

**Saunōan Ka 'Eagke Maoan
(Forgotten But Not Lost):
Rotuman Migration to the
Torres Strait**

by

Makereta Rosarine Mua

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts in Sociology

School of Social Sciences
Faculty of Arts and Law
The University of the South Pacific

December 2007

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Makereta Rosarine Mua, certify that this thesis does not incorporate, without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education; and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

M. Mua
Name of Student

8/5/08
Date

I hereby certify the Declaration of Originality of this work by the author, Makereta Rosarine Mua, who worked under my direct supervision.

A. Newland
Name of Supervisor

8/5/08
Date

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to so many organizations, groups, families and individuals who supported me in various ways. In particular, I wish to acknowledge and offer my sincere thanks to:

- AUSAID for sponsoring the initial phase of my study in 2004.
- USP for helping to finance my fieldwork in the Torres Strait from May-June 2004.
- My supervisors, Professor Alan Howard for his untiring support and patience and Dr Lynda Newland for her enthusiasm and drive. They have been a wonderful combination.
- Professor Jeremy Beckett for recording the *taibobo* chants and dances in 1960. I wish to thank him for providing me with a copy of his recording for analysis by Rotuman elders.
- Elisapeti Inia for her interest in and commitment to transliterating the *taibobo* chants. Her transliterations gave meaning to the chants and their stories.
- All the PRTS Islander families in the Torres Strait Islands, Bamaga and Brisbane I met and interviewed. Thank you to those who accommodated me, invited me out for meals, scheduled my interviews and accompanied me throughout my stay on Thursday Island, Moa Island, and Murray Islands. I am indebted to May Passi who personally went out of her way to prepare for my visit and interviews and to ensure that I was comfortable and well taken care of.
- All PRTS Islander families who traveled to Thursday Island for my Welcome Ceremony and contributed food and in kind towards the function. Thank you to Mayor Pedro Stephen, John Abednego and Danny Morseu for officiating and Frank and Josephine David-Petero for their role in preparing the *mamasa* and organizing the *kup mauri* with the help of other PRTS Islanders.
- Pastor Alo Tapim for performing *taibobo* on Thursday Island. Special thanks to Chuck Young for the video footage of my arrival, the Welcome Ceremony and Pastor Alo's *taibobo* performance and Shannon Campbell for his assistance with digital photos.
- Mr Ron Day, Chairman of Murray Island Council, for permission to visit Murray Islands; Bua Mabo, Father Noah and Azzie Noah for their help.
- Aunty Daisy Passi for housing me during my stay on Murray Islands.
- The late Aunty Rotannah Passi, Del and the entire Passi family for looking after me and hosting my welcome and farewell functions during my Murray Islands visit.
- Vere Ledua who paid for my return airfares to the Murray Islands.
- Mr John Toshie Kris, Chairman of St Pauls Island Council on Moa Island for permission to visit St Pauls.

- Aunty Gertie Levi and family for hosting my stay at St Pauls. Victor and Tara Abednego for hosting a welcome dinner at their home and to all the friends and families that I met and interviewed on Moa Island. Special thanks to Coleen Saveka and Sam Nako Kris for driving me around the Island and for accompanying me to places of interest.
- Father Dalton Cowley who organized my trip to Bamaga and the PRTS Islanders at Bamaga.
- Seaman Dan whom I interviewed on Horn Island.
- Dr Anna Shnukal for allowing me time for a discussion in Brisbane and for relevant information on the PRTS Islanders in the Torres Strait.
- The Gaskell, Barlow and Alexander families in Brisbane for hosting my stay and dinner for PRTS Islanders, Thomas Sebasio, Marcus Pedro and Noritta Morseu.
- Aven Noah, General Manager, Radio 4MW, Torres Strait and his staff for their assistance.
- Mark Bousen (Torres News) for news support.
- Konrote Isimeli of Suva who first suggested the idea of doing research on the Rotumans in the Torres Strait Islands and for his reflective response to the *taibobo*.
- Rev. Iven Fatiaki, Elisapeti Inia, Maria Teresia Fiu, Mosese Kaurasi, Lucia Tigarea, Akanisi Vaurasi, Gagaj Taumanau, Aisea and Susau Antonio, Tonu Nataniela, Fagmanuie Penjueli, Rev. Emotama Pene, Samuela and Violet Taukave (of Rotuma and Suva), for their analysis of the *taibobo* chants and dances and for singing the Rotuman version of *taibobo*.
- Father Soane Fotutata of Futuna for his help in tracing Rotumans who migrated to Wallis & Futuna and Vito Kelekele (Futuna) for his help in analyzing the *taibobo* chants.
- Professor Karl Neuenfeldt (CQU, Australia), Nigel Pegrum (Pegasus Studios, Cairns, Australia), Professor Epeli Hauofa and Melanie Guiney (USP), Rev Iven Fatiaki, Vilisoni Fauoro, Samuela Taukave and the Churchward Chapel Choir (Suva) for their role in producing the collaborative CD recording project on Rotuman Chants and Hymns in November 2004. Special thanks to Rev Iven Fatiaki for composing his song to commemorate the lives and experiences of the early Rotuman migrants to the Torres Strait Islands.
- Gagaj Maraf Solomone (Noatau, Rotuma), Hariti Kelemeti and Motofaga Varea of the Mormon Church, Suva, for their assistance in the compilation of genealogies.
- Gagaj atakoa ne mou se Itu'Hifu e Suva, Jone Ravai & family, Fuata and Molly Fakraufon, Master Mausio & family, Deaconess Olivia, Olivia Pickering, Henry Enasio, Luisa Patmuleo, Herena Mose, Susana Alexander and all our Rotuman families for welcoming and supporting PRTS Islanders who visited Fiji and Rotuma in the last four years.
- Others who may have assisted me and not mentioned, my apologies and sincere thanks.

