revive significant ancestral cultural practices on Aneityum. I must be forthcoming—at this time I was a promoter of '*kastom*', and my counterparts embraced me because I could speak from a perspective that none of them could, for example, I could speak of homelessness, hunger, and poverty in the United States, and elsewhere in the world because unlike them, I had witnessed it first-hand. I was deeply entrenched in this movement from the beginning, I naively thought that the

promotion, perpetuation, preservation of cultural heritage in Vanuatu was my life's work, until my work became too political, which I will explain in more detail in the chapters that follow.

Seventeen years later, and as my training as an anthropologist is complete, I have become more reflexive of my place in the *kastom* movement. In the early stages of my experience on Aneityum I was not critical enough of my positionality, and I did not fully understand the entanglement of local and global processes at a sophisticated level. This contrasts how I understand the movement today, as it increasingly strives to be more '*kastom*', 'traditional', 'local'—these are reactionary stances that are direct influences from the 'modern', the 'global'. For critical post-modern scholars, this is obvious, but as a young PCV, like my counterparts, I was taken with the herd of a '*kastom* consciousness'—a state that created an obsession and even an addiction to work for *kastom* causes, without fully understanding the consequences of our actions. After many year of training, and conversations with my critical advisors, committee members, colleagues, and friends, I can now say that I understand the movement from a more neutral place today, and this work is the distillation of my long experience in and around the movement as both a participant and participant-observer.

As if my long experience with the movement—first as a participant, and now as a participant-observer was not enough—there is another aspect of my method that makes me even more unconventional. During the second year of PCV service I met my wife, an Anejom woman, and we were married in the fourth year of my Peace Corps service. Even though I was fluent in Bislama, my wife and I started our relationship by communicating in Anejom, which I was conversational at the time. There were certainly some misunderstandings between us at the beginning, but speaking Anejom, and now being fluent in speaking, reading, and writing—is essential for my ability to translate everything Anejom into plain English. We now have two boys, two Anejom/Oregonian boys who have been raised in both the United States, and in Vanuatu. We speak Anejom at home, and while our children do prefer to speak English, they understand Anejom, and are comfortable speaking when in the appropriate social environment. In sum, I have never

been alone in this research, with my wife and children always by my side—well, first there was one, and then two! When my oldest child was born, and my wife pregnant with our second child, we returned to Vanuatu for a two-month stint of research in 2013, the first of two periods of research that forms the formal basis for this work. During the first stint of research for two-months from July to August 2013, I conducted research on socio-political organization for my MA paper, which has contributed significantly to chapters 2 and 3 of this work. My methods included participant-observation and semi-structured open ended interviews with 40 adults, 20 male and 20 female, ages ranging from 18-70+. In semi-structured interviews, I explored specific topics with my interlocutors, such as perspectives on contemporary socio-political formations, contemporary and historical cultural practice, categories of persons and things, and the legitimizing principles of leadership. I interviewed Anejom people living in villages as well in the dispersed hamlets emphasized by the *kastom* movement. Within each of these categories, I sampled according to denominational affiliation (Presbyterian, Catholic, Seventh-Day-Adventist), age, gender, lifestyle, and "canoe" membership. The criterion for inclusion in the project were participants who self identified as Anejom, speak Anejom, and either reside on the island of Aneityum or elsewhere in Vanuatu.

The second period of research from December 2014 to February 2016, was financed by The Christensen Fund, and again, my methods of data collection included participant-observation and semi-structured, open-ended interviews with 80 adults, 40 male, and 40 female, ranging from ages 18-70+. Participant-observation was utilized in public and private domains on the island, and was concentrated where my family and I where stationed—first, in the village of Anelcauhat, and second, in Anauonse, one of the rural enclaves, and probably the most important place for the *kastom* movement on the island. While Anelcauhat is the largest village on Aneityum, and the village with the most tourist activity, Anauonse contrasts this by not being a village at all, but an area where *kastom* is the rule—it is now a revitalized 'canoe'—*nelcau*. A decade ago the area of Anauonse was uninhabited, but recently it has been the example of the *kastom* movement, as people have begun to return to land previously inhabited by their ancestors. My wife,

two children, and I all joined this movement, living there for more than two years. From a methodological perspective I was a participant-observer during this time, but put simply, we were just living as Anejom people do, while I recorded daily field notes.

During this second stint of research, semi-structured interviews were oriented to understand what a *nelcau*—"canoe" is in contemporary understandings and practice. This always lead to a discussion concerning *natimared*—"chiefs", and other economic specialization, such as taro or kava gardening, husbandry of pigs, or fishing, but also the more modern aspect of *neclau,* i.e. cruise ships, which will be discussed below. Notably, responses emphasized the importance of the production of food to contribute to feasts. Gardening, specifically, became a topic of significance because the practice is pivotal to how one participates in a canoe, specifically by planting valued crops in the ground, and sharing this food at formal feasts or informal occasions. One might not immediately think of gardening as having the importance it does, but gardening on the land of one's canoe was expressed as the primary way one participates as a member of one's canoe. Henceforth, as I became settled with my wife and two children in Anauonse, we gardened as a daily practice, planting taro, yam, manioc and other vegetable crops. We contributed to feasts, not just in the 'canoe' we called home, but also other 'canoes'. I lived with my family on Aneityum for two growing cycles.

While gardening quickly became a focus for my research, another focus was storytelling, and music. Historically, music and dance have been important to "canoes", and many of the people I interviewed expressed this point. Today there are competing genres of music that have become more popular, in contrast to what can be called '*kastom musik*', or "traditional" Anejom music and dance—*namauyag* in Anejom. Since missionization, gospel and hymns in Christian services are common, but global popular music such as reggae, hip/hop, and other pop music are increasing in popularity. Dancing is not regularly condoned practice in many Christian denominations, such as SDA, and while Anejom people sing in church, they do not dance in church other than in praise. However, as *namauyag* has become less and less common, Anejom people still dance, but global styles of dancing, even breakdancing have become the norm. Popular

choreographed dances are performed at live music performances on the island, and regularly at feasts, marriages, birthdays, and national holidays. While this work does not explicitly focus on music, it is important to know that this was the foundations of my work on Aneityum, and has always been an area that Anejom people themselves have requested of me, namely, to help them produce music, and even film and edit music videos.

Even though it is beyond the scope of this work to focus on music, what talking about music with Anejom people often lead to in the interviews with Anejom people was a discussion concerning the *nuputoga*—"outsider", which is regularly associated with the "whiteman", and the categories of person and things associated with the "whiteman." While music and dancing is just one 'outsider' influence, one of the main differences that were expressed by Anejom was the difference in food. While this is not entirely true, it was often claimed that Anejom people produce their own food, while the 'outsider' does not—the 'outsider' purchases all of one's food at the store. This is changing today, and imported food has often become the norm, especially for those Anejom people who rely on the tourism industry for revenue—the distinction remains in how Anejom people categorize the world. Interview questions related to the 'outsider' were pivotal in understanding the 'colonial encounter', from a historical perspective, but also in contemporary practice, specifically associated with tourists. The concept of "outsider" is an important concept to understand Anejom perspectives on the "other", "modernity" and the "global", and the ways Anejom people negotiate what is categorized as not Anejom, the distinctions of which are not as clear as the uninformed observer might expect, a point which will be discussed in the chapters that follow. These lines of questioning also revealed the ways that geographical distance has significance in Anejom cosmology.

Given my positionality, it cannot be ignored that I was first categorized an 'outsider' myself. But, I must be forthcoming, I have a mixed background, as my maternal ancestors are Chinese, and my paternal ancestors, a mix of European populations. For those who are familiar with the term "haole" in Hawaiian, growing up around Pacific

Islanders in Oregon, I was always considered "hapa-haole" because of my mixed background. Anejom people were fascinated with me because I did not easily fall into the Bislama category of "*waetman*" because I have brown skin. This may have been one of the reasons I was quickly adopted as a fellow Anejom person, given the name "Natauanumu"—meaning "the help of life". When I began putting effort into learning the vernacular, Anejom people quickly accepted me as one of their own. In short, in my own experience, these categories are fluid, and while I am sometimes considered an "outsider", I am also categorized as an *elpuejom*—"Anejom person" especially as an affine, and having two Anejom children. Both my children and myself drift from category to category based on our actions and who we are perceived by, which offers unique insights into how categories or person are constructed and perceived. Henceforth, I am in a unique position to comment on the the nuances of what is means to be an "outsider" or "whiteman"—or an "Anejom person". The idea of "outsider" is relevant nearly everyday on Aneityum, specifically because of how much interaction Anejom people have with 'outsiders' arriving on the many cruise ships. I have spent many days with Anejom people as we interact with tourists, to hear their comments and perceptions of the "outsiders" in question, along with many marketplace transactions. The discussion of what the 'outsider' is—is a regular topic of conversation.

Considering my position in Aneityum society, there are advantages and disadvantages of 'being married to Aneityum.' I have an acute understanding of the workings of life on Aneityum, but, I am also associated with a specific family on Aneityum. This means that some people, with whom my wife's family is not united with —do find me threatening, and because of this some people refuse to participate in my research. This situation has given me even more insights into the processes of contemporary 'canoes', the *kastom* movement, the way people perceive me as being a '*kastom*' worker, an affine, and also a 'outsider', from the perspective of some. As I noted above, while I am more critical of *kastom* today, and the ways *kastom* is influenced by the global political economy, I am still remembered by Anejom people as a collaborator with the VCC, and the Aneityum fieldworkers. While there are some Anejom people who do

not want to work with me, there are others who share information with me like I am family—because for many, I am family, and we are part of the same 'canoe'. For example, I worked closely with the the last chief on Aneityum, whom I called grandfather—and his son, Freddie Damana is another collaborator, whom I recently produced another short film with. It is certainly challenging to be placed as I am within the many people who make-up Aneityum—there are many whom I am more comfortable spending time with than any other people in the world, and at the same time, those who dislike me, and perceive me as a threat. This is the beauty and the difficulty of being an affine, simultaneously considered as Anejom, and discriminated against as not belonging there.

Through this process I also understand the challenge that Aneityum leaders have given contemporary circumstances. While the future of the island of Aneityum is in question, for reasons that will become clear in the chapters that follow, I am comforted with the historical resilience of Anejom people. Call me biased, sure, I am also in a unique position to understand their situation—as their situation is simultaneously my own situation, my wife's, and children's as well. This should be obvious, but I must emphasize, Anejom people are not objects of scientific inquiry, rather they are my family, friends, affines, fellow gardeners, fishing and hunting partners, fellow kava planters, and kava drinking partners. I have a wealth of qualitative data about Aneityum and Anejom people that is probably too informal for scientists looking for objective truths, but my positionality gives my research special significance and importance for the island of Aneityum, and Anejom people—a group that I am a part of. This work is throughly anthropological, but also deeply personal, as anthropology has always be personal for me from the beginning.

As I have briefly illustrated above, the data that I acquired to form the basis for this dissertation was officially through semi-structured interviews and participant-observation, but given my long experience with Anejom people, the majority of the knowledge I have of Aneityum came in informal interactions, when I was not self-consciously a scholar or anthropologist—at times when I was just making conversation with friends, or taking a hike to roast food and drink kava with family members, or go fishing with my wife. More than the formal interview process, I learned what I know

about Aneityum by just letting myself become Anejom, by speaking Anejom, thinking in Anejom, dreaming in Anejom, conversations with my wife and friends, and just accepting the process—what it means to be Anejom manifests itself in my own thoughts and actions. It is difficult to quantify these experiences, and I trust that as I share these experiences in this work, while there may be more so-called 'navel gazing' than modern scholars are used to, keep in mind that while I am an anthropologist by training, I am also a husband, father, nephew, brother, brother-in-law, grandfather, and grandchild of Anejom people.

I remember the first time I saw Aneityum in vivid detail in 2004. I was sitting next to the pilot in a small plane with only eight seats as it descended down to a short grass airstrip on Mystery Island. The island was just long enough for the runway, without much room to spare. It was exhilarating to fly just feet above the lagoon, and quickly descend down to the small strip of land, the plane stopping short of the beach on the other side. After disembarking, a number of Anejom people came up to me with smiles on their faces, one put a flower lei around my neck, and many came to shake my hand. Later I strolled on the white sand beaches looking back at the mountain tops of Aneityum Island, as the Pacific breezes cooled my skin. It was a dramatic welcome, and I remember thinking to myself, "Wow, this is paradise, heaven on earth." In contrast, an Anejom man who I call *etmak*—"my father" recalled the arrival of the missionary John Geddie to me over the campfire one evening, early in my PCV service. As 'my father' told me the story he said that as Geddie was traveling around the western coast for the first time, he saw a stone oven being prepared for a human body, the parts of the which had already been chopped up and prepared for the oven. At the time, Geddie professed that 'if there is a hell on earth—that hell is Aneityum'. The goal of this work is to show the nuance between these representations of Aneityum, and reveal the obvious fact that neither of these representations are true. Aneityum is neither heaven nor hell, it is simply a small island in the post-colonial nation of Vanuatu.

As Aneityum people increasing participate in the global political economy, and the state of Vanuatu continues to promote more neo-liberal economic policies, "culture" has

been central to how Anejom people have participated in this global environment. On the one hand there is the '*kastom* movement,' which works to promote "traditional culture," and on the other, those participating in the tourist and hospitality industry, who promote "culture" in commodified, and easily consumable forms for tourists. My argument is that both of these conceptions of "culture" are two sides of one coin, that both work in tandem to create edited versions of "culture" that are far from any contemporary, scholarly, socio-cultural, or anthropological understanding of culture. Meanwhile, there are those Anejom people who do not participate in *kastom*, or tourist activities, and their lived experience and material practice on Aneityum is in line with more sophisticated understandings of culture today. This is the dynamic interplay in process on Aneityum—the simultaneous negotiation of objectified "culture" and pre-objectified lived experience as practice, and the story of Aneityum that will be described in the pages that follow.

Chapter Outline

The chapters that follow develop a critical understanding of Aneityum Island and Anejom people—the interplay between the global political economy of "culture" and Anejom life as lived experience in practice. Chapter 2 lays out the historical background necessary for understanding the global historical processes that have lead to contemporary politics of "culture" on Aneityum, and Vanuatu as a whole. This part of the story is not just about Aneityum, but also how Aneityum is placed within the scholarly, and popular imagination of others. This chapter dives into the relevant archaeological research in the Pacific, to contrast scholarly perspectives on the Pacific to colonial ones, and to understand Anejom perspectives on their own history—their historical relationship to the island of Aneityum, and other islands within the archipelago, Pacific and beyond. Specifically, this chapter forges an understanding of what a colonial encounter is, not only from the Anejom perspective, but how Aneityum has been placed within the context of the global production of "culture" in the Pacific, and the image that others have of Pacific Islanders, and why this image is being reproduced in Anejom people themselves, especially in tourism and nationalist movements. Central to this description is an

understand of how Aneityum missionary and colonial history were the antecedents of the objectification of "culture", "custom", and '*kastom*'. This history laid the groundwork for the institution of schools, education, the rise and fall of the colonial condominium government, with a specific focus of *kastom* and its importance for the unification of ni-Vanuatu identities, and now the importance of *kastom* in national politics. This includes the history of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre (VCC), and state sanctioned promotion of *kastom* as an economic and political resource.

Chapter 3 goes into more depth into the efforts of the Aneityum based VCC fieldworkers, and the emergence of the *kastom* movement on Aneityum. During the first years I lived on Aneityum, deeply involved with the *kastom* movement, there was an effort to codify Aneityum *kastom*, a codification that will be explored, and deconstructed. Furthermore, the chapter explores Anejom ideas of *natimared*—"chiefs", and considers the reasons why it has been such a challenge to revive 'chiefs' on the island, and why this has been one of the main focuses on the movement. This chapter will also dive into contemporary socio-political organization, totemic groups, totemic ancestors, contemporary Anejom subjectivity in relation to the practice of 'nomination', and the politics of 'name bestowal'.

Chapter 4 contrasts the static representations of the *kastom* movement by the leaders of the movement to the materiality of 'canoes'. Specifically to explore the material reality of what *kastom* really is like on the ground, rather than how the leaders of the movement have idealized it as such; forging a contemporary understanding of daily practice and lived experience, focusing on what it is really like to live in Anauonse—drawing on the two and a half years I lived with Matak-I and those who joined him in reviving *Nelcau Anauonse*—"Anauonse Canoe". I use this experience to contrast the scholarly and theoretical work on personhood in the Pacific, and offer materialist and semiotic perspectives on Anejom subjectivities from the perspective of practice and lived experience.

Chapter 5 concludes my argument, drawing on three analogies—kava, lobster, and Cannibal Soup—to help understand contemporary process on Aneityum. A key

theme is the contrast between the lived experience and practice of Anejom people to popular and objectified understandings of "culture", especially 'invented' culture for tourist sensibilities. It contributes to the theoretical understanding of culture as a commodity, the fetishization of culture, and the biopolitics of culture as an economic resource on Aneityum, and Vanuatu in general. As Vanuatu increasingly relies on "culture" as an economic resource, these processes have instilled radical change to Aneityum and Anejom people—nothing more extreme than the deaths of two of my closest friends and relatives—the two former VCC fieldworkers. Their deaths reveal the underlying processes of the neoliberal global economy, and the fatal ramifications of a '*kastom* consciousness' in Vanuatu, and 'heritage consciousness' globally.

"They have merely a sharpened stick, and yet their plantations are beautifully neat, and produce a good deal. They dig very deep and press every particle of earth through their hands and their plantations look as if they had been raked with the finest garden rake" John Geddie (1852)

"Here we have no capitalists, no division of labour; every man cultivates his own garden, builds his own cottage, hews out his canoe" John Inglis (1855).

II: THE PACIFIC, COLONIAL ENCOUNTERS, AND ***KASTOM***

The Anejom word *nelcau* can be translated as "canoe" or "*kinu*" in Bislama—this is the first English or Bislama term that Anejom people use to translate the vernacular word, but *nelcau* also signifies all kinds of vessels. The marine vessels are the most common use of the term, but as will be described in further detail in the next chapter, *nelcau* are also a historical form of social organization on Aneityum, and the word also signifies bounded dominions of land that once held some 1,000 people. Henceforth, a central focus for the revitalization of *kastom* on the island is the revitalization of the *neclau*. Analogous to the social vessel is the drinking vessel—*nelcau-amoñ* that Anejom people use to drink kava, a beverage that will be discussed in detail later in this work. *Nelcau-amoñ* were regularly used in the past, but recently it has become commonplace to drink the beverage in coconut shells. The change in drinking practice from a "canoe" to "shell" or even to "plastic" is analogous to the changes in social organization that have taken place since Anejom peoples first colonial encounters, and continued changes due to increasing neo-liberal economic processes, and globalization that is powering them. Change continues at a rapid pace on Aneityum, due in part to contemporary neo-colonial encounters, and the hyper-capitalistic environment that tourism has brought to the island.

As we move to explore Anejom people's contemporary understandings of *nelcau* or "canoes" as a form of social organization and why "canoes" have been pivotal to the *kastom* movement, which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter—it will first be important to sketch a history of marine vessels in the Pacific, especially in regards to the populating of the Pacific, but also the importance of place. There is considerably more ocean than land in the Pacific, and this made the islands that ancestral Pacific Islanders

were reaching central to why marine vessels were and continue to be so important. Pacific Islanders used these vessels to reach their future homes, and as contemporary Aneityum social processes reveal—marine vessels continue to be essential for living in these remote places. Henceforth, Anejom understandings of their own historical social organization have depended on oral history and "local" narratives as much as "global" narratives of "traditional" or "pre-historic" life, if it is even appropriate to make the distinction between local and global, as the division between the two can often be fuzzy. Much of this "global" understanding comes from historical scholarly literature as much as global popular narratives, which along with "local" narratives, are all playing a role in the efforts of "cultural" revitalization. Scholarly or popular images may seem distant from the Anejom perspective, as Aneityum island may seem far removed from scholarly debates, or disconnected from popular global narratives, but what is important to understand is the *kastom* movement's relationship to the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, the national museum—the national authority for all "cultural" research anywhere in the archipelago—and the economic importance of tourism for Aneityum, and Vanuatu in general. Likewise, Aneityum island is one of the premier tourist destinations in Vanuatu in the southwestern Pacific Ocean, and before the pause that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought, had been in regular contact with tourists for the last two decades. Henceforth, before I move to describing Anejom people's interactions with tourists, which will be discussed in detail in chapter 5, this chapter will move to exploring a scholarly understanding of "pre-history" and the populating of the Pacific, to form the groundwork for understanding contemporary political and economic processes on Aneityum, specifically in regards to the *kastom* movement and the tourist economy. Moreover, this discussion is essential to understanding the importance of both 'canoes' as marine vessels, and the places that these canoes allowed Pacific Islanders to reach.

When Ferdinand Magellan first crossed the Pacific Ocean in 1520-21, Europeans knew little of the vastness of the Pacific, but since the first colonial encounters up to today, there have been numerous lines of evidence that contemporary scholars have used to infer how and when this vast Ocean with thousands of islands was populated. This was

truly a magnificent feat, beginning as early as 40-60,000 years ago, the populating of the Pacific Islands commenced. This process continued for thousands of years, but as will be described below, most of the islands in the Pacific were populated more recently—in roughly the last 3,000 years. Aneityum was one of the islands that was populated in this later population dispersal. It has only been until the late 20th century and early 21st—that scholars are now agreeing on how the Pacific was populated, and although new knowledge concerning the details and complexities of this process is always being discovered, we now have a sophisticated understanding of how this process took place. Especially important to this debate have been archaeological sites in the archipelago of Vanuatu. For Example, the Teouma site on Efate, an island north of Aneityum, has yielded some of the earliest evidence of the Lapita people in Remote Oceania. Most relevant to this work is the way that ni-Vanuatu and Anejom people have come into contact with some of this material. Due to national radio programming, and community events, the Vanuatu Cultural Centre (VCC) has been actively involved in sharing this research with the public—especially of interest for Anejom people has been the discovery of Lapita pottery on the island of Aneityum. Anejom people have continued a long relationship with the VCC, even before independence—they have worked as fieldworkers, heading of land desk, working as archaeologists, and the current director of the VCC is an Anejom man, Richard Japuneyo Shing, one of my close friends and also my brother-in-law. Japuneyo is an archaeologist at heart, and was inspired by the fieldwork of Matthew Spriggs, when he studied the irrigation system on Aneityum before independence, and its relationship to social organization. Henceforth, while Aneityum may seem distant from these archaeological and scholarly debates, the leaders of the *kastom* movement are actually quite familiar with relevant archaeological studies in Vanuatu and beyond because of their close relationship with the VCC, and have drawn from this archaeological knowledge to guide them in the *kastom* movement. Japuneyo himself has also be central in advising the fieldworkers on Aneityum, in terms of the archaeological evidence of historical social organization on the island.

In terms of global, or popular narratives that are rooted in contemporary scholarly debates, one of the most important are the categories of difference between Pacific Islanders. For example, how Anejom people, and ni-Vanuatu alike self identify as "Melanesian", in contrast to Polynesian, or Micronesian. The areas of Oceania have long been known using the tripartite classification developed by Dumont d'Urville (1832)—Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia. While Micronesia—'small islands,' and Polynesia—'many islands' are not racially motivated, the term 'Melanesia' draws on racial stereotypes, with the term "mela" meaning "black"—Melanesia literally means "black islands". While this is a problematic term for scholarly literature, many ni-Vanuatu have already identified with being "Melanesian", or "*blackman*"—in Bislama, for some this includes an identification with Africa, The Caribbean, Black Americans, and popular ideas of "blackness", for example. From a scholarly perspective, the use of 'Remote Oceania' and 'Near Oceania' are more accurate ways to signify what is popularly referred to as "Melanesia". In critique of this term, the geographical area defined as "Melanesia" is an extremely heterogeneous area—as diverse as any place of relative geographical size in the world, hence, I adopt the terms "Near Oceania" and "Remote Oceania" originally proposed by Roger Green (1991). 'Near Oceania' includes the island of New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelago, the Solomon Islands as far eastward as Makira and Santa Ana. 'Remote Oceania' includes all of the Pacific Islands to the north, east, and southeast of Near Oceania. As will become clear below, the distinction between Near and Remote Oceania is not merely a geographic division, but one that encapsulates two major epochs of population dispersals in the history of Pacific. Note that 'Micronesia' does not imply a cultural or historical unity, but I do not dispense with the classification as a geographical term because it is not motivated by racial stereotypes, and likewise, I will also continue to use 'Polynesia' because it is the only term that has any cultural, linguistic, and historical significance. When I use the term "Melanesia", it will be in quotations, to emphasize the fact that "Melanesia" is a so-called distinction, but that 'Near Oceania' and 'Remote Oceania' are more accurate terms for the islands and the peoples of the Southwestern Pacific Ocean.

Archaeology of the Pacific

The first line of archaeological evidence of population dispersals in the Pacific was discovered by Les Groube (1989) on the Huon Peninsula on the island of New Guinea, in Near Oceania. The "waisted blades" were discovered on a reef terrace, and are dated from 61,000 to 52,000 years ago (Kirch 2017:55). These tools were likely used for food procurement, either used to process sago or pandanus, and may represent the early stages of food-plant promotion, leading ultimately to plant domestication and gardening (Groube 1989:302). During this time period the ocean level was—at its most extreme—100 meters lower than it is today, which means that what is now the island of New Guinea and the continent of Australia were connected and formed a larger continent called "Sahul," and north of Sahul was "Sunda,"—what is now Indonesia and Southeast Asia (Kirch 2017:58). However, between 60,000 and 40,000 years ago there were still significant open water gaps between the island of "Wallacea", which means that the first humans to cross from Sunda to Sahul needed some type of over-water transport—hence, this was likely the "…*earliest purposive voyaging in the history of humankind*" (58, italics in original). While this may seem too distant to be considered in the context of Aneityum, as discussed above, the reason for summarizing this understanding is because it is one of the narratives in how Anejom people understand their history, especially in regards to their island home. In short, as we summarize how scholars understand how the Pacific was populated, it is important to keep in mind that scholarly understandings have become a source that continues to inform the *kastom* movement.

Furthermore, according to O'Connell and Allen (2015:80), the ancestors of the indigenous peoples of modern Sahul (New Guinea and Australia) arrived on the continent around 47,000 years ago. It is unknown exactly how our ancestors first reached Sahul because there is no material record of any type of marine vessel (raft, dugout, or bark boat), however, considering the Wallacean waterways are some 200 km or more, this must have been a purposive voyage (Kirch 2017:60). The first Pleistocene dates on New Britain (Torrence et al. 2004) and New Ireland (Leavesley and Allen 1998) are both

around 40,000 years ago, while Buka in the Solomon islands is dated to 29,000 years ago (Wickler and Spriggs 1988), and Manus by at least 13,000 years ago (Fredricksen, Spriggs, and Ambrose 1993). During the Pleistocene, New Guinea was home to a range of marsupial megafauna, which are clearly visible in the archaeological record, all of which were extinct in the early Holocene (Sutton et al. 2009). The megafauna offered substantial food resources for the early settlers, but they likely also hunted smaller fauna, including birds, fruit bats, rodents, and reptiles. The more complicated question is what kinds of plant foods the first settlers were eating. Microscopic starch grains from the Kilu site (Buka, Solomon Islands) on stone tools have been tentatively identified to the aroid genus *Colocasia* (the same family as domesticated taro, *C. esculenta*), along with other aroids, raising the possibility of wild tuber gathering, along with sago palm, all of which Spriggs suggests could have been staples of the first colonists (1997:34). The domestication of the aroid *Colocasia,* specifically, has special significance for Anejom people, and especially the *kastom* movement because it is considered a *kastom* food, and has been central to the *kastom* movement. The archaeological history of plant domestication gives the historical context for understanding, not only the importance of these plants for the *kastom* movement, but also for the historical and contemporary practice of gardening of Anejom people and their ancestors. Only recently have some of these foods become *kastom,* and not all have been categorized that way.

The island of New Guinea and the adjacent Bismarcks are the probable place of origin for many tropical crops because the wild ancestors of these plants are restricted in their natural distribution to the region, among these domesticates are the *Australimusa* banana (which grow upright and have a reddish-orange fruit), sugarcane (*Saccharum Officinarum*), the tuber crop *Pueraria lobata*, the ti plant (*Cordyline fruticosum*), the breadfruit (*Artocarpus altilis*), a number of fruit and nut bearing trees: the *Canarium* almond, Tahitian chestnut (*Inocarpus fagiferus*), *Barringtonia*, and *Terminalia*, as well as several aroids notably taro (*Colocasia esculenta*), and giant swamp taro (*Cyrtosperma chamissonis*) (Kirch 2017:67-68). However, *Colocasia esculenta* may of had multiple loci of domestication. The steps to domestication and independent invention of horticulture in Near Oceania preceded the

dispersal of Austronesian-speaking peoples into Remote Oceania (Denham 2011). A likely center of domestication for *Colocassia* taro, *Australimusa* bananas, and *Pueraria* tubers is Kuk swamp in the highlands of New Guinea (Denham et al. 2003). Specifically, Douglas Yen hypothesized that *Colocassia* taro was domesticated independently in Kuk swamp (1991), and Fullagar et al. supports this claim (2006) estimating that both *Colocasia* taro and *Dioscorea* yams were being processed at Kuk as early as 10,200 years ago, although these may have been wild—it is likely that by 6-7,000 years ago *Colocasia* taro and likely *Australimusa* bananas were domesticated there. Interestingly, as will be discussed below—both of these domesticates continue to play a significant role in Anejom practice today, and *intal*—"taro", specifically, is central to the *kastom* movement. *Nalak* in Anejom, the "*Australimusa"* banana is associated with 'chiefly' leadership on the island, and it is still considered the banana of the *natimared*—"chief". In short, For 30,000 years or more the peoples of Near Oceania developed a complex human environment that is visible in the archaeological record, and this continues to have relevance for contemporary Pacific Islanders, Anejom people as a case in point.

Lapita peoples are directly related to the populations of Vanuatu, and the whole Pacific ocean—they are the first ancestors of Anejom people. The social organization, and ways the Lapita people subsisted on these islands certainly changed over many centuries, but the Lapita peoples can still offer a glimpse of how the ancestors of Anejom people, and Pacific Islanders in general concerning early social organization, and early lived experience at the time these islands were first populated. The Lapita peoples are clearly visible in the archeological record because of their distinctive earth-ware ceramics, namely, red-slipped globular vessels with out-turned rims, decorated with finely executed motifs, many representing human faces, made by pressing small toothed, or dentate stamps into the clay before firing (Kirch 2017:77). The Lapita people were seafarers, and they moved their material culture hundreds of kilometers, including pottery, obsidian, chert, oven stones, adzes made of stone and shell, flake tools of obsidian and chert, shell scrapers, peeling knives, anvil stones, bracelets, arm rings, beads, discs, needles, awls, tattooing chisels, fishhooks, net sinkers (77-8)—and likely much more that is not visible in

the archaeological record. The Lapita peoples reached the Bismarck Archipelago between 1410-1290 B.C.E. (Denham, Ramsey, and Specht 2012). The material record has painted a clear picture of the Lapita peoples, and linguistic evidence can provide us even more because we know they spoke Austronesian languages. Likewise, Anejom is a language within he Austronesian language family, one of the most expansive language families in the world, as it ranges from Taiwan to Madagascar to Rapa Nui, but the majority of the language speakers are centered in Southeast Asia and the Pacific islands. Henceforth, Anejom is one of the some thousand Austronesian languages spoken in the world today. Scholars have been able to reconstruct Lapita culture from the material and linguistic record, as linguists have been able to reconstruct the "Proto Oceanic" language (Ross et al. 1998). From Lapita vocabulary, we know they were horticulturalists, had domestic animals, and knew how to fish the inshore and offshore water, and by no surprise, they built canoes with sail and outriggers and had sophisticated navigational skills, and we know most of this circumstantially, but this knowledge is also supported by the languages they spoke.

More than 230 sites bearing dentate-stamped pottery have been recorded from the Bismarcks to Samoa, and the radiocarbon dates of this pottery allow us to track the chronology and rate of the Lapita population spread, and 'represents one of the most rapid population expansions across geographic space known anywhere in world history' (Kirch 2017:81). Around 1100 B.C.E. Lapita groups finally broke the invisible boundary between Near and Remote Oceania, which for more that 30,000 years marked the limits of human existence in the Pacific Ocean (83). The first sites in Remote Oceania are found in the Santa Cruz Group, Northern Vanuatu, and date between 3000-2700 years ago (Sheppard, Chiu, and Walter 2015). The Teouma cemetery site of Vanuatu, as discussed above, is remarkable because of the complex mortuary practices, where mortuary ritual was a multifaceted and lengthy process (Sand and Bedford 2010). Teouma radiocarbon dates are between 2920-2750 years ago (Petchey et al. 2015). The craniofacial shape of human remains from Teouma align early Lapita peoples with Polynesian and Asian populations, but later, admixture from Near Oceania ultimately

came to dominate the original phenotype (Valenitin et al. 2016). From the point of arrival into what is now known as the Vanuatu archipelago until their departure further into Remote Oceania, the early descendants of the Lapita peoples likely domesticated kava (*Piper methysticum*). There is also ethnographic, archaeological, and linguistic evidence that kava was used by Lapita peoples to communicate with ancestors and as a source of power (Turner 2012). Today there are more varieties of kava in Vanuatu (80 of 118) than anywhere else in the Pacific, making Vanuatu the most likely birthplace of kava around 3,000 years ago (Lebot et al. 1992:34-6)—from there kava was transported further into Remote Oceania, Polynesia, and Micronesia. I will return to the history of kava later in this work, to understand the role kava likely played in increased social complexity on the island of Aneityum, and more recently, the process of commoditization—how kava has become a global commodity with a demand that is overwhelming the supply, and is increasingly consumed in huge quantities by diverse populations all over the world.

The Lapita expansion out of Near Oceania to as far south and east as what is known today as New Caledonia, Tonga, and Samoa took less than 300 years—these were purposeful voyages of discovery and colonization. Lapita people crossed the 850 km gap from what is now Vanuatu to Fiji, arriving around 1100-1000 B.C. (Nunn and Petchey 2013), soon after reaching Tonga by ca. 900 B.C. (Burley et al. 2015), Samoa 900-850 B.C. (Petchey 2001), and the islands of Futuna, ʻUvea, and Niuatoputapu early in the first millennium B.C. as well (Kirch 1988; Sand 2000). Combining insights from archaeological and historical linguistics, we know that Lapita peoples were likely ranked, but not necessarily highly stratified or hierarchical, hence Kirch argues, it may be best to use the term "heterarchical" to define Lapita social organization (2017:105). Aneityum social organization has changed from the time their first ancestors first reached the island until now, but there continues to be clear similarities between contemporary Anejom people and their Lapita ancestors, such as land and marine based practices necessary for subsistence, for example.

Relative to population dispersals in the Pacific, around the same time and soon after Lapita peoples were moving throughout Remote Oceania, the geographical area of

Micronesia was also being populated. While Micronesia is distant and belongs to a different category of the the Pacific, it is important to understand how Micronesia relates to Aneityum, and Vanuatu in general, and to emphasize that Pacific Islanders had a great deal of interaction between each other before Europeans arrived on the scene. Historical linguistic evidence points to a "three-part sequence for the settlement of Micronesia" (154) because Chamorro and Palauan belong to higher order subgroups of Austronesian, meaning those islands were settled by different linguistic groups. The archaeological and linguistic evidence points to the fact that Palau and the Marianas were settled directly from Southeast Asia, likely ca. 1050 B.C. for Palau (Fitzpatrick 2003), and slightly earlier for the Marianas, ca, 1300 B.C. (Carson 2014); while Yap by Lapita peoples from the Admiralty islands beginning around 1350 B.C., the earliest part of the Yapese cultural sequence is probably yet to be discovered, and a third population moving up into the central-eastern Carolines from what is now the Solomons and Vanuatu after 500 B.C (Kirch 2017:157-8). The material culture of Pohnpei and Kosrae strongly suggest that one or more colonizing populations originated from Lapita cultures in Near or Remote Oceania around 2000 years ago (Athens 1990). While betel nut (*Areca*) is the most common psychoactive substance in much of Micronesia (Fitzpatrick et al. 2003)—along with the majority of Near Oceania—Pohnpei and Kosrae are the only two islands in Micronesia to drink kava, most likely originating from what is now northern Vanuatu (Lebot 1992:56), although today Kosrae islanders have abandoned the cultural practice after converting to Christianity.

The last stages of population dispersals in the Pacific took place in Polynesia, the only one of the three categories hypothesized by Dumont d'Urville—confirmed, for example, by archaeological, linguistic, biological, and ethnohistoric evidence. While this part of the Pacific probably has less relevance for Anejom people, I will include it to emphasize the connections between all Pacific Islanders, regardless of what category they belong to, whether so-called "Melanesia", Micronesian, of Polynesian—all Pacific Islanders are just that—Pacific Islanders. Today the languages spoken by the descendants of the ancestral populations of Maori, Rapa Nui, and Hawaii all speak closely related

languages, sharing a high degree of cognate vocabulary (Kirch 2017:188). Likewise, recent genetic studies, including DNA sequencing, have reinforced the homogeneity within the Polynesian genotype (Kayser et al. 2006). This is likely due to the "bottleneck" from the initial colonization of Fiji, Samoa, and Tonga, resulting in the founder effect (Kelly 1996; Martinson 1996). This was due to the fact that after Lapita peoples reached western Polynesia there was a 'long pause' of between 1800-2000 years before the descendants of Lapita peoples ventured into eastern Polynesia. During this time the 'Proto Polynesian' language developed, as some 1,300 lexical innovations have been catalogued (Pawley 1996, Marck 2000). Computer simulations have supported the archeological and linguistic evidence, as the 'long pause' was necessary for groups to develop the necessary navigational skills, technology—such as the double-hulled canoe—and knowledge of seasonal wind patterns—such as ENSO frequency—to successfully reach eastern Polynesia (Di Piazza et al. 2007; Montenegro et al. 2014). In particular, the recognition of "climate windows" were pivotal for Polynesian navigators to be able to reach New Zealand and Rapa Nui—two of the most distant Polynesian destinations (Goodwin et al. 2014). Unlike in how this type of navigation is represented in popular Disney films such at *Moana* (2016), this was a complex process that took many years to master.

In eastern Polynesia, the Society Islands were likely the first archipelago to be discovered by canoes departing Samoa or Tonga, as sediment coring and pollen analysis of *Colocassia* taro shows initial human presence around 1000 A.D. (Stevenson et al. 2017; see also Kahn and Sinoto 2017). On Mangaia, Southern Cook Islands, bones of the Polynesian introduced Pacific rat indicate an arrival between around 906-1180 A.D. (Kirsch 2017:200). Likewise, central and southeastern archipelagoes and the islands of eastern Polynesia have well-supported radio-carbon chronologies converging between 900-1100 A.D. (Ibid.). This includes Rapa Nui, between 1000-1100 A.D. (Steadman et al. 1994), although Hunt and Lipo argue it was settled later, ca. 1200 A.D. (2006). Likewise, paleoenvironmental evidence including bones of the Pacific rat and introduced plants argue for arrival to Hawai'i between 940-1130 A.D. (Athens et al. 2014), and the last

island to be colonized was Aotearoa (New Zealand), using bones of the Pacific rat dated by 1280 A.D. (Wilmshurst et al. 2004).

As discussed above, scholars are using multiple lines of evidence to infer as accurately as possible how and when the islands of the Pacific were first populated. In the history of the discipline of archaeology, there has been a privileging of types of material culture, such as bone, stone, and pottery—that are clearly visible in the material record. This meant that evidence such as plant matter was difficult to use. However, even though harder materials are mush easier to use, today the clear privileging of strong material has changed significantly, for example, with the use of pollen core samples, and the development of accelerator mass spectrometry (AMS) in the 1990's. Before this time it was necessary to use large samples for radiocarbon dates, of charcoal for example, but with the advanced techniques developed since the 1990's this has changed significantly. Today, small samples are used, as little as '10 milligrams of carbonized plant materials, such as individual seeds or small twig fragments can be dated directly' (Kirch 2017:199). New technologies are especially important in resolving the debate concerning the 'long pause' because earlier radiocarbon dates in east Polynesia were as old as 150 B.C. (Suggs 1961), which meant the duration of the pause was shortened up to 1000 years from what scholars are inferring now. The problem with radiocarbon dates before AMS have been remedied with "chronometric hygiene" proposed by Spriggs and Anderson (1993:211), namely, eliminating dates that do not meet strict criteria. This has been productive, and because of the changes in technology we now know the 'long pause' was more likely as long as 2000 years. During this time there was likely interaction between peoples in Remote Oceania, including what is now Aneityum island, with other islands to the north and east. We tend to separate theses areas out more than we should, and the colonial categories proposed by Dumont d'Urville reify this seperation, but we now know that there was more interaction between Pacific Islanders in Remote Oceania, for example, than we initially thought. One clear example is kava, and the importance of kava for people's outside of what is now Vanuatu. In Anejom, the word for "whiteman" or "outsider" is *nuputonga,* which is most likely due to the interactions between Anejom

people and 'Polynesians' of Tonga, for example. These interactions may have initiated changes in social complexity on the island of Aneityum, and may be the reason why Anejom people are the only people in Vanuatu to drink kava out of *nelcauamoñ*—"drinking canoes."

As discussed above, linguists are using diachronic methods to reconstruct ancestral languages such as 'Proto Oceanic,' which balances the privileging of whatever is most visible in the material record in archaeological methods. Ethnohistoric data is also important, but can certainly be less dependable the farther one inquires into the past. The rise of "traditionalism" certainly poses problematic for post-colonial social movements relying only on ethnohistoric data, for long-distance seafaring, for example (Anderson 2008). As this work will reveal, the reliance on ethnohistoric data for traditionalist movements, such as the revival of ancestral social organization on Aneityum, has faced similar problems. However, aside from this, the use of multiple lines of evidence are now offering a complex and sophisticated understanding concerning population dispersals in the Pacific and beyond. While all Anejom people certainly do not have this kind of understanding concerning populations dispersals in the Pacific, as noted above, there are a long line of Anejom men, specifically, who have been involved with the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, and still to this day, interact with scholars regularly. Matthew Spriggs, for example, is one scholar who every Anejom person knows, and who had specifically inspired the current Director of the VCC to become an archaeologist. While Anejom people and ni-Vanuatu alike may not know the specifics of much of this scholarly understanding, they are familiar with the scholarly narrative due to the efforts of the VCC.

Lastly, I would like to emphasize the importance that all scholars working in the Pacific should be reflexive about our analytic terms, as our vocabulary is being used by our research collaborators, and the general population as well. I have already discussed the problems with the use of the term "Melanesia", but another term that I find problematic that is common parlance in scholarly works, globally and not just in the Pacific, is the distinction between "prehistoric"—before European contact, and

"historic"—post European contact. This clearly privileges European and Western knowledge production as being the "truth," and "objective" reality. In my contention—this is all history, and we as scholars, but especially as archaeologists and anthropologists—should be conscious of the value judgements that are associated with commonplace analytical terms that we have used since the establishment of our disciplines. If we continue to use them, we should at least acknowledge this fact—that our vocabulary is rooted in colonial ideology. Pacific Islanders have their own theories and histories concerning how their ancestors populated these island, and increasingly as indigenous scholars become part of the research process that has long been reserved for "outsiders"—this scientific, archaeological, and anthropological knowledge it now becoming their own, and as I will illustrate concerning the *kastom* movement on Aneityum, this knowledge is being used in post-colonial traditionalist movements. It is the responsibility of scholars working in the Pacific to keep this point in mind, that as much as this is "objective" knowledge—it is also "political".

Colonial and Neo-Colonial Encounters

In the interpretation of the history of the Pacific and beyond—the difference between 'contact' and 'encounter' is an important one. The representation of 'contact' is commonplace in popular culture, a theme that is a regular thread in film and media—especially in the genres of science fiction, and action/adventure for example. The notion that some formerly isolated peoples, aliens, or 'others' suddenly learn they are not the only people in the world continues to stir popular global imagination, and tourist sensibilities alike. Contrasting the isolated peoples are those who are enlightened about the complex realities of the world, the 'civilized' ones who take it upon themselves to educate, save, or just plain exploit the isolated people's ignorance—or just exterminate them altogether. This is the well-know dichotomy between the 'colonized' and the 'colonizers' as represented in popular media. Post-colonial scholars from Said (1978) to Appadurai (1986) to Bhabha (1993) have challenged the narratives of colonial accounts of this history, a trend that continues today—in search for indigenous and subaltern

perspectives of resilience, creativity, and adaptability in the face of often brutal colonial projects. Henceforth, a more appropriate way of interpreting history is by 'encounter', namely, the mutual entanglement, and plural articulation of multiple narratives from all peoples involved.

This work will move to explore such encounters in a neo-colonial context later on—between tourists and Anejom people on the island of Aneityum and Mystery Island, but first it will be important here to explore a few select encounters between Europeans and indigenous Pacific Islanders in the past, to build an understanding of the role 'colonial encounters' have played in Pacific island history, as well as offering some context for the historical colonial encounters that took place during missionization on Aneityum, which will be described below. The focus on 'encounter' attempts to balance the privileging of European narratives with indigenous ones, but one of the challenges in this effort is the question of where to find indigenous or subaltern perspectives, when they are certainly less visible in the historical record. Partly due to the intensional suppression of indigenous voices in colonial accounts from the colonialists themselves, sometimes the only resources that are available are colonial ones. This does not mean that indigenous or subaltern voices cannot be heard, but they are just less visible, and scholars must take a critical 'decentered' reading 'against the grain' (Douglas 1999). This is the only possibility of gleaning anything from the indigenous side of the encounter. Before we move to Aneityum's colonial history, I would first like to share four encounters that took place in the Pacific before missionaries reached Aneityum, primarily to glean a sense of how Europeans were encountering Pacific Islanders, and Pacific Islanders encountering Europeans, and to consider what ideas both had of each other. First, we will start with the first known colonial encounter in what is now Vanuatu today, when the Portuguese Captain Pedro Fernandez de Quiros reached what is now the largest island in Vanuatu, Espiritu Santo.

In 1606, Quiros' expedition was equipped with two sailing ships sponsored by the Spanish monarch, Philip III, and involved between 250-300 people, including six Franciscan friars. The expedition carried provisions for a year, and seeds and animals

intended for a new settlement. The expedition first encountered the people of what is now Gaua in the north of the archipelago of Vanuatu. At first the Gauans seemed more enthusiastic than the expedition, as 'four canoes with unarmed men came and offered to take them to shore'; Quiros declined, after which the men offered coconuts and fruits. The expedition launched a smaller vessel to survey the coast in search of a safe anchorage, when they saw a man on the shore attempting to communicate with them. Those on the expedition interpreted him as asking them their origins and purpose. An unnamed Spaniard replied in Spanish—"we come from the east, we are seeking you and we want you to be Christian" (Jolly 2009:64). The Spaniards then seized the man and took him aboard along with another man, who they placed in heavy chains secured with a padlock. The men tried to escape and one nearly drowned, but they secured them and took them aboard. The men were then treated to a Spanish supper, given wine, and then placed in stocks for the night. The next morning their heads and beards were shaved, except for 'one tuft on the sides on their heads', their finger-nails and toe-nails cut with scissors, and then dressed in 'silks of divers colours', given 'hats with plumes, tinsel, other ornaments, knives, and a mirror…into which they looked with great caution'. The two men were then brought back ashore where they were received by many people, including a woman with a child in her arms, who was likely the man's wife and child. The island did not have a safe anchorage, so Quiros and company continued their journey, but before so, the Gauans gave them plantains, coconuts, sugarcane, fruit, water, and a pig.

After leaving Gaua, Quiros and expedition passed what are now the islands of Pentecost, Maewo, Ambae, and then reached the island of Santo. Due to the massiveness of the island, Quiros thought he had reached the 'Southern Continent.' They found a safe, large, and deep bay to anchor in the north of Santo, what is now known as Big Bay, Santo, which seemed like the perfect location for a new settlement. Some canoes approached the ship with armed men, and the Spaniards fired at them, and they retreated. They then attempted the same tactic that was successful with the Gauans, but with less success. Quiros reached the shore with a small party of supporters, who began surveying the area. Before long one of the soldiers in the expedition killed a man, 'cut off

his head and foot and hung the severed parts in a tree' (Jolly 2009:65). Quiros, a 'spiritual man', reportedly did not want to associate himself with such behavior, but it was too late. The local people soon sought revenge—they attacked the party with bows and arrows, darts, and stones, but Quiros' party defended themselves with guns and cannon fire from the ships and were able to retreat. The Spaniards remained at Big Bay for weeks despite continuing hostilities, established a settlement called *La Nueba Hierusalem*—'New Jerusalem'. Quiros, thinking he reached the 'Southern Continent' named the island 'Australia del Espiritu Santo', and the island is known as 'Espiritu Santo'—or 'Santo'. The island is the largest of the Vanuatu archipelago, and there are a few dozen Anejom people who live there today.

The story goes that Quiros took possession of the 'continent' in the name of the King of Spain, the Catholic Church, and the Holy Trinity. They established a church by building an alter under a canopy of trees. One convert was converted and given the name "Pedro", dressed in silks and given a cross, which he showed to everyone (67). Quiros also set up a municipal government with magistrates, justices, a chief constable, a treasurer, a storekeeper, a minister of war and registrar of mines. They made free-use of the land, plundering and taking what they wished from locals, while planting their own crops. Relations with locals quickly deteriorated, some of which destroyed the church. Quiros' party kidnapped three boys and 'converted' them to Christianity, which distressed and enraged the people. After they unsuccessful tried to retrieve the boys they tried to offer goats for the boys to be returned, but Quiros are company took the goats and left without returning the boys. Quiros then returned to Spain via Mexico (68).

This colonial encounter may seem too distant from Aneityum and Anejom people, but I share this encounter for a reason. First, it is the first of its kind in what is now Vanuatu, and second, it starkly contrasts the popular imagination of "Melanesia" being a place of 'savages' and 'cannibals'. These accounts are difficult to 'read across the grain', but we can glean a sense of indigenous agency in them, albeit very little. One can immediately sense from this account, that the Quiros expedition was uninterested in language or indigenous lives beyond conversion, and they had their own motivations to

kill, settle, and plunder. On the other side of the encounter, the people of Gaua were clearly open to these kinds of encounters, and seemed to want to make contact. Quiros was clearly looking for a larger island for a settlement, and Gaua is small and dry, and does not have the kind of resources that a larger island such as Santo has today. The Gauans were unarmed, and just wanted to establish a relationship with the newcomers. It is obvious that they were not afraid of Quiros' ship, and it seemed like they had encounters like this in the past with other islanders. I can only imagine what the Gauan men were thinking, and how confused they must have been when they were abducted by Quiros, locked up like animals, but then treated to nice meals, dressed in silks, and even given hats with plumes and tinsel! What a thought provoking encounter for the first of its kind in Vanuatu. The next encounter in Santo was not as successful, as the islanders immediately recognized that Quiros and his men were a threat. They defended themselves, but lost a few lives, one who was beheaded with his foot cut off—what a gruesome scene. It's pretty clear who were the more 'civilized' ones, and who the 'savages'—contrary to the contemporary popular imagination.

More than 160 years after Ouiros 'discovered' and named 'Espiritu Santo', on the opposite side of the Pacific, Louis de Bougainville and his men were likewise on a voyage of discovery, also for the 'Southern Continent,' which at the time was thought to be rich in gold, silver, and spices—the year was 1768 (Salmond 2009). Bougainville had left Rio de Janeiro with a crew of 220 men, and with limited cargo space, had only brought enough provisions for three months. Passing through the Strait of Magellan, they entered the southeastern Pacific. Scurvy was appearing among Bougainville's crew, and the symptoms of bowed limbs, swollen gums, stinking breath and livid ulcers were lowering everyone's spirits, but at last on the 2nd of April 1768 they saw two high peaks that were unmarked on their charts. The winds forced them to tack for two days before they reached the eastern shoreline of the larger of the two islands—what is today Tahiti in French Polynesia. There was a 'jagged amphitheater of volcanic peaks with deep valleys, glinting waterfalls, and a green shoreline covered with coconut palms, trees, and thatched roof houses.' After months at seas 'Tahiti looked like Paradise.' As Bougainville's ships

entered the lagoon, 'canoes packed with young women flocked around the ship, and the elderly local men and women stripped the girls of the bark-cloth garments, and one beautiful girl climbed aboard' (18-19). Bougainville recalls the girl dropping the cloth that covered her, and 'appeared to the eyes of the beholders, such as Venus, having celestial form of that goddess.' Salmond explains that in Bougainville's imagination, the young woman was "the goddess of love", known to the Greeks as Aphrodite (2009).

In Tahiti, women stripped to the waist in the presence of gods and high chiefs, and a high-ranking stranger was often greeted by a young girl swathed in layers of bark cloth who slowly turned around, unwinding the bark cloth from her body until she stood naked. This was a ritual presentation with no necessary implication of sexual availability (Ibid:19). From this time on, Polynesian women became mythical figures associated with ideas of a 'Golden Age of innocent desire and sexual freedom'. As we will see below, while Polynesian myths have played a powerful role in shaping early encounters such as with Bougainville, it is important to understand that Europeans were no different—seeing islanders through a 'haze of their own enchantments' (21)—both sides of the encounters perceived the other using categories that made sense at the time, and this continues to be relevant today in neo-colonial encounters. What Bougainville and his crew did not know was that Englishman Captain Samuel Wallis had reached the island around nine months earlier, and told them he would return. The Tahitians were prepared for his return, and their actions certainly reflected this earlier visit. Again, while this encounter may seem to be irrelevant to Anejom people, I am again sharing this example for a reason. As cruise ships port at Mystery Island, and tourists flock the beaches, looking back at the island of Aneityum as I did on my arrival. Many think they are in Polynesia. They often ask where they are, and the "mystery" of the island is intentional. They are arriving at Mystery Island, an island that has an Anejom name—*Iñec*, but no tourist ever hears that name or even cares. Most flock the market to purchase grass skirts and leis, putting flowers in their hair, watching Polynesian style dances by Anejom people, who are not Polynesian. There is a reason these encounters are happening today, just as Bougainville and his men thought they reached the home of the goddess Venus, this trope of desiring Polynesia

over everywhere else in the Pacific continues. These kinds of interactions will be discussed in more detail later in this work, but it is important to understand the ways the perceptions of others, and the ideal images like these are still reproduced today.

Returning to the 18th century, one year after Bougainville reached Tahiti, another voyager, Captain James Cook would arrive at Tuuranga-nui (Poverty Bay), Aotearoa (New Zealand), the following account is from the Maori perspective:

"As they crowded the beach, starting out to sea, signal fires were lit and smoke plumed up, telling the inland settlements to be on alert. No one could say for certain what it was, although when they saw the white-skinned beings it carried, they remembered their tohunga (priest) Toiroa some years before, when the spirit of prophecy had entered him, arching his back and splaying out his fingers like a lizard, singing of white-skinned people coming out of the darkness to their land…" (Salmond 1992:17).

The question Salmond poses, is at this moment upon the arrival of Cook's ships, 'how did Maori and European understand each other? Who, or what, did they think that they had seen?' (18). From the surviving record of Maori narratives of these first encounters between Maori and Europeans, they suggest that 'local people thought that Europeans were part of the world of supernatural beings rather than the everyday world of light', but before long this perception changed. Soon, instead of thinking of them as supernatural beings, they became 'goblins', and then finally, human beings, just like the Maori themselves (20). At points the Maori developed friendships with the Europeans, but at instances when they were disrespectful of the gods, they were killed. Likewise, the same transformations occurred for Europeans as well, as in the case of the Maori, they were first considered by Europeans as being savages, but this changed the longer they interacted, to realize that they were fellow human beings. Similar process took place on Aneityum between Europeans, and Anejom people as encounters with traders and missionaries became more prevalent in the 19th century, and they continue to change. Before we move to explore Aneityum's colonial history, we will quickly review one more

colonial encounter that asks a similar question of what did Pacific Islanders think of Europeans? This case study is especially important to scholarly understanding of these encounters, concerning how and why these transformations take place. Namely, "How does the reproduction of structure become its transformation?" (Sahlins 1981:8).

The debate concerning the encounter between Captain James Cook and the Hawaiians in well-known in anthropological circles. Sahlins argued that early on 'Cook's visit to Kauai and Ni'ihau in 1778, he was treated by Hawaiians as a divine appearance'. Cook would later return to Hawaii after visiting the Northwest Coast, and he did on the 26th of November 1778, but Cook did not step ashore until the 17th of January, 1779 (Ibid:18). Upon arriving he allowed himself to be lead by priests through an elaborate set of rituals associated with the Makahiki. Nearly a month later he would be dead, as Sahlins describes "it was a ritual murder, in the end collectively administered, upwards of a hundred Hawaiians rushed upon the fallen god to have a part in his death" (24). No other European death in the Pacific has sparked so much debate. Sahlins would later develop his argument even further in *Islands of History* (1985), but his argument was the same—Cook's death was a 'historical metaphor of a mythical reality' (106). Not long after this Gananath Obeyesekere would offer his own analysis in *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook* (1992)—challenging Sahlins' argument. Obeyesekere's argument interpreted this history in terms of European mythology, and instead of focusing on Hawaiian rituals and symbols, he emphasized Hawaiian pragmatics (Borofsky 1997:256). This contrasting argument 'asserts that Hawaiians did not see Cook as the god Lono, but rather he was viewed as a chief named Lono.' Furthermore, Obeyesekere has suggested that his own book is more about European than Hawaiian society—namely, it explores the distorted lens through which Westerners see Hawaiians (257)—from Obeyesekere's perspective, Sahlins is one such 'Westerner.' Sahlins responded to Obeyesekere in *How "Natives" Think: About Captain Cook, For Example* (1995), which takes the argument even further. As Borofsky points out, 'the differences between Obeyesekere and Sahlins are not necessarily that great, as it is a small step from saying that Cook was perceived as a chief named Lono to saying that Cook was perceived as a manifestation of *akua* Lono. This debate illustrates

the tension that continues today within the discipline of anthropology between the relationship between structure and agency, especially when interpreting history.

Whatever side of this debate one falls, it is hard to disagree with another aspect of colonial encounters in the Pacific that has thus far not been discussed—the large scale demographic issues, such as as introduced disease that wiped out large percentages of indigenous populations. Stannard argues that Hawai'i was clearly capable of sustaining a population many times the conventionally estimated figure of 200,000 to 300,000 and even more than higher estimates of 400,000 to 500,000 (1989:44)—and it is apparent that Hawai'i's pre-*haole* population could easily have been 800,000 to 1,000,000, and possibly a great deal more (50). Compare this with Hawai'i's population 100 years after 1778—in 1878 the population census lists 47,508. A loss of 90-95% seems outrageous, but, as Stannard illustrates, these kinds of percentages are surprisingly common (48-9). To return to Vanuatu, this kind of demographic disaster is all to relevant for the island of Aneityum, as Spriggs estimates an even higher percentage—95-97% of the population was decimated in the colonial encounter (2007). Europeans and Anejom people had their take own respective take on these encounters, but one aspect of these encounters is unavoidable. These encounters were killing Pacific Islander, and Aneityum is a case in point. Unfortunately this continues to be relevant today..

As I will discuss in depth below, the high mortality rates on Aneityum are attributed to the permanent settlements of traders and missionaries on the island, and unlike what we saw with Quiros' expedition, there are no recorded killings of Anejom people by the missionaries or traders stationed there. As will be discussed in more depth below, the Presbyterian missionaries were not the first to reach Aneityum, even though they were the ones who established their headquarters there. In fact, it was the Catholics who reached Aneityum before them, but they were unsuccessful in converting a single soul. Anejom people's accounts of the Catholic missionaries at the time was that they were always armed, carry guns with them wherever they went. In contrast, the first Presbyterian missionaries carried bibles, which intrigued Anejom people. Today, the bible is still considered by many to be a 'magical stone.' This illustrates a glimpse of indigenous

agency, which will continue throughout this work. Due to the well-documented colonial project on Aneityum, the question of indigenous agency has been explored in detail by Douglas (1999, 2002) and Jolly (1991), specifically focusing on women's agency in the missionary encounter. The Presbyterian strategy of carrying bibles rather than guns illustrates the importance of semiotic ideology in these encounters (Keane 2007), and the indigenous appropriation of European things (Thomas 1991), and likewise, the Presbyterians were also successful because they learned the vernacular, translated the bible to the vernacular, and then setup mission schools and churches in every 'district' of the island (Spriggs 1985). Unfortunately, the success of the missionary project was also the reason for such intense demographic issues.

Even with the long presence of missionaries and traders on the island of Aneityum, it is still difficult to hear indigenous or subaltern voices in the colonial accounts, which is one of the greatest challenges that interpretive historians are still facing in this effort. Thomas' *Islanders: The Pacific in the Age of Empire* (2010) is one of the best examples of this. We might not have long documented histories of Pacific islanders as we do for European explorers such as Quiros, Bougainville, and Cook, but that does not mean Islanders were not involved in this process. We do not know anything about the boys who were abducted by Quiros's expedition, but they were not the only Pacific Islanders to travel with Europeans. For example, Cook's voyages enabled islanders to get to know each other, Pacific peoples such as Tahitians and Maori who are ancestrally linked, but who likely had negligible contact for centuries were reintroduced (Thomas 2010:18). It is unfortunate we do not know more about these relationships, for example, on Cook's first voyage he met a man named Tupaia, a Raiatean priest and navigator who joined Cook's crew and was one of the reasons Cook was so successful in exploring Polynesia. Tupaia had an immense knowledge of the islands of Polynesia, and even though he was never explicit about it, Cook certainly relied upon Tupaia's knowledge for the success or his expeditions. It has been reported that Tupaia was so influential that the Maori thought he was the captain of the crew, unfortunately, he never reached England nor returned home, as he died on the expedition (19).

Considering the lack of resources in the effort of interpretive historical analysis, it is a welcome addition for archaeologists to join in this multi-disciplinary project (Flexner 2014). This complements the multiple lines of evidence that archaeologists are using to contribute to an area or research that needs more attention. Outcomes of colonial encounters were variable, and while the Pacific faced intense demographic issues, mortality rates were even higher in the Caribbean (Deagan 1988), but this has not stopped archaeologists in exploring these early encounters to understand indigenous agency of these encounters in the Caribbean as well (Honeychurch 1997). Like in the Caribbean, the Pacific received a massive influx of European settlers, and many islands still remain under colonial governance (e.g., Hawai'i, New Caledonia, Guam, American Samoa, French Polynesia, Federated States of Micronesia). The nations that did earn independence (e.g. Vanuatu, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea) are still facing the challenge of how to define themselves in a post-colonial context. Likewise, Australia and New Zealand are themselves settler societies, where the descendants of the ancestral populations are living side-by-side with European descendants. The time is ripe to continue to explore colonial encounters, as they increasingly have relevance in the Pacific and beyond today.

Kastom

Vanuatu is a Y-shaped archipelago of eighty-three islands[2] approximately 900 miles east of northern Australia. In 2016, the population of Vanuatu was tallied at 272,459 people —204,710 (75%) living in rural areas and 67,749 (25%) in urban areas (2016 Mini Census Report). At that time, Aneityum's rural population was officially 1,402 people. The total landmass of the Vanuatu archipelago is 12,190 square miles dispersed over a distance of 530 miles—from Hiu, the northernmost island, to Aneityum, the southernmost island. Aneityum is oval in shape and about 61 square miles in area. It stretches about 10 miles by 8 miles at its longest and widest points respectively, and reaches 2,795 feet at its highest peak. The Vanuatu archipelago is spread over such a vast

[2] Not all of which are inhabited.

expanse of ocean that Aneityum is geographically closer to the Loyalty Islands of New Caledonia[3] than it is to most of islands in the Vanuatu archipelago. This makes Aneityum[4] physically closer to many islands outside the political boundary of Vanuatu—a colonial artifact that has no intrinsic meaning to the Anejom people.[5] The most common language spoken on Aneityum is Anejom, an Austronesian language that is unintelligible to speakers of other Austronesian languages in Vanuatu.[6] Bislama (the *lingua franca* of Vanuatu), French, and English are also spoken on the island, and today these three languages are the official languages of Vanuatu.

In 1768, Louis de Bougainville reached the archipelago and named three islands: Pentecost, the Isle of Lepers (Ambae), and Aurora (Maewo)—but only the Pentecost name is currently in use today (Jolly 2009:74)[7]. Bougainville only reached the northern islands of the archipelago, and the southern islands—such as Aneityum—were yet to be discovered by European explorers. This changed in 1774 when Captain James Cook travelled throughout the archipelago, which he named the New Hebrides, a name that continued to be used until Vanuatu's independence in 1980.[8] Cook reached as far south as Tanna—the island north of Aneityum—and although he did not reach Aneityum he could see it from Tanna. After conversations with some local Tannese, Cook named it "Anattom" (Forster 1996:34), and the name—with a different spelling (Aneityum)—

[3] And Hiu to the Santa Cruz Islands of the Solomon Islands.

[4] And other islands such as Hiu.

[5] Or other ni-Vanuatu.

[6] For example, the languages of the southern islands, such as Tanna, Erromango, (West) Futuna, and Aniwa (Aneityum's closest neighbors) are not intelligible to the Aneityumese, and vice versa.

[7] Pentecost island is also known as 'Raga.'

[8] Even though, as Miles argues, the islands have little resemblance to the Hebrides of Scotland (1998:15). From this point on I will use 'Vanuatu' to signify the archipelago, even though this name was not in use until independence.

continues to be in use today.[9]

Whalers and traders followed the first explorers to Vanuatu in the 1820s, when they exploited the islands for sandalwood and sea cucumbers (Shineberg 1967:16). The traders established themselves on Aneityum, where sandalwood grew wild—establishing a trader network that brought the commodity economy to Vanuatu. In 1844, Captain James Paddon built a sandalwood station and trading depot on adjacent *Iñec* islet—or "Mystery Island," as it is currently known to the thousands of tourists who call on the islet by cruise ship each year. As time passed, *Iñec* and various stations on the main island of Aneityum were used as whaling depots (Spriggs 1985:25). Captain Paddon is said to have bought the island of *Iñec* for "an axe, a rug, and a string of beads" (Shineberg 1967:100). However, many Anejom people question whether the island was ever officially 'sold'. Many argue that the 'gifts' Paddon offered simply gave him access and usufruct rights to the island. Given this history, Aneityum was one of the first islands to be introduced to the commodity economy in Vanuatu.

During this time, *Iñec* was not the only island with a contested transaction history, as there was no formal system to legally purchase land in Vanuatu, but *de facto* purchases still occurred—at least from the perspective of the purchasers. Van Trease argues that the purchases made during this time were questionable and that the land bought had imprecise boundaries (1995:7). Those who intended to purchase land on the coast would simply wait in their vessels until local people would paddle out to their ship; then they would urge these local people to put their 'signature' on a piece of paper, in return for which they were given a small amount of trade goods. The ni-Vanuatu who participated in these purchases clearly had no idea they were alienating their land, and today there continues to be a widespread belief among ni-Vanuatu that "the sale of land was not possible in pre-contact land tenure systems" (Van Trease 1987:3, Sope 1974:7). At that time, as Aneityum cultural history attests, ni-Vanuatu did not yet think of land as an

[9] Cook also named other islands in the archipelago, names that are still used today (i.e., Efate, Tanna, Ambrym, and Ambae) (see Jolly 2009:57). As I will discuss below, the name 'Aneityum' is only half of the island, and the other half is 'Inpekeretinpeke.' The whole island is also known as 'Keamu,' and this name continues to be used, specifically on Futuna and the northern islands of New Caledonia.

object to be alienated. Rather, in my interpretation, the ni-Vanuatu involved in these sales thought of themselves as establishing relationships through exchange, and sharing use rights—something that occurs in Vanuatu to this day. This is not an exchange of commodities, but rather a 'gift-exchange' through which relationships are made and sustained.[10]

Aneityum was not only one of the first islands in the Vanuatu archipelago to be introduced to the commodity economy but also the first island to be missionized in Melanesia. The first missionaries to arrive were French Catholics, who landed on Aneityum on May 14, 1848. But their stay was short lived, and by 1851 they closed the mission having had little success in converting any Anejom people to Catholicism (Monnier 1987:7). However, almost simultaneously another missionary was having greater success on the island: Presbyterian Reverend John Geddie. Geddie arrived with his wife Charlotte on July 29, 1848—only 76 days after the French Catholics first arrived (ibid.). Four years after Geddie's arrival, on July 1, 1852, another Presbyterian missionary named John Inglis joined the Geddies (Garrett 1982:173). Inglis, who was also accompanied by his wife, set base on the north of the island, while the Geddies stationed themselves in the south. Together Geddie and Inglis succeeded in translating the Bible into Anejom, the vernacular, and within eleven years they were said to have converted most of the Anejom population to Christianity (Monnier 1987:8). One of the keys to their success was establishing a small printing press to produce the newly translated Bible (ibid.: 9), and establishing schools in every district of the island to teach the Anejom people to read the Christian text (Spriggs 1985:24).

During this process of missionization, Anejom people continued to speak their vernacular, and the missionaries found it successful to first learn Anejom, and use it to convert Anejom people to Christianity. Christianity was explained in vernacular terms within the framework of the Anejom worldviews, a relevant variable to the Presbyterian

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[10] In a gift-exchange of land, the landholder offers usufruct rights to another entity (person or group). The proprietary rights of the landholder are not transferred to this entity, and the landholder is not alienated from the land. If the entity accepts this gift, it cannot then offer usufruct rights to another entity without prior consent from the landholder.

missionaries' success.[11] However, the Anejom language was one of the few areas of Aneityum pre-colonial life that the missionaries did not seek to change. The conversion of many Aneityumese led to profound changes; for example, competitive feasting (*nakro*) and war were banned, along with "cannibalism, polygamy, widow strangling, burial at sea for commoners, kava drinking, and tobacco smoking" (Spriggs 1985:36). There were not only intentional changes to the population that the missionaries sought to enforce, but there were also unintentional ones as well, such as the epidemics that ravaged Anejom people. As noted above, the regular contact with traders and missionaries devastated the island population due to these epidemics. It is estimated that 95 percent of the Aneityum population died from post-contact diseases (McArthur 1974: 8), reducing the population from nearly 6,000 to less that 200 people at its lowest point in the 1940s.

There were not only demographic changes and shifts in lifeways during Aneityum's colonial history, but also changes in the way the Anejom people thought about their own ways of life, which were negatively valued by the missionaries and denigrated as 'custom,' the word that is the etymological root of the contemporary term '*kastom*'. Lissant Bolton argues that this was also common across the Vanuatu archipelago, as the process of missionization was crucial to the development of the formal category "*kastom*," which was for many years opposed to the term "*skul*" (school), a word that refers to "the whole missionary project of education" (Bolton 2003:10). Hence, the negative valuation of the word 'custom' "was part of the missionary discourse from the beginning" (ibid.). Bolton suggests that the development of *kastom* as a category was "principally the effect of missionary endeavor, the reification of islander ways of living as a category that could then be opposed to European practices conveyed in a package with Christian beliefs" (ibid.:12). For this reason, the term *kastom* was negatively valued by ni-Vanuatu for

[11] Use of vernacular was certainly not the whole story. It is possible that one church was more attractive than the other because of different belief systems or concepts of the individual and community. The Catholic and Presbyterian missionaries also acted differently to the Anejom people, for example, the Catholics carried rifles, while the Presbyterians carried bibles. Anejom people did not see the Presbyterians as a threat of violence. From the Anejom perspective, the Presbyterians were carrying *inhat* ("sacred stones"), something Anejom people valued as well.

many years, and this negative valuation would continue until their push for independence from two colonial powers: Great Britain and France.

In the late nineteenth century both Great Britain and France became interested in colonizing the whole Vanuatu archipelago, but their policies differed. At that time, the British were well established in the Pacific region, and their policy in Vanuatu did not favor acquiring more colonies, "especially where the expense of administration could not be easily offset by substantial economic development" (Van Trease 1987:35). However, the French had a more aggressive policy, as they had a vested interest in strengthening the position of French settlers, and validating their land claims. During this time, both countries were in direct competition for power and influence in every region of the world —not just in the Pacific. Hence, even though their policies differed, both countries came to an unusual agreement: that both nations would exercise custodianship over the archipelago. This dual custodianship of the archipelago was established in 1906, and was named the "Condominium," a term designating the joint British and French administration (Van Trease 1987:44). A key area of administration was land, as the resolution of land disputes between Europeans and indigenous ni-Vanuatu was one of the key areas that motivated the two colonial powers to compromise.

The Condominium government established a system for dealing with land claims called the "Joint Court," which consisted of "three judges: one British, one French and a third appointed by the King of Spain, who was to act as the president" (ibid.:49). The Joint Court had jurisdiction in land matters and paid particular attention to registration of the European land claims. The French, in particular, "had insisted on fixing rules and conditions to guide the Court in registering land, but only where European interests were at stake" (ibid.:50). The British felt strongly that the two countries had a "moral responsibility to safeguard indigenous interests"—clearly more so than the French—but both countries shared the attitude that "it was inevitable and indeed right that the more 'civilized' nations of Europe should come to dominate the rest of the world" (ibid.:52). For this reason, not a single ni-Vanuatu won a dispute in the Joint Court. In effect, the court was simply a system established by the Condominium to register European land

claims. Hence, the Condominium was created to provide the "legal machinery for processing the claims of those who alienated land from customary owners" (Rodman 1987:2). The Condominium provided a mechanism for Europeans to gain title to land and the authority necessary to enable them to develop their holdings. It is clear that the land registration system worked to the advantage of the European claimants because it limited the ability of indigenous ni-Vanuatu to defend their rights, as they had no right to challenge the legality of land transactions (Van Trease 1987:53). However, starting in the 1960s, land would become the most important political issue in Vanuatu and the catalyst for the nationalist movement that would eventually carry ni-Vanuatu to independence.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Great Britain and France were divided in their goals for future development of the archipelago. The British wanted to amend the protocol regulations of land registration, but France disagreed—they were primarily interested in protecting the registered titles of its nationals. Van Trease argues, "The maintenance of the French community in Vanuatu was vital to France as part of its goal to influence and control the future of Vanuatu" (1987:220). The British emphasized the need to provide the country with a manageable infrastructure and to educate ni-Vanuatu for independence, but the French were more interested in staying in Vanuatu—and they were willing to create rivalry among ni-Vanuatu in order to achieve their goal (Van Trease 1995:17). The French expanded their education system with the hope of creating a French-speaking majority that would lead to more pro-French votes. In addition, the French government paid the ni-Vanuatu extremely well with the intention of enticing them into a level of consumption that would exceed what an independent country could afford, hence, creating a dependence on France that would make independence unthinkable (ibid.:18).

Beginning in the 1970s, the number of land disputes between ni-Vanuatu landholders and Europeans increased, and the land issue became the focal point of an emerging nationalist movement to "challenge the Condominium structure and force the joint powers to instigate political change" (Van Trease 1995:28). Through the 1970s, the support for the nationalist movement increased, but this divided the Francophone and

Anglophone ni-Vanuatu. The nationalist movement was led by the Vanua'aku Pati[12], which was founded by an English speaking Anglican priest, Father Walter Lini, who sought—as part of his strategy to unite ni-Vanuatu in the struggle for independence—to reverse the negative connotation of *kastom* in the minds of his fellow citizens. Lini linked land with *kastom;* he claimed, "Land is the root of *kastom*…To deny customary owners their land would be to deny *kastom*" (Bolton 2005:71, from MacClancy 1983:303). Christianity was obviously not part of pre-colonial cultural practice, but as an Anglican priest, Lini claimed that Christianity and *kastom* were not contradictory—and both had a place in contemporary Vanuatu society.[13] This point will be considered in greater detail in chapter 4, namely, the role of Christianity in the Aneityum *kastom* movement.

Due to the success of the nationalist movement, the British, willingly, and France, reluctantly, agreed to disband the Condominium and to grant independence (Bolton 2003:21). On July 30, 1980, Vanuatu was declared an independent state, and Father Walter Lini became its first prime minister. Some Francophone ni-Vanuatu vowed not to cooperate with an independent government headed by Anglophones of the Vanua'aku Pati. Many Francophone ni-Vanuatu believed the country was not ready to separate itself from French support, and they were skeptical of the role of *kastom* in the country's future. In national discourse, before the independence movements of the 1970s, *kastom* was primarily a way of talking about and classifying certain negatively valued practices and beliefs. For many Christian denominations, "*kastom* was negatively valued" and associated with the "time of darkness" into which "the light of the Gospel had now shone" (Bolton 2003:11). However, according to Bolton, "the independence movement overturned this

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[12] This was first called the 'New Hebrides Cultural Association,' which was changed to the 'New Hebrides National Party' before settling on the Vanua'aku Pati

[13] It is interesting to note that many of the most important leaders in the Vanua'aku Pati were clergymen, for example, Lini was supported by three Presbyterian pastors: Sethy Regenvanu, Willie Korisa, and Fred Timakata, who all became ministers after independence (Van Trease, personal communication). This is an example of how the churches had done the most to educate ni-Vanuatu leading to independence, and how the colonial government education was clearly inferior to what the church was offering–at least in terms of political and leadership skills. Even Francophone leaders were linked to the church, for example, Father Gerard Leymang and Vincent Boulekone had trained for Catholic priesthood, but they both later entered politics (see Van Trease 1987:214).

negative evaluation" and the identification of *kastom* "as the characteristic that made local people different from expatriates…in turn acted upon the way in which *kastom* itself was understood… *Kastom* came to indicate the practices and characteristics that distinguish ni-Vanuatu from other people" (ibid.:24-5). However, for many ni-Vanuatu today, while *kastom* is a term that has a positive valence and is defined in opposition to foreign "culture," there are many who have no desire to return to the ways of *kastom*. Furthermore, just as *kastom* was revived for political reasons at the time of independence, *kastom* continued to be perpetuated and revived for political and economic reasons. As noted in the introduction, *kastom* has become one of the most important economic resource for nation state of Vanuatu.

In national discourse, '*kastom*' is often conceived as "*history, kalja, mo tradition blong manples*" (history, culture, and tradition of the people of a place) (Taylor 2008:19). This "tripartite phrase" was popularized throughout Vanuatu following the incorporation of *kastom* into national radio programming, arts festivals and various contexts associated with the Vanuatu Cultural Center (Taylor 2008:10). Recently, over the last decade, new local meanings have accrued to the term *kastom*, a phenomenon that can be partially attributed to the efforts of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre (VCC). Each year the VCC organizes a fieldworker conference, in which male and female VCC fieldworkers from all over the archipelago gather to discuss *kastom*, a place where indigenous fieldworkers learn a shared discourse on *kastom*, one that they can share with their home communities. The yearly fieldworker meetings is a reason why *kastom* has now come to signify a "ni-Vanuatu way" or even 'Melanesian way', as it did in the past. The meaning of the term *kastom* was vague in national discourse until influential ni-Vanuatu leaders such as Ralph Regenvanu, the former Director of the VCC and now Minister of Foreign Affairs, spearheaded efforts to appropriate *kastom* as integral to social stability. The first effort to revive *kastom* came in 2007, which was declared the year of the '*kastom* economy,' an economy that focused on indigenous agricultural practices, gift exchange, and pre-European "culture." Since 2007, the VCC has led efforts to strengthen indigenous lifeways—specifically, indigenous food production—with the goal of promoting national self-reliance and food sovereignty. The

Anejom *kastom* movement being just one example of the numerous *kastom* movements that were spearheaded during this time. These were not grassroots movements, but rather, movements that were in line with national political and economic priorities. The initial focus on the '*kastom* economy' has evolved into the revival of ni-Vanuatu leadership structures and social organization, as the years of 2013-2015 were declared the years of '*kastom* governance.' This revival of *kastom* leadership is a continuation of an effort that began before independence to give indigenous leadership national relevance with the establishment of "The National Council of Chiefs" in 1977, which was later renamed "Malvatumauri" (Bolton 2003:19).

Regenvanu was pivotal to Vanuatu state-building efforts in appropriating *kastom* in national politics[14], as Regenvanu is now the minister of Foreign Affairs. '*Kastom* movements' vary from island to island, but a clear example is the effort of many Anejom people, such as Etpok-T and his son-in-law Matak-I, who have been integral to the traditionalist movement on the island. From a national perspective, the Aneityum '*kastom* movement' is grounded in the idea of *kastom*. Early in this movement, Matak-I defined *kastom* as '*nedou anpeke*', meaning 'the way of the island.' For Matak-I, *nedou anpeke* was a contemporary political philosophy grounded in the value of island-based lifeways, particularly the value of language, place, and land given human embodiment. This philosophy was generating dynamic negotiations and re-negotiations involving contemporary understandings of empowering indigenous traditions and practices. However, there was a shift in Matak-I's discourse, as he moved away from thinking about the movement in Anejom terms, and resided to using *kastom*, and even the English word "tradition." One of the reasons for this change was when Matak-I began relying on *kastom* for economic priorities, starting a *kastom* village tour for cruise ship tourists, a lucrative initiative until 2015. This lucrative business came to an end when Cyclone Pam changed the shoreline at the *kastom* village, and made it impossible for tourists to reach the shore, which will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

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[14] For more recent efforts see McDonnell (2014).

As Akin, whose research focuses on *kastom* in neighboring Solomon Islands argues, "*kastom* ideologies and activities are formulated in terms of empowering indigenous traditions and practices" (2013:300). Likewise, in Vanuatu, ni-Vanuatu understandings of historical ancestral traditions and practices are empowering contemporary '*kastom* movements' throughout the archipelago. The effort to revive the *kastom* economy, and now *kastom* governance by the VCC, has clearly fueled the *kastom* movement on Aneityum. While Akin argues, "most '*kastom* movements' do not portray themselves as against the government *per se*, but rather as an alternative to it, as a means to interact with it from a position of autonomy and equality" (2013:341). This may have been the case in the Solomon Island, and while the VCC often appears to be an alternative to the national government ministries, for example, this separation is surface-level at best. While the Aneityum *kastom* movement sought to cultivate a position of autonomy and equality in terms of self-sufficiency—materially in terms of food production and politically in terms of indigenous leadership—it was not opposed to 'development,' and was still in line with national political and economic priorities. While the Aneityum *kastom* movement may appear to openly resist 'Western development,' the movement still depends on the VCC, "cultural" tourism, and global cultural caretakers such as UNESCO, and The Christensen Fund for financial support. While the initial goal of the *kastom* movement was to find an alternative path to Western development, a closer investigation reveals the unintended reproduction of initially unwanted global influences.

Furthermore, not all Anejom people are supporting the *kastom* movement and today they are divided in their opinions concerning the relevance of *kastom* in contemporary Aneityum life. Some are *kastom* traditionalists, and others are pro-development, with many occupying positions in between those poles. What both sides share is a discourse of *kastom*, and the reproduction of perspectives on their own "culture" that are not their own. Anejom people are embroiled in a debate about the direction of its future, a debate that has its roots in the colonial past and continues in the post-colonial present. Aneityum's *kastom* traditionalists believe that global forces should be resisted, but they also unintentionally reproduce these influences in the movement itself. While the

traditionalists may appear to have not given in to the pressure to modernize and develop, they continue to stray away from vernacular understandings of their own lifeways, in search for national and global legitimacy. Anejom people are in the midst of a dynamic negotiation and re-negotiation of *kastom* with their imagined understandings of historical ancestral practices and traditions. While traditionalists seek to actively make changes in their society by encouraging people to engage with their ancestral knowledge and resist the temptations of globalization, the movement has revealed how difficult this effort has been.

In the next chapter we will explore some of the challenges this movement has faced, first in Etpok-T's untimely death, and then second, Matak-I's shocking, and even more premature death. Both of their deaths can only be understood in context with the Aneityum *kastom* movement, and their seemingly lifelong opposition to 'Western development,' and specifically, to increased neo-liberalism in Vanuatu, and the dependence on "culture" as an economic resource. Likewise, "culture" is not the only economic resource associated with *kastom*, but as I have illustrated above, land is the most important material resource, and the "ownership" of land is determined by *kastom* itself in the constitution of the nation-state. Lissant Bolton argues, "The alienation of land was a key stimulus to the independence movement, and the reallocation of land to the people of the place was one of the key points of the new nation's constitution" (Bolton 2003:71). At independence in 1980 the "Land Reform Act" was passed, which stated that all alienated land be returned to the rightful custom landowner (Naupa and Simo 2008:91). Also, at points 71 and 72 of the constitution, it declares "all land in the Republic belongs to the indigenous owners and their descendants" and "the rules of custom shall form the basis of ownership and use of land in the Republic" (ibid.). At independence land alienation was banned in Vanuatu, which means that today land cannot be alienated *per se*—it can only be leased. The maximum rural lease is set at 75 years, but the number of years is negotiable under that number, while in urban areas the length is negotiable up to 50 years. However, the word "lease" is misleading because today it is unclear what will happen when these leases expire.