DEDICATION

To the memory of

our Rotuman forefathers whose adventurous spirit, love of the sea
and sacrifice impacted positively on the pearling industry
and whose values, skills and experience made them successful
members of their adopted communities

To my parents

my late mother, Ramona, whose love and care allowed me to be
myself

and

my father, Tukaha, who has been a tower of strength, supporting me
all the way and constantly reminding me about the value of time

ABSTRACT

This study explores the early arrival and settlement of Rotuman migrants in the Torres Strait Islands. Of central importance is the Part-Rotuman-Torres Strait (PRTS) Islanders' sense of Rotuman cultural identity, their conceptions of Rotuma and Rotuman culture and the extent to which it shapes their social lives. Beginning with an overview of the pearling industry, the thesis discusses several cultural practices with particular focus on the emergence of *taibobo* chants and dances as one of the most prominent practices, linking Rotuma and its migrant workers with the Torres Strait Islanders. The study of *taibobo* by Rotuman elders, provides clarifications and some explanations regarding their connections with early traditional Rotuman chants and dances as well as the impact of other ethnic Pacific Island communities. Transitional changes in the chants and movements as well as "ownership" are noted. Despite the fight over ownership claims by Murray Islanders, *taibobo* chants and dances allow PRTS Islanders to practice their Rotuman identity through the performance of *taibobo*. Genealogies and their stories are integral parts of the thesis that help to establish links between the PRTS Islanders and their relatives in Rotuma and Fiji.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Declaration of Originality</i>	ii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	iii
<i>Dedication</i>	v
<i>Abstract</i>	vi
Table of Contents	vii
Glossary	ix
CHAPTER 1:	
Introduction	1
Research Interest	3
Summary of Chapters	4
CHAPTER 2:	
Introduction	8
Collective Memories and Cultural Identity	8
Methodology	18
Research Setting	19
Interviews and Group Discussions	20
Secondary Materials	22
Research Benefits	22
Limitations of the Research	24
CHAPTER 3:	
Torres Strait Islands	27

Rotuma	30
Early Rotuman Migration	31
Rotuman Presence in the Torres Strait	35
Summary	39
CHAPTER 4:	
Introduction	40
The Importance of Names	44
Case Studies	45
CHAPTER 5:	
Introduction	62
Gardening	62
Methods of Cooking	68
Hardworking Trait	71
Racism	72
CHAPTER 6:	
Introduction	77
Analysis on <i>Taibobo</i> Chants and Dances	84
CHAPTER 7:	
Conclusion	97
BIBLIOGRAPHY	104
<i>Personal Communications</i>	113
<i>Appendix 1: Welcome Speech</i>	115
<i>Appendix 2: Map of Torres Strait Islands/ Pearl Shell Stations</i>	117
<i>Appendix 3: Map of Rotuma</i>	118

GLOSSARY

ROTUMAN

<i>a'häe se 'ou koheā ta</i>	'Think of your kitchen' (Rotuman saying)
<i>ao fo'ou ta</i>	New time (post-colonial times)
<i>ao maksul ta</i>	Time of darkness
<i>ao taf ta</i>	Time of light (colonial times)
<i>apei</i>	Highest ranking Rotuman fine mat
<i>fekei</i>	A pudding from starch (made out of grated manioka), coconut cream and sugar which is served during joyful celebrations
<i>fuag ri</i>	House site
<i>kainaga</i>	Kin group; to be related; to belong to the same clan
<i>ki</i>	War chant
<i>kop la pumahan</i>	'You have to sweat' (Rotuman saying)
<i>koua</i>	Earth oven
<i>gagaj</i>	Chief
<i>ho'aga</i>	Extended kin groups
<i>hual ta</i>	Wrestling chant
<i>mamasa</i>	A feast given to a person after a sea voyage
<i>marä'e</i>	Village square
<i>pigai</i>	Derogatory tag for Australian Aborigines or other very black persons
<i>pipi</i>	Inedible fruit whose kernel is used for scenting oil
<i>rijaujau</i>	An old lively dance and chorus for both sexes; contains verses that are half sung with hidden meanings; usually performed by people of Oinafa

	District
<i>sau</i>	King
<i>sua</i>	To sing (a song); perform a dance; first sub-category of <i>tautoga</i> (traditional Rotuman dance)
<i>tautoga</i>	Traditional Rotuman dance. Tautoga is a suite of pieces in three types: <i>sua</i> , <i>tiap hi</i> , <i>tiap forau</i> .
<i>temo</i>	Temo are old Rotuman chants which were sung by men while they were sitting, slowly and softly, with occasional light clapping and with a chorus of quicker time with clapping and a castanet-like finger snapping. Men would sit together and chant temo during the funeral gathering of a <i>sau</i> (king). Temo chants included stories of voyages, wars and heroic deeds.

TORRES STRAIT

<i>apkas</i>	Half-caste
<i>bingai</i>	A derogatory tag for 'blackened skinned natives with fuzzy hair'
<i>bipotaim</i>	Refers to the era before the arrival of Christianity to the Torres Strait Islands in 1871 and is characterized as a period of darkness in pre-colonial times.
<i>ged</i>	Home or homeland or place
<i>giz</i>	Root of a tree or origin
<i>gud pasin</i>	An individual is taught the fundamental principals of <i>gud pasin</i> (desirable behavior) with respect to kin and land
<i>ketai</i>	Yam
<i>kup mauri</i>	Earth oven
<i>pakalolo</i>	A pudding from starch, coconut cream and sugar

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The movement of Melanesians and Polynesians in and around the Pacific is a part of the phenomena of human migration that occurred in two waves, the first wave, about forty thousand years ago and the second wave, about six thousand years ago (Oliver, 1989a). The ancestors of Polynesians embarked on a journey across the ocean from South East Asia to settle in the Pacific Islands and left behind a legacy of being avid and experienced sailors who mastered the weather and ocean patterns and read the stars for guidance. The interaction of European explorers, traders and missionaries with Pacific Islanders created, amongst other things, a new flow of migration. Some Christian converts left their home islands to participate in missionary work; adventurous seafaring men traveled the world as crew members on early whaling and trading ships; while others were “recruited” by slave traders to provide cheap labor for plantations in Peru and Chile (Maude 1981).

Following World War II, a significant increase in migration within the Pacific Islands has created renewed academic interest amongst scholars of migration, but there is still a paucity of information about migrant movement for earlier periods, including the nineteenth century. Most studies of twentieth century migration have focused on push-and-pull factors such as socio-economic characteristics, employment figures, and age and sex of the population (see Va’a, 2001:46-97). Other studies have focused on the remittances migrants send to the home countries (Tongamo, 1987) or the acculturation patterns of migrant groups in their new environments (Eyde, 1954). The dearth of information on the migration of Pacific Islanders in the nineteenth century and their participation in the labour trade suggests a further need for research in this area.

Although a number of books have been written on the pearling industry and Torres Strait Islanders' culture (see Haddon, 1912; Beckett, 1987; Mullins, 1994), very little has been specifically written about Rotumans in the pearling industry in the Torres Strait.¹ This study is a response to the gap in this literature. Interviews with descendants of these Rotuman migrants to Torres Strait are crucial as they provide insight into their family histories and personal identities.

The focus will be on the Part-Rotuman Torres Strait (PRTS) Islanders sense of themselves as part-Rotumans and the cultural memories they have of their Rotuman ancestors. The study is guided by three main questions:

Do they, the descendants, have any sense of Rotuman identity, and does that shape their social lives in any way?