Joel Simo—an Anejom proponent of the *kastom* movement who previously worked for the Vanuatu Cultural Centre as the head of the "Land Desk"—argued that since independence new laws have been introduced that contradict the constitutional mandate to return land to custom landowners (Simo 2010:42). For example, the "Alienated Lands Act" of 1982 makes it difficult for customary landowners to reclaim any land they may have leased in requiring that the customary landowner "gradually pay compensation for improvements to the property made by the alienator" if they are to recover it (Naupa and Simo 2008:91). Thus, "land will not be returned unless the costs of development are paid in full" (Portegys 2007:2). During the years of the *kastom* economy (2007-8), Simo travelled throughout the archipelago to create awareness concerning leasing and *de facto* alienation of land. On the island of Aneityum I joined Simo to support this effort, and together we travelled to around the island to educate Anejom people concerning the problems with leasing. Today, the fact that leases may become a permanent *de facto* alienation has become one of the key points of motivation for the *kastom* movement on the island. Most Anejom people—and ni-Vanuatu in general—would find it difficult to cover the costs of a small hotel, luxury resort, or residential subdivision much less pay for pricey improvements leases have made on their land.

Simo argues that what is happening in Vanuatu today is repeating the "expropriations that took place before independence" (Simo 2010:42); it is a system of land registration, privatization, and commodification of land that has been catastrophic for many ni-Vanuatu.[15] For example, 56.5 percent of the coastal land of Efate has been leased from custom landowners (Justice for the Poor in Vanuatu 2012). Coastal land is especially valuable because beaches, reefs, and water rights fall within land boundaries and when coastal land is leased, the custom landowners and their respective communities lose access to valuable marine resources. Landowners are not the only people who lose access to alienated land, but also the kin and affines of the owners, who are freely given usufruct rights in practice.

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[15] The recent land reform legislation in Vanuatu seeks mitigate these social impacts by 'radically altering land dealings and providing improved protection of custom owners' rights in customary Land' (see McDonnell 2014).

Today, the proponents of the *kastom* movement, such as Simo, and formerly Matak-I and Etpok-T, were aware of this situation, namely, that the threat of alienation is a contemporary issue hidden behind the term "lease." Until [date], 21.3 percent of Aneityum land was under lease (Justice for the Poor in Vanuatu 2012), a figure that confounded all the Anejom people I talked to, who had no idea such a high percentage of their island had been leased. Since then, Simo was able to dissolve this lease, and while the leases were no longer held by a foreign entity, they were connected to one of the 'development' projects on the island, the 'Aneityum Forest Timber.' This lease has now been dissolved, one of the few successes of the movement. Before Simo took it upon himself to dissolve this lease, a large percentage of Aneityum land had been leased without Anejom people's knowledge or consent. This is due in part by the ease of land registration established by the Joint Court before independence, which has formed the basis for the land registration system in post-colonial Vanuatu. The leasing of Aneityum land demonstrates how not all Anejom people agree that leasing is problematic, or even know they are leasing their land when they sign paperwork they don't understand. Henceforth, Anejom people are still in the midst of a debate that centers specifically on land rights and the leasing of land.

Today, the Aneityum population is divided between *kastom* traditionalists who appear to resist globalization and neoliberal influences, and those pro-development persons who support neoliberal processes, and have largely profited from their engagement with the commodity economy. This polarity is common elsewhere in Vanuatu, as many ni-Vanuatu citizens have adopted neoliberal values to modernize and develop and have leased their land. Likewise, the Aneityum population is divided between those who resist leasing their land: the *kastom* traditionalists—and those who entertain the possibility of leasing: those who are pro-development. However, as will be argued in this work, both are deeply influenced by neoliberal influences, even when some are attempting to resist them. In the face of the tendencies of many ni-Vanuatu to commodify land, *kastom* Anejom people are adamant that their island community should resist the temptation to embrace global and neoliberal values, and they encourage all non-

traditionalists to follow the Aneityum '*kastom* movement' for the good of their island community. Unfortunately, this effort has been a laborious, and lead first to the untimely death of Etpok-T, and currently, a health epidemic that has engulfed much of the population, including the former leader of the *kastom* movement, Matak-I, who passed in 2021, while I was in the midst of finishing this work.

One of Matak-I's first motivations to lead the Aneityum *kastom* movement was found in their origin story, which describes a kinship relationship between land and people. From the perspective of Anejom people like Matak-I, leases are *de facto* alienation because they sever the relationship between the Anejom people and their first ancestor. In my conversations with him long before he died, he expressed the fact that when one leases the land, the land becomes something that can be transferred from one person to another, essentially a commodity, even though he did not use that word, but what he was describing was the impossibility to commodify a kinship relationship. Although it is true that not all Anejom people adhere to the *kastom* movement, the dominant ideology of this movement is that land is not a commodity, and people are connected to the land, or more specifically—place. Place is inalienable and must be looked after by the 'landholder'—the custodian of the land, and it is one's right and responsibility to look after one's place. This was Matak-I's motivation to move to Anauonse, and revive *Nelcau Anauonse*—The Anauonse Canoe. Following this logic, the landholder has the power to grant usufructuary rights, but he or she cannot alienate (or lease) the land because "ownership," or more specifically "stewardship" is not transferable. For people like Matak-I, land rights cannot be transferred because—as their origin story attests to a kinship between person and place—a person experiences one's body as being 'intertwined' and intimately connected with the land through a kinship relationship, a 'mutuality' between person and place. Alienating the land would essentially be alienating a piece of oneself.[16] However, sometimes land is alienated without one's consent. Analogous to the diabetes that ultimately took Matak-I's life, he had no desire for his foot to be amputated, and as the

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[16] And likewise, using the language of "lease": leasing the land would be leasing a piece of oneself.

sore on his amputated leg never healed he met the same fate as Etpok-T. Today, Matak-I and Etpok-T are both gone, the two former VCC fieldworkers. How could this have happened? Both Etpok-T and Matak-I were living examples of *kastom*. What were the underlying reasons why they died in the way they did, both taken from us before anyone was ready. What went wrong? What fatal underlying forces lead to their deaths?

What, then, was being promoted by *kastom* Anejom people like Etpok-T and Matak-I? Accounts vary concerning historical ancestral practice and knowledge on the island of Aneityum, and in the next chapter I will give an overview of Aneityum *kastom* as obtained in conversations with former VCC fieldworkers Etpok-T and Matak-I, and other proponents of the *kastom* movement. While the leaders of this movement emphasized the importance of *kastom*, they were not insisting that people return to an ahistorical past of 'grass skirts and penis wrappers'—this was not part of their vision, but they were however, requiring people to return to an ahistorical structure of *nelcau*—'canoes' that was highly contested. As will be described in detail in the next chapter, following *kastom*, the places where people belong are determined by 'nomination' and the associated practice of 'name bestowal,' which according to *kastom*, emplaces actors evenly over the landscape within a geographical 'structure' that covers the whole island. In this system, actors are dispersed over the landscape. Today, given the demographic decline on Aneityum in the past, many Anejom people do not organize themselves according to this system of emplacement. Many Anejom people live clumped together near villages, in Anelcauhat, Umej, or Port Patrick, for example, where there are churches, stores, and schools. From the perspective of the leaders of the *kastom* movement, this form of social organization is *nedou itoga*—literally "the way of the outsider"—for some, an unwanted colonial artifact attributed to dramatic change in the cultural landscape. However, for others, they have no intention of moving away from villages, especially Anelcauhat, where the *nelcau* of the *itoga* would visit, once every three days. What was clear in my conversations with people like Etpok-T and Matak-I, was that they clearly had an agenda, and that agenda was deeply concerned with place.

"Do the missionaries interfere in the civil affairs of the island? I have no hesitation in saying that we interfere, so far as to instruct the natives how they may govern themselves."
John Geddie (1862)

"The globalising hegemony is to be found in *structures of common difference,* which celebrate particular kinds of difference while submerging, deflating, or suppressing others."
Richard Wilk (1995)

III: THE ***KASTOM*** MOVEMENT

The late Kaumi PhillipTepahae, a man I call *etpok*—"grandfather", and who I have been referring to as Etpok-T (for *Etpok* Tepahae—"Grandfather Tepahae"—for respect), was a former Vanuatu Cultural Centre (VCC) Fieldworker, and one of the first proponents and leading examples of "*kastom*" on the island of Aneityum. As discussed in previous chapters, my Peace Corps Volunteer service was from 2004 to 2009, and the last three of those years I was a volunteer for the VCC—specifically tasked to promote the '*kastom economi*'. I spent many hours discussing *kastom* with Etpok-T at his two homes, one in Uje (near Anelcauhat) and the other in Anpeke (near Port Patrick). When I was around him, Etpok-T loved to talk *kastom*, and it was a central focus in his life—an obsession even. I distinctly remember him telling me early in 2009 at his home in Anpeke: *Watika ri ago tanitai irai naca ujou a elputakes, pu upni.*—"If the younger generation does something with our work, it will be good." This simple statement did not strike me as surprising when I first heard it because Etpok-T often talked like this, but these words continue to haunt me —now for over a decade. Unknowingly at the time, that was the last time I would see Etpok-T, and some of the last words he would say to me.

I met Etpok-T in 2005, and over the next four years we would collaborate on a number of projects with Etpok-T's son-in-law, Inhatasjinjap (or Inhat for short), and who I have been referring to as Matak-I (*matak* Inhat—"Uncle Inhat"—for respect). Matak-I had already assumed Etpok-T's responsibilities as the VCC fieldworker.[17] As a PCV, my job description was to support the VCC's effort to perpetuate and renew significant *kastom*

[17] Etpok-T and Matak-I are related, as Matak-I is married to Etpok-T's daughter, and calls him *Matak*–'uncle' or 'mother's brother'. Matak-I's father is also the brother of Etpok-T's wife, which perfectly follows the logic of binary cross-cousin marriage, which will be discussed below.

practices on Aneityum and strengthen the transmission of *kastom* knowledge. With the collaboration of Anejom people around the whole island, we produced documentaries on food production and children's games, recorded Anejom music in "traditional" and "contemporary" styles, and transcribed Anejom oral history. One such project lead to the co-publication of the book *Inyupal Uja Nisvitai Uhup* (Wood and Inhatasjinjap 2009), a collection of children's stories in the Anejom vernacular, to promote literacy in Anejom and *kastom* knowledge in Anejom youth.

The last time I saw Etpok-T I was passing his Anpeke residence during a full-day walk around half of the island, as there are no paved roads on the mountainous island and transportation is invariably by foot, canoe, or boat. I can remember the scene vividly. Etpok-T and I were sitting on the beach near his house. I was resting after a half-day walk in the sun. We talked about music, storytelling, and our collaborations concerning *kastom* over the previous four years. In particular, we discussed Anejom *kastom* music and the ways that it differs, but also has continuity with contemporary styles. At the time I was currently filming music videos of contemporary music on the island with Nalveio, a talented musician who is well-known nationally. He made the point that he was open to the changing styles just as long as the newer 'contemporary' styles took into account the older *kastom* styles, which Etpok-T had taught to Anejom children for many years. Teaching *kastom* music and dance to Anejom children was a central focus of his, and I assisted him by recording it in visual and audio form. The teaching of *kastom* music is just one example of how Etpok-T made it his life's work to educate the next generation in the teachings and ways of *kastom*. For this reason, I consider him a "traditionalist," a "*kastom* man"—one who believed that there is value in ancestral traditions, knowledge, and who actively promoted *kastom* to younger generations and adults alike. During our last conversation I unknowingly told him that our progress was only the beginning and that I would return to Aneityum in the future to continue where we had left off. He looked pleased and reflective—and then he made the statement that begins this chapter. As I noted above, it was normal for Etpok-T to talk like that, but what happened next was far from normal—a week later Etpok-T was dead.

Anejom people were shocked by Etpok-T's death, and over the course of a decade since his death, people are still talking about it. The first narrative that I heard immediately after his passing, was that he performed "*uwuñtap*," an Anejom word for "suicide." Numerous people I talked to argued that Etpok-T clearly performed *uwuñtap* because of where he was found, namely, at a small plot of land on the north of the island —the place of a long running land-dispute between Etpok-T and some of his closest relatives. The dispute eventually reached the Supreme Court of Vanuatu in the early 80's, and will be discussed in more depth at the end of this chapter. In short, Etpok-T lost his rights to the place where he was found, and his cousin was awarded rights by the highest court of the newly independent nation-state. Etpok-T talked to me often about the court's decision and argued that the court's decision was against Aneityum *kastom*, and that he and his descendants should have the right to be there. Even after two decades at the time, it was clear to me that Etpok-T had not let the pain of the land-dispute and court's decision go, and he was still trying to find closure. This was clearly a place where Etpok-T felt he belonged—deep within him. He clearly wanted a house and garden there because he was working by himself for many weeks before his death. Furthermore, this was first considered an *uwuñtap*—"ritual suicide", because he had told one of his grandsons to meet him at that specific place the next day, but that was not all. He had also given all of his *kastom* writings to this same grandson at that time; notebooks that Etpok-T had been using to transcribe *kastom* for over two decades—stories, music lyrics, all of his writings—he just handed them to his grandson, and told him to meet him in the garden the following day. When his grandson arrived the next day he found his grandfather's dead body, badly burned. Etpok-T had apparently heaped dry 'wild cane' over himself and ignited it. His body was so badly burned that his grandson immediately ran for the nearest help. The people who came had long been at odds with Etpok-T because of the same land dispute.[18] But, when they saw his corpse, their discord was quickly set aside. They immediately wrapped him in a *napevak* (pandanus mat) and buried him, not far from

[18] The group who found Etpok-T were not the primary disputants in the land dispute. The primary disputants will be discussed later, and they had been at even greater odds with Etpok-T.

where he was found. Etpok-T's wife, children, and all other grandchildren—other than the grandson who found Etpok-T—did not see his corpse before he was buried.

The severe burns on Etpok-T's corpse obviously had something to do with his death, but those Anejom people I talked to immediately after his death claimed that the fire did not kill Etpok-T, but following the practice of *uwuñtap*, the 'god' or 'deity' (*natmas*[19]) of that area did—and only after he was burned. They say that the ritual practice of *uwuñtap* requires the person committing *uwuñtap* to drink half a portion of kava, and pour the rest on the stone of the deity, or eat half of a portion of food and leave the other half on the stone. After the deity has shared the kava and/or food, the 'deity and person become one,' which meant that in Etpok-T's case, his existence in this 'visible' world was transformed, and his corpse lay dry with no life. However, his *nesgan* —"soul-body"[20] was now free of its *nuhun*—"shell"[21]. It is said that his soul-body is not dead, but rather, now exists in the 'invisible' world, a world that surrounds all of us. His presence now permeates the area where he committed *uwuñtap*, and even though he is not seen as he was before, his presence is still felt by everyone who ventures there.

Over the course of the time I worked on Aneityum as a Peace Corps Volunteer, I spent many days and nights with Etpok-T, often staying the night at his home in Anpeke, sharing kava and food while he would share story after story in the vernacular. At first I understood little, but Etpok-T never spoke Bislama to me, and after time I slowly understood more and more in Anejom, and then began transcribing the stories from recordings we made together. Etpok-T's death came as a shock to everyone who knew

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[19] *Natmas* is a word that was commonly used during the time of missionization to signify the other 'beings' who lived with Aneityumese on the island, 'beings' who were rarely seen, but whose presence were felt everywhere. Matak-I told me that the word is a combination of *natimi* ("person") and *mas* ("dead"). However, a '*natmas*' is not a 'dead-person,' nor an ephemeral spirit, but rather, an embodied deity that has many human characteristics. The deities are human like, but are notably different in some way. Some are described as 'walking dead' with holes through their body, some as beautiful and exotic vixens, or men with huge genitalia. Inhat says that in the past each particular '*natmas*' were referred to by their distinct names, and the general term 'natmas' was not commonly used.

[20] This term means 'soul' and 'body.'

[21] literally the leftover coconut scrape after milking the coconut.

him, as he was, like many ni-Vanuatu elders, steeped in knowledge of Anejom history, and worked many years as a fieldworker for the VCC to sustain and revive *kastom*—it was central to his life's work. Over the years I lived on Aneityum, I developed a close relationship with Etpok-T, and worked with him for many years supporting his effort to sustain and revive Aneityum *kastom* for future generations. That is what he taught me and wanted me to pass on, and I still feel that responsibility—and this work is my way of passing his message on, albeit probably in a different way that he had in mind. His last words were still ringing in my ears, and I am still faced with the question: Why did Etpok-T's life end in this way? Was it intentional or unintentional? His death is still a mystery to many Anejom people, but the answer to this question begins with the importance of land, but more specifically place—for Anejom people.

In recounting the history of Anejom people and their relationship with the island of Aneityum, specifically the "ground" or "soil" of the island, Matak-I told me a *kastom* story (*inyupal*) that I had referred to in the last chapter, but did not do into detail. In this 'origin story', Anejom people are said to descend from the *nopothan*—"ground". 'Ground' was the grandparent of 'Moon' and 'Sun,' and Ground raised these two siblings. In this sibling set, the Moon was the sister and the Sun the brother. The story goes that one day Moon and Sun were bathing together at river Ijepdav when they felt the desire for each other's naked body. At that moment they engaged in sexual intercourse, and their subsequent offspring were the first Anejom people. Today, sexual intercourse between siblings on Aneityum is prohibited by 'taboo' (*itap*) and is considered an act of incest. In this worldview, the 'ground' (*nopothan*), or 'soil' of Aneityum, is the first ancestor of Anejom people—an understanding that creates a 'mutuality of being' between those who know this story to be true. The *nopothan* ("ground") is not gendered, and he/she is referred to as *etpok*—"my grandparent." In the previous chapter we explored how this relationship between land and people had fared over Aneityum's nearly two centuries of colonial history, specifically with how *kastom* now determines the "custom owners" of any plot of land in the nation-state, and Etpok-T's death should also be understood in light of these politics and global pressures.

Today, not all Anejom people feel a connection to their island in the way suggested by the story of the Ground, Sun and Moon. The idea of interconnectedness with the island and the indigenous lifeways that flow from that interconnectedness are threatened by global systems of value, such as neoliberal economic policies promoted by the state of Vanuatu, and globalization that is powering it. A powerful neoliberal concept that has emerged over the course of Aneityum colonial history is that land is an object and commodity to be exploited—a new conception that was introduced by the first European traders and reinforced later by the colonial government, which considered indigenous conceptions of land and customary land tenure as impeding modern development, progress, and civilization (see Van Trease 1987:52). As discussed in the previous chapter, the colonial history of Aneityum and Vanuatu resulted in land alienation by foreign entities and the loss of ni-Vanuatu land rights became commonplace, a trend that unfortunately continues today, even with ni-Vanuatu efforts to enact reform.

As discussed in the previous chapter, at independence, land was to be returned to indigenous ni-Vanuatu on the basis of "custom"—*kastom* in Bislama. From that point on, '*kastom*' was ingrained in the constitution, and became legally tied to the most important material and 'tangible heritage' for ni-Vanuatu—land. For the outsider, *kastom* is most obviously visible in tourist activities and performances, such as *kastom* dances, music, and other activities, for example. Cultural tourism has become an important economic resource for Vanuatu, and is increasingly encouraged by the state—a trend in many post-colonial nations in the Pacific, Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and in the Americas—as "culture" continues to become an important economic resource globally, but especially small post-colonial nations trying to find their niche in this neo-liberal economy. While *kastom* is increasingly being developed as an economic resource marketed specifically for tourists and outsiders, the commodification of *kastom* has included land—as many tourists/outsiders are not only looking for a holiday, but a place for a holiday home, or an investment opportunity. It is commonplace for tourists and outsiders to inquire about land, and even make offers on the spot for millions of vatu (tens of thousands of USD),

just as the first Europeans did before independence. *Kastom* has become a national obsession, and one that any ni-Vanuatu concerned about their birthright is perpetually conscious of, or even obsessed, as Etpok-T clearly was.

'***Kastom* Consciousness**'

'Kastom' is the condition for the possibility for indigenous ni-Vanuatu to be self reflective of their own "tradition", "culture" or "heritage", a process that can be described as a "*kastom* consciousness" or a 'heritage consciousness' more generally—that is becoming more pronounced as people rely on *kastom* as valuable economic and political resource in the global neo-liberal economy. Cultural heritage in general, and more specifically *kastom* in Vanuatu—is a transformative agent playing a role in creating new forms of complete and incomplete subjectivities, what I describe as "*kastom* consciousness"—a process that fundamentally re-orients and 'edits' cultural practices to contemporary political and economic priorities. While this work focuses on *kastom* specifically, it is relevant to the broader discussion concerning 'heritage consciousness' globally (See Scher 2016 and 2007). Especially during the national years of the *kastom economi*—*"kastom* economy", for example, when the state of Vanuatu was promoting *kastom* for economic reasons, and later during the years of *kastom governans*—*"kastom* governance"—Anejom people were embroiled in a debate concerning what their "*kastom*" actually was. As I continue to return, the key figures in any discussion concerning *kastom* on Aneityum was Etpok-T, and his nephew Matak-I. Matak-I specifically, spearheaded the recent '*kastom*' movements on Aneityum, building on the foundation that Etpok-T had started in the 80's and 90's. Since Vanuatu independence, a number of *kastom* movements have formed, not surprisingly, central to these *kastom* movements were issues concerning land.[22] '*Kastom'* has been a central issue of national identity politics, and can be understood as a body of lore that "defines differences and marks boundaries among competing groups," and at the national level, it is used to signify "a largely homogenous past that owed nothing to alien cultural

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[22] For example, the Nagriamel movement on Santo (see Van Trease 1987:127). It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore all of these movements, but rather to focus on the '*kastom* movement' on Aneityum, the '*kastom* consciousness' that is driving it.

forms and…the basis for a pan-regional 'Melanesian way'" (Tonkinson 1982:302). This conception was important for unifying the nation at independence, and while *kastom* is still considered homogenous in national popular imaginations, a critical analysis reveals an increasing emphasis on difference, and specific types of diversity, while submerging others.

Today, even though *kastom* may be marketed to tourists as something that creates national cohesion, or used as a 'transcendental signifier' in national political debates as something that all ni-Vanuatu have in common—it is actually extremely heterogeneous. Throughout the archipelago, there are many different *kastom*(s), not just one. Even on the island of Aneityum, there has been an attempt to codify *kastom* by people such as Etpok-T, and Matak-I. A process that I became involved in. What continued to be true about most *kastom*(s) is that while they are vaguely defined in both local and national contexts, *kastom* is usually conceived as different from, and in some respects opposed to, modern Western culture. In this way, *kastom* is strongly influenced by the foreign—as it ideally defines a 'way' that was and is in opposition to foreign ways, when in reality, there are many 'foreign' elements to *kastom*, a point that is central to the thesis of this work. In short, *kastom* refers to contemporary ni-Vanuatu understandings of historical ancestral practices and traditions, which are often conceived in opposition to the practices and traditions of 'modern Western culture,' but actually re-produce 'modern Western culture' through its opposition, for example, development, progress, and modernization are all implied in *kastom* through this opposition. The study of *kastom* is necessarily historical and points toward change within the cultural landscape.

Aneityum experienced extreme change over the last 150 years. The greatest change was the 'demographic disaster', discussed briefly in the last last chapter, when 95 percent of the population died from post-contact diseases due to the unceasing contact with Europeans, such as missionaries and traders. Before these colonial encounters, Anejom people were dispersed over the landscape, living in rural hamlets placed at a distance from each other. Today the landscape has changed, as the majority of Anejom people live in the villages of Anelcauhat, Umej, and Port Patrick. A minority of the

population live scattered along the coast between these villages. No one lives in the interior or the island, although there are some temporary settlements developing. Anelcauhat is the largest village and has a population of about 700 people (approximately 50% of the population on the island). It is located on the southwestern coast, adjacent to the largest harbor and the islet of *Iñec,* or 'Mystery Island,' which protects the harbor and the village from the open ocean. Umej is the second largest village with about 300 people and is located on the southeast; it also has a large bay, but does not offer the same protection for marine vessels as Anelcauhat does. Port Patrick is the smallest village and is the only village located in the north; it has a population of about 200 people and also a harbor, as the name describes. The Aneityum population is currently tallied at about 1,400 people and growing.

Anelcauhat was the first village established by the missionaries and formed the base for the Presbyterian mission, headed by Reverend John Geddie. Anejom people settled in Anelcauhat when Geddie and his family encouraged the population to move from their isolated hamlets to the village, which offered church and health services, education, and access to commodified goods. The remains of John Geddie's house, office, and printing press still stand in the village. During Geddie's time, Anelcauhat was the site of the largest Presbyterian church on the island. Today, the largest Presbyterian church of Aneityum is still in Anelcauhat, along with two Seventh-Day-Adventist churches, and one Catholic church. The village has an Anglophone primary school and an Anglophone junior high school, many stores offering market-based commodities, and the largest health dispensary on the island. Anelcauhat offers the greatest opportunity for participation in the cash economy and market-based subsistence because it has two 'projects' that provide salary wages, and avenues to easily spend one's income.

The two primary sources of income generation for Anejom people is through tourism and timber. Formerly the 'Aneityum Tourism Project' (ATP), is now Mystery Island Tourism Holding Limited (MITHL) is supported by landing fees from cruise ships that arrive on average once every three days (before the Covid-19 pandemic), such as P&O, Carnival, America Holland, and Royal Caribbean cruise lines. The cruise ships do

not visit the island of Aneityum, but rather they call on the islet of *Iñec*, or 'Mystery Island,' which is a short boat ride from Anelcauhat. Mystery Island is also where the Aneityum airport is located. When the cruise ships visit, MITHL organizes a market where Anejom people take part in a number of jobs, for example, braiding hair, selling locally cooked food such as lobsters and fish, *kastom* dancing, and security for all of it. The MITHL also rents stalls where Anejom people sell souvenirs and cheap trinkets, mainly items they import from Chinese businesses in Port Vila—the capital of Vanuatu, but locally made handicrafts such as shell necklaces and earrings are becoming more common. Some Anejom people have opened small businesses, such as a coffee shop, kava bar, fire walking, a "cannibal soup" attraction, and one offering sail-canoe rides. The most lucrative businesses are "tours", which transport groups of tourists for snorkeling on the reef, visiting John Geddie's old residence and printing press, or *kastom* village, for example. The *kastom* village is the most obvious, but most if not all of these tours have some element of *kastom* or "culture" to share with tourists in an easily consumable form. These activities will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 5. In short, tourism has become the greatest economic resource for the Anejom people, and *kastom* being one of the most popular attractions.

Another economic opportunity on Aneityum, but far less lucrative than tourism is the "Aneityum Forest Timber" (AFT), a small forestry project that harvests plantations of introduced Caribbean pine planted before independence. The Caribbean pine grows well on Aneityum's alluvial soil, and has now begun to grow wild and cover the Aneityum landscape. In some places the seedlings look like grass. The majority of the prime harvested timber is exported to the capital of Port Vila, while Anejom people use the lower quality timber for local house construction. The AFT always struggles to make a profit, and at best breaks even, or gets bailed out by MITHL. As discussed in the previous chapter, the land was previously leased by a British expatriate, and returned to the "custom owners" after independence. However, due to the fact that the lease covered some 20% of the island, there were numerous "owners", and not just one. This lease was successfully dissolved by Joel Simo, during his time working at the Land Desk at the VCC.

For many years it was unknown that this land was formerly leased, but it has now become clear that the colonial government supported the initiative to plant the Caribbean pine, and the land was registered with few Anejom people's knowledge. The plantations of Caribbean pine cover a large portion of the island. As noted above, Anejom people, and ni-Vanuatu in general, are still unclear about the conditions of many of these leases. On the northern shore of the island lies the village of Port Patrick, which was also formed during missionization. After John Geddie stationed himself in the south in Anelcauhat, John Inglis stationed himself in the north in Port Patrick. Early in the village's history it was the Presbyterian mission's north station. Today, the village is small and scattered; there is an Anglophone primary school, a small health clinic, and a few stores, but the village is not as centralized as the other two villages. There are fewer economic activities in Port Patrick in contrast to Anelcauhat, and people who live there tend rely more on land-based lifeways and agriculture. However, many Port Patrick residents often travel to Anelcauhat on the days the cruise ships call on Mystery Island, bringing food for the local market, and some spend weeks or months in Anelcauhat working for the MITHL or AFT. The village is more dispersed than Anelcauhat, and many people still live in rural hamlets, even though they say they live in Port Patrick. There are multiple church denominations in Port Patrick, namely, Presbyterian, Assembly of God, and Seventh-Day-Adventist.

The village of Umej, the second largest village on Aneityum, formed when the original Anelcauhat village fractured immediately before independence. The Francophone members of Anelcauhat vacated in political protest, as they did not support independence and wanted France to continue joint colonial rule. At this time, the village of Anelcauhat was aligned with the pro-independence Anglophone Vanua'aku Pati (VP), while the village of Umej supported the Union of Moderate Pati (UMP), which was Francophone and pro-colonial (see Morgan 2008 for an overview of the political parties

in Vanuatu)[23]. The village of Umej is still Francophone, and has a Francophone primary school that is connected to a French Catholic church. The village also has a Presbyterian church, a health clinic, and a few stores. Like Port Patrick, Umej does not offer the level of economic opportunity like Anelcauhat does, and people from Umej also travel to Anelcauhat on cruise ship days to take part in the market on Mystery Island, and like everyone else, some spend extended periods of time working for MITHL or AFT.

Modern/*Kastom*

The common justification that most Anejom people give for residing in one of Aneityum's three villages is church, education and/or access to money. In all villages, Christian church services are constant, and require the faithful to participate on almost a daily basis. Seventh-Day-Adventists meet on Saturdays, and all other denominations meet on Sundays, but there is a constant schedule of activities organized by every denomination during the week. The other reasons for living in the village—education and money—are related because education requires school fees, which means people must have access to money to pay those fees. As noted above, the greatest opportunity for income generation is in Anelcauhat, and the people from Port Patrick and Umej regularly travel there to participate in the market economy. Today, Anejom people living in villages have not returned to the places where their ancestors once did because they have followed, from the perspective of *kastom* traditionalists, *nedou itoga*— "the way of the outsider," which includes sending their children to school, finding ways of earning income via the market economy, and paying school fees. Today, the majority of the Aneityum population live in villages, which contrasts the dispersal of 'the way of the island,' or what has been promoted by the "chiefs" of Aneityum or *Intasalep,* known nationally as the "council of chiefs", but most importantly, *kastom* traditionalists such as Matak-I. Matak-I has been the biggest promoter of the distribution of people over rural hamlets that lie at a

[23] It is important to note that the Anelcauhat/Umej, Anglophone/Francophone divided was mapped on to a historical and ancestral structural opposition between the Sunset/Sunrise moieties, which will be described below. Even today, the Sunset moiety tends to be more Anglophone, while the Sunrise moiety is more Francophone.

distance from one another rather than concentrating the population in one place, as in villages, and he set the example of this way of life, which will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter.

Anejom people who are on the other side of spectrum, and who I describe as "modernists" have little reason to permanently return to their rural hamlets because they have adopted different values. There is an emerging class of neo-liberal entrepreneurs who value development, modernization, and participation in the global market economy. Likewise, those who depend on a more capitalistic life, clearly do not value 'the way of the island' as people like Matak-I promote, or have much interest in practicing island-based lifeways. This does not mean that modernists have renounced *kastom*—far from it, they actually depend on it. To say that those who are "modern" are anti-*kastom* is actually a drastic misunderstanding. Considering the foundational place of *kastom* in the constitution—those who need land to "develop" must still claim knowledge of *kastom*. If one wants to succeed in the market economy, a good place to start is land. The contemporary neo-liberal entrepreneur, must also claim *kastom* for the sake of his or her modernity. Those that do are not so different from the scholarly imagination of the "Big Man", as the Sahlins described it back in the 60's—'thoroughly bourgeois, and free enterprising individual.' In general, it just depends on how influenced one is by global pressures, how much of a neo-liberal subject one has become, individuated, neo-colonially subjectivized—in varying levels of 'consciousness'.

The current national education system poses a problem for Anejom people who want to return to 'the way of the island,' not only because of the money needed to pay for school fees, but also because it physically separates Anejom people from the materiality of the island. One can argue how this process slowly engulfs some into the neoliberal system, described by Althusser as 'interpellation'—a process of neoliberal subjectivization, namely, the process of learning how to market one's embodied self as a business, and increasing one's embodied market value for the global economy. I often hear ni-Vanuatu parents say they are paying school fees now, for their children to win a salary job and income in the future. What this often instills is the centrality of the

“market”—to purchase goods rather than produce them oneself. Gardening may seem like a leisurely hobby for many in the ‘Global North’, but for many in Vanuatu it is a way of life—one that takes years of training through one’s upbringing. It is not only the land-based activities that one learns from one’s elders, friends, family that is important to an island-based livelihood, but also the process of kinship to place, the soil, and the land. Henceforth, the neo-colonial education creates neoliberal subjectivity in varying levels of completion, it really depends on how alienated one becomes from the ‘means of production’. The fact is that most educated Anejom people, or other ni-Vanuatu for that matter, have spent years away from the island in boarding schools on other islands. The highest level of education Anejom children can reach without having to leave the island is Year 10 at Aneityum’s bi-lingual junior high school, which supports both Anglophone and Francophone students.

Teruja Junior High is one of the few bi-lingual schools in Vanuatu, and it was just recently established around 2003, and I was one of the first teachers when I arrived in 2004. I taught math for two years before ‘extending’ to work with the VCC. Hence, before 2003, if an Anejom person wanted to pursue higher degrees past Year 6, they would have had to travel to other islands. My wife is a case in point, as she left the island of Aneityum after Year 6, and would only return for holidays until she reached Year 12. Today, Anejom students will travel to other islands for a degree past Year 10, which does not seem as extreme, but a closer look at the underlying ideology of boarding schools reveals something more appalling. In boarding schools across the nation-state it is prohibited to speak indigenous languages or Bislama, and students are forced to speak English or French. I do not know of one single school—elementary to high school—that allows students to speak their vernaculars. Far worse than that—they actually suppress it. This is reminiscent of the ‘residential’ schools for indigenous children across the globe. Today, ni-Vanuatu are still regularly punished when they speak indigenous languages from their home islands—being smacked by a ruler across the hands, or weeding the school grounds as one’s classmates watch on, or even digging up a small tree with one’s bare hands. Hence, educated Anejom people have been taught that island-based lifeways such

as gardening is a punishment for not meeting the standards of education. It is an inferior subjectivity to depend on the land. The subjectivity that was being instilled is that one should depend on the neo-liberal market, and the monetary system of the neo-colonizers. Henceforth, many educated "Big Men" and "Big Women" have adopted values that do not include island-based lifeways, but at the same time, claiming authority over Aneityum *kastom* as well. From the perspective of the neo-liberal subject, island-based lifeways are what people revert to when they do not succeed in school and are unable to modernize, develop, or civilize.

Today, although the majority of the Aneityum population live in villages, Anejom people are still connected to their rural hamlets on the basis of *kastom*—the geographical structure reproduced through the practice of 'nomination' and more specifically, name-bestowal, a practice that will be described in depth below. 'Nomination' by name-bestowal was important to how land was transferred in the past, and that continues today. Likewise this practice has been central to the *kastom* movement on Aneityum. In 'nomination', names 'emplace' people to where they belong, and grant them the rights and responsibilities to reside there. These places are often contested, and people often disagree about where they belong, or where other people belong. For example, Anejom people who are profiting from market-based lifeways in Anelcauhat often make the argument that they belong in Anelcauhat, either by primary or secondary affiliation (described below), while also claiming they belong in a half-dozen other places on the island as well. When I asked a friend how this could be the case, and how one person would claim they belong everywhere—he did not say anything, and just gestured with his hands by reaching as far in front of him as he could, bringing his hands together, and squeezing his hands into his body. I interpreted this as him showing how some Anejom people are grabbing at all they can get. This is the reason there are so many land-disputes on Aneityum. Not because there is not enough land, but too much land. Who deals with all of these land-disputes before they reach the Supreme Court, as in Etpok-T's case? *Intasalep*—the highest political authority on the island, and an 'invention' rooted in missionization and Aneityum's colonial history.

In 1854, John Geddie sought to unite all the chiefs and different groups on the island and he encouraged the chiefs to form a "united government for the suppression of crime and the good of society" (from Spriggs 1981:6.5). Geddie's model was 'one church, one government,' and in its early years the Anejom people followed this model, and the 'united government' was unified under the Presbyterian Church. However, this 'one church, one government' model started to erode as Anejom people began embracing different denominations of Christianity over the course of the last 150 years. Today the 'united government', which is now called *Intasalep,* is no longer united under one church, but rather, is attempting to unite under one island, with a half-dozen churches. *Intasalep*—the antecedents of which was rooted in the instruction of John Geddie, is now the political foundation of the *kastom* movement, lead by people like Matak-I, who are striving to fulfill the national objectives of the VCC. *Intasalep* and the *kastom* movement are not anti-Christian and they are still united under Christianity, however, Christianity on Aneityum is extremely heterogeneous, which has posed problems for the unity of the movement. The *kastom* movement is explicitly pro-Christian, but the leaders do not specify what denomination of Christianity must be followed because there are many. One of the greatest challenges of the movement has been to unite Anejom people who identify with a number of different Christian denominations. Anejom people strongly identify themselves as Christians, specifically as the first island to receive 'the light of the gospel' in "Melanesia"—the place of 'darkness.' Since *kastom* continues to oppose the '*skul'* of Christianity, each denomination has its own position on *kastom,* some more syncretizing than others. Some denominations flat out oppose *kastom*, while others interweave *kastom* in practice. Some still decry or outlaw *kastom* as sinful and consider it an offense to God, and cite *kastom* as the principle reason why the country is backward, underdeveloped or even lacking civility. I have even heard ni-Vanuatu joke that this underdevelopment is biological, and joke that *blakman, blak brein*—literally "black people have black brains". For

this reason, many Anejom Christians support 'modernization' and associate 'development' with the light of the gospel that brought them out of darkness.[24]

The word *Intasalep* literally means "language to care for until it is ready", and evokes the process of *Intasalep* itself, as a continuous discourse that never really ends. Likewise, *Intasalep* meetings include a syncretism of Christian hymns and prayers to begin and end each meeting, but also kava drinking to conclude each day. Kava was banned by the missionaries, but Anejom people have reintroduced it into formal meetings such as *Intasalep*—one obvious reason to Anejom people, is that kava is one of the motivating factors for representatives to attend *Intasalep* meetings at all. The *Intasalep* meetings ideally take place every month in a different *nelcau* of the island, but in practice only take place half that time as best. Representatives from all areas of the island regularly attend the meetings. *Intasalep* settles land-disputes, or at least tries to, and also settles other conflicts, such as the theft of food, domestic violence, or infidelity. When I first started attending *Intasalep* meetings in 2005, any Aneityum adult—man or woman—were free to attend. In fact, at this time *Intasalep* encouraged every adult Anejom person to attend when the meeting was being held in one's vicinity, and on average there were around 25-50 people at *Intasalep* meetings, but attendance has declined in the last decade. There was a shift in *Intasalep* from 2005 to 2015 from previously including women, to now explicitly excluding them. For Anejom women, understandably, this change has been a controversial one. With good reason, women have been critical of what the men are actually doing at these meetings. Women are only included when *Intasalep* is discussing an issue that specifically involves women, but then they ask them to leave as the men decide how to deal with the problem. *Intasalep* is now exclusively reserved for men. *Intasalep* is where the dynamic negotiation and re-negotiation of *kastom* takes place, and it often becomes a heated debate between the men who participate in these meetings. It has been unfortunate that they have decided to exclude women, and this is a change that Matak-I initiated. His reasoning was clear—that land-disputes are the work of women, and it is the men's responsibility to

[24] See Robbins (2004) for a clear example of how newly converted Christians are rejecting any form of *kastom* in neighboring Papua New Guinea.

find solutions without the women creating more problems. This is obviously not the case, and over the course of the last decade, land-disputes have continued to be on the rise. Excluding women from these meeting has only de-legitimized *Intasalep* especially amongst Anejom women. Today the debate concerning Aneityum kastom has been the sole responsibility of men, and women have been explicitly excluded from participating.

During the years of 2004-2009 there was only one *natimared*—"chief" on the island, Yautaea, who passed in 2010 (I will refer to him as Etpok-Y for respect). Before his death, Etpok-Y participated in many *Intasalep* meetings that I attended. After standing up and opening the meeting, he would sit quietly and listen to all of the participants before he summed up all their perspectives in his concluding remarks. Etpok-Y's responsibility was to open and close the meetings, and make them as inclusive as possible. He always included women's voices in his summarizing. After Etpok-Y's death, there were no "chiefs" on the island for about a decade, but *Intasalep* continued to meet and they appointed a representative, or place-holder for chief. For a short time this was *Etpok* Yauotau, Matak-I's father, but Yauotau was never formally installed as a "chief," but simply held the position as a highly respected elder who was asked by Etpok-Y to look after *Intasalep* when he passed, until a "chief" was installed into office. It has become clear that Etpok-Y's wishes before he died was likely for Yauotau to take over, and to be formally 'nominated' and then installed into office, but Matak-I took over the position before that happened because he was the VCC fieldworker, and most people thought he had the authority to do so. Others were always critical that he drew on his authority as a national representation for the VCC, and in retrospect, Yauotau would have probably been a better person to continue that position. Yauotau, on the other hand, was actually fine with that move, but this was more likely due to him not aspiring to be "chief". I think Etpok-Y recognized this in him—that he would have been the best leader for *Intasalep* because he was not aspiring for power. Currently Yauotau has outlived his son, and he is still a respected elder, who sits quietly at *Intasalep* meetings listening to the cacophony of divergent perspectives. I have been close with Yauotau over the years, he's one of my favorite kava drinking partners, and I have always thought he was the a living example—

not of *kastom*—but of just a good Anejom person, who never really aspired for power. As Matthew Sprigg's primary informant, I think Matthew would probably agree. Hence, even though *Intasalep* is often referred to as a "chief's council," it did not have a chief preside over the meeting from Etpok-Y's death, until 2019, when a "chief" was finally installed into office in Anelcauhat, and later in 2020, when another chief was installed in Umej. I was not present for these installations, and have only heard about them through phone conversations with family, and over social media.

The recent installation of the two "chiefs" has taken place after my formal period of research, and henceforth, I am not able to comment in-depth concerning the details. Both of the men who have been installed into office were constantly participating in *Intasalep* meetings when I was there, and they had been 'nominated' to these positions early on in the *kastom* movement, but just not installed into office. At the time they were just two of the five men who were 'nominated' to fill the five *natimared*—"chiefly" positions that *Intasalep* sought to fill, only a part of Matak-I's big agenda. At the time of my fieldwork, no one had been installed into office, and it will require more research in the future to understand more about these recent developments. From the time of Etpok-Y's death until these recent developments, *Intasalep* was collectively governed by a group of *natimi alpas*—literally "person big" or "big man." From one perspective, in an Anejom critique of the typology of 'Big Man' and 'Chief', using Sahlins' terminology, what has been taking place on Aneityum is a dynamic interplay between the two typologies of leadership—both exist on Aneityum. Today, two of the previous *natimi alpas* have been installed into office, and are now *natimared,* but they are still part of the group of *natimi alpas* that has been there for the last decade. Again, it will require future research to understand the dynamics between the newly installed "chiefs", and the other "big men" that participate in *Intasalep* meetings.