What conceptions do they have of Rotuma and Rotuman culture? Where did they get these conceptions from?

Which aspects of Rotuman culture most interest them, if any (dance, values, etc.), and why? An enthralling aspect of culture that emerges is the *taibobo* chants and dances which derive from the early Rotuman migrants in the Torres Strait. There is a contestation of identity between the Mer (Murray) Islanders and the PRTS Islanders regarding the ownership and rights to perform the *taibobo* chants and dances. The Murray Islanders claim that the *taibobo* was a "gift" given to them by the early Rotuman migrants. The PRTS Islanders claim ownership of the *taibobo* through their Rotuman ancestry. Self-representation

¹This is reaffirmed by Anna Shnukal, former Senior Lecturer in Linguistics at the University of Queensland and Associate Professor Steve Mullins of Central Queensland University. Dr Shnukal has written over 20 articles on Torres Strait Island languages and has vast holdings of Torres Strait Islander genealogies (600 of them); Associate Professor Mullins, has written a book titled 'Torres Strait: a history of colonial occupation and culture contact 1864-1897' (Shnukal 2003, pers.comm., 2 June, S. Mullins 2003, pers.comm., 10 June).

in this case, through the form of chants and dances, is in opposition to other groups of people (refer to Chapter 2).

Music and dance are a very portable part of the 'bundle of culture' and an effective way to help shape group and individual identity (Frith 1996, cited in Costigan and Neuenfeldt, 2002). Howard and Rensel (2001) mentioned that Rotuman dance performances allow opportunities for Rotumans to interact with each other and in so doing, unite people. The lyrics of the chants idealizes Rotuma, the beauty of the Island and important values like hard work and generosity. The Rotuman-derived music and dances known as *taibobo* have been firmly established and practised in the Murray Islands (Beckett, 1981). An analysis of the *taibobo* chants and dances will be presented in Chapter 6.

Research Interest

My interest in the subject began when the idea was first mooted by an uncle who, during his university days in Melbourne in the 1960s, met a group of nurses from the Torres Strait who claimed that they had Rotuman ancestry (Isimeli 2003, pers.comm). My own family had been a part of the early migration to the Torres Strait. My father was named after his great-grand-uncle who traveled to the Torres Strait Islands in the 1870s to do pearling. Here is his version of that story:

Ha'mena, a woman from the Urakmat clan in Noatau, married Iroa from Maghoi (homestead) in Malhaha. Ha'mena was born in 1803. Ha'mena had two children – Tukaha and Sukamanu. Tukaha went to the Torres Strait in the 1870s to do pearling. Sukamanu married Solval and had a son called Mamea Konrote who was born in 1869 and died in 1945. He was installed as Gagaj (chief) Varomua. Sukamanu received news from returning divers that her brother, Tukaha, was old with blurred vision, neglected and destitute and refused to return to Rotuma. Sukamanu urged her 18 year old son Mamea Konrote to *tau lu* (pull the ropes) or join the sailing ships as a crew member to go and bring her brother home to Rotuma. Konrote brought his uncle, Tukaha back to Rotuma in the 1890s

where he later died. Mamea Konrote had a daughter named Lavenia, my mother. She named her first-born son, me, after her destitute uncle, Tukaha. I am named after my great-grand-uncle...

(Tukaha Mua 2004, pers.comm).

Tukaha was one of the early Rotuman migrants who joined the maritime pearling industry in Torres Strait. He was one of few, who, after spending several years in the Torres Strait, returned to Rotuma. My father mentioned that this research had historical significance because it would shed more light on the lives and experiences of Rotuman migrants and their families in the Torres Strait Islands.

The paucity of information regarding Rotuman migration to the Torres Strait warranted such a study, not only for recognition of the historical circumstances of their arrival and stay in Australia, but to enhance people's general understanding of the donor regions in the migration chain and provide a written record for future generations. At a reception on Waiben (Thursday Island) I affirmed that those of us "...who are historically linked through the early migration of Rotumans to this part of the world, have a duty and a right to collectively tell our stories and have them recorded for the benefit of those who follow after us..." (see Appendix 1).

The findings of this research will contribute to the development of literature on Pacific Migration Studies and encourage scholars to examine the migration patterns of selected ethnic groups, the general impact on them, their families and the wider communities.

Summary of Chapters

Chapter 2 examines Maurice Halbwachs' theory on collective memory where individuals do not know the past singly. Instead the past is always remembered with other individuals or against other individuals situated in a group. Collective

memory is shared, passed on and constructed by the group. Such collective memories are crucial for the cultural identity of groups. Paul Connerton has extended this definition to include the body as a site for habitual memory. He argued that recollected knowledge of the past is conveyed by ritual performances such as dancing. Bodily movements such as dancing is an essential aspect of social memory. Halbwachs asserted that human memory can only function collectively within members of a group who have lived through similar experiences and contexts. This chapter looks at theories on collective memory and cultural identity with specific reference to the *taibobo* chants and dances, the changes they underwent and identifiable similarities to Rotuman chants and dances. Power relations between the Murray Islanders and the PRTS Islanders and the contestation over the ownership and rights to perform the *taibobo* are discussed as well as the changing attitudes towards the *taibobo* as a result of modernization and globalization. My research methods and their relevance and effectiveness are discussed with reference to the research setting.

Chapter 3 is developed from public knowledge in official records that describe the arrival and settlement of early Rotuman migrants in the Torres Strait. It offers contextual background information on Torres Strait and Rotuma, discusses the Rotuman migration pattern and provides an overview of the pearling industry in the Torres Strait with special reference to Rotuman involvement. Rotuman migrant impact on the local communities is included, especially the special skills and cultural practices introduced by them. Special reference is made of the opposition from the indigenous population to Pacific Islander and Rotuman achievement on Murray Islands which eventually led to their expulsion in 1885.

Chapter 4 deals with “making connections” through private memories of the PRTS islanders, initially reflecting on the past as a result of the Welcome Ceremony hosted by the PRTS Islanders in my honor and developing further out of visits, ceremonies and interviews. A large portion of the chapter is devoted to

genealogical links with family stories based on a selection of three case studies. Many stories linking the past and the present as well as the changes experienced over time are developed throughout the chapter. Of great significance is how the PRTS Islanders handle the duality of identity, with their Rotuman identity largely submerged due to their integration in Torres Strait Islander Society and the benefits associated with it.

Chapter 5 records additional private knowledge which advances the issues in Chapter 4, examining and assessing PRTS Islanders' conception of Rotuman cultural practices and values largely based on fieldwork interviews and relevant literature. Reference is made to gardening and cooking methods, cultural practices supposedly introduced by the Rotuman migrants and branded as "Rotuman" by PRTS Islanders and indigenous members of Torres Strait Islander communities. The interconnectedness of food production, land and identity and their significance in the Rotuman and Murray Islands contexts is discussed. To a very large extent the chapter highlights the centrality of land to one's belonging and identity in both communities.