Metacultural Structures of Common Difference

While the *kastom* movement strives to revive ancestral forms of social organization, the effect of this movement are the conditions for the possibility of Anejom people to self-

reflexively think about their own *kastom*, and revive it based on their contemporary understandings. What has been revived is not a "culture" or "tradition" that is an ahistorical representation of the past, although that conception does guide this process, but rather this process is producing something novel that has recourse to ancestral practices, namely, an edited version of "culture" for contemporary realities. To be clear, this process has not resulted in a return to the past, but rather draws on the memory of the past to chart a path into the future, with contemporary realities in mind. In short, rather than something ancestral, the product of this process has been very much contemporary, an innovative process that can be described as "metacultural", namely a "culture" that is produced reflexively, made possible by the idea of "culture" itself (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004). As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett argues, the central quality of the 'metacultural' nature of culture is time, namely, an 'asychrony or temporalities, of things, persons, objects'. There is now a "culture" that reflects a tension between the 'contemporary and contemporaneous'. This disjuncture is a mark of modernity, and one that creates a confusion between 'evanescence with disappearance, and the paradox'— that the possession of heritage, or "culture" or *kastom,* is the condition for the possibility for world cultural heritage itself. Like heritage, as *kastom* interventions attempt to slow the rate of cultural change, what they are actually doing is creating something novel, and self-reflexively "cultural".

After Etpok-Y's death in 2010 the 'metacultural' production of "traditional" or *kastom* forms of social organization had already begun. What is currently being promoted or reconstructed is not a *kastom* from the past that everyone understands to be the case, but rather contemporary understandings of *kastom* that are even contested as 'invented' by many Anejom people themselves, especially women, and those who do not participate in *Intasalep*. The pattern that has emerged within *Intasalep*, is the focus on the aspects of *kastom* that are most relevant for contemporary times for the men who are participating. While this revival is justified using ethnohistorical and archaeological evidence, what has become clear is that these innovations of Aneityum social organization and leadership are specifically the perspective of men. From a popular understanding, *kastom* may be

understood as an indigenous "custom", "culture", "tradition", or "heritage" of the past—one that has been changeless over time. For outsiders such as uncritical tourists looking for authentic cultural experiences, this idea is easily consumable, and in short, what many tourists have expected *kastom*—or "custom" to be. *Kastom* in the daily reality of *Intasalep* is processual, and very much a contemporary process that has changed over time, and continues to change. The national *kastom* movement of the VCC has been one of the most important forces for the self-reflective and 'metacultural' process of the nation. For example, the national movement is the reason why *Intasalep* quickly chose five men on the island and 'nominated' them to become *natimared*—"chiefs". This was not an organic process, but a synthetic one that Matak-I initiated due to his authority as VCC fieldworker. *Intasalep* argued that once the required steps were taken for them to be installed into office, they would be *natimared.* This began a self-reflective process of considering what a *natimared* actually is, drawing on understandings of what *natimared* were, and lining those understandings with contemporary understandings of "chiefs".

The term "chief" was first uttered by the first Europeans to reach the Pacific, and the first ones to reach Aneityum were primarily traders and missionaries. One of the central arguments of this work is that, what Anejom people have historically signified as *natimared,* is fundamentally different than the contemporary popular understanding of "chief". One could go as far as saying that "chiefs" were desired by the traders and missionaries, and they were an 'invention' of leadership that was deeply influenced by colonialism. Today, the younger generations I interviewed tend to hold a more popular understanding of *natimared*—"chief", even as far as thinking that the *natimared* were like kings of Europe, who held absolute authority over their domain, sat on a thrown, and even wore a crown. Today this is one understanding of *natimared,* a popular one, but what should be made clear is that there are many differing understandings of *natimared* currently on Aneityum. Anejom people are in the midst of a dialogue concerning what a *natimared* actually is, as they have now installed two into office, more research will be needed to see how this plays out, namely, how these two "chiefs", and any that follow, will find legitimacy in this dynamic world. What will become clear in this work is that *natimared*

or “chiefs” on Aneityum today are a contemporary ‘metacultural’ innovation, that has antecedents to the importance traders and missionaries placed on “chiefs”, and now the relevance of “chiefs” for contemporary realities. Over time this position was pushed more and more to have absolute authority over dominions of land, even though it is unclear if this was the case in the past. The kind of leadership that the first missionaries describe, did not have the power that the missionaries and traders wanted them to have. In this way, over time that understanding of *natimared* began to change, and was largely influenced by European ideology more generally, and today, the global economy of cultural production.

When there was a void of “chiefs” while I was living on Aneityum most recently, Matak-I was the “chairman” of *Intasalep* meetings. For nearly a decade, Matak-I would open and close the meetings, and also speak during the meeting, while the former director of the VCC, *Etmak* (my father) Nepcevai (formerly Keitadi), assumed the “secretary” position. Nepcevai was a former director of the VCC under the name Keitadi, and had studied anthropology in Australia before assuming the Director position. He was a close friend of Kirk Huffman, an anthropologist who was instrumental in founding the VCC and National Museum before independence. Nepcevai’s role as note-taking secretary of *Intasalep* is another contemporary innovation over the last decade. *Intasalep* continues to look more and more like a committee, like any other committee in Vanuatu or anywhere for that matter, with a chairman and secretary, and minutes from every *Intasalep* meeting held in record. Of course, there are some differences. Those who had been ‘nominated’ to *natimared* at the time were represented by a “talking chief” or “chief’s mouth” (*nipjinosei-natimared*), who would speak on behalf of the “chief” and their *nelcau*—“canoe”. Following the example that Etpok-Y set, the ‘nominated’ *natimared* only spoke at the beginning and/or end of the meetings. At the conclusion of the meeting, the group would then sing a Christian hymnal, and final prayer, whose responsibility changed depending on where the meeting was being held. At dusk the group would always drink kava and then eat a meal together, prepared by the women while the men met during the day. The women would also be busy preparing morning tea and biscuits before lunch, and then prepare lunch,

then afternoon tea, and dinner. As the men of *Intasalep* would sit all day, the women would always be busy behind the scenes preparing their tea breaks and meals.

As noted above, it is the goal of the *kastom* movement for Anejom people to slowly return to where they belong by virtue of their names and 'nomination'. The leaders of *Intasalep* aspire to restore the structural geography they believe to have existed in the past —the physical emplacement of actors to where they belong by virtue of their names. As described above, this is a 'metacultural' process, and one that reveals the values and motivation of the *kastom* movement itself, and has lead to unintended and unpredictable consequences. Understanding this 'metacultural' structural geography requires returning to the account of Aneityum social organization I collected in my conversations with Matak-I, Etpok-T, and other Anejom people associated with *Intasalep*, and from attending *Intasalep* meetings over the periods from 2004-2009, 2013, and 2015-17. As noted above, during the first years I was there, I worked closely with Matak-I and others associated with the VCC and *Intasalep*, by virtue of my volunteer position with the VCC. Later on, when I returned for masters and then doctoral research, I was able to conduct more interviews and broaden my understanding of how other Anejom people understand this structural geography, historical social organization, and the innovations or edits that are being made to the *kastom* being revived. While returning to a "traditional" form of social organization is the goal of *Intasalep*, in actuality, the Aneityum population is organized in a way that contrasts these static and ahistorical understandings of *kastom*—this codified version of *kastom* contradicts many contemporary processes on Aneityum. This chapter focuses on the ideal—the codified version of "culture" proposed by *Intasalep*, while the following chapter will reveal the "reality" of the *kastom* movement from participants themselves, especially from women, and those 'canoes' that are not formally recognized by *Intasalep*.

First, as we return to the story of Etpok-T and his untimely death. In order to understand why he died in the way he did, it is first important to understand the 'metacultural' processes that have been taking place, historically rooted in a history of colonialism, but especially since independence when *kastom* became directly tied to land

"ownership" in the constitution. This is a result of modernity, and a 'disjuncture' resulting from a history of missionization, colonialism, and globalization. Today, the codification of *kastom* is especially germane to the global political economy of "culture" that persists today. The global cultural system promotes difference instead of suppressing it, but only difference of a particular kind. In order to make a claim to land, one's story must be different, but one that is recognizable. As Richard Wilk has argued (1995), that the globalizing hegemony of "culture" is found in 'structures of common difference', where certain kinds of "culture" are celebrated as diversity, while other kinds of "culture" are submerged, deflated, or suppressed. Again, in this chapter we will focus specifically on what is being promoted, while the following chapter will focus on what is being submerged and suppressed.

This work is not simply an account of the commodification of "national culture" as *kastom* for outsiders, but rather an attempt to go beyond some of the most commonplace oppositions, such as indigenous and imported, authentic and false, local and global—to move beyond the polarities of global hegemony and local appropriation. The 'structure of common difference' has created what Appadurai has described as 'global localities'—the interplay between local context and global content (1990). Today, while some Anejom people have returned to their rural hamlets of their ancestors, the majority of the Anejom population still live in villages, *kastom* claims to land have become more relevant that ever—due to the global political and economic pressures on Aneityum. In order to make a claim to land, one must make a *kastom* claim—one that is relevant to Aneityum and beyond, specifically, one that will dually hold weight in *Intasalep* and in the national court of law. The static structure of dispersal that is the narrative of the *kastom* movement, and one that has been endorsed by *Intasalep* is a modern process, made possible by the global political economy of heritage, being promoted by the VCC, and global partners such as UNESCO. While there is a 'movement' of Anejom people based on this ideal *kastom* structure, the majority of Anejom people still live in villages, a colonial invention themselves.

Most Anejom people do reconnect with their place of belonging, their 'nominated' emplacement, at least temporarily, but few reside there full-time. Many parcels of land are holiday or vacation retreats from the business of the villages. When people do return to what they understand as their *kastom* land, they often still return to the village because that is where all key services of modern life are located. This next section will outline the information that has been distilled from constant negotiation and re-negotiations over the course of many years of *Intasalep* meetings that I have attended, and other conversations with Anejom people who take part in *Intasalep,* such as Etpok-T before his death, and Matak-I before his untimely passing. This is the *strukja*—"structure" of the island as described by Anejom people themselves. Using the loan word "*strukja"* is important because it is this 'structure of difference'—the *strukja* of difference that identifies Anejom people from others in Vanuatu and beyond. This information is essential to understanding the *kastom* movement on Aneityum, and why it is relevant to understand the reasons underlying both Etpok-T's and Matak-I's deaths. To be clear, unless it is otherwise noted—this account focuses on the contemporary understanding of historical social organization, a contemporary discourse that is being negotiated in *Intasalep* meetings. This is not the contemporary reality of Anejom people today, but rather, the ideal that proponents of *kastom* want Anejom people to accept. As Anejom people continue to self-reflexively considered their own social organization, and more specifically their own "culture" from a perspective that is not their own.

ANEITYUM *'KASTOM'*

Moieties and Chiefdoms

The *kastom* movement has inspired Anejom people to think about their past, and remember how their ancestors lived, and to reproduce this *kastom,* hence, creating what can be described as a neo-liberal '*kastom* consciousness' for many Anejom people in varying degrees. This process was inspired by the *kastom economi*, and *kastom governens* initiatives from the VCC, and not surprisingly, a national emphasis on the economic and political priorities of *kastom*. *Intasalep* has now come to a working consensus of *kastom,* and

this "*kastom"* is certainly not accepted by all Anejom people, but primarily those who take part in monthly *Intasalep* meetings, or those who are connected to them. Many outside *Intasalep* argue that this "*strukja*" is akin to an 'invention of tradition', and has missed many important details. while most Anejom people identify with vernacular phrases, such as *nedou anpeke*—"the way of the island"—Anejom vernacular is unrecognizable to those beyond Aneityum. Anejom people outside of *Intasalep* often claim that the *kastom* narrative of Aneityum, is rooted in something that is not theirs. While it is important to understand Aneityum *kastom* from this perspective, my argument contends that this is a contemporary effort to codify *kastom* for economic and political initiatives by the men involved. When relevant, I will discuss any alternate understandings of *kastom* among Anejom people who are critical of *Intasalep*. The following chapter will go further in depth with the contradictions of this '*kastom strukja'*.

As has been generally agreed upon by *Intasalep,* at the peak of Aneityum socio-political complexity, Aneityum had a moiety system, with two distinct "halves" to the island—two different *nelcau*—"canoes" or "vessels" of Anejom people. The moieties contained smaller "chiefdoms", also called *nelcau,* which were further diversified by "totemic groups", the smallest level of *nelcau*. This structure is conceived as having four levels: moiety, chiefdom/domain, totemic group/district, and household, and each level is both social and geographical, as the social categories designated geographical divisions of the island. The two moieties roughly divided the island down the center along a North-South axis. The western side of the island is known as the "Sunset Moiety" (*Nelcau-sokou* or *Nelcau-Inpekeritinpeke*), and the eastern side of the island was conversely the "Sunrise Moiety" (*Nelcau-jekou* or *Nelcau-Anejom*). The two moieties together were said to be divided into seven chiefdoms, and chiefdoms divided into districts, all of which (moieties, chiefdoms, and totemic groups) are signified as *nelcau*—"canoes". The boundaries of the chiefdoms are constantly being debated, and still not agreed upon, and although *Intasalep* has come to a consensus of roughy where the boundaries are, there is still debate, especially among those who do not participate in *Intasalep* meetings. It is said that six chiefdoms stretched from the coast to the interior and subdivide the island into wedge-

shaped dominions like the pieces of a pie, and the the seventh chiefdom was located in the interior of the island with no coastal access. As common discourse at *Intasalep* meetings, the Sunset Moiety contained four chiefdoms—*Nelcau-Anijinwei, Anelcauhat, Nelcau-Anauonse,* and *Nelcau-Anejo*—and the Sunrise Moiety contained three chiefdoms—*Nelcau-Anijeganwei, Nelcau-u-Elpuincei,* and *Nelcau-Anauanjai*. This structure is supported by Anejom oral history, but also scholarly knowledge. Although John Geddie initially concluded that there were six chiefdoms, or "tribes" as he referred to them, Spriggs' work on the island concluded that there were actually seven "canoes" (1981). So far, *Intasalep* has sided with Spriggs account that there were seven, while they do disagree with the boundaries of these seven canoes that Spriggs concluded based on archaeological evidence, but this is something that nearly everyone on Aneityum is unclear about. In fact, it is commonly discussed how there was something like a moiety system on the island, as Anejom people regularly discuss how the island has two "languages"—one for each side of the island. Over the course of many years living on Aneityum, I can say that I have noticed subtle differences in what Anejom people commonly refer to as *norantas* —"accents" and *icsipeke*—"metaphors". Today, people from one of the "sides" are able to communicate with each other, namely, the "languages" and mutually intelligible. These linguistic differences persist today, but they were apparently more distinct in the past. It is also common to hear Anejom people inside and outside of *Intasalep* discuss the *nedou* —"way" or "style" of those who identify with one side over another. the people from the Sunset Moiety are known as being more introverted, reserved, quiet; while the members of the Sunrise Moiety, are in contrast more extroverted, outgoing, and talkative.[25]

The story of how this structure developed has been contested, but it is generally accepted that Anejom people's ancestors were the *Elpugiñman*, who were egalitarian and not organized into chiefdoms, until a social revolution gave rise to increased social complexity, and the installation of one *natimared*—"chief", and hence the first *nelcau*—"canoe" of the

[25] Aneityum's moieties were similar to the ones recorded on Tanna, Futuna, and Aniwa, as discussed by Lynch and Fakamuria (1994), which is not surprising giving the long history of interaction between the islands. The characteristics of the Aneityum moieties also parallel the differences between the endogamous moieties of Futuna (ibid.:85).

whole island. Later this *nelcau* split into two, right down the center, to create two distinct chiefdoms, the historical roots of the two moieties—one giving rise to the other. Today, those within the Sunset Moiety call themselves *Nelcau-inpekeritinpeke,* which Matak-I describes as "the chiefdom that started everything", namely a system of governance, an idiom that expresses the Sunset Moiety's belief that their moiety was the original chiefdom. Sunset Moiety people say that their success with a chiefly system influenced the Sunrise Moiety to adopt the same system. However, this claim is contested, and some members of the Sunrise Moiety offer alternative perspectives. For example, *matak* Neriam, another uncle of mine, who represents the *Anauonjai* chiefdom in *Intasalep* meetings, argues that while there were originally people on Aneityum, such as the *Ilpugiñman,* the system of "governance" was brought here by his ancestors, on the eastern side of the island. His canoe and his moiety were the first to adopt the chiefly system, and it was brought to Aneityum by *natimi-yag* (yellow-people), which he now believes to have been Polynesian[26]. Both of these claims, from Matak-I and Neriam, respectively, reflect the social revolution that took place when Anejom people established the position of *natimared*—"chief". Matak-I says that as the population grew within the original two chiefdoms, they were sub-divided into seven smaller chiefdoms by the chiefs of the original two chiefdoms, who then moved inland to govern the two inland chiefdoms, their respective moieties, and their halves of the island.

[26] Neriam also claims that there are only six chiefdom, not seven, but Intasalep has not substantiated this claim.

Moieties:	**Chiefdoms**:	**Totemic Districts:**
halves of the island	**seven moiety subdivisions**	**seven chiefly subdivisions**
	Anijinwei	Purple Swamp Hen (*Inga*)
Sunset Moiety	*Anauonse*	Barracuda (*Tatau*)
(*Nelcau-sokou*)	*Anelcauhat*	Trevally (*Nerop)*
	Anejo	Turtle (*Nahau*)
Sunrise Moiety	***Anijeganwei***	Eagle (*Rapad*)
(*Nelcau-jekou*)	*Anauanjai*	Parrot Fish (*Inmokom*)
	Nelcau-u-elpuncei	Coconut (*Neañ*)

Figure 1. The more influential original "inland" chiefdoms are in bold. The *Anijinwei* chiefdom was the only true inland chiefdom because its domain did not reach the coast. The *Anijeganwei* chiefdom—which was mostly inland—did reach the coast, but this was only a sliver of coastal land in relation to the other chiefdoms. Only the chiefly totemic group is mentioned per moiety subdivision (chiefdom), but there were many totemic districts within a chiefdom, but it is unclear how many.

Natimared—"Chiefs"

The leadership within each moiety was centered on the *natimared*—"chief" of the inland chiefdom: the *Anijinwei* chief in the case of the Sunset Moiety and the *Anijeganwei* chief of the Sunrise Moiety. Today there are no *natimared* titleholders of the inland *nelcau*(s), or even anyone 'nominated' to those two positions. However, these titles can be bestowed at some point, and *Intasalep* insists that it is working toward this goal, and the leaders claim that it is just a matter of time. Within this structure, the chiefs of the inland chiefdoms were the strongest, most powerful, and most influential of all the chiefs within their moiety.

"Chiefs" are part of the national vocabulary in Bislama, "*jif*", are used loosely in popular discourse. *Jifs* are so common in Vanuatu, that it seems like any man with a straight face can call themselves "*jif*". While there were certainly forms of leadership that

were more complex than the stereotypical 'big-man system', "chiefs" in Vanuatu seem to contrast those found in Polynesia. It is often argued that Vanuatu, being within "Melanesia", big-man systems of social organization dominate the area. However, unlike other areas of Vanuatu, where the signifier *jif*—"chief" has become a popular identity largely shaped by events associated with contact and colonialism, it has been posited by scholars that "the Aneityumese chiefly system was most likely something closer to ones found in Polynesia" (Lindstrom 1997:212, from Spriggs 1981)[27]. Many Anejom people are aware of this claim, and it is supported by ethnohistoric accounts of their own "chiefly" system, supporting Spriggs' and Lindstrom's claim. Henceforth, *Intasalep* has developed a multi-level system with centralized leadership at the level of each moiety based on this scholarly and ethnohistorical evidence. In this system, commands are thought to come from the higher-ranking inland chiefdoms of each moiety, and tribute flowed from lower ranking coastal chiefdoms to the inland chiefdoms.

The structure being codified by *Intasalep* has four levels of leadership[28]: 1) the highest is the *natimared* ("chief"), who was the *nijinelcau* ("head of the canoe"), the most influential position within a chiefdom; 2) the second-level is the *nhakli-natimared* ("small chief"), who was the *nijininareneclau* ("head of a large district within the canoe") and exerted the next level of influence; 3) the third-level was also a *nhakli-natimared* ("small chief"), who was the *nijininararinelcau* ("head of a small district within the canoe") and had less influence; and 4) the *nijini-netec* ("family-head"), with the least influence, who looks after a hamlet within a totemic district. Every household had a family head that was the 'head of the household.' The family-head was not considered a chief, but played a significant role in the political system. First-level, second-level, and third-level chiefs were male titles belonging to different totemic groups within chiefdoms. The first-level chief

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[27] In support of this claim, Matthew Spriggs argues that the 'Aneityumese' chiefly system was most likely the product of a developing economic infrastructure of irrigated taro fields (1981:57-60). For Spriggs, the 'Aneityumese' economic infrastructure of irrigated taro fields did not lead to an ecological disaster, but rather, to a complex system of social stratification.

[28] This information comes from Matak-I. He explained that there are three levels of chief, and one family-head.

(*natimared*) was a title belonging to the chiefly totemic group, of which there was only one per chiefdom (seven total for the whole island). Likewise, second-level and third-level chiefly titles belonged to other totemic groups within the chiefdom. Unlike first-level chiefly titles, there were many second-level and third-level titles within chiefdoms. No *one* totemic group could have more than one chief (first-, second-, or third-level), and totemic groups took their rank, first, from the rank of the chiefdom of which they were a subdivision (inland, coastal), and second, from the rank of their chief (first-, second-, or third-level)[29].

In short, Anejom people were stratified into two status levels: those with chiefly titles and those without chiefly titles, and this continues today with two men attaining the titles of *natimared*. Even though chiefly titles had various ranks, they were clearly differentiated from other non-chiefly titleholders. Attaining one of these chiefly titles on Aneityum was not inherited automatically, but one was 'nominated' to this title from a pool of possible ascriptively defined titleholders by virtue of exemplifying shared Anejom values, and the exemplification of those values through one's deeds, actions and virtuous 'ways.' This is what is being discussed at *Intasalep* meetings today.

'Nomination' and Installation to Chiefly Title

It is in general agreement within *Intasalep* circles that, in the past, chiefly titles were awarded patrifilially, namely, successors were the sons of the incumbents. This is confirmed by C. B. Humphreys, an anthropologist conducting ethnographic research in the 1920s on Tanna—the island north of Aneityum, who documented from a few Anejom people visiting the island that Aneityum chiefly titles were hereditary (Humphreys 1926:107). However, earlier in Aneityum's history, in the midst of the demographic disaster, there were apparent changes in the way Anejom leadership was

[29] First-, second-, and third-level chiefs were all considered '*natimared*' in Anejom, but second-, and third-level chiefs were referred to as '*nhakli-natimared,*' ("small chief"). More research is need to determine the details of this system, for example, which totemic groups, specifically, have second-, or third-level chiefs. The chiefly totemic groups (first-level) are clear, but the details concerning the second and third levels of this system are not clear.

reproduced, and Anejom people had to find other routes of socio-political reproduction. After high mortality rates decimated all levels of the population, it became common for previous titleholders to lack sons to pass on their leadership titles, and when this was the case, a daughter's son, brother's son, or sister's son was also eligible for the title. This is confirmed by an early missionary account, as Lawrie noted that, 'in rare cases a female is said to have assumed one of these leadership positions, even the role of chief' (Lawrie 1892:710). Anejom people are aware of this history, but what continues to be emphasized in *Intasalep* is that only males held these leadership positions for any significant length of time. Today it is argued that the female "chiefs" of the past did so only temporarily, until such time as she was able to appoint a male to assume the title. Although chiefly titleholders typically chose their successors, this appointment had to be accepted by the collective of chiefs, family-heads, and elders of the respective chiefdom, who would collectively 'nominate' and them install or "lift-up"—*alcause* a person to this title, through an actual installation ceremony, involving kava, pigs, taro, etc.—material items of value that would signify complete support for that particular person. In short, this was a two step process that *Intasalep* is following today, exemplified in the installation of the two most recent "chiefs", who sat in waiting for many years before they were finally installed into office.

The contemporary understanding of the past understood within *Intasalep* is that chiefly successors were chosen from a pool of possible titleholders with a genealogical relationship with the chief. Today, as *Intasalep* strives to install chiefs into office —'nomination' to chiefly title ideally will follow genealogical lines of descent, as genealogical relationships with "chiefs" of the past continue to be important as they strive to find successors. However, those of *Intasalep* are in consensus that if one is a hereditary descendant but does not exhibit the qualities necessary for the chiefly title, one will unlikely be nominated to that title. Title is ascribed, and the ascription is based upon a set of values deemed necessary for the title. Preferably, chiefs are 'nominated' from a pool of possibles who share a common ancestor with the chief, but, as noted above, there is flexibility in 'nomination.' When there are no available heirs, titles can be bestowed upon

a person outside one's descent group. One is 'nominated' to chiefly titles when one embodies the qualities that are considered essential for any leader. The descendants of previous chiefs are a case in point. A person can be a descendant of a previous chief, for example, a historical chief's son, grandson, or great-grandson, but this does not automatically mean that the title will be conferred upon them. Today, descent only creates the potential for 'nomination' because the attainment of chiefly title is based on a moral valuation of the ascriptively defined potential titleholders. As *Intasalep* strives to revive "chiefs", genealogical descendants of "chiefs" have the most straightforward path toward attaining the chiefly title, and are in a privileged position. This can be considered Aneityum *kastom*. It has become a requirement for those striving to reach the leadership title of "chief"—to embrace *kastom*. This is also the reason why many chiefly titles have remained vacant, as *Intasalep* is waiting for persons who embody their idea of *kastom* to emerge. Today, there are now two previously 'nominated' chiefs who have been installed, and three 'nominated' chiefs who are still in waiting. The inland chiefdoms continue to remain vacant without anyone being 'nominated'. The argument for why the inland chiefdoms have not been a focus on this effort is because no one lives in the interior of the island. *Intasalep* has taken an approach to leadership that depends on people living in the places of these *nelcau.*

Both Etpok-T and Matak-I emphasized that when 'nominating' and then installing a chief in contemporary Aneityum society, the greatest concern is the issue of respect (*ecen*), a characteristic that must be embodied in the chief's *upopo*—"low" ways—the actions of a stable, non-coercive person—in contrast to *ijiñis*—"high" ways, which are, in contrast, unstable and aggressive. Today, a good leader is thought to embody humility by staying low, metaphorically, namely, being grounded and respectful regardless of the situation—in contrast to someone who has a short temper, is hasty, and holds his head too high. Etpok-T emphasized that a prospective *natimared* must be able to take care of (*amenjinañ*) the members of his canoe, and have the personal strength and stamina to lead and represent them in any and all situations. A *natimared* should be selfless and be the central locus of sharing, and 'redistribution' as exemplified in the first feast to install one

in office, and the regular practice of communal feasts (*nakro*) within the *nelcau*—at least once a year. In short, how the leaders of *Intasalep* describe the importance of *natimared* is because leaders are a locus of sociality, and the perpetuation and construction of relationships, and specifically through 'redistribution' of material goods at feasts. To be clear—this understanding of *natimared*—"chief" is a contemporary understanding of "chief" based on ethnohistorical, scholarly understandings, and contemporary understandings of this historical leadership position.

'Nomination' to Totemic Group and District

In the past, as noted above—chiefdoms were divided into districts. However, there is no consensus among Anejom people—*Intasalep* included—as to the exact number of totemic districts. Spriggs estimates that there are fifty-one to fifty-five districts on the island, and supports this claim with archaeological evidence and early missionary accounts (1985:27). In all of my interviews with Anejom people, it has become clear that the ethnohistorical record lacks this level of detail, and that Anejom people simply do not know how many districts there actually were in the past, or how many there are today. The problem is that many districts are currently uninhabited and are waiting to be re-populated, which is the fundamental goal of the Aneityum kastom movement. This is a problem, namely, that *Intasalep* wants people to return to their districts, but most people do not know where they actually are, especially concerning inland *nelcau.*

Anejom people are usually clear concerning which larger *nelcau* they belong to, but the details concerning their smaller districts are not always clear. From the perspective of *Intasalep,* totemic districts are uninhabited for one of two reasons: 1) all of the members of the district have died out, in which case the district is signified as *nopothan mas*—"dead land", or 2) the members of the totemic district live elsewhere on the island, most likely in one of the main villages: Anelcauhat, Umej, Port Patrick or somewhere else in Vanuatu or beyond. As noted above, it is the primary agenda of the kastom movement for Anejom people to move away from the centralized villages of Anelcauhat, Umej, and Port Patrick, and return to their districts, which are evenly dispersed over the landscape, although it is

unknown exactly how many districts there are. In broad strokes, districts were then divided into “hamlets” surrounded by gardening areas. Understandably, this goal of repopulating these districts has been an onerous task. It is unknown even in *Intasalep* circles how many of these districts there were or even are on the island.

While the broad scope of this understanding of historical ancestral practice is supported by oral historical, missionary, and scholarly accounts of this structure, it should be clear after reading this chapter that working out the specifics of this ‘structure’ has been a challenge. The consensus within *Intasalep* is there was a rank order among the chiefdom totemic groups that was “structural”—the chiefly totemic group was the most influential of all totemic groups. As noted above, it is being argued that there were also second- and third-level “chiefs”, who were the chiefs of less influential totemic groups within every chiefdom, but again, the ethnohistorical data is limited. Today, even though many Anejom people do not reside in the totemic districts they were ‘emplaced’ in—the social divisions between totemic groups have been maintained through the practice name-bestowal. In short, these divisions have not been maintained geographically, but they have been maintained ideologically, at least in Anejom people’s contemporary understanding of their ‘emplacement’, which, again, is often contested.

In this *kastom* logic, each totemic group has a finite set of names that belong to them. This understanding is supported by Lindstrom’s account of Kwamera social organization—from the island of Tanna, just north of Aneityum. Lindstrom describes a similar situation, and calls these finite sets of names a “name-set” (1985:28). On Tanna, each name from the name-set is associated with the land of the totemic group’s district, and the same is argued by proponents of *kastom* on Aneityum. Henceforth, on Aneityum—totemic names are gendered, and both male and female names give the named person what signifies as *intasmu*—“rights” over the whole totemic district. All members of a totemic group are thought to share the responsibility of stewardship of the totemic district and all totemic entitlements. One’s name ‘emplaces’ the named person within this district in the sense of designating the responsibilities for the stewardship of the land of the district. Bestowing one of these names constitutes ‘nomination’ to “primary”

affiliation with the totemic group.

In this contemporary understanding, every Anejom person who has been bestowed a name has "primary" and "secondary" affiliation to specific totemic groups. "Primary" affiliation and membership in totemic groups is bestowed upon a person through 'nomination' regardless of whether one can trace a genealogical relationship with the members of the totemic group with which one's name is associated. "Primary" affiliation means that an actor has been given a totemic name and the associated *intasmu* —"rights", which designates totemic group membership, and gives the named person rights to land, entitlements, responsibilities of stewardship, and access to chiefly title. In *Intasalep* meetings, common idioms for these levels of affiliation as "primary" totemic affiliation is *opoc*—"heavy", meaning the strongest, and most important of a person's affiliations. In contrast to one's primary affiliation, a person's other affiliations are said to be "secondary" or *aihecaihec*—"light", meaning less important. In this *kastom* logic—all cognatic descendants who can trace a genealogical relationship with the totemic ancestor have secondary affiliation. Secondary affiliates are not entitled to proprietary totemic rights, but they are entitled to usufruct rights. Secondary affiliates have no responsibility of stewardship, and they do not have access to chiefly titles. An actor can only have one "primary" totemic affiliation, which is bestowed upon a person when one receives a totemic name, but one can have many "secondary" affiliations by virtue of cognatic descent. Anejom people are in general agreement that every totemic group held 'rights' to their respective totemic district, and any idea concerning 'ownership' is a colonially rooted idea. However, the vocabulary of "ownership" is common parlance nationally, exemplified in the constitution of the nation, which means that people do often talk about "ownership" because it has significance nationally.

In *Intasalep* discourse, one's primary totemic affiliation is a male or female person's foremost *nefalañ*—"path" or "road" in life—an identity that will slowly become a part of that person as he or she participates as a member of that group. 'Affiliation' is thought of as a path because a person's primary affiliation requires action and participation following the bestowal of the responsibilities of stewardship of land. In contrast, a secondary

totemic affiliation is lighter and less important; it is a person's peripheral path or paths and does not require the same participation because one is not a primary member of the totemic group—only a secondary affiliate. These secondary paths remain open, regardless of whether a person chooses to follow them. A person's primary affiliation is typically to one's father's totemic group, as there is patrilineal bias in naming. However, one's primary affiliation can be either patrilateral or matrilateral because it is determined by 'nomination,' not descent. In contrast, 'nomination' is not necessary for secondary/light affiliation. Once a person is 'nominated' to a totemic group, one will reside with his or her parents until marriage, after which men will ideally create a residence near the hamlet of their 'nominator', who is typically one's father, but sometimes one's grandfather, another relative, or even someone biologically unrelated. In contrast to men, a woman follows her husband, and resides on a hamlet near her husband's parents. As a person receives primary affiliation in a totemic group, he or she also assumes the identity or "ways" (*nedou*) of the totemic ancestor (*inpulidwiñ*). The totemic ancestor is an animal from which all members of a totemic group are thought to 'descend' or (in the vernacular) to *aced* —"follow" the same path[30]. People who are genealogically connected with the totem (and members of the totemic group) are the first to be considered for 'nomination' because they have totemic blood (*ïja*). To be clear—this process does not always go as planned, but this is a system that *Intasalep* is encouraging Anejom people to return to. This remains a contemporary understanding of historical ancestral practices—and the ideal of the *kastom* movement on the island.

In this contemporary understanding proposed by *Intasalep*—members of a totemic group do not have a totemic appellative (like a last name in European traditions). Rather, the name they receive from the name-set associates them with the totemic group that has the right to bestow the name and with its district. A name belongs to only one person at any one time and cannot be used by another person. At any one point in time, not all

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[30] For example, the chiefly totemic group of *Anauonse* chiefdom is *tatau* (barracuda), who is known to have sharp teeth and remains stable even in the roughest weather. Likewise, the members of the barracuda chiefly totemic group have fierce fighting skills if needed, but they are also able to stay resilient in times of adversity.

names in the name-set will be conferred. The un-conferred totemic names are retained in a totemic 'name-bank,' which only totemic group members have access to. When a person dies, if he or she did not appoint a namesake, then the name will be deposited in the name-bank and remain in people's memory until it is bestowed again. Ideally, the un-conferred names in the 'name-bank' continue to exist in the common memory of all totemic group members, and in the memory of other Anejom people, and will eventually be bestowed by those who have the right to do so. However, as one would expect—there is often disagreement as to who has the right to bestow un-conferred names from the name-bank. Name-sets themselves can be disputed, as totemic groups sometimes claim each other's names. Henceforth, names, name-sets, and name-banks have become increasingly political as the *kastom* movement has progressed. While *Intasalep* may come to some consensus concerning who has "rights" to names, and who does not—naming has become the most contentious parts of the *kastom* movement for Anejom people, inside and outside of *Intasalep* circles.

Unlike on Tanna, where women's names do not entitle a person to any rights in property (Lindstrom 1985: 34)—there is general agreement among Anejom people that women's totemic names bestow shared rights to all totemic entitlement. Anejom names not only entail rights to land or ground (*nopothan*) to men and women, but also accord the named person a social position of the previous holders of the name. This position is based on contemporary understandings of the past, and is largely ideological—but it points oneself to the material world that one belongs to, and has rights and responsibilities in. The position one's name bestows is not fixed and depends on the previous holder of the name because the position changes with the reputations of previous namesakes. This is not only a social position but is commonly understood as a personality and unique skill, namely, how one's namesake acted and talked, and if they had a historical economic specialization (canoe building, fisher, mat weaving, midwifery, kava planting, taro planting, etc.). However, this social positioning does not include chiefly titles. When the name of a chief is bestowed upon a person, this simply invokes the social personality of the chief in the named person. In order to attain the title, the named

person must be installed into office. 'Nomination' to chiefly name and installation to chiefly title are two different actions. The name lays a path toward attaining the title, but the named must still be installed into office by the members of one's *nelcau.* The *nakro* —"feast" is how a *natimared*—"chief" is installed into office.

As names are passed on, from generation to generation, each acquires a history, often in accordance with the reputation incumbents have earned. A person can improve the name's reputation and prestige or 'fame' by using it in a positive way, most easily through sharing, unselfishness or feasts ('*nakro'*). In contrast, some names are remembered for the wrong reasons, namely those concerned only for personal gain, or selfishness ('*meteg'*). The actions of the person nominated to that name will forever be associated with the name long after the person perishes. If the other members of a person's totemic group think that he or she is using the name improperly, then the name will be disputed and eventually, if the person in question does not modify his or her actions, removed. A person who has been stripped of his or her name belongs nowhere, as one has been ejected from the group. One becomes a *netec-alo* Literally, "family vomit,"—in the sense that one has been vomited out of the *nelcau*. When this happens, the one considered *netec alo* is 'emplaced' in a different place through a name change.

One's name designates primary totemic affiliation and thus shared rights of totemic entitlement, as each totemic member is entitled to an equal share of proprietorship. All cognatic descendants of a totemic ancestor may potentially receive a totemic name, as totemic names are typically given to blood descendants, who are all "secondary" totemic affiliates.[31] A person's primary affiliation is typically to one's father's totemic group because male and female children usually receive names that affiliate them with their father's totem. However, it is not uncommon for a person to be nominated to his or her mother's totem. For example, Matak-K and Risik-ithii-N have ten children. Nine of them have been nominated to their father's (Matak-K's) totemic group, and one male has been nominated to their mother's (Risik-ithii-N's) totemic group. Hence, given

[31] Although, as I have argued, this system is flexible. If there are no blood descendants—anyone, in theory, can be 'nominated' by virtue of name-bestowal.

that primary affiliation in a totemic group is through 'nomination', sibling sets may be scattered among totemic groups. Even though there is a paternal bias in naming, anyone —in theory—can be 'nominated' to totemic groups in need of custodians for the land owned by the totemic group.

Naming Ceremony

Naming ceremonies have become an important part of the *kastom* movement because as people return to ancestral land, one can only receive rights by having a name that 'emplaces' one there. Naming ceremonies take place on a regular basis, across the island. The practice is as important as marriage, and in one sense, it is a marriage—to one's place, one's land. It is common for people to receive their names months or even years after the child's birth because a *nakro*—"feast" must be prepared to mark the occasion. One may be "named" at birth, but this is not really a persons name until the feast, and naming ceremony. Today, Anejom people are also given European-derived names, which are often bestowed first,[32] and Anejom names are bestowed later.

Naming ceremonies bring many people together, numerous households from inside and outside a person's *nelcau* congregate to prepare food to be cooked in the ground oven. This includes pig (for non-SDA communities) or beef, taro (*intal*), and kava. As noted above, taro is an ancestral staple root crop, and valued food for any Aneityum ceremony. Likewise, it has become a central focus of the *kastom* movement to plant taro because along with pig and kava, they are all necessary for naming, and likewise, installing *natimared* into office. Today there are many other root crops and imported foods, for example, sweet potato, manioc, rice, and flour—but taro is thought to give strength, and as one uncle put it, '*Et cin intal elpuejom'*—"Taro is the food that Anejom people eat," and another uncle, '*Topoc intal ejeregdai nitai ciñ asga'*—"it's heavier than any other food." But taro is not eaten by itself as a meal, and requires a '*nadipiañ'*—a food to combine and balance the taro. Taro is dry, and one needs a moist food to eat with the relatively dry taro. In the past this was pig, and today it also includes beef. The taro and meat are a

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[32] European-derived names are described in depth below.

meal, but to complete a ceremony of this kind, it must also include kava. The naming ceremony exhibits this pattern, namely, the combination of these three valuable items. The naming ceremony ideally takes place in the afternoon, when the sun is nearing the horizon. The food is then unearthed and set on leaves in bunches, in preparation for the feast (‘*nakro’*), which will take place when the ceremony is complete. When the name is uttered for the first time, the meat and taro are shared equally among all those present. The name conveyer takes center stage among the audience with the receiver, or receivers at his side. He then says the name, or names for the first time among the constituents, after which, people are given the bundle of food that had been set out for them. Sometimes portions are set-aside for allied family-heads, especially if they have close kinship ties with those receiving names. In conclusion, those who took part in the festivities carry the bundles of food, whose recipients are absent, to all corners of the island. The men and women then congregate to drink kava long into the night. After kava is consumed, the area calms, and people slowly return to their hamlets or houses.

Totem Endogamy and Exogamy

As Anejom people self-reflexively consider their own “kinship”, especially in *Intasalep* meetings. Their understanding draws on the importance of names and *nelcau*—“canoes”. Likewise, names are a regular topic during *Intasalep* meetings. In the logic of *kastom,* when one receives a name, it ‘emplaces’ one to a specific place—inside a *nelcau.* It is one’s primary place to root oneself into place. This is especially true for men, but also for women. However, women will eventually be married, and while women retain land rights even after they are married, they will only retain them as long as they have a name, and ideally, one will find a spouse within one’s *nelcau.* This is an example of endogamy, which has become especially important in the efforts at reviving “chiefly” leadership. When a couple both have a shared ancestor who was a *natimared*—“chief”, their children have a clear path to becoming chief.

Following this logic, bestowal of a totemic name prepares a person for one’s social position, and for both men and women this means being matched with a spouse, to

produce more members of the *nelcau.* In the Aneityum system of kinship, endogamy and exogamy are not mutually exclusive. Endogamy is the ideal in terms of naming, and exogamy is common to create alliances and 'roads' of exchange with other groups. Both endogamy and exogamy have been important for the *kastom* movement, but for different reasons. Endogamy is the "ideal" option, and is advocated by *Intasalep* for the revival of "chiefs" because in totem endogamy, a person's ideal partner belongs to the same totem and resides within the same totemic district. Chiefly lines are thought to become stronger if endogamy is practiced. In contrast, exogamy is practiced to create relationships and alliances between *nelcau* and other social groups, and it tends to be more informal, namely, it is not the "ideal" of *Intasalep*. Exogamous relationships do happen, especially when the couple are bilateral cross-cousins.