Chapter 6 addresses *taibobo* chants and dances and the central position they enjoyed within the cultural practices introduced by the Rotuman migrants and their adoption and adaption by PRTS Islanders and indigenous Murray Islanders. The *taibobo*, as understood and practiced by the Torres Strait Islanders, is examined anthropologically and sociologically at one level and at another level are attempts at interpretation (as well as transliterations) and linkages to traditional chants and dances by Rotuman elders in Fiji and Rotuma. The latter involved a number of people and created a lot of interest that took them back in time searching for clues and meanings. Understandably there were variations in their findings and interpretations but some links were perceived between the *taibobo* and some of the old Rotuman traditional chants and dances. The contestation of cultural identity between the Murray Islanders and the PRTS Islanders is discussed where each cultural group claims ownership of

the *taibobo* with the PRTS Islanders reaffirming their Rotuman identity in the process.

In conclusion, the discovery of family links has created a renewed interest in Rotuman and Torres Strait Islander ancestry which has extended beyond the realm of cultural memories to the physical ties brought about by the rediscovery and meeting of new relatives. While cultural practices such as gardening and cooking methods are no longer practised, they are still important because gardening, cooking methods, genealogies and *taibobo* all play a crucial role in the formation of selective memories of PRTS Islanders. As long as memory does not completely fade away from a group of people those cultural practices remain significant aspects of cultural identity because they live in the minds of PRTS Islanders. Memories of these practices and links bind PRTS Islanders as an ethnic group with a shared heritage and gives them a sense of well-being and peace in the midst of all their day to day concerns and experiences. Despite the fight over ownership claims by the Murray Islanders, *taibobo* chants and dances allow PRTS Islanders to practice their Rotuman identity through the performance of *taibobo*.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The main issues addressed in this thesis center on Rotuman migration to the Torres Strait, more specifically, the PRTS Islanders sense of themselves as part-Rotumans and the cultural memories they have of their Rotuman ancestors. Key concepts such as *cultural memories* and *cultural identities* will be discussed in this chapter and the main research questions highlighted, followed by a narrative on how I obtained my data.

Collective Memories and Cultural Identity

During a span of over 140 years, the collective cultural memories of PRTS Islanders became just as important as the historical events that took place concerning the original Rotuman migrants. The concept of “collective memory” was first introduced in 1925 by French Sociologist Maurice Halbwachs. According to Halbwachs (1980), cultural memory implies that people possess history as they remember it. Human memory can only function collectively within members of a group who have come through similar experiences and contexts. Collective memory is therefore selective, based on the groups’ background and experiences. It is also a living memory because cultural memory retains from the past only those things that still live or are capable of living in the consciousness of the groups keeping the memory alive. This helps to retain and solidify cultural identity for those living in the present (Halbwachs, 1980:50-80). Apart from being selective, collective memories only continue to live because they become relevant in new ways. In this study I wish to argue that *taibobo* chants and dances have become relevant in new ways as a response to the contestation of cultural identity between the Murray Islanders and the PRTS Islanders. In addition, there is an issue of power and power

relations in 'memory' over who has the authority to remember and claim ownership of *taibobo* chants and dances.

In his book *How Societies Remember*, Paul Connerton discusses how the collective memories of groups are conveyed and sustained over time and how images and recollected knowledge of the past are sustained by bodily practices such as dancing (Connerton, 1989:1). This implies that social performance like dancing is the outcome of habitual practice which the body's systems have capably stored for easy retrieval over time. Often a drum or other musical instruments supply the beat or music for the chants and movements of a dance, which allows for a story of the lives of the members of a social unit through the posture, gestures and general movements of the body. Members of the social unit who collectively and repetitively perform the same actions to the same "music" of a dance over time reinforce the memory of their body systems into a habitual state which Connerton refers to as "habitual memory sedimented in the body" (Connerton, 1989:102). It is important to note the linkage between the beat or music with the chants and bodily movements and the story they convey about an aspect of the life of the members of the social unit in question. Each dance is a reflection of a component of their past and a way of conveying and sustaining memory (Connerton, 1989:104). Connerton's analysis of "habit memory" has direct relevance to the Murray Islanders' habitualised performance of the Rotuman-derived chants and movements of *taibobo* dance since the arrival of the Rotuman migrants. *Taibobo* became a way of conveying and sustaining images and recollections of Murray Islanders' past (Connerton, 1989).

During my stay on Thursday Island, Pastor Alo Tapim, a Murray Islander, performed several *taibobo* dances for me to a recording of *taibobo* chants sung by Murray Islanders in 1960 and recorded by Anthropologist, Jeremy Beckett. A striking feature of one of the dances was his introductory movements—he stood with his feet apart and moved alternatively from side to side, resting on each leg

in turn while bending and straightening his knees while lifting his hands from his sides, clasping them together in front of his waist before releasing them to his sides again.



Photo: Alo Tapim doing the *taibobo* on Thursday Island in June 2004

These positions and movements are similar to those of the *sua*, which is the first sub-category of traditional Rotuman dancing known as the *tautoga*. This action, known as the *tu siu* is interpreted by Hereniko as “a mark of respect and a dedication of the dance to the chiefs” (Hereniko *et al.*, 1991:127). It also reaffirms Connerton’s analysis of habit memory where repeated gestures, hand movements and actions (and accompanying chants/music) in *taibobo* dance became deeply ingrained within the body. Over time, from one generation to the next, the components of *taibobo* dance were passed on as additions to the collective memory of Murray Islanders and PRTS Islanders. Indigenous Murray Islanders emphatically explained that *taibobo* was a “gift” given to them by Rotuman migrants and claimed ownership of it (Mabo 2004, pers.comm). The PRTS Islanders, on the other hand, accepted *taibobo* as part of their heritage passed on by their forefathers.

Connerton (1989) noted an important link between collective memory and history and between people’s experience and knowledge of the past. In addition he claimed that social memory is “a dimension of political power and that the organization of collective memory bears on legitimation and the control and ownership of information ...” (Connerton, 1989:1). In this study I wish to argue that the link between collective memory and historical representation can create conflict at the intergroup level where there is a contradiction between the collective memories of two different ethnic groups regarding their rights to the

ownership of *taibobo*—the Murray Islanders on the grounds of a gift from the early Rotuman migrants and the PRTS Islanders through descendancy and cultural identity rights. For example, in an interview, May Passi, a PRTS Islander, related how she formed a dance group called *Hoas ne Hoi* with her Part-Rotuman mother's support and performed *taibobo* as a way of celebrating her Rotuman heritage. She received a lot of criticism for her performance of *taibobo* in the Torres News and on the radio. Several Murray Islanders argued that *taibobo* was given to the Murray Islanders by the Rotumans and she should not perform *taibobo* publicly without the approval of elders of Murray Islands. May's case highlights the contestation of cultural identity over the ownership of and rights to perform *taibobo*.

The issue of ownership of *taibobo* is linked to power relations between Murray Islanders and PRTS Islanders. Foucault pointed out that:

Power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate through its threads, they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always the element of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not the points of application (Foucault, 1980:98).

Foucault's definition suggests that power cannot be possessed by an individual, group or institution but rather, that power is diffused throughout society. However, he does not specify the nature or source of power. He is more concerned about how power is exercised. Power is productive in the sense that it functions through the production of knowledge. He argued that power produces subjects, in this case, people who are subjected to power relations and knowledge. Through its various technologies, power shapes and transforms social relations, practices and institutional processes. He emphasized the

relational character of power and how its “existence depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance” (Foucault 1978:95).

In his first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (1978) Foucault argued that “where there is power, there is resistance...” (Foucault, 1978:95). Resistance is not only an exercise of power but it is through resistance that power is disrupted (Foucault, 1978). While Foucault’s work has received criticism from some feminists who argue that his insistence that power cannot be possessed has posed major problems for their understanding of patriarchal power (Sawicki, 1988), I find his views useful in this analysis on *taibobo*. Using Foucault’s ideas on power relations, neither the Murray Islanders nor the PRTS Islanders possess power. What is important is the **exercise** of power relations in terms of ownership claims to *taibobo*. Through interviews I learned that the Murray Islanders were more affirmative and outspoken about ownership compared to the PRTS Islanders. The latter group was more subtle in their approach and in many ways performed the dance in memory of and as a link to their Rotuman ancestry. The ritualisation of *taibobo* by Murray Islanders during Ascension Day is another example of how power transforms social practices and social relations. According to Bua Mabo, a Murray Islander, May Passi’s Murray Islander and Rotuman ancestry did not give her sufficient right to perform *taibobo* publicly without the approval of elders of Murray Islands, so she received a lot of criticism in the local news media (Mabo 2004, pers.comm). By performing *taibobo* publicly, without the approval of elders of Murray Islands, May was affirming her Rotuman identity in direct resistance to Bua Mabo’s ownership claims. This example highlights the fact that resistance itself is an exercise of power and through resistance, power can be disrupted.

An interesting issue which is discussed further in Chapter 6 is the changes through new inclusions and adaptations that have impacted the original *taibobo* through the years. Murray Islanders and PRTS Islanders now dance to the “beat” and chants with no real understanding of their meanings except that the dance handed down through their families and social group members are theirs.

An example is the *taibobo* chant called the *Tugifo chant* (Track 12) in Chapter 6 where the Rotuman version of the song is Mạn ta is se Mạn ta o(2)/Tei rau mai, tei rau mai (2)/Tui se rau lo (A bird called, a bird answered (2)/Where are the dried tobacco leaves? (2)/Ready to be rolled)² and the Murray Islanders version is Mamda ise mamda ho (2)/perongoi perongoi tute aulo. Bua Mabo and Azzie Noah said that Murray Islanders did not understand the meaning of the lyrics but it was a chant that was given to them by the original Rotuman migrants (Mabo 2004, pers.comm; Noah 2004, pers.comm). On the other hand, Elisapeti Inia, a Rotuman elder, recognized that the *Tugifo chant* was originally Rotuman (Inia 2004, pers.comm).

Simon Frith (1996, cited in Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, 1996:109) wrote that while music may be shaped by the people who first made and used it, a piece of music or a performance creates and constructs an experience and as such, music, as experience, has a life of its own. In examining the aesthetics of music, Frith argued that the issue was not about how a particular piece of music or performance reflects the people but how music or a performance produces people and helps create and construct an experience that people can make sense of by taking on a subjective and collective identity. Using Frith's analysis I would argue that the PRTS Islanders and Murray Islanders are partially defined by their musical activities in that a significant aspect of their cultural identity is being defined through the actual cultural activity itself, the *taibobo* chants and dances. The performance of *taibobo* becomes a musical experience for them and the loss of meaning of the lyrics is not important because the importance is the identity which is produced in the performance. Moreover, I wish to argue that, in this case, the collective identity of being a Murray Islander or a PRTS Islander is more important than understanding the individual sentiments expressed in the lyrics. The performance of the *taibobo* chants and dances ties Murray Islanders and PRTS Islanders to their own respective ethnic pasts. Frith

² According to Elisapeti Inia, a Rotuman elder who did the English transliteration, the chant was an old traditional Rotuman chant that is no longer being sung by the Rotumans (refer to Chapter 6).

mentioned that “identity is mobile; a process not a thing, a becoming not a being; second that our experience of music—of music making and music listening is best understood as an experience of this self-in-process” (Frith, 1996, cited in Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, 1996:109).

During the Mabo Day Celebrations on 3 June 2004 I noticed that the Murray Islanders did not perform the *taibobo* and upon enquiring I was told that *taibobo* was usually performed by Murray Islanders during Ascension Day, after Easter, when it was sung by both men and women before and during the feasting. The Mabo Day Celebrations is a major event in the Torres Strait Islands because it signifies a historic landmark case, where Eddie Mabo and other plaintiffs from Murray Islands won their land rights case on 3 June 1992. The High Court of Australia handed down its decision, *Mabo and Others v. Queensland (No 2)* [1992] HCA 23; (1992) 175 CLR 1 F.C. 92/014, finding that there was prior occupation and ownership of the land, thus overturning the doctrine of *Terra Nullius* which meant that Australia was unoccupied at the time of white settlement (Stephens 2004, pers.comm). Sharp (1993:235) argued that *Terra Nullius* implied that Murray Islanders were primitive and uncivilized, without recognizable land laws and hence, lower in the scale of humanity than the newcomers.