In both endogamy and exogamy, all bilateral cross-cousins are eligible partners, who—in endogamy—belong to the same totemic group and *nelcau* by virtue of 'nomination,' and—in exogamy—belong to different totemic groups and *nelcau*. Today, as noted above, bilateral cross-cousin marriage (in endogamy or exogamy) continues to be the ideal form of marriage and any form of parallel-cousin marriage is thought incestuous. While *Intasalep* advocates for this kinship practice, there is linguistic evidence that this is a historical form of kinship on Aneityum. This is structured linguistically in kinship terms: parallel cousins for males and females are brother (*etwak-atamañ* or *natamañ erak)* and sister (*etwak-ataheñ* or *nataheñ erak*), while cross-cousins for males are brother-in-law (*nega uñek*) and wife-in-the-family (*egak-an-netec* or *incinap*), and cross-cousins for females are husband-in-the-family (*natamñ-uñek-an-netec* or *napap*) and sister-in-law (*nohod-uñek*). While this system of kinship is advocated by *Intasalep* and the *kastom* movement, it is also common sense for Anejom people.

In the past, bilateral cross-cousin marriage within the *nelcau* (endogamy) was common because both sides of a person's family—maternal and paternal—belonged to the same *nelcau*. That is, with endogamy, one's mother and father received names from the same *nelcau* and resided in that same *nelcau*. This system was clearly much easier when the population was larger and people resided all over the island, rather than in today's villages

where people from all *nelcau* are centered for reasons other than the *nelcau*. Today, the leaders of the *kastom* movement advocate for totem endogamy because of the revival of "chiefs", and the value placed on land. Anejom people have more claim to a specific place, when a couple both have names emplacing them there, which is why women's names are often changed to match one's husbands. Stripping her 'primary' affiliation with her *nelcau* of previous 'nomination', but now with the group of one's spouse. Hence, both husband and wife are stewards of the same *nelcau*, a responsibility that they both share. Endogamy is still valued because couples who marry endogamously belong to the same place, rather than two different places, which unifies the couple in a relationship with the place where they were emplaced when they were given a name.

Totem endogamy continues to be the preferred form of marriage from the perspective of the leaders of the *kastom* movement, but totem exogamy is more common these days, as discussed above, or even romantic marriages with people from other islands, or countries—as in my marriage. The system of endogamy became impractical during the demographic disaster, when the population dropped to a level that made totem endogamy possible. However, as noted above, totem endogamy and exogamy are not mutually exclusive. In the past, Anejom people used exogamy to create *nefalañ*—"roads" into other districts and chiefdoms to acquire resources, and they are still using it that way today, but those roads are reaching even farther—to other islands within the archipelago, and even as far at North America. On Aneityum, *Nefalañ* are pathways into areas that were normally insulated from each other by virtue of the practice of endogamy. In short, exogamy typically created relationships between *nelcau,* but now that has included most distant places. In the past, exogamy was reportedly common among "chiefs", who would marry outside one's *nelcau* to create routes of exchange and to acquire resources. This solidified alliances between totemic *nelcau*. Chiefs aside, in the past, it was common for non-chiefly titled Anejom people to practice endogamy, namely, marrying within the same *nelcau* to retain resources. However, today, given that exogamy has become more common, Anejom people have numerous 'roads' throughout the island, and resources are

shared amongst the population. Totem endogamy is rarely a rationale for marriage, and today it has become increasingly common to marry for romance, prestige, or money. When a woman marries outside her *nelcau*, she still retains the land rights her name accords her, and these rights could potentially be shared with her spouse's *nelcau* in the form of usufructuary rights. This is how *nelcau* acquire resources through exogamy. By virtue of her name, the woman continues to be responsible for the land of her *nelcau*, and she is free to return to her's when she wishes. In this way, intermarrying groups come to share land and its use. These types of alliances were important in the past and continue to be important today, but if the relationship goes awry, the alliance can easily turn hostile. Exogamy also complicates the couple's relationship because the two are not stewards of the same place. In exogamous marriages, the couple is not grounded in one place, but is divided between two places because of the different responsibilities they have received by virtue of 'nomination'.

Today, in practice most marriages are totem exogamous, but the logic of endogamy is sometimes maintained by the changing of people's names. It is a *kastom* ideal that *Intasalep* promotes. When a woman marries outside her totem, her name can be changed to match her husband's—unless the woman is the last member of a totemic group, or her family insists she keep her name to preserve a 'road' for her kin to reside in more than one *nelcau*. Either a woman's name is changed to preserve the rule of endogamy, or exogamy is upheld to ensure an alliance between totemic groups. For example, Matak-I's former wife, now widow, Nuwagi, was previously Nauyan, a name Etpok-T gave her from the name-bank of his *nelcau.* My *risik-ithii*—"aunt" Nuwagi's name and *nelcau* membership changed when Matak-I returned the name 'Nauyan' to Etpok-T, and then bestowed Nauwagi, a name that emplaced her within his *nelcau*—retaining the logic of totem endogamy.

When a female changes her name after a totem-exogamous marriage, most of her children will receive a name from their paternal totem, but typically one or more children, male or female, will receive a name from the child's maternal *nelcau* as a form of exchange. As noted in the example above. The child "belongs" to the maternal totemic

group even if the child remains in the parent's household during childhood. This is an example of 'bride-service'. The child is thought to replace the mother within her totemic group. 'Sister exchange', while it does happen, is less common on Aneityum than what has been documented on Tanna, the island just north of Aneityum. It continues to be a practice that Anejom people nominate a female or male child in the next generation to assume the place of the mother in her original *nelcau,* if this *nelcau* is different than one's father. Note, this is not always an 'exchange of women' because male children are commonly part of this exchange. This is better described as 'bride-service', in contrast to 'bride-wealth', which Anejom people do not regularly practice. When a woman keeps her name after an exogamous marriage, this creates an alliance between totemic groups and a 'road' between districts in the sense that the family members can move freely between *nelcau* because they have use rights and/or responsibilities in each *nelcau*. Again, as in the former case, it is common practice that at least one male or female child receive a name from one's maternal *nelcau,* as 'bride-service'.

Created Vernacular Names

Some Anejom persons receive vernacular names that do not have totemic associations. These names are *athai*—"created" or "built". These names are often metaphorical, such as the name I was given—'Natauanumu', meaning "help of life." The more metaphorical the name, the shorter the history associated with it. In contrast, the most important totemic names are often esoteric and they have longer histories and are usually no longer metaphorical. Created vernacular names do not imply membership in a totemic group and therefore also do not confer entitlements, such as stewardship of land. A person who has one of these names has no primary totemic affiliation and relies instead on his or her secondary totemic affiliation to find his or her way. Persons with created names do not have *intasmu*—"rights", which means they have no chance of attaining any leadership position in any particular *nelcau*. Hence, there is a hierarchical relationship between those few bearing created names and those bearing totemic names. However, while persons with created names can be seen as having no place in the social order because of a lack of

rights, they are also recognized as having less responsibility and more freedom than a person with a totemic name.

Persons with created names and secondary affiliation are freely given usufruct rights to land, and so they are not landless. In this sense, a created vernacular name allows incorporation within the spatio-social Aneityum order, but without the responsibilities and entitlements that come with a totemic name. Created names are the only names given to foreigners who have been informally adopted into Aneityum families, for example, the name *Etpok* Yayaho gave to me. In bestowing this name, Yayaho was not 'nominating' me to his totemic group, but simple inviting me to participate in the Aneityum social world. In contrast, formal adoption requires totemic 'nomination'—the conferring of a totemic name and associated responsibilities and entitlements. Once married, a person with a created name will typically follow the primary affiliation of his or her spouse, and it is typical for the spouse's family to confer a totemic name on the person with a created name once the couple is married, fulfilling the logic of totemic endogamy.

European-derived Names

Most Anejom people have two names: one totemic and one European-derived. Most people agree that European-derived names lack the meaning that totemic names have because they are novel foreign indicators with little significance in Anejom logic. However, as noted above, European-derived names are usually bestowed first, before totemic names are bestowed. It is usually argued that it is more appropriate to wait to see where to emplace and 'nominate' the person. Unlike the neighboring island of Tanna, where indigenous names become associated with European-derived appellatives and are reproduced through nomination (Lindstrom 2011:149)—Anejom people keep European-derived names separate from their vernacular names. European-derived names are nonetheless essential when one ventures beyond Anejom linguistic boundaries, for example, school, tourism, and other economic activities. The European-derived name is utilized to make it easier to participate in the social world beyond Aneityum, and the name itself is associated with this world.

To illustrate this point I recall an experience I had a few weeks after my arrival on Aneityum, when a man participated with me in my 'outside world' using his European-derived name. His "name" was Georgie, and I met him serendipitously at the *inteptag* —"meeting place" of Anelcauhat. He was a friendly man who had spent some of his life living in the capital Port Vila. We had a common interest in music, and his brother was a nationally know musician. In Anejom practice we shared a *nupu*—"heap of chewed kava" infused with cold water and sieved into two coconut shells. The kava was particularly strong and I was unable to walk after only one shell[33]. The experience was so intense I was seeing double of everything. I remember looking up at the kerosine lantern and asking Georgie who brought the second one. Georgie just laughed hysterically. Georgie was also struggling to walk and stayed by my side the whole night. We had a long and complex conversation about life in Vanuatu. With the help of the kava—I felt like I knew Georgie inside and out. The next day I told my host-mother that I shared some strong kava with a man name Georgie the night before, but she looked at me with confusion, and she said she did not know who that was. I described him in detail and she soon exclaimed, "Oh, that's my uncle Topam, I didn't know his name was Georgie." I realized that "Georgie" was using his European-derived name intentionally, and I didn't even know his "real" name. Topam, like many Anejom people, use their European-derived names as a way of acting in accordance with the foreign world with which they come into contact, and their European-derived names allow them to do this. European-derived names do not become associated with a person's totemic name, as my host-mother had no idea who Georgie was, but rather, European-derived names are used to hide one's totemic name and the totemic group from the uncertainty of the outside world, which for Topam, was embodied in my presence.

In the past, instead of using a European-name as Topam did, Anejom people recall the practice of physically hiding their face and/or body from others when they were in the presence of strangers. It is also a practice today of avoiding eye contact with strangers. This is considered to be *necen*—"respect." Anejom people recall that in the past,

[33] The strength of the kava was intentional, as it debilitated me.

if one did not have a name that gave them use rights to a particular *nelcau*, they avoided visual contact with everyone who belonged there. In this way, names are one's way of interfacing with a linguistic population, and social world. It creates a phenomenological presence with those who are familiar to the named person, and likewise, a distance to strangers or "outsiders"—*nuputonga*. Today, Anejom people are respectful by not immediately making eye-contact with new people, and slowly do so. It is uncommon for Anejom people to introduce themselves using a vernacular, but rather one's European-derived name is the one Anejom people use.

European-derived names are necessary when interfacing with the global world, and the name makes this interface possible because it is thought to be derived from there, and hence, has belonging there. It is not that Anejom people fear that their name will be stolen or ruined if they share it, but rather, it is common to maintain a division between the two linguistic worlds, analogous to the way Anejom people are said to have maintained divisions between *nelcau* in the past. European-derived names are useful in maintaining a similar division because when a person uses his or her European-derived name, he or she assumes the role that name evokes—a foreign signifier, one that is not Anejom. In other words, with any name—totemic, created, or European-derived—names are the condition for the possibility of interfacing with the socio-linguistic world and material and physical space that the name belongs to, but without it, in this logic, one remains outside it.

Etpok-T

As we return to the story of Etpok-T, to understand why he passed in the way that he did—either by *uwuñtap*—"ritual suicide", or simply a result of intense labor, Etpok-T clearly felt a strong need to establish a settlement for reasons that should now be clear, to set an example for the island and returning to where one belongs on the basis of *kastom*. He was laboring for *kastom* because this was central to Etpok-T's identity, namely, as an example of *kastom* for Anejom people. Central to my argument is the fact that the self-reflexive consciousness of one's *kastom* is a metacultural process, and that Etpok-T was enveloped

by a '*kastom* consciousness'. This is key to understand Etpok-T's situation as a laborer for *kastom*, and why this was so important to him was intensified by his 'alienation' from that specific place in the past. Immediately after independence, when land was being returned to "custom owners" following the national constitution, as discussed briefly at the beginning of this chapter, the land in question became embroiled in a land dispute that reached the highest court of the new nation-state.

In 1985, the land dispute concerning Etpok-T reached the Supreme Court of Vanuatu.[34] The claimant, a man of Futuna descent, claimed that his father was the "custom owner" of the land in question, and had more right than Etpok-T to be there. The claimant was representing his father and all patrilineal descendants of a man named Habina (Who I will refer to as Etpok-H for respect)—his great-grandfather—an Aneityum pastor and chief of *Anejo* who married a Futuna woman, moved to Futuna, and never returned to Aneityum. However, some of his descendants did, such as the claimants of the land in question. Etpok-T was also related to Etpok-H, but through his mother. Hence, the claimant and Etpok-T both shared a common ancestor by descent, or *inja* —"blood", but Etpok-T was related by matrilineal descent, while the claimant was related by patrilineal descent. Etpok-T argued that he had rights to be there on the basis of *kastom*. In 1986, the Vanuatu Supreme Court ruled against Etpok-T. The judge ordered Etpok-T to leave for one year, after which time he could return only if he was granted a lease from the "custom owner". Etpok-T lost the rights and access to land. He lost his rights and access on the basis of *kastom*, as the judge ruled that following *kastom*, 'land in Vanuatu is transferred patrilineally, from father to son, and not mother to son'. Etpok-T lost access to his land through a post-colonial legal system that ignored more complex forms of customary land tenure, and took patrilineal descent as absolute in Vanuatu. As discussed in this chapter, the idea that there can be one individual "owner" of a parcel of land is rooted in colonial ideology, as a prime commodity in the global political economy, and now the global hegemonic order. The argument that *Intasalep* tries to promote is in opposition to this, that individual "ownership" is an unwanted colonial artifact that made

[34] Tebahai v. Habina, Vanuatu Supreme Court 9; Land Appeal Case 007 of 1985.

it easy for foreigners to acquire land. *Intasalep* continues to argue that an individual Anejom person cannot "own" land—land can only be collectively held by a group. But, key to this argument is the importance of "chief", who is the designated spokesperson for land of the *nelcau*. Today, the "chiefs" signature is the voice of the people, a colonial invention that made it easier for ni-Vanuatu to alienate land.

From the perspective the leaders of the <u>*kastom*</u> movement, *Intasalep* should have resolved this dispute because they claim to be the collective authority of Aneityum customary land tenure, but the truth is that the Vanuatu Supreme Court has the real legal power. This dispute was taken out of the hands of *Intasalep* and was resolved by a neo-colonial system of law that did not take the practice of 'nomination' into account. After the ruling, Etpok-T moved from his totemic district to a neighboring district that was uninhabited and started a new temporary settlement at *Anpeke,* the place I had last seen him. After Navalak (Etpok-N for respect), the great-grandchild of Habina won the case, he was often referred to as "chief" but, like Etpok-T, he was never 'nominated' or installed to a chiefly position. Etpok-T was devastated by the Supreme Court's ruling and was unable to return. In response, Etpok-T started calling himself "chief" as well, and even published a paper under the name "Chief Philip Tepahae" (1997). In my interpretation, the issues surrounding this land dispute are the principal reasons why Etpok-T was never considered for a chiefly position. This tension continued until 2008, when a *nasiñpa*—"peace ceremony" was organized by *Intasalep*.

The peace ceremony was intended to heal the fractured relationship between Etpok-T and Etpok-N, a dispute that epitomized the Aneityum/Futuna tension on the island that now involved a handful of other families. The ceremony was first thought to be a success; Etpok-N, with his lawyer by his side, signed a written agreement to give up his proprietary rights and to let *Intasalep* resolve the dispute. It had become clear to Etpok-N that *Intasalep* wanted to establish collective "ownership" over the land in question, and they did not want to alienate him. Etpok-N agreed that *Intasalep* should have determined the "owner" before the Vanuatu Supreme Court made any ruling. This was an admirable move, as Etpok-N was giving up his proprietary rights to the land and allowing *Intasalep* to

determine if his rights were valid. Etpok-T was then allowed to return to the land in question as an equal to Etpok-N. Etpok-T wanted to return to his land immediately to renew his relationship by gardening and dwelling in that specific place. However, there was some resistance from Etpok-T's family to return, as they had lived in Uje, and Anpeke, the temporary settlement, for much of their life. The thought of starting a new settlement again was overwhelming for many of them. Etpok-T needed the support of his whole family to successfully return. This was not something he could do alone, and he felt strongly that they needed to return together.

Etpok-T was acting on an intention to pass something on, as his statement that opens this chapter indicates. He wanted to make a statement about his life that would be impossible for people to forget. Etpok-T was not only acting for himself, but also for the totemic group as a whole. He wanted to end his life in a way that would propel the rest of them into participation with the land. As a *kastom* "traditionalist," Etpok-T wanted his totemic group to return to the place where they belong—to the place where they had been emplaced by virtue of 'nomination'—the foundation of Etpok-T's '*kastom* consciousness'—his identity as Kaumi Philip Tepahae, and the history of his name when he died. Etpok-T was laboring for *kastom* when he passed, it was a motivating factor that consumed much what he did. Much of Etpok-T's *kastom* work was admirable, such as his work with *namauyag*—"*kastom* dance", and his overall emphasis on the "traditional" and "cultural", but Etpok-T was making a political act as well, and he was deeply influence by the global hegemonic order. As Aneityum's colonial history attests, not all Anejom people support the idea of returning to any form of *kastom* and there is resistance by some to return to any "traditional" way of life. In short, *kastom* has divided Anejom people more than uniting them. As Etpok-T's story attests, he was striving for difference, for his conception of *kastom*—*Kastom* as a 'common structure of his own difference'—and one that is directly tied to land.

Unlike other areas of Vanuatu where land leasing and *de facto* alienation is common, no Aneityum land has been leased to any entity, but there is always the chance that one could lease one's land, and that trend could continue. It will depend on how

Anejom educated youth, for example, will relate to the land, especially if they have spent long periods of time in boarding schools. Many of these youth have spent years in boarding schools separated from their families and their island. It remains to be seen if *Intasalep* and the leaders of the *kastom* movement can rally the growing youth population to return to a *kastom* way of life, or if the younger generations will choose a different path. More importantly, the future of Aneityum will hinge on the example that leaders of *Intasalep* will set for our youth, and all Anejom people. Ultimately, the future success of the *kastom* movement will hinge on the sustained participation of future generations of all Anejom people, youth, adults, elders. The exclusion of women from the movement seems to be a move in the wrong direction, and may be a bad sign of things to come.

For both Etpok-T and Matak-I, *kastom* was a driving force in their lives, and they labored and continued to labor for *kastom* until their untimely deaths. *Kastom* was the most important economic and political resource for them. It was not just land, but land as *kastom*. Etpok-T's action should be understood as the expression of his '*kastom* consciousness', and what he was willing to sacrifice—his own body, to be remembered as an example of *kastom*. This concerns the commodification and global politics of "culture", but also as the objectification of *kastom* as phenomenological—the a subjectivication of *kastom* in oneself. For Etpok-T, this ended in a horrific death, and for Matak-I, again a premature and shocking death, which will be discussed in the following chapter. These are examples of the unintended and unpredictable effects of increased neo-liberalism in Vanautu, and the global hegemony of "culture" found in 'structures of common difference'. It was not just Matak-I and Etpok-T who were experiencing a '*kastom* consciousness'. This is the paradox of the work of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, exemplified again and again by those Anejom people who hold *kastom*, culture, or heritage, as the basis for their subjectivity, that those who depend on *kastom* as a economic or political resource, are simultaneously debilitated by the consciousness of *kastom* as central to oneself, a neo-liberal subjectivication of *kastom* as one's "culture".

"Taro is cultivated in considerable quantities, and my be considered the bread of the land" John Inglis (1855)

"…sugar was an ideal substance…It served to make a busy life seem less so; in the pause that refreshes, it eased, or seemed to ease, the changes back and forth from work to rest…" Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power* (1985)

IV—*NELCAU*—"CANOES"

I remember rising one morning in 2016 to the sounds of roosters crowing, before the sun had risen. I quickly arose and began preparing for a trip from Anelcauhat to Umej. The walk would take a couple hours, and I was planning to stay for a few nights with Matak-I, as we participated in an *Intasalep* meeting. This meeting was special because it was not the normal, regularly scheduled monthly meetings, but rather a meeting that had been requested by Umej *Intasalep* representatives, for Matak-I to assist in getting their *nelcau* —"canoe" afloat again. For many months, the *nelcau* of Umej was simply in disarray, as the representatives themselves were not getting along. The were still attending monthly *Intasalep* meetings, but not doing any of the 'work' that they had agreed upon to do in those meetings. In short, the 'canoe' lacked any kind of unity, and people were stealing kava from one another, for example, and there were clear internal divisions between families who lived there. Matak-I and I were traveling to Umej to find out what was wrong, and in what ways we could remedy the situation. As I awoke that morning I was excited for the walk, in anticipation to take part in this special meeting, and to visit my friends in Umej, the eastern most village on Aneityum.

As the sun slowly rose in the east, Matak-I and I were well on our way, and about half way I was getting hungry. I pulled out a baby loaf of fresh baked bread that my wife's mother had baked the night before. I snacked as I walked, and I offered some to Matak-I, which he declined only because he had a loaf of bread as well. He joined me in eating while we walked, and as he started eating his bread he took out a Coca-Cola, opened it, and slowly drank as he ate the loaf of bread. He had bread in one hand, and Coca-Cola in the other. Even though the bread and Coca-Cola are considered *itoga* —"outsider", how Matak-I was eating is an Anejom practice called *nadepiañ,* which means

to mix a drier starchy food with something moist—to balance food in one's mouth so that is it sufficiently moist when one swallows. Often this is a combination of *intal*—"taro", *noye*—"manioc or cassava", or *naren naren*—"rice" with a juicy protein or vegetable, such as *numu*—"fish", *incodei kurimatau*—"beef", *pikad*—"pig", or *nasiej*—"slippery cabbage", a leafy green vegetable. Sometimes the *nadepian*—"balancing food" is made into a soup, that will easily moisten whatever drier starchy food it is being eaten with. Soups are common these days because a small serving of meat or fish, for example, can make a *nadepiañ* for many people. While what Matak-I was eating may shock those concerned about excessive sugar intake, especially in light of the diabetes epidemic that the nation of Vanuatu is experiencing—the meal was perfectly appropriate for Matak-I because the foods fall into pre-existing linguistic categories that Anejom people use to understand the material world around them, and specifically to 'balance' one's meal.

As I ate the dry bread by itself, and Matak-I had bread with Coca-Cola, I thought about the contrast between eating bread by itself on the one hand, or with Coca-Cola on the other, and the need to balance every meal. From an Anejom perspective, Matak-I was balancing more than I was, but was this the appropriate balance? It was not my place to tell Matak-I not to drink what he was drinking, namely, not to *adepian*—"balance" his food. The vernacular signifier *adipiañ* is important when understanding what could be described as a mundane cultural practice, namely, balancing of foods in one's mouth, finding the appropriate combination of dry and wet. As the dry carbohydrate is often combined with a wet protein, it is notable that both the dry carbohydrates and wet proteins, namely the dryness and wetness in combination makes the food eaten together a meal. A meal for an Anejom person must include both of these elements. To be clear, the dry bread I was eating was less of a balanced meal, and the dry bread and Coca-Cola that Matak-I was enjoying was more of a balanced meal. As a researcher, and participant-observer—again, it was not my place to make a comment about how Matak-I was finding balance with his food, but rather to observe and take note. At the time I never imagined that Matak-I would be gone only five years later, to die from a foot infection that would not heal because of type-2 diabetes, which I had no idea he had. I had thought, like many

Anejom people, that Matak-I was invincible—that's what his full name evokes —"*Inhatasjinjap"*—a stone in the ocean that doesn't budge; he was the strongest stone imaginable, one repeatedly being hit by wave after wave, and continuing to stand rooted in place no matter how bad the weather. He was the shining example of *Intasalep*, the example of a traditional *kastom* man, working for the good of all Anejom people. As we made our way to Umej, he was living up to this example again for Anejom people, by traveling across the island to get Umej's 'canoe' afloat again—his work powered by the combination of a loaf of bread and a Coca-Cola.

After a couple days of intense debate under the banyan tree at Umej, the conclusions of the special meeting were simple—families were not spending time together, gardening together, eating, or drinking kava together. Matak-I talked at length about the importance of just hanging out, drinking kava, and sharing food. He made examples of two men, from different families living in Umej who would rarely drink kava together, but had actually stolen kava from each other—and made the point that instead of stealing kava from each other, they should just start drinking kava together. He said something along lines of 'the next time you dig up a stump of your own kava, rather than bringing the kava back to your home to drink alone—bring it over to the other family's house, and drink kava with them'. In short, his advice was simply to bring families together through sharing food and drink. For Matak-I, the health of the 'canoe' depends on people actively participating together as a 'canoe'—ideally through gardening, but also sharing food, and one of the most important activities, sharing kava. Kava is important because through the practice of drinking kava, a mutuality between the material bodies of the 'canoe' are created. As will be described in greater detail in the next chapter, kava is described in the vernacular as "the liquid of the island" (*nidinapotan*)—and when it is consumed, it combines to contribute to the *nesgan*—soul/body of those who consume it. To share kava, or food, for example, is to create a mutuality between those who share these things, and to practice kinship in a material way, in other words—to share in one another's embodiment. Hence, the sharing of food and drink are essential for relationships between members of a 'canoe'. Matak-I's final remarks at the special

meeting rang true for the participants, and we concluded the gathering by drinking kava and eating together, with kava and food that all of the participants contributed.

When I think about Matak-I, I remember these times—drinking kava, talking about Anejom _kastom_, laughing, and singing. I will never forget how he would sing after drinking a shell of kava, and then later when we were all feeling the effects —"*aaaawwwwweeeee—yyyyyyeeeeeee!*". It was hilarious, it still puts a smile on my face, but also a sadness that we will never share a shell of kava again. I still do the same practice, to sing with the kava, and I will never forget where I learned it from. He was only 57 years when he passed—much too young. Like Etpok-T, I had planned to return to Aneityum to continue collaborating with him, and to continue the progress that we had started. However, unlike Etpok-T, we know how Matak-I died—it was not a suicide or unanticipated death, even though it has probably hit Anejom people even harder. Further research will be needed to understand the significance of his death for Anejom people, as he died early in 2021, after my formal research period, and when I was actually in the middle of revising this work for my dissertation defense. What had been true was Matak-I was sick. I became aware of his deteriorating health when I lived in Anauonse from April-2015 to June-2017. Near the end of my time there Matak-I travelled to the capital, Port Vila, for a check-up. It was rumored that he was diagnosed with _sik blo sugar_ —"diabetes", but Matak-I denied that and just told me *Ek ityii hag upni anak*—"I am not eating enough", but what it also means is that he was not finding the appropriate balance in the foods he was eating. From the time we first met on an eventful night in Uje in 2005 —when he got me so inebriated on kava that I had to walk home on all fours for part of the way, and later I had stumbled upon a family of cattle sleeping in the dark—Matak-I and I had been very close. I spent much more time with Matak-I than I did Etpok-T, and we collaborated on a number of projects together, and even published a book together (Wood and Inhatasjinjap 2009). Matak-I and I are related through my wife, and I refer to him as *matak*—Uncle (MB or FSH), and he is a half-brother of my wife's father. I should also make it clear that they have the same father, but different mothers, which was one of the reasons why my wife's father was not considered one of their brothers for most of

their lives, and only until recently, when their father Yauwutau, told the family that he had another son, and formally recognized him as a son through a *nakro*—"feast". For this reason, before I married my wife, I called Matak-I *etmak*—"my father", but this changed after we were married. Matak-I always preferred that I called him *etmak*, and I do still feel that he is an *etmak*—"my father", and although I call him "Matak-I" out of respect for my wife and wife's father, who I also call *matak,* Matak-I started out as a father for me, and will always be a father.

This chapter is about Matak-I, but more specifically, about what it means to be an Anejom person in relation to one's *nelcau*—"canoe" in contemporary life; what it's like to be a part of a 'canoe' today, and not in the past. In some ways, Matak-I was following a path that had been charted by his ancestors, but in other ways, as described in the last chapter, he was doing new things that his ancestors never did. One can gain an understanding of Anejom personhood—in one's successes as much as one's failures from the perspective of Anejom people themselves. Matak-I and I shared many experiences, most recently for over two years in Anauonse. During this time I learned what was really happening with the Anauonse 'canoe'—Matak-I's 'canoe', the shining example of the *kastom* movement before his death. This is an important story to tell, and Matak-I was always open to sharing his story with others, and even though I do not use his real name for respect, he was always open for me to use his name, and to share his personal story with Anejom people and others, for the benefit of all. Albeit, I am probably sharing it for reasons that both of us never anticipated, and likewise, the benefit is probably greater than we ever imagined. Neither of us were anticipating that he would die before this work would be finished. It is important to know how and why he passed in the way that he did. While Etpok-T burned up from the outside, his nephew, Matak-I burned up from the inside. We have lost another VCC fieldworker in Matak-I, a person who was not only a relative, but also a close friend, and family, and he was one of the reasons why I met my wife in the first place. Before we move to a description of the Anauonse 'canoe', it is first important to ask, what does it mean to be an Anejom person?

As I discussed in the last chapter, one's Anejom name is the first place to start in understanding what it means to be an Anejom person. One's name is the condition for the possibility of the life Matak-I was living in Anauonse because of the rights and responsibilities that he believed was given to him by virtue of receiving the name "Inhatasjinap". Although like many names, and their emplacement—this was contested by other Anejom people who argued he was not supposed to be there. It is beyond the scope of this work to explore all of these contestations, but the important point is that Matak-I himself believed that he was 'emplaced' there. What it means to be a *nelpunejom* —"Anejom person", starts with the understanding of one's rights and responsibilities that one's name 'emplaces' on oneself, how one should fulfill those rights and responsibilities, even when there are people who argued that one should not be there. Again, not everyone agrees on where people are 'emplaced', and Matak-I is just one of the many examples. He was aware of these contestations, but took them in stride, and really was working to show that what was true was that he was there, and believed that he was supposed to be there. To be clear, Matak-I was not perfect, and while in some ways he exemplifies what it means to be an Anejom person, in other ways he was far from fulfilling that ideal. As I noted in the last chapters, his leadership was losing legitimacy from the perspective of women, and others who do not formally take part in *Intasalep* meetings and do not accept the ideology of *kastom* that Matak-I was proposing. This chapter will describe these perspectives in more depth below. One can learn as much about what an Anejom person is, or even what a 'canoe' is though the ways that Matak-I found legitimacy—as much as in the ways he was losing it.

***Nelcau* Anauonse—the Anauonse 'Canoe'**

What is an Anejom person, and more importantly, what is an Anejom person's relationship with one's 'canoe'? The answer begins with one's personal Anejom signifier for one's personal material signified—emplacing oneself on a specific place on the island. Emplacement does not happen automatically, although 'nomination' happens when one receives the name, and while a name emplaces oneself in geographical space, the material

process of emplacement takes place over time and requires action by the named person. When one follows one's rights and responsibilities by virtue of one's name, and nurtures a relationship with the specific place on the island one's name is associated with, one belongs in place through the process of creating belonging. Emplacement is not automatic—to be clear, it does not entitle one to "ownership", but rather simply the rights and responsibilities of place. While it is common for people to equate rights with ownership, this is a mistake. One cannot own land on Aneityum, but rather one's rights and responsibilities grant oneself the right and responsibility to hold it or the next generation, until one's name is passed on in the future. In order to hold one's land for the future, one must fulfill one's rights and responsibilities, first by planting a garden, and continuing to garden there year after year, planting trees and nurturing them, and eventually establishing a settlement. If and only if one does these things, one can be said to hold the land or one's name in practice. What should be clear is that whatever an Anejom person is, is not static, bounded, or concrete, but rather—processual, and grounded in practice and lived experience.

The practice of 'nomination' is central here because when a person receives a name, this emplaces oneself to a specific place on the island, and the rights and responsibility for the named to emplace oneself there through practice. This is germane to the story of Matak-I, who received the full name "Inhatasjinjap" from his FFB (Father's Father's Brother), an elder who I will refer to as Etpok-B. Etpok-B didn't have any children of his own, and when Matak-I's mother was expecting a child, Etpok-B told Matak-I's father that if she gave birth to a boy, he would name him, and the boy would live with him. After Matak-I was born, and he was a boy, Etpok-B 'nominated' him, and gave him a name from Etpok-B's name-bank that Matak-I understood as emplacing him to the 'canoe' of Anauonse. As noted above, this claim is contested by some Anejom people who argue that Etpok-B did not have the right to use that name, or others who say the name does not emplace him there, but rather someplace else. It is beyond the scope of the work, and moreover, not my place to say if either Matak-I's understanding was true, or if those who contested it were more true, but what is clear is that Matak-I believed he

was emplaced there, and similar to the case of Etpok-T—Matak-I felt the importance to emplace himself there through practice.

When I first met Matak-I in 2005, he was living closer to Anelcauhat, in a place called Uje. He lived near his father, brothers, and sisters, as his mother had passed before I reached Aneityum and his father was living alone. Matak-I was the only one to receive a name that emplaced him in a different place than his brothers and sisters, and when he was a child, he lived with Etpok-B rather than his biological mother and father. When Etpok-B passed, he moved closer to his father, brother, and sisters in Uje, but there was always the understanding that he was emplaced elsewhere, and would eventually leave Uje for where his named emplaced him. As I prepared to close my Peace Corps service in 2009, Matak-I had told me that the next time I would return, he would no longer be living in Uje, as he planned to make the move to Anauonse, about a 4 hour walk along the coastline on the western shore of the island. At that time there were not any permanent settlements in Anauonse, as it is one of the dryer parts of the island, and more difficult to find water sources in comparison to Anelcauhat, or Uje, which have streams nearby, and communal water taps available for all those who live there. Anauonse lacks any streams, and those who live there must rely on inland or coastal springs to get water. In short, it is an extremely dry place to live, and far removed from the busyness of the more populated areas of the island. Gardening can be challenging for some crops unless one irrigates, or farms near an inland swamp. Aerial yam is a crop that grows well in the dry climate, but taro can only be planted in one of the few inland swamps in the area.

When I returned in 2012 for just a few months, Matak-I had already developed a settlement with his wife, two boys, two girls, and Wanipi, Etpok-T's widow, Matak-I's *risik-ithii*—"aunt", and Matak-I's wife's mother—since Matak-I were cross-cousins. Their marriage was the ideal type, as discussed in the previous chapter. At the time they were the only ones living there full-time, although there were a number of families who had part-time settlements there. They had piped water from an inland swamp down to where they had built a half-dozen houses near the coast out of local materials and timber from the AFT project. In 2012 I remember it being a comfortable and even magical place to

live, and I was amazed at what Matak-I had done in such a short period of time. An essential part of this process was creating the settlement, and planting taro at the *inhenou* —"inland swamp", which was also the water source for his settlement. The settlement began at the coast, and ran along a narrow strip of land into the interior of the island, just south of the swamp. At the time I estimated that there were a couple acres, or about a hectare of taro in the swamp, which thrived with the combination of the moist soil and constant sun. Matak-I was renowned for his ability to plant taro—a living example of a traditionalist and a <u>kastom</u> man, and living up to that title by producing taro in huge quantities. At the time Matak-I was not just planting taro, but also tomatoes, watermelon, pumpkins, manioc, leafy green vegetables—he had an abundance of food. He also hunted for wild boar, fished, and harvested shellfish. In short, it was a life filled with abundance that Matak-I and his family had created. When I visited in 2012 for two months, I experienced this abundance first-hand, and I was motivated to return for my doctoral research. I then returned with my wife and two children in 2015, with the plan that we would live with Matak-I and his family, and be a participant-observer of the <u>kastom</u> movement.

In 2012 it seemed as if Matak-I was destined to succeed. He had the support of *Intasalep,* which he was the chairman of, and he regularly hosted *Intasalep* meetings at the Anauonse settlement. As I emphasize again and again, he was the example that everyone supporting the <u>kastom</u> movement looked to for how to return to one's place—how to emplace oneself following the rights and responsibilities of one's name. Matak-I wasn't only receiving recognition from Anejom people, but also national support from the VCC. At the yearly fieldworker conferences he would share his experiences as the chairman of *Intasalep,* and the progress that they were making. Central to his success was due to the high yield of taro farming. On an island where tourism dollars are leading to the shift to imported foods, such as rice, and flour—Matak-I and the Anauonse 'canoe' provided an abundance of taro to the Aneityum population. This taro was important, not only for *Intasalep* meetings, but also exchange, especially for <u>kastom</u> ceremonies, such as for 'marriages', 'name-bestowal', and 'nomination.'

When I returned in 2015, all of the progress that Matak-I had started seemed to be withering. This was not when he was diagnosed with type-2 diabetes, or when his leg was amputated, as the deterioration of his health became obvious a few years later. Rather, another dramatic event affected the progress that Matak-I had started with the Anauonse 'canoe'. In March of 2015, Vanuatu was struck by one of the most intense tropical cyclones ever recorded—the category 5 Cyclone Pam came from the north, and spared most of the northern islands, but hit the center of the archipelago—the most populated island of Efate, and headed south. The eye of the storm passed just west of Aneityum, but the island sustained high damage, especially on the western coastline. Anauonse is on the northwestern coast, and was devastated. The coastline changed overnight. The cyclone cleared the vegetation near the coast and left the sand beach relatively clear. All that were left were coconut trees, and a type of tree called *netet* in Anejom. The cyclone had destroyed Matak-I's half-dozen residential houses near the coast, where most of the structures were located. Only one was left standing, which Matak-I resided with his wife.

An appropriate analogy to what happened to the settlement because of Cyclone Pam was an uprooted banyan tree near the coast, a place that had previously been a meeting place for *Intasalep*. There was another banyan tree a short walk inland, which became the new meeting place after the disaster. Matak-I realized the importance of building one's residential house on a hillside, and months later he began building a house inland. The good news was that the taro that Matak-I had planted in the swamp near his settlement, sustained minor damage. Other crops such as manioc, bananas, and breadfruit, for example, were damaged by the cyclone. Matak-I still had taro, and he continued to share it. The problem was not a lack of food at the time, but at first it was actually an excess of food that was damaged by the cyclone. Immediately after the cyclone had passed there was an abundance of manioc, bananas, breadfruit, and also kava, which were all damaged in varying degrees. Breadfruit simply falls from the tree, and banana trees fall over as well, but manioc and kava are damaged because of the wind

whipping the branches and breaking the roots. The roots would rot in the ground if not consumed within a few weeks.

The cyclone dramatically changed all of our lives, and personally, my family and I were included. When the cyclone passed through Vanuatu I was on Efate, taking part in some collaborative research with the VCC, to develop educational materials for ni-Vanuatu audiences. I was disconnected from my wife and two children for a month, and the phones were still down when I was finally able to fly south, to be re-united with them. I had just reached Aneityum and was relieved to find my wife and two young children doing well. We had planned to live with Matak-I, but when a large portion of his settlement was destroyed—he could no longer house us. Thankfully we did bring a tent, and since my wife's parent's house was still intact just a short walk away, we pitched our tent near their house, a short walk from Matak-I's settlement. We made our home on the sand beach that was cleared by the cyclone, and lived in a tent for six months. This also allowed our children to live with their grandparents during our time on Aneityum. I realize now that this divided Matak-I and I to some extent. That was not my intention when we moved our tent closer to my wife's parents, but I understand now that it signified for Inhat that I was part of a different 'canoe', and not a member of Matak-I's 'canoe.' Yes, 'canoes' are large on Aneityum in *kastom* ideology, but in practice I came to realize that the larger *nelcau* that Spriggs documented was full of a number of divisions, which are also 'canoes.' In short, although Matak-I worked hard to focus on the larger *strukja* of the 'canoes' on Aneityum, the contemporary 'canoes' on Aneityum today are mush smaller, as there are multiple levels of smaller 'canoes' within each of the larger 'canoes' that Spriggs described.

While I though it would be fine to live just a short walk from Matak-I, I began to understand that Matak-I did not like it that I was living near his *etwan*—"brother". In Anejom, there is no differentiation between one's brother and half-brother, and both are signified as *etwak*—"my brother." My father-in-law, Matak-K, had been the first person to be nominated for "chief" of Anauonse. It was one of the most contested nominations because even though Matak-K's name was a previous Anauonse 'chief', as I discussed

above, this does not automatically make one a chief. One must have the support of one's people. Everyone in the Anauonse 'canoe' would have to 'lift' him up to the position of 'chief' by contributing to a 'feast' that he would distribute. The problem was that Matak-K had little support. He usually expressed disregard for *Intasalep* meetings. Even though he was nominated to 'chief', he rarely attended these meetings, which left me attending on my own. At one meeting, Matak-I thanked me in front of all of the participants, for representing my wife's family. I cannot emphasize enough that this was not my intention, and I certainly do not aspire to a leadership position on Aneityum. I had thought that 'canoes' were much larger, and we were all part of the same social group, but I learned in practice, that the Anejom 'canoes' of today are much smaller, and while *Intasalep* focuses on the larger structure, this is more ideological that material. I will return to this point below, when I discuss the 'canoes' that are not formally recognized at <u>*kastom*</u> by *Intasalep.*

Even though Matak-I may have felt this way, my intention was to be with him as much as I could; I visited him daily, and often spent whole days with him when there were *Intasalep* activities. My wife and children would just hang out with their grandparents, and other relatives a leisurely 10-15 minute walk away. During this time, Matak-I and I worked in collaboration on a book and film project focusing on changing lifeways and the effects on food on Aneityum, again, to produce educational materials for ni-Vanuatu audiences. This project also supported my research on Aneityum during the same time. As I mentioned above, I came to realize that Matak-I was increasingly uneasy that we were not living with him. I only slowly came to understand this because Matak-I never spoke directly about it, but would often criticize Matak-K, especially for being too *itoga* —"outsider." It became clear that I was also a part of this, as myself, along with my two children are all considered *itoga.* We planned to build our house near Matak-I, and cleared a beautiful area on a hillside within his 'canoe.' But our house just never got built; not because Matak-I did not want to, but he simply could not do it, or rally the members of the 'canoe' to build it. He planned to do it on his own, but he was also re-building his own house, and that was clearly the priority, and I agreed. The house he was currently living in was still near the coast, and if another cyclone came, it would surely also be gone. In

short, while Matak-I would have preferred that my family and I life with him, he simply could not support us at such a challenging time. I would definitely agree, and if we did not have the help of my wife's parents, and other relatives, we would have faced extreme adversity during this difficult time. At the time we were not the only ones, as everyone was recovering from the cyclone—not only for Anejom people, but many ni-Vanuatu across the archipelago.