The fact that I did not witness *taibobo* dancing as part of the official celebrations on Mabo Day raised important questions in my mind. If *taibobo* belonged to the Murray Islanders, why was it not included in the Mabo Day Celebrations? The answer to this question lies in the changing significance of *taibobo* as a result of the impact of globalization and urbanization. Technological advancements in the twentieth century have allowed Western music to travel the world through new communication technologies, which in turn, help to forge new collective identities. Kellner stated “radio, television, film and other products of media culture provide materials out of which we forge our very identities, our sense of selfhood, our notion of what it means to be male or female; our sense of class,

of ethnicity and race...” (Kellner,1995:5). Storey drew on pop music and how pop music culture, concerts and magazines helped to establish a sense of identity among the youth of society insofar as many of them experience emotions through the culture of pop music where pop songs mirror the every day social and emotional disturbances of adolescents (Storey, 1996:100). Preference for Western music has been popular especially amongst the younger generation of Torres Strait Islanders, with many of them preferring Western music to traditional chants such as *taibobo*. During my fieldtrip there appeared to be only a small and scattered group of Murray Islanders who could still actively perform *taibobo* chants and dances. Many of the younger generation to whom I spoke did not know how to sing or dance *taibobo*. While a small number of them expressed a desire to learn, the majority said they considered *taibobo* boring and preferred to listen to modern Western music, thus reflecting changing consumer tastes and the popularity of Western music over traditional music. Nicholas Thomas (1992:213) argued that identities and traditions are constituted in opposition to other identities and traditions. *Taibobo* is associated with “traditional” societies and is in opposition to Western music in “modern” societies. These developments within a rapidly changing context influenced by globalization have convinced me that *taibobo* chants and dances will be phased out of existence unless there is a concerted effort by the Murray Islanders and PRTS Islanders to revive them.

The emergence of *taibobo* chants and dances is an example of Hobsbawm and Ranger’s *invented tradition*. Hobsbawm and Ranger used the concept of *invented tradition* in a broad sense to describe traditions which emerge or are recreated according to a contemporary context and which can include both old and new elements in them. These traditions are formally instituted and ritualized, with reference to the past which may or may not be through a self conscious process of planning and manipulation by those involved (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983). *Invented tradition* does not mean ‘inauthenticity’ when used in this context. Hobsbawm and Ranger’s ideas on *invented tradition* are based

on the ways in which societies evolve and change over time and how they reproduce themselves. Because their collection of papers emphasized conscious invention, manipulation and hegemony some critics argued that *invented tradition* undercut the cultural authority of indigenous people by calling into question their authenticity (see Trask, 1991). Authenticity was equated with the transmission through time of a tradition.

For instance, Cultural Anthropologist Roger Keesing said that what native people in the Pacific now accept as “traditional culture” was largely an invented and idealized vision of their past. The pasts that Pacific Islanders were actively creating today often bear little resemblance to the lives of their ancestors as documented historically, ethnographically and archaeologically and was used to objectify certain aspects of their cultures as opposed to the negatively valued aspects of Western culture (Keesing, 1989). Hawaiian activist and scholar Haunani-Kay Trask argued that Keesing’s critique was fundamentally flawed because he only used Western documents. She said that native peoples have oral traditions, genealogies, and other historical sources that are not reflected in Western historical documents and added that anthropologists like Roger Keesing are trying to hold on to their privileged position as experts in the face of growing numbers of educated native scholars (Trask, 1991). This argument is more complicated than what appears here, as it is clear that colonialism did change entire social systems in various areas of the Pacific.

Hobsbawm and Ranger argued that all traditions were socially constructed and the concept of *invented tradition* suggested an attempt to produce new cultural forms of tradition that were designed to support social and political changes with the legitimacy of tradition. For example, under globalization, traditions have been reshaped and enlivened in many ways. In the past Fijian traditional dancing (*meke*) was performed by men and women. Men performed club and spear dances and women performed fan dances. *Mekes* were accompanied by chanting and rhythmic clapping, thumping and stamping of bamboo clacking

sticks on important social and religious occasions such as deaths and marriages (Fiji Government, n.d.). Now, *meke*s are choreographed and staged for tourists. In the past *meke* dancers wore grass-skirts for their dance performance but nowadays grass skirts have been replaced by cotton sarongs (*sulus*). While some may argue that *meke*s in hotels bear little resemblance to how *meke*s were conducted in the past, cultural tourism helps put a value on traditional cultures and ways of living that otherwise might be lost.

Under globalization tradition can be translocal, multicultural and performed under new settings for new purposes. *Taibobo* are invented traditions because they were introduced by the early Rotuman migrants to the Murray Islanders and continue to evolve and change over time incorporating old Rotuman chants and dances in Murray Islanders' culture and are performed as part of Christian rituals during Ascension Day. A deliberate attempt by Murray Islanders to claim ownership of *taibobo* helped strengthen a common cultural identity for Murray Islanders in terms of ownership claims as Murray Islanders (Mabo 2004, pers.comm; Noah 2004, pers.comm). The rather strained and uneasy social relations between Murray Islanders and the PRTS Islanders over ownership of *taibobo* reaffirms the point that ownership of tradition can be contested, making tradition a political discourse. Tradition is therefore central to cultural identity because it symbolizes an ethnic group's sense of their collective past, of who they are as a people and how they came to be who they are.

The quest for identity is therefore a quest for representation about who we are, where we came from and with whom we belong. Hall (1997:3) explained that **meaning** is what gives us a sense of our own identity. Cultural identity is "produced out of those historical experiences, those cultural traditions, those lost and marginal languages, those marginalized experiences, those peoples and histories which remain unwritten" (Hall, 1995:11). Identities are also contained in stories that change with historical circumstances and identity shifts with the way in which we think and hear them and experience them (Hall,

1995). Vilsoni Hereniko described cultural identities in Oceania as being “in a state of becoming, a journey in which we never arrive” (Hereniko 1994, cited in Howe *et al*, 1994:407), thus reinforcing the fluidity and ever changing nature of cultural identity as a process in the lives of Pacific Islanders. He divided Pacific history into three phases using a Rotuman standpoint that corresponds to *ao maksul ta* (time of darkness), which coincides with pre-colonial times; *ao taf ta* (time of light), colonial times; and *ao fo’ou ta* (new time) post-colonial times. There are similarities between Hereniko’s conceptualization of time in the Rotuman context and the way Torres Strait Islanders conceptualize time. *Bipotaim* refers to the era before the arrival of Christianity to the Torres Strait Islands in 1871 and is characterized as a period of darkness in pre-colonial times. The arrival of Christianity marked the divide between darkness and light (Mullins, 1994:9).

Ao maksul ta creation myths shared a circular view in which the circle of life has no beginning and no end, with each living thing a part of that cycle. Hereniko asserted that the myths, legends, chants and songs revealed an important period of contact between different islands, along with changes in social practices, including skills and knowledge. Even the arrival of Europeans was foretold by prophets in various Pacific Islands. Hereniko mentioned that artists created objects or songs and dances that served practical or religious purposes, and that these activities embodied the aspirations, visions, fears and hopes of the people in their environment and beyond the seas (Hereniko, 1994 cited in Howe, *et al*, 1994:407). *Taibobo* chants and dances appear to derive from this pre-colonial period. They depict journeys across seas to new places and in some cases a yearning to return home to Rotuma.