There were two other *netec* (families) living in Anauonse at the time, and they could also be described as different *nelcau*—'canoes.' First, were a married couple who I will refer to as Etpok-NN, with his wife Risik-ithii-NY, along with two children, a short 20 minutes walk along the coastline to the north from Matak-I. The only other family at the time I will refer to as Nega-W and Etwak-W, and their two children. While we all lived in the Anauonse 'canoe', it is important to keep in mind that we were not unified under the 'canoe' automatically, and that the unification of all of these families became increasingly difficult for Matak-I during this time for a number of reasons that will be described below. In all, there were some twenty people living in Anauonse when we were there, ourselves included. At times this population would double, or even reach upwards of one-hundred when there were large gatherings, such as naming ceremonies, and wedding that took place while we were there, and always events like *Intasalep*. When there were gatherings like this, we would gather near Matak-I's settlement, or one of the other small settlements. Anauonse has a remote and rural feeling to the area. Those who live there are usually happy to stay within their settlements and gardening areas. I got used to not seeing people often, other than the time that I spent with Matak-I, either working, or just practicing daily activities.

After the cyclone, Matak-I continued farming taro, and while Matak-I was not selling taro, or only did so on rare occasions—he was sharing taro, and receiving other gifts in exchange. When Matak-I would share taro with people, people would reciprocate later, often a bag of rice, flour, or sugar. The exchange would often be delayed, and can be described as 'balanced reciprocity.' To be clear, Matak-I was not purchasing these 'outsider' products, but they were given to him in reciprocation for taro. As hard as

Matak-I tried to live an island-based life, he was surrounded with imported, 'outsider' products. He did not reject them, and although he did not accept them completely—they were always there, rice, flour, sugar, etc. to be eaten. On more than one occasion I ate taro with sugar lemon leaf tea while eating with Matak-I. There just was not another *nadepiañ* —food to balance the taro. It was not that Matak-I loved sugar tea to balance his taro, but it was the easiest thing available. I did contribute tins of canned fish or meat, or even food that my wife and family had harvested. The problem was that Matak-I had been so focused on taro, that he stopped planting other kinds of root crops and other vegetables. He did have *nasiej*—"island cabbage" the popular leafy green vegetable, but it was a long, hour-long walk from his house, and needed to be harvested during the day. Matak-I and I were talking about food all the time, but the actual meals with Matak-I were always lacking. We just did not eat together enough, and would often skip meals. Only when there was a <u>*kastom*</u> event, did everyone eat well, with a nice selection of root crops, fish, pig, or beef—but unfortunately, other days it was perfectly normal to go hungry, especially during the midday. However, we would regularly drink kava together, and anytime he had kava on hand, he would make sure I new it was there. Matak-I and I both loved green leafy vegetables, but we only ate them together on rare occasions. Numerous times after kava, he would take some green vegetables out after we had drunk a few shells, and fry them—even after drinking a few shells of kava. As will be discussed in depth in the next chapter, it is extremely difficult to do some kinds of tasks after drinking kava, and it would be shocking to some that Matak-I would cook after drinking kava. While women always cooked for *Intasalep* meetings, on other days I rarely ate with Matak-I unless he himself cooked. I regularly ate leafy green vegetables with my own family, and we often shared vegetable with Matak-I, but when I visited him, they were often lacking. I emphasize this because it was not only my observation, but also something that Matak-I told me often, that we would not be 'balancing' our foods very well after drinking kava. On numerous occasions he apologized for not having a 'balancing food.' While at some points, at *Intasalep* meetings or <u>*kastom*</u> ceremonies, it seemed like the population would double or triple, and everyone was still eating huge amounts, while on other days, we were all

hungry, and always ready to drink kava. I came to realize that this was a good analogy for understanding the whole *kastom* movement—there was a lack of appropriate balance.

Matak-I was hungry, and as he told me, not eating well, but he still insisted that he needed to prioritize *Intasalep* and *kastom* activities. He labored everyday, either at the taro swamp, or finding coconuts to feed his pigs. This labor, or *naca*—"work" was central to Matak-I's mission in reviving the Anauonse 'canoe'. The idea that he was proposing was that every smaller 'canoe' within the larger Anauonse 'canoe' boundaries would take a few specific *naca*—"work" to contribute to the larger whole. Matak-I delegated some 'work', such as leadership (*natimared*—"chief") for Matak-K, and kava for Etpok-NN, and pig for Nega-W, but it became clear that everyone seemed to be vying for the chiefly position, and claiming some biological descent from a chief in the past, whether Anauonse or elsewhere, such as the Inland chiefdom (Anijinwai). I certainly did not want to be in the middle of all of this, and I came to realize that I living in the midst of a competition for chief, but one that require ascriptively defined qualitites. I did not have those, so I was not eligible, but my children did have ascriptively defined qualities. Of course they are much too young to be eligible to hold office right now, but I think the fact that they are half-Anejom, and half-*itoga* really concerned some people. I made it clear to Matak-I that we were not there to compete for that *natimared* position, and I was only there for research. While my father-in-law was involved in this—we were separate as far as the leadership position was concerned. Unfortunately, it was unavoidable, as I was often grouped in with him and my affinal family, which as I discuss in the first chapter, I was both considered *itoga*—"outsider" and *nelpunejom*—Anejom, and more so one way, depending on who you asked. My children faced the same issue. In short, there was all kinds of *naca*—work that Matak-I was trying to revive in the 'canoe', but most of the people living in Anauonse were competing for one type of *naca.* Matak-I obviously took too much on his own. It also became clear to me over time that Matak-I was also aspiring for chiefly office, and even though he never told me directly that he was aspiring to be chief—saying one was aspiring to be chief, would easily discredit any attempt to be chief. Matak-I was the de facto 'chief', as the chairman for *Intasalep*.

While Matak-I was clearly taking on too much work, he was slowly battling another problem—his health. We all received disaster aid after the cyclone, but the food —rice, instant noodles, and canned meat/fish that was distributed to everyone seemed to make his situation worse. While Matak-I continued to have an abundance of taro, there was also an abundance of rice. The aid was good in many ways, as it ensured that Anejom people did not starve after the cyclone destroyed many people's gardens. However, the aid was first distributed when there was an abundance of island-based food, such as manioc, banana, and breadfruit. Yes, the rice was able to keep for months after receiving it, but it was often consumed as fast as any other food in people's kitchens. I am not referring to a few pounds or kilos of rice—the aid that was distributed were 25-50 pound bags of rice. In sum, while Matak-I continued to have taro, rice was everywhere, and Anejom people were not letting it go to waste, it was the easiest food to eat, and we were all eating it. Considering Matak-I eventually passed because of the complications related to diabetes—the excess of white rice at this time, which lasted for many months, likely worsened his already poor health. However, even with all of this adversity, Matak-I was dedicated to *naca*—his work as the leader of the *kastom* movement, and a member of the Anauonse 'canoe'. Matak-I was putting *naca* into action as best he could—this was crucial to the ideology of *kastom*. If there was to be an Anauonse 'canoe', it must be able to contribute, as a 'canoe' should. He was making sure he fulfilled his responsibilities, and Anauonse 'canoe' was always able to contribute taro, kava, and pig for any event of significance, including ceremonies, initiations, and fines, but especially for his own ceremonies, such as a naming ceremony that took place early in 2017 that I will discuss in detail at the end of this chapter. Before I go into any detail concerning that ceremony, and its significance to the *kastom* movement, it will first be important to review the different types of *naca*—"work" that Matak-I was working to revive.

***Naca*—Work**

The "work" (*naca*) within each 'canoe' is social and political. Planting taro was just one of Matak-I's *naca*—"work", and one which became the central focus of the *kastom* movement

after Matak-I relocated to Anauonse, as he was the living example of fulfilling one's *naca*—work, his responsibility as a member of the 'canoe'. *Naca* is central to one's responsibilities, as it is associated with one's place in a particular 'canoe' and with those who share the same 'canoe'. The prefix *nhaklii*—"small" is a specific responsibility to contribute to "feasts" (*nakro*), literally "sharing" within one's 'canoe', and as a member of Anauonse. Along with one's responsibility to contribute to feasts, it is also a responsibility to have an abundance of *namta*—"starts" for example, as Matak-I's work was 'small taro,' he was responsible to have an abundance of "taro starts" (*nedman-tal*) for growing taro. However, growing taro was not the only *naca* that Inhat was responsible for. This *naca* was actually not associated with his name per se, but rather a *naca* that he inherited from his mother. Likewise, he also had inherited the *naca* of *noyag*—"song" from his father, and to *namenjinai-numu*—"take care of fish" from his grandfather, Etpok-B, who named him. Hence, when asked what *naca* was his responsibility, he responded with all three of these *naca*.

Matak-I emphasized that when fulfilling the responsibilities for taro, as one harvests taro from a dry garden or "swamp" (*inhenou*), it is taboo to harvest all of the taro in that particular place, and it is also taboo to eat all of the taro without sharing some of it. Likewise, leaving the smaller taro starts, and some medium sized taro is how one continues to be grounded in place, and I watched Matak-I do this when he harvested taro—he would selectively leave some all of the smaller taro in the ground for starts. Matak-I emphasized that it is taboo to harvest everything from a taro garden, and this is also relevant for sugarcane, aerial yam, kava, etc. but specifically for one's *naca*. It was Matak-I's responsibility to plant taro, share the taro with others, and always provide taro starts to those who requested them. Likewise, those who inherit responsibilities to care for pigs, for example should always have pigs available. Animals are similar to plants in that it is taboo—if one has *naca* that involves an animal—to kill all of one's animals. If one were to kill all of one's animals this would be tantamount to giving up one's *naca,* or responsibility to one's 'canoe.' Hence, if one is a "small chicken," for example, one is responsible to always

have chickens. Matak-I raised pigs and chickens as well, but did not consider these his *naca.*

The other two *naca* that Matak-I mentioned were a little more complicated, namely "song" and "take care of fish" because neither required that he garden at all. In the past, one who had the responsibility for "song" would compose new lyrics and songs for the 'chief,' and one's 'canoe.' In this way, "song" was the metaphorical narrative of the 'canoe,'—it told the story of the 'canoe', and today serves as an archive of *kastom* history. Since Matak-I was responsible for "song", this meant that he should have been composing new musics, he told me this himself, but when I asked him if he had ever composed a new song, he said no, and that no one is composing new songs today, but rather it was his responsibility to draw on his knowledge of historical music, as a basis for understanding *kastom.* In the following chapter I will return to the claim that Matak-I made that no one is composing new songs. I found that this was not the case, that there are still a few Anejom people who are composing songs, but just not music that is formally recognized as *kastom* by *Intasalep*. Matak-I's other *naca* of "taking care of fish" actually had nothing to do with fishing per se, but to ensure that fish stocks were plentiful in the coastal areas of the 'canoe', which meant closing some areas for fishing or harvesting of shellfish, to ensure that the people of the 'canoe' would always have *nadepiañ*—"balancing food" to go with their taro, dry starchy root crops, or the disaster aid rice.

There is a rich history of different kinds of *naca*—"work" that were part of each respective 'canoe' in the past, and since each respective 'canoe' had a number of different totemic groups, each totemic group had a specific type of work. Today, the responsibilities of work within each 'canoe' are still known, but until recently, much of this work was no longer associated with a particular 'canoe.' and as Matak-I's case illustrates, since the populations of these "work" are just a fraction of what they were in the past, most people would claim they have more than one *naca* responsibility. Anejom people continued to do much of this work even after the arrival of Christianity, and some kinds of work was more accepted than others, while some was openly suppressed. Likewise, during the time I lived in Anauonse, there was a focus on the revival of only some kinds of work, like the

ones that Matak-I mentioned, while other kinds of work was left out. This 'editing' was understandable for a number of reasons, but most obviously because there weren't enough people living near Matak-I to do all the work. However, there were a few settlements, and *naca* was slowly being revived as discussed above, and the priorities were clear. The *naca of* taro, kava, pig, chief's mouth, and chief were the priorities. These are the current areas of focus, while others are considered second priority, and furthermore, other kinds of *naca* have negative stigmas. Some *naca* is still being suppressed, and thought to be against the teachings of Christianity, and therefore the negative side of *kastom* that should be 'kept, but not practiced', and Matak-I had told me.

The position of 'chief' is an essential part of 'canoe' organization, but it is the most highly contested. As I have discussed in previous chapters, when the '*kastom* movement' was focusing on "governance" as part of a national movement initiated by the Vanuatu Cultural Centre (VCC), the "chief's council" (*Intasalep*), had nominated five men, each from respective chiefly totemic groups, to first be the placeholders for the position of chief. The idea was that these men would eventually be installed into office ceremoniously. As discussed above, initially *Intasalep* had chosen one of Matak-I's half-brothers, who I have been referring to as Matak-K, a man who is also my wife's father, and my 'father-in-law.' Chiefs only come from a particular totemic groups within the 'canoe' and referred to as *netec-atimi*—"the family of the people", those who are descended from a particular chiefly "totemic ancestor" (*inpulidwiñ*). Matak-K had descended from *tatau*—Barracuda, which is the chiefly totemic group of Anauonse. However, Matak-I descended from *inga* (purple swamp hen), the chiefly totemic group of the inland chiefdom of *nelcau* Anijinwei. While Matak-I was not a descendant of the Anauonse chiefly line, he was from the inland chiefdom inland from Anauonse, and his leadership of the Anauonse chiefdom was serving as placeholder for Anauonse until a chief was installed. Once a chief was installed on the coastal chiefdom, he pledged to then move inland to Anijinwei, which was where he would be eligible for 'chiefly' office. However, even though Matak-K was chosen by *Intasalep* because of his descent from the *netec-atimi*, soon after he was chosen, there were two other men who claimed that they

were also *netec-atimi,* but not because of descent, but because of 'nomination'—specifically their names, or names of their kin who received names from the *netec-atimi* name-bank, but who did not have a genealogical relationship with the totemic ancestor. Currently there has been no resolution, *Intasalep* has been unable to choose one of the three potential candidates, and no one holds the office of chief in Anauonse. While Anauonse has struggled to install a chief, as noted in the previous chapter, two other chiefdoms have been successful: Anelcauhat and Nelcau u Ilpuincai (Umej).

Another highly valued work that is positioned alongside the chief is "chief's mouth" (*nipjinosei natimared*). This work involves speaking for the chief at *Intasalep* meetings. Historically the chief would not speak during meetings—he would only open and close the meetings. During meetings the 'chief's mouth' would speak for him, and this continues today, as 'chief's mouth' are the only ones who speak at *Intasalep* meetings. This work continues today, even though no one has been installed into the office of chief, the 'chief's mouth' position does not require a ceremony for installment. There are currently five 'chief's mouth' who regularly attend "monthly" *Intasalep* meetings, and speak on behalf of their respective "chiefs"—even though while I was there, no person had been installed into office. Since there were no chief's installed into office, the leader of the movement—Matak-I would be the one who would regularly open and close all meetings. The position of "chief's mouth" was a problematic one for Matak-K, who was the 'nominated' chief of Anauonse because when he attended *Intasalep* meetings, he was instructed not to speak, and that his "chief's mouth" would speak for him. In private conversations with Matak-K, he told me that this was just a way to silence him in the meetings, and he was silenced—he literally was not allowed to speak. Ideally, if the person who was 'nominated' to "chief's mouth" and the "chief" were on the same page about issues, then the "chief's mouth" would be appropriate, but Matak-K said that he did not chose his own 'mouth', and that the person who was chosen by *Intasalep* was clearly against Matak-K, and they did not have a good working relationship. *Intasalep* had blamed this on Matak-K himself, that he was not a good leader, but it was pretty clear what was happening. That even though Matak-K was the most eligible person to be Anauonse

"chief"—there was opposition to his installment by many of the 'big men' of *Intasalep,* as many argued that Matak-K was too *itoga,* and he was SDA, which meant that he did not drink kava. As I have mentioned above—the comment about him being *itoga* is directly relevant to myself, as Matak-K had always supported that I marry his daughter, and he was even more delighted that she bore two grandsons for him, which he promptly named—our oldest he gave his own name, "Kadikau", a historical *natimared*—'chief' of Anauonse, and the second born, "Nafua", a historical *nocsopo*—'warrior' of Anauonse.

When Matak-K had told my wife that he was going to name our first born "Kadikau"—my wife protested. She felt extremely uncomfortable that he would name him after himself. My wife knew exactly what he was planning, and that he envisioned an Anauonse that was mixed with *itoga,* and had placed the responsibility on his grandsons to fulfill their responsibilities in the future. This was an example of how Anejom people practice 'bride-service' rather than 'bride-wealth.' To be clear, while most of the islands in Vanuatu practice 'bride-wealth', and require that the husband's family give a large amount of material wealth, often a few pigs, kava, and valued foodstuffs to the wife's family upon marriage. Today, there is even a commodified "price" for women, which is 80,000 vatu, or about $800 USD, but 'bride-wealth' is usually more than than that, and can reach multiple thousands of USD, especially when cattle are involved. In contrast, Anejom people do not practice 'bride-wealth.' I was not required to give my wife's family anything upon marrying my wife, but in exchange, my children belong to Matak-K, and have the responsibility to return to their place of belonging when they are older. I have no idea if this will actually happen because they are growing up in the US, and speak English along with Anejom, and the thought of our now seven and nine year old children leaving to Aneityum right now, is unimaginable. However, Matak-K convinced my wife, who's name is "Mamas", that the historical Mamas was the child of Kadikau, and that they needed to stay together. That if Mamas was in the US, then Kadikau needed to be there as well. My wife and I know we are in a complicated situation with this, as we are responsible for 'bride-service', and it is our responsibility to return to Aneityum in the future. This point will be discussed in depth in the following chapter. In short, considering

my positionality in the Anejom social world, even my being on Aneityum with my two children was highly contested by some, and conversely, highly supported by others.

Other than the highly contested leadership positions within the 'canoe,' the other *nhaklii naca*—"small work" positions, of taro, pig, and kava, are all essential to installing a "chief" into office. When considering the most highly valued work of 'small taro,' 'small pig,' and 'small kava,' the main reason why these have been glorified as part of the *kastom* movement, is because they remain essential elements for *nakro*—"feasts" and *nerutati*—"fines". In sum, these three *naca* are clearly the most important kinds of work that are currently being revived, while others are second priority. In light of the other kinds of 'work' that are being revived, it has not been as simple as just reviving everything because each *naca* often comes with a host of complications and contradictions, due to Aneityum's colonial history, and contemporary neo-colonialism and increasing neo-liberalism. For example, the work of 'take care of fish' involves creating abundance of fish and shellfish through management of marine resources. This means that the person who is responsible for this particular work has the power to create taboos or restrictions (*itap* or *atapnes* meaning "closed") over coastal areas. As noted above, Matak-I had taken this responsibility upon himself because of his 'nomination' from Etpok-B, but to say the least, this is a highly contested responsibility. Areas that are taboo are not open for fishing, or harvesting of shellfish, a vital resource, not only for Anejom people's nutrition and 'balance' for their meals, but also increasingly with the market-based economy, as lobster, to name the most important example, has become a valued market-based economic resource. Lobster will be discussed in more depth in the following chapter, but it should be noted that even though Matak-I and others were 'traditonalists'—they were all deeply influenced by the global pressures on the island, and the hyper-capitalistic activity that tourism has brought to the island.

'Taking care of fish' has been contested because, put simply, some canoe members contest the person's right to create taboos, in this case Matak-I. Henceforth, not all taboo areas are respected, and there are those who fish, or harvest shellfish because they do not respect the respective person's right to create a taboo. Many intentionally act against the

taboo to show the person putting the taboo has no authority. The 'revival' and 'preservation' of other kinds of work also reveal the challenge in this. For example, *nhaklii-numu*—'small fish' is another *naca* that brings complications, but not necessarily for the same reason. 'Small fish' is the *naca* to supply fish for the members of the 'canoe' has been a challenge to revive partly because it is not clear who the 'small fish' totemic group actually is. Matak-K had claimed that this responsibility is his, along with my wife and my affinal relatives, but others contest this claim. This is one of the problems rooted in the 'demographic disaster,' when upwards of 95% of Anejom people perished after contact with European missionaries and traders. Hence, it is often not clear who is responsible for the work like 'small fish', and this tends to be the case, not only in Anauonse, but other coastal areas. Likely because 'small fish' totemic groups are all coastal groups—the people who were most severely affected by post-encounter diseases.

The revival of 'small aerial yam' and 'small sugarcane' have also been complicated for different reasons. Firstly, the 'small aerial yam' is specific to Anauonse, but again, it is not clear who the 'small aerial yam' totemic group is. There has been discussion that one could possibly be nominated for this respective 'small aerial yam' *naca* specifically, or that other kinds of *naca* can be 'nominated' to work that is not being done, but no 'nominations' have been made. In another example attesting to the 'local' revival of tradition in this 'global' modern world is the 'small sugarcane' work, which has largely become defunct because of the abundance of processed sugar, which is slowly taking the place of sugarcane in Anejom people's diets. However, the work of 'small sugarcane' still continues, but it is certainly overshadowed by imported processed sugar, which is regularly part of feasts. Lastly, 'small chicken' is being revived, but this work has been overshadowed by 'small pig.' Chickens are needed for small fines (*neruitai*), but they are not required for feasts (*nakro*). Although there is not a stigma against raising chickens, but pigs are are simply valued higher and hence, there is a greater focus placed on pigs. Chickens are also easy to steal, and it is more difficult to know who stole one of your chickens in comparison to stealing a pig. As I continue to emphasize—the *kastom* movement is editing

an ahistorical understanding of their own heritage to produce a radically new version of "culture" that is in dynamic engagement with the global political economy.

In contrast, there are specific types of work that are not part of the '*kastom* movement,' for example, 'take care of small whale,' 'warrior,' 'nursing the island,' 'cyclone,' 'sorcery,' 'rain,' 'ocean waves,' 'landslide,' 'drought,' 'offerings,' and 'chief's assistants,'—all respectively are not part of the movement. There are stigmas against some of these types of work, such as 'take care of small whale,' 'nursing the island,' 'cyclone,' 'sorcery,' 'rain,' 'ocean waves,' 'landslide,' 'drought,' and 'offerings' likely because all of these types of work are associated with *inhat*— "stones" and *niricai* —"leaves," and what can be described as pre-Christian religion. There is a stigma against stones because they are considered idols, especially by Presbyterians, the church that has the longest history on Aneityum. However, Catholic teachings tend to be more lenient regarding stones, and Catholics have been more comfortable talking with me about how to use them, and even openly confessed that they use stones, for gardening, or to change the weather, for example. The first missionaries discouraged and rejected the use of stones, and openly prayed against them—with the intention that they would lose their power. The missionaries reportedly buried them and tried to destroy them, but Anejom people say the stones never lost their power, and are still used. The missionaries were also not aware of the fact that the black bibles that they carried with them everywhere, resembled the black magical stones that Anejom people used for ritual practices. It is likely that the reason Anejom people were so intrigued by the Presbyterian missionaries is because they carried these 'stones' with them, and were even able to open them up, and even speak from inside the 'stones' themselves as they quoted scripture. Ironically, as the missionaries were trying to destroy the stones of Anejom people, all they were doing is reinforce the truth that stones are powerful, as they were depending on a stone for their religion as well.

Stones still have power today, but the stigma against them means they are not officially part of the '*kastom* movement,' even though it is clear that people still use the power of stones even though they will rarely talk about it. The other types of work that

are not part of the movement are not being revived for other reasons, these types of work include 'warrior,' and 'chief's assistants.' 'Warriors' and 'chief's assistants' are regularly mentioned by some key Anejom people as absolutely necessity for the '*kastom* movement,' but *Intasalep* has not found a way to revive these types of work, for one, giving someone the authority to use physical force to quell disputes, or to support the work of the "chief" is no longer an accepted form of dispute resolution after the pacification of Christianity. The 'warriors' and 'chief's assistants' were the primary groups to fight for the chief's or canoe's respective causes. Today, the officers of the Vanuatu Police Force take the place of the 'warriors' and 'chief's assistants,' but many Anejom people are critical of this move, saying police officers have a different national authority and do not always respect what has been historically the value system of the chief, and they are fundamentally different from the 'warriors' and 'chief's assistants' in the past.

As I continue to return to is the importance of taro, chicken, pig, and kava, as the most important *naca* across the island. These valuable material items, while they are required for any ceremony or ritual of significance, such as installing a chief into office—they are also required to pay for "fines" (*neruitai*). Fines are placed on people for doing anything that is prohibited by *Intasalep*, and *Intasalep* places these fines on people. Larger fines are placed for more serious offenses such as rape, assault, or adultery, for example, and smaller fines for offenses such as theft, breaking a fishing taboo, or drinking locally made alcohol, for example. A payment for a small fine would typically be one "bundle" of taro (*necnas*), which usually includes five taro with stem (*nedmantal*) attached, one chicken, and one kava, and would sometimes include a pig if that offense being fined was extreme enough. A larger fine would include more than one bundle of taro, a pig or a couple pigs, and a larger kava, and possibly more, such as a few 10,000 vatu, or $100 USD. On that point, and the use of money, today, all of the fines have been commodified into the national currency, which means that if a fine is placed on a particular person, for adultery or infidelity, for example, which included three bundles of taro, one large kava, and one pig, and if the person being fined did not have any pigs—they could either ask

for a pig from a relative who has pigs, or pay the cash equivalent for that size of pig, which would likely be somewhere between 30,000-50,000 vatu—roughly $300-500 USD.

If one did have a pig and offered the actual pig for the fine, this pig would not be killed. The family accepting the fine would have the pig reproduce before killing it, in this way the one pig would lead to more pigs that could possibly be shared. This is the regenerative component to fines and feasts. For example, when fines are being paid, this regularly consists of a "bundle of taro" (*necnas*), a chicken (*inja*) or pig (*pikad*), and kava (*incacen*) of varying size depending on the severity of the fine. A 'bundle of taro' is more valuable than simply taro itself because the bundle is tied at the stems, namely, the stems are attached to, typically five roots of taro. The stems (*nedmantal*) are important because this is the regenerative component of the taro, only with the stems can the taro be planted and grow new taro. Likewise, in a fine that involves chicken or pig—the animal is rarely killed because it is kept for its regenerative potential. In a fine the chicken or pig is kept to reproduce, and only after it has reproduced a number of times will it finally be eaten. Likewise, kava has a regenerative potential, which like taro, is in the stems. In a fine that includes kava—the stems should always be attached. The kava root will be consumed, but the stems will be planted by the party receiving the fine.

Feasts are different from fines in that the pigs (or cows), which are part of the feast are always killed. Chickens are not included in feasts, only fines. Today, feasts involve the killing of a pig or pigs, and possibly a cow or cows. The meat is shared ceremoniously with all the people who participated in the feast—namely, whoever contributed to the feast—minimally, at least one bundle of taro. There are some participants who contribute more than one bundle of taro, but the bundle of taro is the minimum that must be shared as a participant of the feast. When one contributes at least one bundle of taro, one will receive cooked pig and/or beef, and cooked taro—all cooked on stones, as part of the sharing ceremony. One will also be free to drink kava. The following day when participants are returning to their homes, they can request stems of taro or stems of kava to plant. Not all participants request stems of kava or taro, but all participants are free to request these items.

Central to this discussion concerning *naca*—"work" within the 'canoe' is the notion that people can be intimately connected with material things of value. Some of these have become important for the *kastom* movement, while others have not. As I have argued, there is an editing process that takes place when *kastom* is objectified as such. *Naca* was central to Matak-I's mission, and while he worked to revive *naca,* what should be clear is that Anejom people are still practicing *naca* as practice and lived experience. Some of this is for *kastom,* while some is simply how Anejom people live, and what it means to be an Anejom person. An Anejom person cannot be understood separate from one's *naca,* and the place where one has the rights and responsibilities of *naca.* In scholarly literature, the so-called area of "Melanesia" has been central to theories of the self and personhood for the last few decades. It is important to understand how Anejom people contribute to this debate, and how Anejom people cannot be understood separate from one's rights and responsibilities of one's *neclau.* While the *kastom* movement has sought to focus on only a few *naca* for political and economic reasons, there are those on Aneityum who practice *naca* for the sake of the *naca* itself. While this *naca* might not be motivated by the 'canoe' that are formally recognized by *Intasalep.* Anejom people are practicing work, whether for *kastom* motivations, or as one's livelihood, or both.

Personhood in the Pacific

Even after the post-modern turn it is still commonplace for anthropologists to consider 'personhood' in terms that Radcliffe-Brown would have used, namely "…to merge the individual in the group to which he or she belongs" (1952:25, see also Helms 1998:109). Likewise, for the anthropologist working in the so-called cultural area of "Melanesia"— that postmodern scholars working in the Pacific are still trying to do away with, there has been an uncritical tendency to 'universalize' or 'typologize' personhood in a place that likely has more linguistic and cultural diversity than any other place in the world. But, for all the contradictions that this project has accrued since Maurice Leenhardt, and more recently, Roy Wagner, and Marilyn Strathern proposed a unique 'Melanesian person,' there is still value in understanding their arguments, where they went wrong, and what

they still have to offer. I cannot hide—my former self was once a proponent of 'Melanesian dividuality', until I realized that we as anthropologists should do away with thinking about "Melanesians" in the first place, and second, we the anthropologists can be just as 'dividual' as the islanders we attempt to understand. In sum, 'dividuality' should not be something that we reserve for 'Melanesians,' 'Pacific Islanders,' 'Westerners' or 'Easterners'—for that matter, but rather we should move the conversation to a critical discussion of the value one places on relationships and kinship—to explore "relatedness" (Carsten 2000) or "mutualities" (Sahlins 2013) that exist in all human cultures in diverse forms. This will be especially relevant concerning Matak-I, and the Anauonse *nelcau,* and a general understanding of the Anejom person, especially those who are not interested in *kastom* at all. Before we explore how scholars are thinking about kinship after the postmodern turn, and moving to more ethnographic examples from Anejom, let us spin the vinyl back, to remember what we have learned from Leenhardt, Wagner, and Strathern, and take the argument from there—and dub the original.

Maurice Leenhardt was not an anthropologist, but rather a missionary who hoped, not only to convert the 'Canaques' (Kanaks) of New Caledonia to Christianity, but also to learn from them. Geographically, Anejom lies just north of what is now New Caledonia, and while the 'Kanaky' person differs from the Anejom person, it will be helpful to consider the corollaries between the two places. For geographical reference, the island of Aneityum is geographically closer to the northern islands of New Caledonia that most of the islands in the Vanuatu archipelago. For Leenhardt, conversion to Christianity demanded an 'evolution—an individuation' and an acceptance of a new cultural outlook and worldview (Crapazano in Leenhardt 1979 [1947]: xxiii, see also Hess 2009:44). This individuation would evolve from the Kanaky '*kamo*' ("the living one"), where one only knows oneself through the relationships that one maintains with others (Leenhardt 1979:153). In Leenhardt's visual illustration of this concept of person, he does not use any marking for the self (ego), but rather draws lines radiating from an empty center, to mark relationships that correspond to the ego, and in the empty space, one finds *kamo,* the Kanaky "self". Hence, the individuation that is necessary for conversion

depends on the escape from this 'sociomythic' domain of relationships—to discover one's individuated person—separate from others. In the well-known conversation between Leenhardt and Boesoou, a Kanaky sculptor and 'guardian of speech' Leenhardt asks: "In short, we introduced the notion of spirit to your way of thinking?"—remarkably, Boesoou responds, "Spirit? Bah! You didn't bring us the spirit, We already knew the spirit existed. We have always acted in accord with the spirit. What you've brought us is the body" (164). In Leenhardt's understanding, the individuation he sought in Kanaky converts was their spirit, but from Boesoou's perspective, Leenhardt was mistaken to think the spirit evolved as individual, rather, what Boesoou taught Leenhardt was the body was what was being individuated. This is a point that we will return to below, but before we get there, let us explore how two scholars: Roy Wagner and Marilyn Strathern—took this notion of Melanesian personhood, a self defined by one's relationships—a step further.

The lesser known concept of the 'Melanesian person' of the two scholars just named comes from Wagner, who posited the 'fractal person'—one who is one and the same as his constituent relationships (1991, see also Rio 2007:29). Wagner illustrated this type of person using ethnographic examples from his research with the Daribi of the New Guinea Highlands. The Daribi consider a person as being made out of both paternal and maternal substances (semen and blood), and on the basis of what Wagner calls 'cross-substance ties', specifically the encounter between the flow of blood and semen, one's ego connects patrilineal and matrilineal flows—hence a 'fractal person' is the fruition of people acting in relations with other relations in mind—this takes Leenhardt's idea a step further in considering substances of the body. Around the same time Wagner was hypothesizing the 'fractal person', Marilyn Strathern developed a similar notion of self, one that is well-known in "Melanesianist" anthropology: what she dubs the 'dividual,' a term she borrows from Mckim Marriott, who was theorizing notions of self in India (1976). In one of the most widely quoted passages from Strathern's text *The Gender of the Gift* (1988):

“Far from being regarded as unique entities, Melanesian persons are as dividually as they are individually conceived. They contain a generalized sociality within. Indeed, persons are frequently constructed as the plural and composite site of the relationships that produced them. The singular person can be imagined as a social microcosm” (1988:13).

Since its publication, Strathern’s argument has spurred critical debate, and although her basic premise of a self defined by others has been widely accepted by “Melanesianists”—she has been criticized as much as she has been praised. For example, LiPuma argues that Strathern compares ‘Melanesian notions of personhood, not to the Western reality of personhood, but to Western ideology of individualism’ (1998:75). Moreover, she sets up binary oppositions between Melanesia and the West, gift economy and commodity economy, and anthropological versus feminist debates (see Biersack 1991, Jolly 1992b, Macintyre 1995, and Hess 2009). In short, even though many scholars have found the contrast between ‘modern individuals’ and ‘Melanesian dividuals’ useful, ultimately this distinction has been criticized as being too ideal and dichotomous. In a similar vein, the ‘big man’ of Sahlins’ political types of Melanesia and Polynesia (1963) seem likeness to the self-aggrandizing individual of modern capitalist societies. For reasons illustrated above, there must be some features of individuality that characterize the so-called ‘Melanesian person’, just as much as ‘moderns’ express aspects of ‘dividuality’.

This well worn debate is important because of where we are now, and most importantly, understanding what it means to be an Anejom person: scholars agree that one can just as easily find varying degrees of both ‘individual’ and ‘dividual’ aspects of personhood in cultures everyone (see LiPuma 1998, also Wardlow 2006)—regardless of the analytical terms one uses. To give just one example of how scholars are theorizing the varying degrees of ‘relationality’, Andrew Stathern and Pamela Stewart propose the concept “relational-individual”—“a form of personhood in which elements of relationality and elements of individuality coexist” (2000:63). Henceforth, the value of this discussion has lead us to a critical understanding of relationships, and the varying degree that humans establish and perpetuate those relationships, and how this contributes

to notions of personhood. As we continue to explore what an Anejom person is, and how this notion of self is related to the 'canoe' in practice, and more material aspects of one's relationships, this will be essential. Likewise, Anejom people are clearly not separated from the global world and the neoliberal political economy, which means that any notion of Anejom person, must take into account the 'global-locality' that is the island of Aneityum. Beyond the critique of Strathern, and the controversies just mentioned, what she says about relationships is pivotal to our understanding personhood in general, even give the materialist and global influences that Anejom people are increasingly facing today. In her own words:

> The acting subject or agent is construed in these systems as a pivot of relationships. I do not mean one who is an assemblage of or the locus of relationships—that is the "person," the form of their objectification. By agent I mean one who *from his or her vantage point acts with another's in mind.* An agent appears as the turning point of relations, able to metamorphose one kind of person into another, a transformer….The person is construed from the vantage points of the relations that constitute him or her; she or he objectifies and is thus revealed in those relations. The agent is construed as the one who acts because of those relationships and is revealed in his or her actions. (Strathern 1988:271-2)

At the time, Strathern was focused on the local relations, with little consideration of the global political economy and emerging neoliberal concepts of self. However, with those global influences in mind, her point is still relevant. Hence, Strathern's point about 'Melanesian personhood'—is that 'the self is composed of multiple entities through an array of significant relationships' and 'people are understood to exist as part of each other, and in certain contexts both absorb and produce their relationships with others' (see Taylor 2008). As I have already made clear, the only issue I have with this description of personhood is that it is reserved for "Melanesians", but should be available for all of humanity, and specifically to take into account the global influences that Anejom

people face nearly everyday. Ultimately I am more in line with how Sahlins describes kinship as a "mutuality of being" (2013) because this is what I think Stathern was trying to get at all along. However, we should take note of Robbins critique (2013) of Sahlins, namely, when defining 'mutuality of being' we should avoid thinking about this in terms of "intersubjectivity"—a relationship between minds, and lean toward thinking about this more in terms of "intercorporality"—a relationship between bodies because this more accurately describes kinship from a phenomenological and embodied perspective. Given that Matak-I was combining dry bread and Coco-Cola on our walk to Umej, this notion of 'intercorporality' of the 'global-locality' has even more relevance.

In this light, as we consider this notion of personhood critically, it is important to understand that all anthropologists working in the Pacific have done so in the wake of missionaries, traders, and colonial government officials, not to mention the global political economy, and neoliberal concepts of self. If we agree that individuality is the dominant ideal and ordinary experience of 'modern' personhood, it has likely been seeping into the Pacific for some two hundred years or so (Lindstrom 2013:5, Macintyre 1995:30). In short, it is unlikely that any unique pre-colonial notion of self would be untouched at this point, and the Anejom person serves as a case in point. A relevant point for the Anejom person brings us back to Leenhardt, the missionary who started this whole discussion—and leads us to a pivotal point that has been sidestepped in much of the history of this theoretical debate: How does this concept of person/self relate to the process of missionization and conversion? As discussed above, Leenhardt's understanding was strategic, as he posited that the Kanaky self needed to be individuated to be converted, namely, it needed to evolve in some way, but what happens to this 'relational self' when one converts to a new religion such as Christianity, how does one become individuated? or is it a mistake to think one must be 'individuated' for conversion? And specifically, what can this teach us about the Anejom person? Is the process as easy and simplistic as what we find in Leenhardt? Is that why Anejom people openly accepted Christianity as they seemly did? These are difficult questions to answer, and rightly so, just as there are a diversity of ways one can be 'relational'—there are also diverse strategies of

missionization, and as many denominations of the Christian church, and each needs to be examined in it own light. It is beyond the scope of this work to explore all of this diversity, but for now a few examples will suffice, and will be crucial in understanding conversion of Anejom people to Christianity, and what that can tell us about what an Anejom person is today, and the relevance of 'canoes' today. In short, the Anejom person —'modern' or 'traditonal'—must be considered in light of 'canoes' and the importance of 'canoe' considering their history, as well as in contemporary life.

First, let us return to Robbins for a moment, who is a scholar that has established himself as an anthropologist of Christianity, and who specifically explores the notion of 'relational persons' and the process of conversion to the Christian denomination of Pentecostalism. In Robbin's vocabulary he uses the term "relationalist"—namely, when the shared paramount value is the 'creation of relationships over that of other cultural forms' (2004:292). Robbins argument is clearly against 'syncretism'—namely, to 'adopt Christianity in bits and pieces seized upon as syncretic patches' because conversion for the Urapmin of Papua New Guinea was one where everyone 'took it up as a meaningful system in its own right, one capable of guiding many areas of their lives'—and leaving them with 'two cultural logics'. Let us make sure we consider Robbin's argument as completely as possible. Robbins has argued against 'localization, indigenization, and syncretism' (2003:221) because, as Keane comments, "a leitmotif runs through anthropological writing about colonial and post-colonial Christian communities, stating that the image of a past lives on in disguise, at a depth, or under translation" (2007:128). Robbins argument is that anthropologists have long emphasized continuity because of a bias built into the very concept of culture itself, since it 'assumes people can see the world only through received categories' (Ibid.). This is a point well taken, but it is important to note that the Urapmin of Papua New Guinea converted to a specific denomination of Christianity: Pentecostalism, and although this argument against syncretism may accurately illustrate what has happened for the Urapmin, this is certainly not the case for all coverts of Christianity, and I am arguing that something different is happening with Anejom people.

Before we move to conclude our discussion concerning the Anejom person, in light of all the ethnographic detail presented in this work. It is important to consider what exactly is creating continuity with the past, namely, while categories of thought are likely part of this process, from Keane's perspective there is something larger and more expansive in one's phenomenological experience, namely, one's 'semiotic ideology'. Semiotic ideologies incorporate language ideologies—which are crucial in the social and political dynamics of language structure and use (Keane 2007:16-17, Kroskrity 2000). Keane argues that "Language ideologies don't just express social difference, but rather they play a crucial role in producing—in objectifying and making inhabitable—the categories by which social difference is understood and evaluated" (2007:17). Taking this a step further, a 'semiotic ideology' extends the idea of linguistic ideology to include more than just language itself, and includes, for example, material things, such taro and fish, as much as bread and Coca-Cola, for example. In short, the use of semiotic ideology captures 'practices involving words and things within the same frame' (20). It is essential to consider conversion within the context of semiotic ideologies:

> "What are those who have converted to Christianity *themselves* to make of their former gods? For converts to Christianity, the problem of the past is compounded as they take on both the past of the Christian church and that of their own pre-Christian forbears —or as they construct even their living neighbors as anachronistic remnants of the past?…For in what does the persistence of an invisible being consist apart from its embodiment in ways of acting or in talk about it?" (Keane 2007:134).

As Keane illustrates, in the case of the Sumba of Indonesia, and their conversion to Protestantism, this is a process that involves all aspects of one's phenomenal reality. This case puts the Urapmin of Robbin's in context because as Keane shows, it is the 'mundane' reality that urges us to consider the nuances of conversion. The shift from the past involves all aspects of one's phenomenal reality. Understanding the 'mundane' reality

of the Anejom person will be pivotal is understanding the phenomenology of the Anejom person in the contemporary context, from 'local' as well as 'global' perspectives.