METHODOLOGY

To capture the cultural memories that PRTS Islanders have of their Rotuman forefathers and explore Rotuman identity and the extent to which it shapes the

social lives of PRTS Islanders a number of qualitative research methods were adopted, including the use of secondary resource materials, archival research, interviews and group discussions.

Research Setting

My fieldwork in the Torres Strait Islands, Queensland, Australia was conducted over a total period of five weeks from May-June 2004. During this period I spent most of my time on Thursday Island but was able to travel to Murray Islands for five days (May 31-June 4). I also spent one day at Horn Island where I visited the museum. Father Dalton Cowley organized a day trip to Bamaga on the mainland on 12 June where I interviewed several PRTS Islanders. I visited Moa Island from 14-17 June and stayed at St Pauls Community with Mrs Gertie Levi and family. At Moa Island I had informal discussions with a large group of people at a dinner hosted by Victor Abednego and his family. Interviews were also held with PRTS Islanders and Torres Strait Islanders during that period with a visit to the local cemetery. Coleen Saveka kindly drove me around the Island where I had the opportunity to see gardening land with coconut trees that belonged to the Abednego family. The gardening land was named *Noa'tau* after their grandfather's village in Rotuma. Coleen drove me to another piece of land with a house on it called *Maftoa* after a place in the district of Itumuta in Rotuma. I also had a brief stopover at Brisbane on my way to the Torres Strait and was able to interview several PRTS Islanders and consult with Anna Shnukal. After spending five weeks in the Torres Strait, I returned to Brisbane where I met and interviewed a couple of PRTS Islanders at a dinner hosted by my relatives in Brisbane.

In Suva I spent well over 3 years interviewing a number of Rotumans and church officials from the Catholic and Mormon Churches on *taibobo* chants and dances and genealogical research matters. Over the same period I conducted archival research at the Fiji National Archives and the Mormon Church, and was

able to piece together several genealogical links and family trees involving PRTS Islanders.

Interviews and Group Discussions

According to Plummer *et al* (2001:396) researched life stories are those that occur in special settings where researchers are required to seduce or coax life stories out of subjects using special equipment such as tape recorders, thus bringing life stories into being that otherwise would not have happened. Sociological life stories were drawn from PRTS Islanders through interviews which were tape recorded. In the Torres Strait Islands and Brisbane I interviewed 35 PRTS Islanders on a one-on-one basis. However, during the Welcome Ceremony on Thursday Island on 22 May there were about 100 people present and I sat and spoke to different groups of families, many of whom showed me photos of their Rotuman grandfathers and enlisted my help in a search for their relatives. During my visit to Bamaga I was invited to the church hall where I had an informal meeting with seven people, most of whom were PRTS Islanders. At St Pauls on Moa Island I conducted one-on-one interviews with some people, but one night, during a welcome feast at Victor Abednego's home, I interacted with a big group of PRTS Islanders who raised a lot of questions about Rotuma and the Rotumans. On the Murray Islands, I was invited to several people's homes and spent a lot of time chatting with different groups of people. I paid a courtesy call to the Chairman of the Murray Islands Council, Mr Ron Day, on the first day of my arrival and spent some time at the cemetery visiting Rotuman graves. On Thursday Island I was invited out by several PRTS Islanders where we had group discussions with their families. Others came over to the hostel where I lived and spoke to me on a one-on-one basis. I made two visits to the cemetery on Thursday Island and was accompanied by some PRTS Islanders who helped me identify the graves and observe traditional protocol such as introducing oneself to the dead and seeking their permission before taking photos.

In Suva, I interviewed close to 100 Rotumans about genealogies and *taibobo* chants and dances. I spent a lot of time with Elisapeti Inia, a retired schoolteacher and esteemed elder of the Rotuman community who did the Rotuman transliteration of the *taibobo* chants. She identified some words and phrases that were derived from Fijian and other Pacific Islander languages, suggesting as well as proving that there was interaction among Islanders in the early days allowing cultural exchange of many kinds including words from their respective languages. A dinner was held at my home where the Rotuman version of *taibobo* was sung by Aisea Antonio, Tonu Nataniela, Sam and Violet Taukave, Mosese Kaurasi and Elisapeti Inia and was recorded on CD. Karl Neuenfeldt, then a Senior Lecturer at the School of Contemporary Communication at Central Queensland University asked me to liaise on his behalf with the former head of Churchward Chapel, Rev. Iven Fatiaki and choirmaster Samuela Taukave to have the Churchward Chapel Choir do a CD recording of Rotuman chants and church hymns and a special song was written by Rev. Fatiaki to commemorate the lives and work of Rotuman pearl divers in the Torres Strait. The recording was produced by Karl Neuenfeldt and Nigel Pegrum and recorded by Nigel Pegrum at the University of the South Pacific Media Centre, Suva, November 2004 and mixed at Pegasus Studios, Cairns, Australia. A considerable amount of time was spent with Wallis and Futuna students at the Pacific Regional Seminary to analyze the *taibobo* chants.

I spent some time at the Catholic Church head office doing archival research on genealogies. I interviewed Father Soane Fotutata, a Futuna priest with Rotuman ancestry and we studied the Futuna baptism records for genealogical links as there were a number of Rotumans who left for Futuna in 1853 due to the persecution of their Christian converts by non-Christian chiefs (Howard and Kjellgren, 1995:131-152). I also communicated via email and letters with academics, Rotumans and PRTS Islanders on a wide range of issues ranging from information clarification to tracing of family links and other things Rotuman.

Secondary Materials

Secondary materials included general text books and papers on the culture and history of the Torres Strait Islands such as A.C. Haddon (1912) *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Strait*; Beckett (1987) *Torres Strait Islanders: Custom and Colonialism* and other general text books. Apart from Anna Shnukal's work titled 'Pacific Islanders and Torres Strait 1860-1940', *Journal of Australian Aboriginal Studies*, 1992/number 1, pp 14-27 (Shnukal, 1992) and 'The Expulsion of Pacific Islanders from Mer (Murray Island): Contemporary and Modern Interpretations' (Shnukal, 1996), very little has been written about Rotumans in the Torres Strait. Most of these books and papers were obtained through inter-library loans which took many weeks and months to obtain. The lack of written material and the fact that all the original Rotuman migrants had passed on leaving behind a few children and mostly grandchildren and great-grandchildren made oral interviews with PRTS Islanders all the more important in an effort to record the cultural memories they have of their Rotuman forefathers and to explore their Rotuman cultural identity and the way it has shaped their social lives.