As was illustrated above, Christian missionaries such as Leenhardt were primarily concerned with the individuation of the self, but clearly there is more to the process of conversion. Robbins has given us an example of 'relationalist' selves, who have converted to Christianity, in a conversion that he argues is not syncretic. To complicate this argument, Keane, reveals the way semiotic ideologies are involved in the case of the Sumba of Indonesia. In general, Christian scripture remains silent on most daily mundane problems, 'from planting fields to investing profits, from child rearing to medical treatment' (2007:140). When spirits are potentially implicated in every sort of practice, 'there is always the possibility that even an apparent harmless detail might afford an opening to paganism'. As Keane argues, when considering the phenomenological reality of the Sumbanese, one "…cannot assume the religious innocence even as such things as what knots are used to tie the house beams, how one names a newborn or handles cats, which words one uses while hunting, or in which sequence rice fields are planted"—in each of these cases, one's procedures are prompted by assumptions about spirit agents (Ibid.). For the Sumba, even sharing betel nut is commonly understood to potentially have effects on a person's spirit. Hence, to 'be a good Christian' means to have a cosmological rupture from the world of one's ancestors. "The perception of continuity or persistence from the past into the present is mediated by semiotic ideology…Perceptions of continuity are inseparable from concepts of change and the stances toward the future they make possible" (146). Concepts and categories do not exist merely in the world of thought, rather they are 'embodied in the particular forms available for action, and in the semiotic ideologies that mediate between forms that actions take and their consequences'.

Another way of thinking about the durability of a semiotic ideology is to consider the ways meanings are entangled with materiality. Moving back to the island of New Guinea, not far from the Urapmin are the Baruya. For the Baruya, the process of missionization commenced soon after 1951, when they were first contacted by Europeans. In 1963, some 40 young men were attending a mission school organized by Lutheran

missionaries (Lemmonier 123). Some forty years later they are still practicing initiation ceremonies, with many of the participants being Christian converts. In 2010, these male rituals, and the sacred objects looked after by the masters of the ceremony were at the center of a rivalry between various Christian denominations, namely, because some denominations tolerate initiations, while others, such as Pentecostal and Seventh Day Adventist, for example, do not (Ibid.). In short, people's place in the world is an entanglement with materiality, the artifacts of daily life, whether phenomenal or mundane give 'endurance and solidity to the fundamental ideas and practices that pervade one's culture and social organization' (127). One might not think a Baruya garden fence to be anything of significance, but Lemmonier argues that something considered mundane from an outsiders perspective, is of central importance for the Baruya. The Baruya fence is an example of a "perrisological resonator"—namely, it is a way to reinforce a message, 'one that refers more or less indirectly and in different ways to some of their key values or some of the main logic underlying particular social relations' (128). The oversized Baruya fence is an 'intertwining condensation' of social relations that the fences' construction activates, the erection of the oversized barrier transforms a mundane artefact into a means of non-verbal communication concerning at the same time the production of staple foods, gender, ritual, and kinship.

The construction of a Baruya garden fence, or the sharing of betel nut by Sumbaese may not seem like practices that have anything to do with personhood, kinship, and social organization, but they are just that. The individuation of the self for conversion to Christianity, as hypothesized by Leenhardt, it clearly far too simplistic an idea, once one considers the durability and entanglement of semiotic ideologies, mundane materiality, and the relational concepts of self that value the construction and perpetuation of relationships with things. The process of missionization is not homogeneous depending on the time and place, and there is not always an individuation of personhood, as Leenhardt thought was necessary. When a group of people who share the bonds of kinship convert to Christianity, syncretism and non-syncretism are both possible outcomes. The easiest conversions are when concepts of personhood, and the

cultural objects and practices entangled with those concept are incorporated in a phenomenological and material experience of space.

This theoretical discussion is fundamental to understanding Anejom persons, and the central importance of 'canoes' when considering the colonial encounter, and especially the process of missionization, and today the hyper-capitalistic activity that tourism has brought to the island. While it would be easier to write Anejom people off, as inauthentic selves of the past, this is far from the case, and any consideration of authenticity is central to the problem. to be clear, thinking about authenticity versus inauthenticity is the root of this problem. The premise that the only places worth while for anthropological fieldwork, or 'cultural tourism' for that matter, depends on an authentic experience. While the anthropologist and the tourist looks for the authentic—that says more about the global perspectives on Anejom people, than Anejom people themselves. In short, the key to understanding the Anejom person, is the mundane, the everyday, that anthropologist and tourist alike, would not consider to be of interest. Well, at least until now.

Mundane Practices/Semiotic Realities

Drawing on the work of Keane, Lemmonier, and others—the key to understanding personhood on Anejom is through the entanglement of semiotic ideologies in the material environment, which is not limited to local materiality, but also global materiality because everything has the potential of falling nicely in pre-existing categories of thought. While Aneityum has experienced rapid cultural change, first due to the demographic disaster, and currently the hyper-capitalistic onslaught of the tourist economy, and the hyper-political climate of the traditionalist movement; there is still clear continuity in their vernacular, and the material objects of their environment encompassed by Anejom. What environment do Anejom people live in, and what objects are valued, interacted with, and used in daily practice? Many of these objects are mundane, actually most of them are—but all are cosmological. The mundane in all of our lives as embodied beings on this earth, form one's cosmological foundation.

At the most mundane level is *nopothan*—soil, ground, earth. There are many different kinds of *nopothan,* and the varieties that I recorded were *neduaviñ* —sand and soil mixed together, *intencai* — coastal soil, *itoho* —inland soil, and *naclantan* —red soil. Without *nopothan* there is no island, and no *Nelpuejom*—"Anejom person". The soil is also where one creates a livelihood, whether that be through island-based lifeways, or more market-based —the ground is the foundation for all life of Aneityum. Another mundane object that is entangled with the soil are *inhat*—stones. As discussed briefly above, stones have power, especially taboo stones, which are used to do certain kinds of work, such as gardening, of fishing. The stones are used for prayer, and specific leaves are used with the stones. The most powerful stones are associated with specific deities, the Sunset Warrior, for example. Stones are potent because they are concentrated *nesgan*—"body/soul", but not all stones are the same. The heaviest stones have the most body/soul, while the lightest have the least, relatively. Stone varieties that I recorded included *nicñiñ* —magical stones, which are used for a particular purpose, such as gardening, fishing, hunting, or cosmological power; *inhat itap*—also magical stones that have power, but are not necessarily used for a particular reason; *inhetmi*—heavy black stones, that are the best for terraces; *nelep*—flat stones, which can be useful as a table, for example. The importance of stones for Anejom people can be easily missed, and soil and stones tend to be two of the most mundane objects in our embodied existence, but they continue to have cosmological power.

Mundane Objects

Another mundane level is food, which is grown in the soil. Root crops grow inside the soil, and starchy root crops are the staple of the Anejom diet. As noted above, foods are also central to the Anejom system of value, and *intal*—taro, continues to be the most valued food by the Anejom people I interviewed. This is partly due to the <u>*kastom*</u> movement, especially in Matak-I's case, but not all Anejom people are motivated by <u>*kastom*</u>. When asked their favorite food, the most common response was taro among all demographics. As discussed above, taro is used to pay fines, and it is also important for any ceremony of significance, such as naming, shaving, and marriage, but it is not just those things that give

taro value. One reason given for the popularity of taro is because it is "heavy" (*opoc*), as one becomes the fullest after eating taro—it is the most satisfying root crop for one's body, and hence, one will have a steady supply of energy and be able to work. There are many varieties of taro, the differences between different kinds of taro include size, color, taste, for example, and the varieties that I recorded were: *sekenomantau,apeñ, puyap, inhamesei, nauwirep, nopom, totadupei, nouaniducei, nijmanragpei, numpomveira, inhujom, intalnesganaiyu, kaiyasua, niaga, nesganaiyu, nijec, inmayinakwei*. It is beyond the scope of this work to discuss the differences between these different types of taro, but to emphasize the diversity of taro. Taro is not just taro, but taros. Many of these varieties I recorded with Matak-I, and while we had planned to continue research on the different types of taro in the future, considering I will no longer be able to do this with Matak-I, I will turn to others to continue to understand the complexity of the varieties of taro.

Another valued root crop that rivals with taro in popularity is *nu*—"aerial yam". While it is not commonly used in *kastom* ceremonies, or for fines, it is the second most popular food among Anejom people. When asked their favorite food, many said yam instead of taro because it is lighter than taro, but has a nice texture, and is still a good balanced energy food that satisfies one's appetite for a long time. Aerial yam has not become a part of the *kastom* movement like taro has. It is different than taro in that it flourishes in a dry environment, such as Anauonse. There are many different kinds of aerial yam, and many grow wild in the forest, and can be easily harvested when they are ready. Hence, Anauonse, which is in the rain shadow, where taro can only be grown in swamps, and is a challenge on dry ground, is a place where aerial yams flourish. The crop loves the dry weather, and loose aerated ground. Like taro, there are also many varieties of yam, with different sizes, colors, and tastes, and as noted above, some are only found in the wild. Anejom names for types of aerial yam that I recorded include: *nuriagdan, nouanmerei, nouanrowod, toaleka, nurineto, rami, antijanepcev, wailu.* Again, it is beyond the scope of this work to explore all of these differences, and more research will be needed to illustrate these differences in detail.

Nohos (Bananas) are not commonly used for fines, or in *kastom* ceremonies, but they are however, the favorite food for a handful of Anejom people, as it ranked third out of all favorite foods for Anejom people. There are many different kinds of banana, in varying size, color, and taste. Some bananas are nice to eat green (not yet ripe), which others are only eaten when they are ripe. Varieties include: *injacap, injamelmat, nakai, nakaimelmat, nariramhulec, nariramhulec, nohoserepet, intapuña (nauonse, niñapeñ, niñamelmat), nedwonyau, sapani, nerop, iliawei, inmoanijvañ, nohos atimi.* The *nalak* (musa) variety of banana is a category in itself. It is not considered a common banana, but it associated with the *natimared*—'chief'. It is interesting that even though it has an association with chiefly leadership, it has not become a part of the *kastom* movement. Only chief's, or descendants of chief's plant *nalak.* Unlike other bananas, which typically like dry coastal soil, the *nalak* variety thrives in moist swamps alongside taro. *Nalak* varieties include: *nagesga, funaden, nalakmereago, nalakhat.* It is notable that *nalak* varieties are hard to find on Aneityum, they have a cosmological importance that rivals few other foods, even taro. They are however, as difficult to find as chiefs are these days. The last kind of banana are bitter bananas, which are "*heldañ*"—"introduced." However, even though they are not as valued as the bananas already noted, Anejom people still plant them. The *nohosisaina*—"Chinese banana" variety—in particular—is a favorite food to eat when ripe. Varieties of bitter bananas include: *nohos itoga, nohos aniusilan, nohosisaina, nohos fietnam.*

While taro, aerial yam, and bananas were the three most favorite foods among those Anejom people I interviewed, another popular root crop was introduced later in Aneityum's history, likely only in the last hundred years. *Noye*—(Sweet) manioc is rarely used in *kastom* ceremonies, and if it is, it is usually placed alongside taro. Manioc is *heldañ* —"introduced," and some varieties even in the last few decades, but it has become the most popular crop to plant. I can say that we ate *noye* nearly everyday while living on Aneityum, and even when I was a PCV, it was the most common food. It does not have as long a history as other crops such as taro and yam, nor is it as highly valued, but Aneityum is know for its *noye*. It is a starchy root crop that has easily syncretized within Anejom linguistic categories. It has become the basis for the meal that one will balance.

When asked about their favorite food, manioc was also a common favorite, and ranked fourth behind *nohos.* However, today manioc is by far the most common food consumed on Aneityum. It is easy to grow and it is hearty, as it does not need to be harvested after a year like taro or bananas, or after nine months like aerial yam. Manioc is special because it will continue to grow for as long as one wants to keep it. Manioc varieties include: *uatmegan, cap, kari, biscuit.*

Lastly, I will discuss *naren-naren*—"rice" and flour, which does not have a vernacular name. Both rice and flour are popular foods, and only the youngest demographic said that either rice or flour was their favorite food. However, Anejom people consume both in abundance, and both are consistently missing from the stores if a cargo ship has not replenished their stock for a few months. While fewer Anejom people named rice as their favorite food, it is becoming one of the most common foods on Aneityum, especially those who take part in tourist related activities. It is common for people to visit the store after earning some money on Mystery Island, and the most common meal for people on cruise ship days is always rice. Considering cruise ships visited Aneityum once every three days before the Covid-19 pandemic, one can imagine how much rice had been eaten, especially in the village of Anelcauhat. It will be interesting to see if the pause in tourism has changed this, and if there are any positive health effects of this. More research will be needed in the future. Flour is popular, but as Matak-I and I illustrated at the start of this chapter, it is commonly eaten as bread for breakfast, and balanced with hot tea, or when that's not available, a Coca-Cola will suffice.

It is notable that when asked what their favorite food is, Anejom people always named a starchy food, usually a root crop, some said bananas, and only a few said rice, and only one said flour. Not a single person said a protein, like fish, chicken, or beef or even a food like ice cream or cake—and this illustrates the importance of complex carbohydrates for Anejom people, and the mundane semiotics of what makes a meal, and the importance of *naca*—work. It is clear, the Anejom person eats starchy foods, and balances those out with proteins or vegetables, and they work, as hard as I have even seen

people work. Many do it in a group—their 'canoe'. It's harder to do it alone like Matak-I exemplified, and the effect of this is a slap in the face for all of us.

Mundane Liquids

Moving on, another essential mundane object is the category of liquids. The most mundane is *inwai* (water), but to be specific, Water is not just water—and there are a number of different kinds of water. It is common for Anejom people to know exactly what kind of water they are drinking, just by the taste. Swamp water (*inwanheno*), in particular, has a distinctive taste, which people attribute to the life (*numu*) in the water. In terms of life, swamp water has the most life, and for this reason, it is the best for gardening. Swamp water is potable, but the purest water in terms of drinking is spring water (*namiri*). However, in terms of life, spring water has minimal life—it is just watery (*weiwei*) and clear (*weila*). Swamp water, too, is clear and not cloudy, but one can still taste the ground (*nopothan*), and things growing in it like algae (*nilum*). Water varieties include: *namiri* (spring water); *inwaite,* water that does run, for example, a freshwater pool that does not flow. *nofowai* (river or stream water); *inwanheno* (swamp water, the most powerful of all water); *inraiwai* (stream or river water); *netod* - coastal spring water, this water is available only at low tide from springs on the coast, and often has trace amounts of salt water; *inmak* (muddy non-potable water). This brings us to another non-potable water, *injap* (saltwater) is bitter (*acen*), but is consumed when it is used as a flavoring in cooking. It is dripped on food before being cooked on stones. This adds taste to the food—a desirable saltiness. In the past, Anejom people living inland had roads (*nefalañ*) to the ocean, as access to the saltwater was important. The saltwater itself is a resource, and access to the coast is important for other marine food resources, such as fish and shellfish. When one has not eaten shellfish for a few days, it is common to crave saltwater, and eating shellfish is analogous to drinking saltwater (*amniijap*).

Other kind of liquids fall under the category of *nidi-halitai* (juice), for example, sugar cane (*neto*), kava (*incacen*), cabbage (*nasiej*), fruit (*nowancai*), leafs (*niricai*), coconut (*neañ*) —all of which, juice is extracted from all of these things. The power is in the juice, the

good and the bad. Juices have potency because they are one of the purest forms of life (*numu*), and they have a variety of powers (*nemda*). For example, juice can give one energy (sugarcane, fruit), root oneself in place (kava), provide sustenance (cabbage), and do all kinds of magical things (leafs). For example, leafs can cure sickness or make one or another sick. Leaves have cosmological power, such as the ability to fly, choose the gender of a child, make it rain, create a cyclone, etc. Introduced medicines are also considered as types of water (*inwaimehe*), literally "water-sick". Another juice is *neto* (sugarcane), which as I mentioned above, was an important part of feasts in the past, but recently has been replaced with processed sugar. It continues to be an energy supplement, usually when gardening. It is used to quench thirst, and give energy between meals. However, at no feast in recent history has sugarcane been a part of what is shared. Varieties of sugar cane include: *incesmetañ, nesjau, nitolvanispev, nepjed, nefetgan, manava, nijilcomesei, napisennijvañ, netocara.*

Not all liquids are the same, and liquids are differentiated in terms of how much life (*numu*) they have, and how much body/soul (*nesgan*). Some liquids have more or less life, and some have more or less body/soul. For example, coconut (*neañ*), when the milk (*nidineañ*) is squeezed from the meat of the coconut, what is left over is scrape (*nuhuñ*)—not body/soul (*nesgan*). Hence, the body/soul is in the milk (*nidineañ*), and not in the dry scrape (*nuhuñ*). The wetness of the coconut milk is what is transferring the body/soul, which is a requisite for its life. Without the wetness there is no life. However, coconut also has water, which is differentiated from the milk. The water inside the coconut is not juice, rather it is coconut water (*inwaineañ*). The water of the coconut has more life than body/soul, and in contrast, the milk has more body/soul than life, but both the water and the milk of the coconut have a combination of life and body/soul.

When a human body has become a corpse (*nuhun*) the blood (*inja*) has ceased to flow. Like other potent liquids such as kava, blood (*inja*) also has a high concentration of life and body/soul. However, when a person has died and their body has become a corpse, the blood is dried, and is no longer blood. Like the coconut scrape, which has been dried through squeezing the milk out of it, the blood in the corpse has been dried,

and is no longer blood. The wetness of blood it a essential component of the body/soul having life, and without life the body/soul (*nesgan*) turns to a corpse (*nuhuñ*). *Nasan* (sap), which is sticky (*apol*). When one cuts a tree or plant, the liquid that comes out first is the sap. Sap is also in particular foods, such as 'bitter bananas' and taro, for example. Sap is an inedible part of the food. When cooked, the sap is leached from the food making it edible. The best example of a food having sap is taro (*intal*). If taro is not cooked long enough, the sap will not be leached from it, making the taro itchy (*eyas*) on one's mouth and throat, but can also give people a rash or hives. Some people are more sensitive than others to the itchiness of taro, but if the taro is cooked well enough, and the sap is properly leached out of it—it should be edible for everyone. The best way to leach the sap from taro is to cook it on stones.

Not all liquids are consumed, but do have semiotic value in Anejom life. For example, *nidimimi* (milk), The word *mimi* is a breast, so the word *nidimimi* is the juice from the breast. Humans breasts have milk, as animals do, such as pigs, and cows, but the island also has milk. There is a ceremony to milk the island, which is a practice that is associated with a productive growing season. Milking the island is a *naca*—work that is not formally part of the <u>*kastom*</u> movement, and only some people know how to do it. An 82 year old man who I will refer to as Etmak-N that I interviewed said his *naca*—'work' is milking the island (*alidanpeke*), and he inherited this particular work from his mother. The 'canoe' that he is a member of is *Natuta,* located on the northern shore, what is commonly known as the area of Inap. It is notable that the 'canoe' of *Natuta* at Inap is not formally recognized by *Intasalep* as a 'canoe' at all. It is located within the Anejo 'canoe', and could be described as a separatist 'canoe' from *Intasalep.* It is explicitly against the <u>*kastom*</u> movement. In fact, I would argue, even with all of the discussion concerning 'canoes' on the island of Aneityum, and the focus on the larger structure of 'canoes', and the focus on the political leadership of the five coastal 'canoes', that *Natuta* is one of the few working *nelcau* on the island. While Matak-I and others struggled to legitimize themselves for Anejom people, the 'canoe' of *Natuta* has no problem with legitimacy. While Etmak-N said that one of his *naca*—work was 'milking the island', the other *naca* he mentioned was

pig. When he first established a settlement at Inap, he raised pigs. Today he also raises cattle, and he and his descendants have the most cattle on the island of Aneityum—an essential item for any _kastom_ ceremony. While *Intasalep* does not formally recognize *Natuta* as a 'canoe', ironically, they are the ones who provide cattle for many of the _kastom_ ceremonies on the island. When Matak-K wanted to hold a *nakro,* and name my two sons, we planted to taro together, and *Natuta* provided us with a cow, and also a stump of kava. They also helped me build my house—free of any charge, but I still owe them. As I will emphasize in the final section of this chapter—that is the most Anejom thing to do.

The last mundane object, that has probably the greatest semiotic value for Anejom people is *inja* (blood) is passed through genealogical relationships, namely, procreation through sexual intercourse (*egejed*) from both the man and the woman. Moreover, the *inja* is the liquid that is one's *nesgan*—body/soul. When the body is dry, without blood—it is a corpse. The Anejom body/soul is a liquid, that flows in the form of blood. In short, blood, and the fluids that are contained within one's body is the Anejom soul. Children receive blood from both their father and mother, but relatedness is not defined by one's biological relationships, but rather who contributes to one's blood. Who feeds oneself, who provides drink, all of these material elements contribute to our blood. Animals, such as chickens, pigs, dogs, fish, birds, also have blood, and pass blood similarly to humans, although animals have a different term for intercourse (*ahai*). Certain characteristics live on blood (*et umu anja*), hence, certain characteristics can be passed on genealogically, such as personality. However, these traits live on the blood—they are not part of the blood. Another kind of blood is *namña* (menstrual blood), which will end this discussion concerning mundane liquids, and for this reason, when women are on their menstrual cycle they cannot cook, as this is thought to contaminate the food. Historically, Anejom women would leave their homes during their menstrual cycle and stay at a menstrual hut (*niom amña*). This menstrual hut would have a separate garden, and separate water source. During menstruation, women are still prohibited from going into the ocean, gardening, or going to a swamp, because they would contaminate the water. A

woman on her menstrual cycle must eat separately from her family until her menstrual cycle is finished.

In conclusion to this section, it is important to note that menstrual blood is not a focus of the *kastom* movement, even though it is one of the most powerful liquids in Anejom semiotic ideology. Considering that *Intasalep* has excluded women, it is not surprising that there would not be a focus on menstrual blood, but the lack of any discussion concerning menstrual blood is reflective of its power. It may seem unusual for me to even bring this up because menstrual blood is not something that is common to the popular imagination. It is something that has even been suppressed in tourist activities in the Caribbean (Scher 2007). However, I end on this point for a reason—because every woman that I interviewed said that she practiced menstrual taboos, and while there was a history of menstrual huts in the past on Aneityum, recently the practice of women leaving their residence for the menstrual hut while they are menstruating has ceased. Not a single woman that I interviewed currently leaves her main residence when she is on her menstrual cycle. However, even elder woman, who remembered the menstrual huts—every single one said they want them back.

It is beyond the scope of this work to go into detail about menstrual practice on Aneityum, but rather to emphasize what is being suppressed on Aneityum, and in contrast, what is being celebrated. While the men of *Intasalep* attempt to revive their ancestral canoes, there is clearly a lack of balance in this process. Some aspects of Anejom practice is glorified as *kastom*, while others, such as *Natuta* are being suppressed, and menstrual taboos, just ignored. This reveals the 'metacultural' process of cultural production as a novel one, and far from returning to anything like what their ancestors did, what *Intasalep* is reviving is something far different, and ironically, even farther from what it means to be an Anejom person, as defined by Anejom people themselves.

Kastom **Subjectivities**

In 2017, as I was nearing the end of my stay on Aneityum, and preparing to return stateside. Matak-I held a naming ceremony. He had planted large quantities of taro the

previous year, in preparation for this particular ceremony. His first motivation was to name the children of an Anejom man, who lived in Port Vila, and worked as an Air Vanuatu pilot. Matak-I gave them names that emplaced them within the Anauonse 'canoe', but they were only a few of the children being named. The last person to be named was Matak-I's last born son, who had previously been named by Matak-N, a man whose 'canoe' is Anauonje, on the northeastern shore of the island. This naming was complicated by the fact that Matak-I's child already had a name, and that he was first to return the name to Matak-N before he could name his son. He gave bundles of taro, and baskets, with the idea that this was the <u>*kastom*</u> to return the name. Matak-I planned to give his son a new name, once Matak-N had accepted the name back. The problem was—Matak-N did not accept the name back. It was an awkward moment. Matak-N just stood up, accepted the gifts from Matak-I, and said *pu amen akaja*—"we will be together."

Matak-I was clearly distraught, as his plan had not come to fruition. He had made the argument that he needed his son for his 'canoe', but Matak-N did not allow him to be re-named. He did not say anything else, but I knew what he meant by saying that 'we will be together'—namely, that even though we are a different 'canoe', we are here to support each other, and to support the relationships that we have. We support you today—you support us in the future. One could say that Matak-I was attempting neo-liberal negative reciprocity, akin to a commodified transaction, where I give you taro and baskets, and you give me my son back. Matak-N accepted the gift, but did not accept the negative reciprocity, and the exchange would be balanced in the future—it must be delayed. After this negative reciprocal exchange fell through for Matak-I, he proceeded to do it again, with another two men from the Umej 'canoe'—the same 'canoe' that we had visited earlier in the year. He placed bundles of taro at their feet, and said thank you for your support. They both looked at him with confusion. Likewise, I remember looking at the crowd witnessing the exchange, and many faces were shocked. Why was this so shocking to so many people? Matak-I had closed the relationship, rather than leaving it open. While he may not have realized it, what he was saying was—this transaction is closed, I don't need you anymore. While it may not seem shocking for many people reading this

that Matak-I would say thank you to a couple men who had helped him with a naming ceremony, and that would be the worst thing he could have done at that moment, but it was. The naming ceremony was unsuccessful, in more ways than it was successful, but it reveals more about what it means to be an Anejom person in practice, and in lived experience. While Matak-I was practicing *kastom*, many Anejom people just looked on horrified.

As we have lost Matak-I to diabetes, it is notable that his last naming ceremony he closed some of the most important relationships he had. It is the relationships that we keep open that give us life. As I have emphasized in this chapter—Matak-I was laboring for *kastom*. He was doing everything he could to fulfill his rights and responsibilities that were bestowed on him when he was given his name. Unfortunately, we now know he was battling a disease below the surface that was burning him from the inside. While he produced *kastom* food to legitimize his authority in *Intasalep*, and ceremonies, such as the one above that was largely unsuccessful, and lead to him losing more legitimacy from the perspective of Anejom people. He told me directly that he was not eating well throughout the day, and I witnessed it first-hand that the most convenient foods for him to eat were not what he was saving for *kastom*, but rather, were imported, especially sugar, and rice, which were killing him. Eventually his *kastom* labor in combination of the lack of balance took his life—this is the fatal effects of a '*kastom* consciousness', and 'heritage consciousness' more generally.

On Anejom, every person lives in an environment that is filled with significance, surrounded by material objects and phenomenon—the semiotics of mundane life does not simply disappear. A stone is a stone until it is crushed by heavy machinery, or until is perishes because of a disease that could have been avoided with a little more balance. While Matak-I sought to revive *kastom*, the editing process that he himself was doing, was contributing to his lack of balance. What was *kastom* did not and could not include everything, and because of this, some more mundane aspects of life were left out. Matak-I was planting taro, and when I gave him some seeds to plant leafy green vegetables, such as kale and chard—he was skeptical, and feared they may harm him in some way because

they were *itoga*—"outsider". He planted them once, and decided it would be best not to plant them again—they were not *kastom*.

As this story attests, any theoretical consideration of Anejom person, or "Melanesian" person, or Pacific Islander, must take into account the self-reflective subjectivization of self, in relation to others' objectification. Often the challenge for Anejom people, and other small post-colonial nations, is the shadow of their colonial history. Certainly some aspects of this history is good—improved health care, birth control, vaccines, etc. but Aneityum's colonial history devastated the Anejom population, to the extreme of nearly wiping everyone out. But, it did not, and now the Anejom population is growing rapidly in the post-colonial nation-state of Vanuatu. The problems that Aneityum is facing are rooted in the conditions of the possibility of having a nation at all. It is not just the idea of *kastom* that poses unique challenges for ni-Vanuatu, but also a popular conception of "culture". Stemming from Sahlins' Big Man theories, to the dividuality posited by Strathern, Pan-Pacific Personhood has sparked debate among scholars for decades. The Anejom person can contribute to this debate, not in some radical way, but one that can be expected. While scholars may disagree whether the self is individual, dividual, or relational, etc. It should be clear that the Anejom self is a hybrid of those concepts to varying degrees, but more importantly, personhood that is increasingly self-reflectively "cultural" or *kastom* in the case of Matak-I. While I agree with Robbins' point that it has been a tendency for scholars to emphasize continuity because of the bias that is built into the very concept of "culture" itself, which emphasizes continuity. It should also be stated that continuity is being subjectivized in Anejom people because continuity is built into the very concept of "culture" that scholars have proposed over the course of the history of the discipline of anthropology.

In conclusion to this chapter, as one considers the story of Matak-I, and in what way he, or Etpok-T, offer clues to understand the *Nepuejom*—"Anejom Person", a pattern is clear—the materiality of the island of Aneityum, the emphasis on action for one's rights and responsibilities, and in both cases *naca*—"work" in place, which became their *kastom* labor. Maybe for them, *kastom* was not so much in rocks, liquids, milk, or menstrual

blood—even though they are certainly part of a more sophisticated understanding of the materiality of culture and semiotic ideology of Anejom people. Matak-I, and Etpok-T both felt the responsibility to emplace themselves in space, in specific places on the island, respectively—because this was central to their ideas of *kastom*. Both Etpok-T and Matak-I labored at such an extreme level that they both burned up, they labored themselves to death in specific places, exploiting themselves for *kastom*—rooted in their '*kastom* consciousness'—as if nothing else mattered. While there may be other places where they both believed they had the right to use, the specific places that they chose were directly tied to the rights and responsibilities they believed were bestowed on them, by virtue of 'nomination'. If Matak-I would have moved to Anauonse to plant taro, garden, raise pigs, chickens, etc.—live an island-based life, he would probably still be here. The problem was that he was self-consciously doing all of those things for *kastom*. As A. F. C. Wallace emphasized long ago, there will always be a level of hybridization in revitalization movements. Matak-I gave it his all, but as much as he avoided the *itoga*—"outsider", the more it became a part of his embodied self. The clearest example was *suga*—"sugar," which he often mixed with hot tea, and ate with the taro that he grew. Cold taro by itself is not appetizing when one eats it everyday. However, when one *adepiañ*—'balances' the taro with hot tea with sugar, the taro is transformed into a hot meal. The question is, although this is a desirable 'balance,' and nicely fits in pre-existing Anejom linguistic categories—is it an appropriate balance? The answer is as clear as sugar in hot water.

"A superstitious dread of eating before work exists, lest the *natmasses* should blast they crops" John Geddie, 1852

"Politics…is what links value and exchange in the social life of commodities."
Arjun Appadurai, *The social life of things.*

V: KAVA, LOBSTER, AND CANNIBAL SOUP

It was a typical beautiful midday on Mystery Island—the sun was shinning, there was a slight breeze from the southeast, and tourists were everywhere. As I strolled around the island, I greeted friends and family, while navigating through the crowds of tourists. This was a normal day on Mystery Island, and a regular social event for Anejom people, who have gotten used to flocks of tourists on the white-sand beaches, snorkeling the coral reefs, and enjoying the many tours and attractions. One of these attractions involved two of my Anejom relatives, one that I call *etwak*—"my brother", and the other *inhal-uñek*—"my child". The father and son were wearing nothing but leaves below their waists, face-paint on their faces, while one held a club and the other a spear, but in contrast to how they were dressed—they both greeted me with smiles. As I chatted with my child, who I will refer to as Inhal-uñek-F (for "my child F"), I remember him saying: *eh etmak, kityi fi hag añak nadiat asga, ek atuakam anak…ek egei anak mika pu amen kava yi faiv opaiko*—"Eh my father, I have not eaten all day, I am preparing myself…I hear there will be five batches of kava on shore". Inhal-uñek-F was preparing himself for kava that evening, all while he was taking part in a tourist attraction that is one of the most successful on the island.

The attraction is a performative display that is impossible to miss, as it is strategically placed at the entrance of the marketplace, and centered around a large pot, often with two Anejom men standing inside—both dressed as angry Pacific Islanders ready for a fight. This was all part of the performance, as they would invite tourist after tourist to join them in the pot, where they would act like they were going to kill tourist after tourist who joined them—all for show of course. There was no blood being spilled here, but maybe a few tears of laughter. Near the front of the pot there was a sign that read "Cannibal Soup". I watched Inhal-uñek-F wrap a chain around a woman's neck, and hold a club in the air as if he was going to hit her, but once the photo was taken,

everyone relaxed again, smiles, laughter, and the next tourist would step up for the same performance. Unfortunately, this is what the performance of "culture" on Aneityum has become. One tourist after another would survive this encounter, and while this performance still gives me chills—I thought about the irony in all of this. My child was far from being a meat eating cannibal—he was hungry, and already thinking about kava before noon. As I watched him perform caricature after caricature of savagery, I thought to myself, "who is eating who?" Was my child being consumed by these tourists?

What is clear is that Inhal-uňek-F was a commodity with exchange-value, but his labor was also being alienated from himself, and he was merely an exploited laborer in the larger scale of things. Inhal-uňek-F was making money for the owner of the attraction, who was simultaneously the manager of MITHL (Mystery Island Tourism Holding Limited). The fee at the time was $5 AUD per tourist—and tourist after tourist would eat it up, often forming a line to jump into the pot. Some with beers in hand, or even a man wearing a grass skirt with a bra made of two coconut shells. It is an example of how tourism invites, not only the commoditization of all kinds of "cultural" objects, but also the commoditization of bodies. Commoditization, which encompasses all capitalized economic relations between humans in which human bodies are the token of economic exchanges (Scheper Hughes 2002). One would be surprised at how popular this attraction is, and while it is grotesque for some—it is funny and playful for others, and is what tourists have come to expect from these "Melanesian savages". It is an easily consumable stereotypical performance of the savagery, brutality, and violence of "Melanesians" and Pacific Islanders—a stereotype that is less historical fact, and likely more how Europeans acted upon arrival to these islands beginning in the 17th century. It should be emphasized, that far from Anejom people killing Europeans—they allowed the first traders and missionaries to stay, which initiated a turn of events that left nearly 95% of the indigenous population dead. It is more accurate to say that Europeans have been killing Anejom people since their arrival in 1848, and the fatalities continue.

While Anejom people were being represented as ruthless human meat eaters, I find it ironic that the opposite is probably a more accurate description of Anejom people

today, especially on Mystery Island. As Inhal-uñek-F's comment exemplifies, not eating is a common Anejom practice called *natwakam*—meaning to "prepare" oneself for a particular activity by not eating, or eating a culturally specific, restricted diet. For example, specific foods are restricted in certain places on the island, and restricted for certain activities. The most common restricted foods are coconut and fish. Sometimes it is necessary to fast from these particular foods for up to two days in advance for certain activities. One cannot take part in some of these activities if one has eaten something that is restricted. For example, one must *atwakam* before one gardens, goes fishing, hunting, or even traveling through certain spaces, and the restricted diet would be different depending on what activity one plans to partake in. One would do this before one enters a taro swamp, for example—and everyone who enters the taro swamp must also prepare themselves ahead of time—if they want to take part. If one were to eat something restricted, but then enter a taro swamp, for example, it is thought to have disastrous effects to crops in the garden. It is said that the taro would have holes throughout, and rot from the inside.

However, the word *natwakam* is not only reserved for gardening, but also signifies the preparation for kava, which requires that one fast, or refrain from eating oily or heavy foods before one drinks. While the specific kind of preparation is different, the same word is used, and under extreme cases the *natwakam* in the morning for the garden, also becomes the *natwakam* for kava, namely, one does not eat for the whole day. Inhal-uñek-F was doing the same kind of preparation, while he performed a cannibal stereotype. This was not the garden of his ancestors, but rather the "traditional" performance of a popular racist stereotype. While he worked, he was already preparing himself for drinking kava when he would eventually reach the shore after the day's work. I greeted Inhal-uñek-F hours later that afternoon as the sun was setting, after he had finished work and reached the shore. He looked emaciated after being cooked all day in the hot sun, but still smiled as he greeted me. We joined a dozen other men and a few women at the *nakamal*—"kava bar", where the kava was being prepared and sold in commoditized form. In Anejom, the central meeting place is called an *inteptag,* and *nakamal* is a loan word from Bislama, which

also means "meeting place", and has become the signifier for "kava bar." Wherever you travel in Vanuatu, the *nakamal* is the place that sells kava—whether in the capital of Port Vila, the northernmost islands, or in the south—the *nakamal* is the modern meeting place for kava drinkers. As one bucket of kava was drained after another, usually in a "take away" style where people bring plastic bottles and fill them up with kava to be taken home. We hung out at the *nakamal* to drink around the fire, but the kava quickly ran out, with the last bucket being purchased in full before any of us were able to drink a single serving. Inhal-uñek-F and I were done, but not by choice—simply because of a lack of supply. I remember it being a less than satisfying experience. While we could have drunk a couple more servings, and I could have asked him a little more about what it is really like to be in that pot all day—the kava supply did not meet the Anejom demand. This was the state of kava in 2016 on Aneityum, and illustrates the value of kava for Anejom people today. The vast majority of the kava prepared on Aneityum is consumed by Anejom people—not tourists. The kava scene has not always been like this, and I recalled a night a decade earlier, when the kava supply was much different.

In 2005 I remember the coolness of the evening as the sun was setting, and the village of Anelcauhat was quiet and peaceful. There was no cruise ship that day, and rather than returning from Mystery Island, Anejom people were returning from their gardens, or working around their settlements. I was walking the sand beach with Kalo, who I call *etwak*—"brother", and who I will refer to as Etwak-K because he is no longer with us now after dying from complications due to a stroke. We passed my house on the eastern shore of the harbor and headed west, passing the football field, meteorological station, until we reached our destination: the *nakamal.* When Etwak-K and I arrived, the owners of the *nakamal* were still pulverizing the kava in a meat grinder, and not yet squeezing the juice out. As I watched the process I noticed a small stump of unprocessed kava laying on the ground, and I inquired if it was for sale, which it was. I purchased it for 500 vatu, about $5 USD, and Etwak-K and I heading back home to prepare it. On our way home, an Anejom elder smiled at me and asked *neve meat napos aak?*—"What meat are

you carrying". I replied that it wasn't "meat"—it was kava, but he laughed and replied, *butcha naa, fresh meat napos aak!*—"that's butcher, that's fresh meat you are carrying!"

Ten years later, as I sat with Inhal-uñek-F at the *nakamal* after the business had closed early because all the kava went dry, I remember thinking that it is too bad there is no more 'butcher.' Today, kava can usually only be purchased on Aneityum in juice form, primarily because the demand for kava has skyrocketed with all the work that Anejom people do on cruise ship days, and the economic impetus for selling it this way. What has become clear is that Anejom people have the means to purchase kava, but few have kava growing in their gardens for daily harvest. Yes, Anejom people still plant kava, but most do not have the supply of kava that would allow oneself to drink daily or even weekly. Kava grown in the gardens is usually reserved for special occasions such as *kastom* ceremonies. While there are a minority of Anejom men and women who tend to kava as *naca,* and their way of life—they are the minority. The vast majority of Anejom people are usually preparing for activities associated with cruise ships. As noted earlier in this work, at the peak, before the Covid-19 pandemic, there was an average of one cruise ship every three days, and over one hundred cruise ships a year calling on Mystery Island. Considering the formal period of research for this work took place before Covid-19, more research will be needed to understand how the pandemic has affected Anejom people's lives.

Furthermore, when cruise ships dock at Mystery Island in the morning as the sun rises in the east, Anejom people are already well on their way to the islet, where they will spend most of their day. Cruise ships usually dock in the morning and leave before sunset, and it is a typical full day's work for those Anejom people who participate in tourist based activities, whether it be sitting in the marketplace, taking tourists on tours, food/drink hospitality, or performing racist stereotypes of themselves—Anejom people are busy from sunrise to sunset. There is a marketplace with some 80 stalls where mostly Anejom women sell locally made handicrafts, but primarily, trinkets and souvenirs made in China that are purchased in the capital of Port Vila. One could describe the marketplace as a gendered space for women, and while there are some men who participate in the

marketplace, the vast majority are Anejom women. The marketplace is not a menstrual hut of the past, but considering Anejom women's desire for the huts to return, the marketplace is a space where women are relieved of the domestic responsibilities at their homes. They can just sit back, relax, and let the vatu flow. In truth, while those in the marketplace do generate income, their expenses are high because most of their earnings go back to the businesses in Port Vila, where they purchase the products for sale, and MITHL requires a daily fee to use the marketplace, at $5 AUD per stall. While working in the marketplace can be a challenge to break even, there are some lucrative activities that are generating income. Performances such as the 'Cannibal Soup' pot are a clear example, and tours are other lucrative endeavors, as the only expenses are fuel for travel by boat, and/or any employees one may have. The manager of MITHL would take away hundreds of dollars a day from his 'Cannibal Soup' business, and he would only pay his employees a meager flat rate of $10 AUD/ day (about $8 USD)—the amount of two paying tourists, when sometimes hundreds of tourists would take part in the performance on a good day. The 'Cannibal Soup' pot is one of the clearest examples of the commodification of the body, where my brother and my child were performing racist stereotypes day after day for exchange-value. They were the ones performing today, but the owner of the pot has a half-dozen Anejom men in stand-by, if anyone complains or refuses to work. Human bodies are not the only "bodies" commoditized on Aneityum, related to tourism and *kastom* activities. While it may seem insignificant in comparison, it will be helpful to explore two intertwined "bodies" that are in the process of commoditization on Aneityum—both analogous to Anejom bodies—material objects that are 'good to think with' in understanding larger processes relevant to the politics of "culture" on Aneityum, the commoditization of "culture" more generally, and '*kastom* consciousness' that is having fatal effects on the island population—especially among Anejom men.

Kava

Kava is the most valuable mundane liquid on Aneityum, if one can call it mundane. It looks like muddy water, tastes bitter and sometimes spicy, and for some induces nausea and a gag reflex—even for experienced kava drinkers. Even as repulsive as it sounds, it is slowly becoming a global commodity, and the supply is struggling to meet the demand—not only on Aneityum, but across the Vanuatu archipelago, and "kava bars" all over the world. How could a juice that sounds so revolting be so popular? One argument may be that it is heavily 'fetishized', but that is far from the whole story, as it is a drink that has deep historical roots, and use-value—certainly not in the taste—but for the psycho-active effect. For many Anejom people, kava is more important than taro or yam, the favorite foods of Anejom people, or any other food for that matter because it 'comes before food.' Kava is always consumed before food on Aneityum, and across the Vanuatu archipelago because the effect is most intense on an empty stomach, and the nausea or gag reflex that it sometime induces is minimized on an empty stomach. Kava also takes a long time to mature, usually 3-5 years, and if it was really that repulsive—there would not be much sense in devoting so much time to it, but there is certainly value in kava for many Anejom people, and ni-Vanuatu across the archipelago. From the perspective of *kastom*, kava is key; in the past, when preparing for a *nakro*—"feast" the kava was planted first, and once the kava reached 1-2 years, then the pigs would be fattened up, and then one year from the feast the taro would be planted. Kava is important because it starts the process of the preparation for a *nakro*—"feast". If kava is absent from a feast, most participants would not consider it to be a feast. Yes, today the kava for a feast is often purchased by the stump, but good luck in finding someone who will sell you one. A stump of kava that is fully mature can run you up to 20,000 vatu, or about $200 USD. There are numerous varieties of kava, which range in size, growing time, and psycho-active effect. Anejom names for kava include: *puya, mokom, nisginecrei, cap, nidinolai, riki* (from Futuna)*, top, noumea.* They are all a little different, and have their own personality, and while it would be fun—I will reserve the details for a future work!

Today, while kava is commonly consumed in juice form at the *nakamal*, not only on Aneityum, but across the Vanuatu archipelago. Away from the *nakamal*, there are diverse methods of preparing it. On some islands it is pounded with a wooden stick, or ground with a sharp piece of coral, or in more commodified form, in a hand-crank or electric meat grinder. On Aneityum, when it is not being prepared for the *nakamal*—it is chewed. This process is common among the southern and once in the central islands in the archipelago, where meat-grinders are probably more common now. On Aneityum the kava is first cleaned, skinned, and then chewed. In the past the chewing was reserved for pre-pubescent boys, but today, anyone with a full set of teeth, man or woman, can chew the kava. Even today, this job is usually reserved for the younger participants for the simple fact that they have the healthiest teeth. When I first started chewing kava I found it challenging because as one chews, it is important not to swallow the saliva infused juice in one's mouth. If you do, it is usually a combination of the mash, and often gets stuck in one's throat, and hence, gag—out the mash comes without being properly masticated. At first, one salivates too much, and the saliva infused juice usually drips out of one's mouth. It does not help that one of the effects of kava is a local anesthetic, and it numbs one's mouth. This happens when one drinks kava to a certain degree, but even more so when one chews it. Sometimes the kava starts dripping from one's mouth without one even realizing it—like you have been shot with Novocain in the dentist chair and you do not realize you are drooling until it is dripping on your shirt. I am describing this process in detail, not to scare you away from drinking kava, but to emphasize the skill involved in chewing kava—it is a difficult skill to perfect. I would say that it took me a couple months of regular kava chewing to perfect it, and once one does, it is a valuable skill—and you will always be invited to prepare, and drink kava—especially with elders who lack teeth.

Once the kava is pulverized, and infused with everyone's saliva, it is spit out in heaps of mash, usually on fresh cut leaves on the ground. Each heap of masticated mash is usually enough for two servings of kava. Today, the mash is then placed in a cloth, and cold water is slowly poured over it. The juice is slowly dripped into half-coconut shells on the ground. The first squeeze of kava is signified as *nidinopothan*—literally the "liquid of

the soil". The second squeeze is the *nesgai-kava*—"body/soul of the kava", and the third is *nawata*—"juice from the drier mash," when most of the body/soul, and active ingredients have been squeezed out. The dry mash of kava (*nawata*) and left over coconut scrape (*nuhuñ*), for example, are similar because the body/soul have been squeezed out of each, which means the kava or coconut is "dead"—and analogous to a corpse. The animate part of the kava and likewise, the coconut is in the liquids. In short, the liquids are transferring body/soul, and without the liquid, one has no life and no body/soul—one has become dry. Likewise, as just mentioned, when a human body, or any body has lost its life—it is dry, it has become a corpse (*nuhuñ*), the same word used for dry coconut scrape.

Kava is the quintessential beverage, not only for Anejom people, but across the Pacific. As noted in chapter 2, kava's domestication was likely centered in what is now the northern islands of the Vanuatu archipelago, some 3000 years ago (Lebot, Merlin, Lindstrom 1997). Today, while kava is the drink of choice for many ni-Vanuatu, this was likely not the case for this whole period of its domestication, as the distribution of domesticated kava was likely uneven. While the northern islands of Vanuatu had kava, other areas of Vanuatu may not have been introduced to kava until later. As Lynch argues, southern Vanuatu, namely, the islands of Erromango, Tanna, and Aneityum may not have been introduced to kava until the Polynesian outliers of Futuna and Aniwa were populated (2002). Lynch makes this arguments based on linguistic data, for example, Aneityum uses the word "kava" for kava, which is closer to the Polynesian word for the term "awa". Henceforth, kava could have been a recent introduction to southern Vanuatu, at least in terms of drinking practices, and the relationship of kava to social organization. Archaeological evidence argues for increased social complexity around the time kava was likely introduced, between 1000-500 BP (Spriggs 1981). While canoes as marine vessels have been essential in populating the Pacific starting some 47,000 years ago, they became even more significant when Lapita peoples came onto the scene, some 3,000 years ago. It is unknown when Anejom people started to use "canoe"—*nelcau* as a metaphor for a social group, but my argument is that it likely coincided with the re-introduction of kava to the island—especially considering how important kava is to canoe

social organization. While today it is more common to drink kava out of half-coconut shells, in the past kava was shared by two people, who both drank out of a wooden canoe —*nelcau-amoñ.* Kava has been called the "compass," quoting one Anejom elder in his late seventies, Matak-N, the son of former "chief" Etpok-Y, who lives in the capital of Port Vila, on Efate as the 'chief' of the *nhaklii-nelcau Vila*— "small canoe of Vila" for the Anejom diaspora residing in the capital of Port Vila and the surrounding areas. Following the *naca*—"work" of his mother, Matak-N has a kava market, where kava from all islands of the archipelago is stored and sold. It is a popular location, where hundreds of people gather everyday.

Kava continues to play a prominent role on Aneityum, throughout the Vanuatu archipelago, across Oceania, and globally—in part to its "outstanding pharmacological properties" (Lebot and Levesque 1989). Kava has been classified as a narcotic and hypnotic, and when consumed it has psycho-active properties, but it is not a hallucinogenic nor a stupefacient, which helps to explain the 'sociability' felt when drinking kava. The kava plant is an elegant and attractive shrubby plant measuring from one meter to four meters in height. It is a hardy, slow-growing perennial, generally resembling other *Piperaceae*. The active principles of the kava plant are called "kavalactones," which have diuretic, soporific, anti-epileptic, spasmolytic, analgesic, local anesthetic, bactericidal, and antibiotic properties (Ibid.). The area of cultivation of kava was likely much wider before the arrival of Europeans, at which time the religious taboos of some of the Christian missions were responsible for outlawing its use, but also because of the introduction of alcohol by traders, where it replaced kava in popularity in some places across the Pacific. More than 118 cultivars of *Piper methysticum* have been collected in Oceania, but the distribution of kava, which used to spread to nearly all corners of Oceania, is no longer so extensive, and the number of cultivars may have been closer to 240 in the past (Lebot et. al. 1997). Lebot and Levesque note that kava was left to die out in many valleys of the society Island, the Marquesas, Tubuai, the Cook Islands, Niue, and Hawaii. In early Hawaiian history, "awa" was drunk by chiefs or people of high rank, and never by commoners, likely because the plant was not plentiful, however, by the beginning

of the 19th century, there was enough for everyone, and "awa" was drunk by all social classes. However, as noted above, although kava is making a comeback, alcohol has replaced it as the drink of choice for many Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders today. Paralleling the Hawaiian history of "awa", we find a similar transformations in Vanuatu, and Aneityum specifically, although there are some notable contrasts. Missionaries did their best to stop kava drinking, and they were successful in stoping ritual kava drinking, and drinking at what they described as 'competitive feasts'. However, it is clear that Anejom people did not let the plant die out. When I first arrived on Aneityum in 2004, there was an abundance of kava, and as the sun set on the island each day, it was easy to find kava to drink—either in juice or "butcher", as I did with Etwak-K. However, this was not always visible to the public, as kava drinking continues to be done in relative secrecy. While in the past, "chiefs" were seen drinking kava at feasts, what was likely not seen if it took place in the past—was the kava drinking of commoners in secrecy. This may have been an innovation to missionary rule, but nonetheless, today kava is available for all social classes, and while the practice mostly excluded women in the past, it is now accessible to all genders on Aneityum, and much of Vanuatu—especially near the urban areas.

In Vanuatu, ceremonies, methods of cultivation, and cultivar classification systems vary from island to island. 'Folk classification' of kava cultivars results from detailed observations, both of interclonal variability and, where it occurs, intraclonal variability, which reveals the existence of a 'science of kava' known to ni-Vanuatu elders. Many of these cultivars have remained in the same places for decades to centuries, and are the result of local selection carried out by the farmers, and are known by precise names in the vernacular language. For the consumer, kava can be weak or strong; it can be soothing and induce sleep or, on the contrary, it can fail to produce relaxation and can provoke nausea or insomnia. Due to the suite of up to 15 different kavalactones, and the variability of these active ingredients in the root—every kava is a little different (Lebot et al 1997). Drinkers are well aware of these variations and usually want to know which kava

is being prepared and where it comes from. The physiological effect varies according to which cultivar is chosen, and the differences in chemical composition.

The origin of kava has been one of the oldest riddles of Pacific ethnobotany, but as noted above, botanical evidence suggests that kava was first domesticated in northern Vanuatu some 3000 years ago (Lebot, et. al. 1997), and dispersed, first by Lapita people, and later by their descendants throughout Oceania. Botanical evidence clearly indicates that *P. methysticum* is a native domesticate of Vanuatu, as 80 of the known 118 cultivars in the world are found in Vanuatu. The authors argue that kava's morphological and chemical variability is largely the result of human selection and cloning of somatic mutations in genetically similar, vegetatively propagated cultivars—and Vanuatu is the center of origin of all kava cultivars.

From the earliest period of European contact, foreign observers have been struck by the importance Pacific Islanders attribute to kava, for example, the preparation and drinking of kava continues to be a central component of rituals, and may have for over the course of its some 3000 year history (Turner 1986). Tuner explores the cultural meanings that inform these rituals, and argues that while many local differences exist in kava rituals of the various island groups, he argues that the basic form is similar and, as a symbol, kava occupied an analogous position in many societies in this region. Turner argues that the kava ritual is likeness to a form of sacrifice, and the object of the ritual is communication with the supernatural (203). While this may not be true for all Pacific Islands, especially today as it becomes a global commodity, there continues to be some truth to this claim on Aneityum island, and throughout Vanuatu, attributed to the semiotic ideology of kava. While this is certainly in the midst of change, especially as kava is commoditized for the global market—when kava is prepared from fresh kava, the harvesting of kava can still be likened to a sacrifice. It is notable from a materialist perspective that kava takes 3-5 years to mature, which means that when kava is finally harvested, it has been invested with years of work for kava farmers. Those who plant kava get to know their plants, and they are often likened to a part of the family, or more accurately, a piece of oneself growing in the ground. I have heard from kava farmers, that

when kava is stolen, it is like losing a child. Also, due to the psycho-active effects of kava, it is a substance that allows participants to phenomenologically experience the unseen world, and share this experience with those who one shares the kava with. Hearing the ancestors is a common statement that ni-Vanuatu make, even in some of the most commodified environments, especially in terms of 'hearing the kava'—*harem kava* in Bislama. Hence, the sacrificial function of kava cannot be understood without taking into account its pharmacological properties, for it is these that make it a suitable symbol for the form of communication being sought. Turner argues that Lapita people likely brought with them and developed a set of practices and beliefs centered on an association with kava and death, and kava with the medium for communication with ancestors as sources of power (Turner 2012). However, while this is certainly a part of the history of kava, as it becomes a global commodity, people's relationship with it is clearly changing. While the ideas associated with death and communication continue to be a part of the "culture" of kava—on the island of Aneityum, kava drinking is, especially in more commoditized form, becoming more like how global populations drink alcohol, hence the "kava bar" is signified as a "bar".

However, kava is not alcohol, and has different psycho-active properties. These properties make it impossible to drink it exactly like alcohol, for the obvious reason that the taste is undesirable, even for experienced kava drinkers. Henceforth, spitting continues to be part of the contemporary ritual, analogous to kava spitting in the past. For example, Lindstrom describes what he calls 'ritual spitting' on Tanna, Vanuatu, the island just north of Aneityum. This 'ritual spitting' is indispensable with Tannese social relations and traditional religion, and is referred to as '*tamafa*' (Lindstrom 1980). On Tanna, a practice that continues today, men take *tamafa* immediately after drinking kava in the late afternoon—a period of the day which is referred to as "the time of the ancestors." As on Aneityum, men and boys on Tanna clean and then chew roots of the kava plant, pulverizing the root fibers and mixing them with saliva. They spit the masticated kava on leaves and then strain it with water through the netting of coconut spathe into a half-coconut shell. The drinker takes his shell of kava on the edge of the drinking area—and

downs it in one long draught. As one approaches the bottom of the shell, the drinker tosses away the dregs and violently spits "*Fwei tamafa,"* spitting an impressive spray of kava in the air. While Anejom people joke about Tannese *tamafa*, it is still common to spit, 'sing' after drinking kava, and communicate with one's ancestors.

The furious spitting which follows the downing of a shell of kava might be related to the practice of spitting at bad tastes and smells throughout the archipelago. One eats food immediately after drinking kava, to 'wash down' the taste, and to assist in the digestion; in Bislama this food is signified as *wasemout* in Bislama, and *nofono* in Anejom. Hence, on Tanna, taking *tamafa* is at once religious and social. The most important supernatural beings, the ones to which *tamafa* is directed are the ancestors, and spitting is the Tanna way of communicating with the ancestors. While Anejom people joke about *tamafa*, it is notable that the joke is also that one will hear one's ancestors if the kava is strong enough. Even on Aneityum, after a person spits, one can sometime hear people uttering a short set of instructions—*tas apat*, which are heard by the invisible surrounding ancestors. While on Tanna, it is common practice to take *tamafa* to ensure a good harvest of yams, taro and other crops; to cure or keep away disease; to change the weather—calling up sun and wind when there is too much rain or not enough—likewise, while this practice is changing on Aneityum—Anejom people continue to imbue it with cosmological power. Hence, kava is essential at important points in the life cycle: birth, naming, first cutting of hair, marriage and death. Lindstrom argues that on Tanna the *tamafa* is not a prayer or request, rather it is like a 'knock on the door'—an indication to the supernatural that a message follows. Men do not exactly supplicate their ancestors, rather they advise what they are doing and expect co-operation. Hence, *tamafa* is sometimes akin to a set of instructions, sometimes akin to a complaint filed with the ancestral police. While *tamafa* is not explicitly practiced on the island of Aneityum or even considered *kastom*, my argument is that it still takes place in practice. Of course, the most obvious practice on Aneityum with drinking kava is the spitting, spitting, and more spitting. The psycho-chemical properties of kava demand this, as one becomes sensitive to sound after drinking kava, and sometimes the spitting is all one can do to communicate.

The preference continues for talk to take place before the kava is consumed, and after the kava is consumed, a peaceful silence sets over the whole drinking area. While this peace is not always experienced in more commoditized areas, it is as close as one can come to a 'social fact' that one must be quiet when drinking kava. However, this is changing as the mixing of other substances takes places, especially the mixing of kava with alcohol, for example, completely changes the experience of the drinker.

Today times are changing, and even on Tanna the practice of *tamafa* is not practiced as it was in the past. As described in brief above, all over Vanuatu a new way of taking kava is changing with the invention of the "kava bar"—or *nakamal* in Bislama, considered "the most transformed social context for quasi-traditional kava drinking" (Baker 2012). Commoditization of kava is well documented in urban areas of Vanuatu, where price is determined by the size of the serving, with smaller servings costing 50 vatu (about 50 cents USD), to 100 vatu, to 150 vatu (about $1.50 USD) and upwards, and this process continues on Aneityum as well. Baker argues that in some Pacific Island contexts, especially informal kava-drinking gatherings near the urban centers, kava and alcohol are both consumed. In Vanuatu, when one drinks alcohol after drinking kava this is called '*kahle*'—a word that is rooted in the French word '*cale'* meaning "hold or wedge." The addition of alcoholic beverages changes the social context of kava drinking, and it suggests that the goal of such consumption is focused more directly on individual intoxication, rather than communication with ancestors, or anyone else for that matter. The sale of alcohol on Aneityum is prohibited by *Intasalep*, but that does not keep Anejom people from importing it from the capital, and selling it informally, or on the 'black market.' It is rare for Anejom people to drink alcohol daily, but for marriages, or national holidays, it is becoming increasingly common. The trouble is that alcohol is consumed like kava—chugged rather than sipped, which has disastrous effects for those who do not want to be belligerently drunk.

In the past, kava drinking was reserved for men, and women were excluded from the practice, but as noted above, this is also changing. Women are regularly seen consuming kava, and present at the *nakamal* on Aneityum, and throughout Vanuatu,

especially in more commoditized environments. John Taylor explores this change, and describes the case of kava to explore the articulation of gender and modernity in Vanuatu (2010). Kava norms are changing, and women are now drinking kava alongside men—something that was forbidden in the past. Taking an ethno-historical approach to address the complex sense of rupture that infuses everyday kava-related talk and activity in Vanuatu. In doing so, it reveals important insights into the dynamic relationship between '*kastom* and its others.' Through the diversity of contexts in which kava circulates and is consumed, it has become saturated with meanings that evokes complex narratives of nostalgia, anxiety, and hope, as kava and its related practices are intimately connected to social and cosmological configurations that inculcate ideal relations of gender, generation, rank, and ancestry. Taylor argues that these are the 'prelapsarian roots of kava as *kastom*' such as are manifested most potently in the masculine romance of the 'men's house.' This ideal arises in relation to an 'other' image of kava, one that is often considered more negatively—kava put through the meat grinder, for commercial consumption in 'kava bars'. Taylor argues that this speaks more to kava in turmoil and of uncertain futures.

'Turmoil and uncertain futures' best describes the kava situation on Aneityum today, and why the story of kava is analogous to the commoditization of "culture" on Aneityum, and Vanuatu in general, especially the urban areas of the country. While kava is still the preferred drink of choice for Anejom people, the supply cannot meet the demand for the simple reason that Anejom people are not planting enough kava to meet their own demand, and while they do not intend to let it all die out—they clearly have other priorities. Instead of planting kava, Anejom people are focusing on something more lucrative—the neo-colonial encounter with the modern 'canoe'—cruise ships, and the people who arrive on it—cruise ship tourists. As Aneityum receives on average, one cruise ship every three days (pre-Covid 19, of course), kava gardening—and all gardening for that matter— is being replaced with market-based activities related to tourism. As Aneityum was the first island in Melanesia to encounter Europeans, they continue to encounter neo-colonialists regularly departing the cruise lines of Royal Caribbean, Carnival, America Holland, and P&O—all considered *nelcau*—'canoes' in the Anejom

vernacular. It is not that the experience of drinking kava is changing in itself, but there simply is not enough kava to go around for reasons specific to the hyper-capitalistic activity on the island. Given the constant arrival of the 'canoes' from abroad, Anejom people have abundant monetary capital, but what they lack are the material goods they desire. And while Anejom people nearly always prefer kava over alcohol, this is changing because alcohol often meets the Anejom demand—while kava is not. Likewise, even though a lobster is the ideal food to balance the taro, sugar is often the one on hand.

Kava is described as having a *nesgan*—body/soul by Anejom people themselves—the same animated substance of Anejom bodies. Once a kava root is harvested, it must be consumed in full within a few days, unless it is dried. Kava is also sold on Mystery Island, but the demand is so high that the owner of the "kava bar" has to turn Anejom people away, and only sells kava to tourists, or his closest friends. This is understandable because he is the not the only kava bar that cannot meet demand and regularly turns people away. It is still thought that the *nesgan* of the kava is connected with the person who planted the kava, and to drink the juice is analogous to drinking the soul/body of the one who planted it—of course only if one asks who planted the kava, or if one knows who it is. The owner of the kava bar on Mystery Island does not plant his own kava for sale, but rather purchases from Anejom kava farmers, or kava from other islands. Henceforth, while the harvesting and preparation of kava can still be akin to sacrifice because the kava root will no longer grow, and will need to be replanted—the commoditization of kava has begun to sever this connection between grower and consumer. Today, like the owner of the *nakamal* on Mystery Island, there is often a middle-man who purchases from the grower, and then sells the kava for a profit. In the past, kava was essential to the 'balanced reciprocity' that sustained the relationships inside the 'canoe.' Today, as kava is consumed in more commoditized form, it is easy to see how the 'balanced reciprocity' of the past is becoming transformed to the 'negative reciprocity' of the neo-liberal economy, or even the extreme of the rejection of once valued relationships.

...with Lobster

It is notable that kava is not consumed by itself, and demands something to *wasemout*—or *nofono* in Anejom. I say "demands" because kava has a phenomenological personality even in commoditized form. It is an embodied being with body/soul from the Anejom perspective—and if you think I am romanticizing it—try drinking a serving on its own. It is extremely difficult to drink kava by itself, and while some Anejom people gravitate toward sweet biscuits, chips, or store bought snacks—in my personal experience those just do not cut it, and one must choose one's *nofono* wisely. An Anejom favorite *nofono* that is running parallel with kava in the process of commoditization is *nijvañ*—lobster. Unlike kava, it is easily marketed to tourists, as it is considered a global luxury item, and already heavily 'fetishized' for global tastes. It happens to be even more lucrative than the 'Cannibal Soup' performances, at least while stocks are not depleted. While tourists tend to eat the tail, and leave the rest for scrap, it is common to see Anejom men filling plastic bags full of lobster bodies and legs, and saving them for kava. While lobster tails are a rare *nofono,* the bodies and legs are always around the *nakamal* on cruise ship days.

The lobster market is probably the second most popular place for tourists, second to the 'Cannibal Soup'. They are strategically placed at the opposite ends of the marketplace. The lobster market is easily noticeable because commencing at sunrise, Anejom men congregate there, building fires that are clearly visible—as the smoke plumes rise, the water begins to boil in large drums, to cook freshly caught lobster. The lobsters are caught off the coasts of Aneityum, and cooked live on cruise ship days. After they are cooked, the lobsters are displayed on a counter, where tourists can walk through, and pick the lobster of their choice. Each lobster sells for anywhere from $30-50AUD, and multiple lobsters can easily bring in hundreds of AUD for a single person on a single day. This practice tends to be gendered for men, and I have regularly seen men sell upwards of a half-dozen lobsters in a single day—making enough money to sustain their families for month—if they wanted. However, in discussions with Anejom lobster fishermen—few save their earnings, and a portion typically goes to rice, sugar, processed meat, or other imported food products at the store; and the other place lobster earnings goes is kava,

where large batches are often purchased with money from lobster. The commoditization of kava and lobster are inextricable linked, not only because the earnings from lobster support the commoditization of kava, but also because their 'social lives' are intertwined. As one is in the process of commoditization, the other follows, for reasons that will be described below. Lobstering has been one of the most contentious activities for Anejom people, especially considering the lucrativeness of the practice, lobster is often caught in areas that have been 'closed' for fishing. Due to the fact that lobstering is done at night, with underwater flashlights, as lobsters are easily harvested when they are dormant at night—this makes it difficult to regulate who is harvesting lobster where. Matak-I had tried to kept the coastal areas of Anauonse 'closed' for much of the time we lived in Anauonse. He would open them anytime there was an *Intasalep* meeting, or a *kastom* ceremony, but I learned that it was only 'closed' to those who lived there. I would often see flashlights at night in areas that had been 'closed' for fishing. It became a regular sight, and it was hard to know who exactly was harvesting lobster in the areas that were 'closed', but it was obvious what they were doing. It was no surprise that the flashlights were common the night before cruise ship calls on Mystery Island.

Lobster is notably one of the best *nofono,* and historically it has been one of the best *nadepian*—"balancing" foods, one would eat with taro, for example. While tourists just eat the tail by itself, an Anejom person enjoying a lobster would always balance it with their starchy carbohydrate of choice, taro, aerial yam, or manioc being some of the favorite combinations. Furthermore, both lobster and kava are special foods for Anejom people because they are not restricted by *natwakam,* namely, there is no restriction for eating lobster before or during garden work. Lobster, unlike fish, can be eaten anytime of the day, and it does not create impurity for the person who consumes it. However, considering the exorbitant exchange-value of lobster in the global market, and even though lobsters are always for sale on Mystery Island—these lobsters are rarely—if ever, purchased by Anejom people. I never bought a lobster at the lobster market, but I was given lobsters from friends who insisted I take one for *nofono*! For Anejom people, myself included, the price is simply too high. Anejom people are used to harvesting them for free,

and the thought of paying $30-50 AUD for a lobster is a ridiculous idea for many. However, lobster is an essential food in the 'balance' of island life because in the past it supported all kinds of gardening. One could bring a lobster up to the taro swamp, for example, dig up a stump of kava, and prepare the kava right in the garden after a day's work, and roast the lobster for *nofono*. In contrast, it would be taboo to do this with coconut or fish, but lobster and kava can be freely consumed anywhere. However, even though these products have no restriction and can be consumed while gardening, the demand is so great as a market-based commodity that they are rarely consumed in the garden these days. Both lobster fisherman and kava gardeners alike make such a substantial amount selling these two products as commodities—their exchange-value outweighs the use-value, no matter how essential the use-value is for island-based practice.

Lobster and kava are just two analogies for larger processes in motion in the commoditization of "culture" on Aneityum, and two examples of how essential foodways have become increasingly politicized. As this work has illustrated, while more Anejom people depend on "culture" as economic and political resources—"culture" is deeply biopolitical—it stratifies a hegemonic relationship between those who are the national or global "cultural" authorities, and those embodied selves who put "culture" into practice. Throughout this work, "culture" has most often been placed in quotations, not because I am arguing that there is no such thing, but rather because any conception of objectified "culture" that is being promoted by global and national perspectives—is far from any contemporary scholarly socio-cultural understanding of culture. The bounded, static, and ahistorical conception of "culture" that informs the economic and political resource, lends salience to the complicated history of "culture" within the discipline of anthropology. A century ago, this static conception of "culture" was popular among social evolutionists who compared all "cultures" using a universal yard stick, from savagery to barbarism, to civilization. This conception of "culture" was often the justification for the paternalistic colonialism the world over. This continues in neo-colonialist encounters such as on Mystery Island, as exemplified in the 'Cannibal Soup' performance. It is clear that these early conceptions or "culture" by our forbearers continue to be reproduced in

popular media, and is what tourists have come to expect when they step off cruise ships, not only on Mystery Island, but at ports and airports around the world. Likewise, the "culture" or *kastom* that is being promoted by Anejom people for global audiences, like the *kastom* promoted by the nation-state of Vanuatu, is an edited version of "culture"—one that is an invention as an economic and political resource. It is not that pre-objectified culture is not being practiced, lived experientially, or continues to be a semiotic and phenomenological reality, but that the complicated dynamic between pre-objectified to objectified and commoditized "culture" have been put on a collision course. As kava, lobster, and 'Cannibal Soup' all exemplify, "culture" in the small post-colonial nation of Vanuatu is a valuable commodity, one that requires the material performance of ni-Vanuatu and Anejom bodies—embodied subjects that modify themselves, in appearance and action, to reproduce the stereotypes and desires for national and global consumption.

Kastom **Right or Requirement?**

The following examples reveal the ways that the national government, through the national tourism office, and Vanuatu Cultural Centre alike, have encouraged ni-Vanuatu populations to consider their actions and behaviors as self-consciously "cultural", often through the guise of *kastom*, but in general—"cultural" because of the global audience that consumes these performances. To practice one's culture is no longer simply a right, but rather a requirement, and how a small post-colonial nation such as Vanuatu is required to consider culture as a resource that has to be managed effectively (See Scher 2014 for examples in the Caribbean). Furthermore, the commoditization of cultural on Aneityum is an example of governmentality, as commoditization of "culture" has become imperative for many small post-colonial states in the Pacific and elsewhere (Smith 2007). The examples described in the work, from the *kastom* movement to 'Cannibal Soup', reveal the nationalist ideology concerning "culture" that is constantly being reconfigured by the hegemony of the global economy of meta-cultural production. Vanuatu, like other post-colonial nations, have found the commodification of national culture as a way to preserve its sovereignty and legitimacy in governing the ni-Vanuatu population, but to

what end? The ruthless effects of this process can be seen in both Etpok-T and Matak-I—the worst case scenarios of the commoditization of "culture", and those who perform "culture" for national or global audiences. My friends and relatives are perishing because of the "cultural" governmentality that has become increasingly prevalent due to both support of traditionalist movements by global organizations seeking to preserve or revitalize "culture", as much as the economic motivations due to tourism. *Kastom* as the national brand is dependent on the consumption of products with the national brand identity, and as the 'Cannibal Soup' performance epitomizes—it is unclear who is eating who. What is clear is that *kastom* performances of this kind are enactments of colonial power—in-prisoning ni-Vanuatu and Anejom people alike as marginalized and exploited laborers.

What has become clear through the examples illustrated in this work, is that the nation-state of Vanuatu is folding to the pressures of neoliberalism, and has increasingly modeled itself as a kind of corporate entity, adopting some of the practices of a corporation. *Kastom*, as the national culture of Vanuatu is being marketed—is not only an economic resource, but also a political one. The state of Vanuatu is emerging as the vendor of *kastom*, and dually, also the promoter of *kastom* for political motivations. Drawing of the work of Michel Foucault, 'biopower' and 'biopolitics", which concerns the material, embodied subjects as members of the national population (2003). The nation-state of Vanuatu is far more concerned about the performance of "culture" for outsiders rather than the health and longevity of the ni-Vanuatu population, or the practice of land-based or island-based lifeways, for example. When indigenous populations practice ancestral forms of culture that are not yet objectified as such, on land that is not registered—gardening, farming, and hunting as a livelihood—this brings no increase in Vanuatu's GDP, or any economic advantage from a global perspective. On the contrary, when land is registered and available for sale, and the commoditized versions of culture are performed for tourists dollars—these types of activities increase GDP, and likewise the economic legitimacy of the state. It has become clear that the nation-state of Vanuatu has become more concerned about the economic productivity of the population

as part of the nation-state, from a global perspective, rather that the health and well-being of their own ni-Vanuatu citizens.

Central to the meta-cultural production of *kastom* in Vanuatu, and the promotion and sale of *kastom* as a commodity are the technologies of biopower, the disciplining, punishment, and general promotion of neoliberal subjectivities. Since the birth of the nation of Vanuatu in 1980, *kastom* has been central to disciplining and managing a population, in order to control the economic and political effects. As discussed above, "culture" or *kastom* is no longer simply a "right" for ni-Vanuatu citizens, but an economic and political requirement, analogous with other marketable commodities, such as copra, kava, lobster, or land. Vanuatu has found a niche in the global market of culture and tourism, and likewise, also in the "sale" of land. The criteria for who does or does not belong to a certain *kastom*, and therefore who has or does not have the right to identify with, participate, or profit from *kastom*, whether this be *kastom* performances for tourists, or the extreme of the alienation of land on the basis of *kastom* is dependent on the authorities of *kastom*. From a theoretical perspective, socio-cultural understandings of culture as a pre-objectified processes, should be a right for community members to survive, flourish, or disappear, inasmuch as cultural forms and practices continue to be relevant to the population in question. However, dually, global and local, from the perspective of the nation-state of Vanuatu, is the condition in which *kastom* activities cannot afford to be lost of changed.

In article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is stated that "everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community". Those who understand "culture" as historical or constructed, such as the case in meta-cultural production, may take issue with the almost genetic permanence or immutability of "culture" as described here. The culture of any particular community is theoretically diverse and continually in process, but at the same time, there is something that those who participate in a "cultural community" share. Before it is objectified, or commodified, "culture is not a right or a choice, but simply a fact" (Scher 2014). However, as Aneityum's story illustrates, we can and do objectify culture for economic, or political

reasons. In the global political economy of cultural production, the definition of "culture" that has been promoted, focuses less on diverse conceptions of personhood, or semiotic reality, but rather simply what is different (Wilk 1995). When "culture" or *kastom* is associated with specific plots of land, for example, there is an obvious motivation for the emphasis, or production of difference. In the same way a tour operator must establish oneself as different from other tours, in a way that tourists can easily consume that difference—it is easy to recognize the economic and political motivations for the 'meta-cultural production' of difference. Crucial here is the understanding that the performance of difference, whether for political or economic motivations, depends on the presentation of "cultural" selves that are recognizable and easy consumable. It is here where embodied selves become biopolitical, and *kastom* becomes part of the global biopolitical economy.

As I noted earlier in this work, In 2012 I visited Matak-I in Anauonse and was impressed at what he had accomplished in such a short time. He had a half-dozen houses, a water system, and a large communal area, where people buzzed in and out. At that time Matak-I was the example of how one lives a *kastom* life. Soon after I left in 2012 Matak-I had started a *kastom* tour, which he began to generate some income. It was popular among tourists looking for a longer outing, and an "authentic" experience off the beaten track. The *kastom* tour would take a group of tourists and travel to Uje, considered a *kastom* village. Tourists would depart Mystery Island on a small boat owned by Anejom people, and after the 15-20 minute boat ride, they would reach Uje. As they were guided through the village, Anejom people would show them *kastom* dancing, food preparation, and weaving, for example. This tour was in operation until 2015, when cyclone Pam passed through the nation, just west of Aneityum, and changed the shoreline to the extent that the small tour boats could no longer reach the shore. The tourists could not disembark without wading in the water, which was not permitted. They needed a clear passage to the shore, but did not have one, which meant that the tour ceased to operate. At this point, after cyclone Pam in 2015, Matak-I stopped operating his tour. At the time I did not realize the magnitude of this change because I had just arrived and did not actually see the tour in operation. I did not know how much Matak-I and family were depending

on the income they generated from the *kastom* tour, but that source of income went dry. Matak-I did not have many other sources of income other than the tour. He was reluctant to sell taro because it was *kastom*, and following the teachings of Anejom elders, he was taught to share his taro. If he ate it all, it would ruin him, as he would likely become sick and unable to plant any more. Sharing the taro that he grows was thought to ensure that his health remains good, and his crop abundant. He trusted in those teachings, but that made him vulnerable in times of adversity such as he was facing. He did eat some of the taro he planted, but was always conflicted about it, and always felt that he should share it instead.

Rice and Sugar

As discussed in the previous chapter, after Cyclone Pam had passed, I arrived to live with Matak-I, but this plan became difficult due to the destruction of many of his residential structures. Matak-I was stressed and had enough to deal with, so my wife and two children moved next to him, and we lived a short walk away from him. It was easy to recognize that Matak-I was stressed, and as we discussed what kinds of work we would accomplish over the course of the next few years, I could tell that he was overextending himself. As chairman of *Intasalep*, Vanuatu Cultural Centre Fieldworker, a father and a husband—this was an overwhelming amount of work given the situation. As I discussed earlier in this work, he confessed that he was 'not eating well', and would rarely eat lunch. He also told me that he would often *atuakam*—prepare by fasting in the morning before entering the taro swamp, and then only eat something upon his return to his residence, usually in the afternoon. He revealed that often he did not eat breakfast nor lunch, and would sometimes only eat one meal a day. This was due to the responsibility that Matak-I maintained as a member of Anauonse 'canoe' following *kastom*. He was setting a *kastom* example for the island of Aneityum and beyond, an example of how he was adamant that he must perform the "cultural" difference that earned him legitimacy on Aneityum and throughout the archipelago. While Matak-I was earning legitimacy by taro farming, he was also being critiqued by some Anejom people, for some of his other actions discussed

in the last chapter, and he clearly sought to hold on to his legitimacy. In 2017, when we performed a naming ceremony for a number of children, those Anejom people I interviewed, recognized the changes or edits that Matak-I performed. Matak-I was performing difference, and he felt a strong need to do so—and he argued forcefully that it was *kastom*. Ultimately, because of his focus and full embrace of *kastom*, he was working extremely hard and not eating 'balanced' meals, while also depending on imported foods to supplement the foods that came from his garden. While Matak-I, like other Anejom people are concerned about *natuakam*—preparing by fasting, it is important to understand that foods like rice and sugar do not interfere with this preparation. Hence, mornings might consist of a hot lemon tea with sugar, often a couple tablespoons or more, and even a plate of rice. If one has lunch, that could consist of another plate of rice. Neither of these foods are restricted, and one could re-enter the taro swamp, or specific work if one wanted. Both rice and sugar are categorized as non-restricted foods, and people eat them freely as such.

As the commoditization of kava and lobster takes place on Aneityum, and tourists and Anejom people alike are consuming the supply of both, respectively, they are being replaced by sugar and rice in Anejom people's diets. Kava is fundamentally a different drink than sugar tea, but I find it illuminating that my friends and relatives drink less kava, and eat less lobster, while increasing consumption of sugar and rice. Both products are cheap and readily available. As noted above, rice was also distributed to Anejom people multiple times after Cyclone Pam. At that time, everyone often had a large 25 kilo (or 50 pound) bag of rice in their kitchens. Sugar was not distributed as cyclone aid, but readily available, cheap, and always in people's kitchens. Kava and lobster on the other hand—usually only available on cruise ship days. When I lived on Aneityum most recently, I consumed a lobster every month or two, and usually the lobsters that were accidentally killed during the harvest, as lobsters must be alive to sell to tourists, but I think I was the exception. My friends and relatives gave me lobster because they knew I enjoyed it, and as a form of 'balanced reciprocity'. Similarly, as discussed above, kava is only rarely available unless a cruise ship has visited, or one takes part in a *nakro*—"feast" or other *kastom*

ceremony. However, rice is everywhere, and sugar is consumed throughout the day by the majority of Anejom people. Every Anejom person that I interviewed drank tea with sugar, in varying degrees, and everyone eats rice. In contrast, only about 60% of those interviewed drank kava, although about 80% of men drink. What has become clear is that Anejom people have easy access to rice and sugar all the time, while foods like lobster and drinks like kava, are a rarity, and aren't always available. The increase of rice and sugar in people diets have lead to a severe degradation of people's health, exemplified by Matak-I. Vanuatu continues to allow the import of large quantities of rice, sugar and other imported products that are contributing to a diabetes epidemic. As this work illustrates, imported foods, especially rice and sugar quickly become a part of people's diets because they easily fall into pre-conceived linguistic categories. If people were eating more lobster in the garden, as a way to practice a land-based lifestyle, and would drink kava to end one's day of work—there would certainly be more food and kava in people's gardens. However, having rice and sugar available does not concern the nation-state of Vanuatu because imports convert into VAT tax of 15%. In a nation where neither income nor property is taxed, the taxes on all imports are essential to fund the government. Another irony that without imports, the government of Vanuatu would be severely defunded, but with the imports they may lose a significant portion of the population they are responsible to care for. In sum, rice and sugar express the techniques of biopower, and are the consumption of colonial power.

and Cannibal Soup…

While I have argued that the 'canoe' has played a central role in Anejom people's history, and continues to be relevant today to understanding social complexity on Aneityum. In concluding this work, it is important to describe another vessel that is also relevant to the processes that are taking place on the island of Aneityum, and Anejom people. That vessel being the Cannibal Soup pot. To be clear, the pot is not a 'canoe'. While it is also a type of vessel, it is different from a 'canoe' for a number of reasons. In Anejom vernacular, a "pot" is a *nipjinitai,* which differs from a *nelcau*—'canoe', which holds a social

group and travels through space and time, while the *nipjinitai* stays in one place, and cooks what is inside it over the fire. With this in mind, I find it horrifying that two of my relatives display themselves in this pot all day, making money for someone else, and only receiving minimal pay. I fear that while the 'canoe' has been the vessel of choice for many Anejom people past, present, and future—with 'canoes' innovating and adapting to the conditions in the contemporary world. A more accurate analogy of the reality that Anejom people face as participants in the global political economy, is the "pot". Given Etpok-T and Matak-I both burned up in front of us. The fact that we are putting "Melanesian savagery" on display, in a pot that is cooking those inside it, is unfortunately an accurate analogy for understanding what the island of Aneityum, and the destructive neo-liberal influences that Anejom people are facing right now. Drawing on the work of Jean Baudrillard, the 'Cannibal Soup' pot is a 'simulacrum'—a copy that has no original. However, that does not make it less real, especially for those inside the pot.

When I asked Wanipi, Etpok-T's widow, what her rights and responsibilities were as a member of the Anauonse 'canoe', she just looked at me without responding. She told me that she composes *noyag*—"music", but not for the 'canoe' of Anauonse, and not for any 'canoe.' She told me that she composes music because that is the *naca*—"work" that her father passed on to her. One of her nephews even protested that Wanipi, his aunt, was composing music, and said only men can compose music. While the men of *Intasalep* rely on music lyrics for the basis of <u>*kastom*</u>, and argue that only men have the authority to compose songs, but that no songs are being composed because they are <u>*kastom*</u>. The authority of *Intasalep* is clearly a power play, but one that is suppressing the lived experience of women, and those who do not ascribe to the <u>*kastom*</u> that *Intasalep* promotes. When I asked Wanipi what 'canoe' she was a member of, she sat quietly staring at me again, and said *etti nelcau uñek*—"I have no 'canoe." Her statement reveals the reality of the <u>*kastom*</u> movement—the ways that it glorifies only certain practices and people, while suppressing others. It should be emphasized that Wanipi and I were talking at her residence in Anauonse, on the hillside behind Matak-I's house.

While *Intasalep* strives to revive an over arching system of chiefly leadership, and return to a pre-European structure guided by an 'ethnographic present', I find it revealing that it was likely the *itoga*—other Pacific Islanders who re-introduced kava, and the groundwork for the evolution of a system of taro gardening that would support increased social complexity on the island. "Canoes', when allowed to find their way in space and time, have shown the adaptability of a highly seaworthy marine vessel in rough seas. *Natuta* is a contemporary example of a 'canoe' that is flourishing—they have a store, they raise pigs, they have many heads of cattle, and they are the only 'canoe' that I know of that 'milks the island' every year, to ensure fruit is plentiful—and every year I lived on Aneityum, I too enjoyed their abundant citrus crop of mandarins and oranges. I resist to go into detail concerning the practice of 'milking the island' because I fear it will become the next tour, for tourists looking for the "authentic culture" of Aneityum. Why is *Natuta* not accepted as a *kastom* 'canoe'?—because they are too *itoga*—"outsider." It is clear that the building blocks of the ancestral 'canoes' have been suppressed, especially for those who have been enveloped by a '*kastom* consciousness'—suppressing 'canoes' that are closest to home. The hull of the outrigger being the parents, and the outrigger the children—without everyone working in unison, the 'canoe' is not seaworthy, and will capsize at the slightest wake. It is ironic that *kastom* in Vanuatu, and heritage in general, has been central to an attempt to deal with, negotiate, and regulate change (Smith 2006) —but is actually contributing to the most violent change of all—fatalities of those closest to us. In *kastom,* those Anejom people who have bought into it, such as Etpok-T and Matak-I as the most extreme examples—have imprisoned themselves in their understanding of their past. As Anejom people increasingly rely on *kastom* as an economic and political resource—the underlying fatal effects of a '*kastom* consciousness' are in plain sight—both Etpok-T and Matak-I are clear examples of what happens when one mistakenly finds oneself in a 'pot' thinking it is a 'canoe'.

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