Research Benefits

Archival research was conducted to help link PRTS Islanders to their Rotuman relatives. Documents in the Archives included reports by Resident Commissioners based in Rotuma, land cases, shipping information, registration of births, marriages and deaths and court cases revealed detailed information regarding Rotumans. Some land cases contained genealogies of kin members who were directly related to one another and to portions of land known as *fuag ri* or homestead. This information helped in tracing family members and the registration of births, marriages and deaths helped to decipher their age, gender, place of residence, parents names, family members and their connections to land in Rotuma.

One of the advantages of qualitative interviews is the search for meaning in people's lives. Interviews can create a deeper understanding of people's personal feelings, attitudes and experiences. Secondly, the information revealed may not be available in public records and when discovered can help to analyze public records on topics such as health issues. For example magic or *pouri pouri* permeates Torres Strait Islander Society and is known to explain illness, death, success and failure (Singe, 1979:145). One of my informants who did not wish to be named mentioned that she was sick for several months and nearly lost her life because a close relative was jealous of her success and performed *pouri pouri* on her. Doctors at the local hospital were unable to provide any medical help because they were unable to diagnose her illness and she only got better with the help of a witch doctor. Dr Peter Holt, a doctor at the hospital on Thursday Island explained that he personally did not believe in black magic at all but he believed that people's belief systems have a big impact on how sick they get or how quickly they get better. He added that the belief system for older people is absolutely fixed with some locals flying in witch doctors from Papua New Guinea to heal the sick (Holt 2004, pers.comm). This example shows that qualitative interviewing can reveal a more holistic understanding of magic and its role in health issues in the Torres Strait. Health issues are of major concern to Torres Strait Islanders.

The topic of my research and my ethnicity as a 'Rotuman' researcher created a lot of interest and linkages amongst PRTS Islanders, which facilitated my fieldwork. One of the issues encountered during my fieldwork was seeking the permission of the Chairpersons of Island Councils in the outer islands. All researchers had to apply to the Chairperson of an Island Council for permission to enter their island and carry out research. Although I formally applied in writing it was the PRTS Islanders who helped to facilitate approval and allowed easy and quick access to the outer islands. They spoke to the Chairpersons on my behalf and convinced them about the importance of my research to them as

PRTS Islanders. PRTS Islanders supported me in various ways—they provided accommodation for me during my visits to the outer islands, helped with my transportation, scheduled my interviews with other PRTS Islanders, hosted a Welcome Ceremony on Murray Islands and also hosted dinners in the outer islands with other PRTS families.

Limitations of the Research

The qualitative and subjective nature of interviewing involves openness from both the researcher and informant and one cannot be neutral when trying to elicit personal stories from the informant. Firstly, while the researcher must become involved and empathetic he/she must not be blinded by sympathy and fail to be balanced in reporting both positive and negative issues (Rubin and Rubin, 1995:12-13). There were some very sensitive issues such as alcoholism and domestic violence that were raised during interviews. Due to the focus of my research on *taibobo* I have omitted the inclusion of these social problems in my research.

Secondly, memory can be selective in that people tend to remember what they think is exciting or important and the information given to the researcher may be biased. For example, many PRTS Islanders spoke about Rotuman cultural values such as hard work and generosity and how many of them excelled in all areas of life. Some PRTS Islanders certainly lived out these values successfully in their respective professions and lives. While these PRTS Islanders have excelled in Torres Strait Islander Society others have not done as well, with some relying on welfare benefits or facing problems such as alcoholism and domestic violence.

Thirdly, my ethnicity as a Rotuman researcher and the linkages made with PRTS Islanders were not without its problems. During fieldwork I was often accompanied by some PRTS Islanders when introduced to other informants. At

times they would actually sit in while I was interviewing. While this was seen as being culturally appropriate, at times, I found their presence during interviews quite intimidating and overwhelming, influencing informants at times to be less revealing and more guarded about certain issues. The presence of a third party at interviews can negatively affect the outcome of interviews, especially when vital information is withheld or diluted as a precautionary measure.

Fourthly, one of the limitations of oral interviews is having to rely on the memory of those being interviewed, especially when it relates to the memories they have of their grandfathers or their conceptions of Rotuma and Rotuman culture. Memory is *selective* in the sense that people have a subjective understanding of the past based on their experiences and perceptions which, if originally flawed, would produce distorted memories. The selective and subjective nature of memory can lead to different accounts of events that occurred, making it difficult for the researcher to identify a historically accurate account of what transpired. A good example was the expulsion of Pacific Islanders, including Rotuman families, from the Murray Islands in 1885. This significant historical event is discussed further in Chapter 3. There were different versions for the expulsion by church officials, Torres Strait Islanders and PRTS Islanders. One reason given for the expulsion was the greed of Pacific Islanders for Murray Island land. Another version was that the Pacific Islanders, who were skilful and hardworking, became more successful than the locals who plotted and executed their expulsion. Yet another version was that the Pacific Islanders, and particularly the Rotumans, were generally well built and fair in complexion and much sought after by local women, causing some division between the Rotuman and Murray Islander men. All one can do under these circumstances is to report the discrepancies, which themselves are aspects of cultural memory. The expulsion of Pacific Islanders is an example of domination and marginalization, insofar as the Murray Islanders used their political rights as landowners to impose their interpretation and understanding of the situation—that the Pacific Islanders were greedy for land—on others. The official version, that of the

Murray Islanders, gained the appearance of authenticity while the unofficial versions of non-Murray Islanders and Pacific Islanders were marginalized.

In Chapter 3 we look at the early presence of Rotuman migrants in the Torres Strait and the cultural memories that PRTS Islanders have of their Rotuman forefathers. The power relations between Murray Islanders and Rotumans will be discussed, including the conflict which ultimately led to their expulsion from the Murray Islands in 1885.

CHAPTER 3

BACKGROUND ON THE PEARLING INDUSTRY AND ROTUMAN PRESENCE IN THE TORRES STRAIT

This chapter presents an overview of the pearling industry in the Torres Strait followed by a discussion on the experiences of early Rotuman migrants and their descendants at work and in the community. While many migrants intermarried successfully and were generally accepted with special status among indigenous Islanders, there were cases of envious and negative reactions against their accomplishments. The chapter looks at the reasons behind the expulsion of Rotumans from Murray Islands and how power relations between Murray Islanders and PRTS Islanders was shaped by political issues, which in turn, shaped Rotuman and Murray Islanders' cultural identity.

Torres Strait Islands

Named after Luis Vaez de Torres, the Spanish navigator who made the first attested European passage through Torres Strait in 1606 (Shnukal 1992:15), the Islands of the Torres Strait lie between Australia and Papua New Guinea. According to Shnukal, "Torres Strait Islanders were originally a Melanesian people, who are believed to have migrated from coastal Papua New Guinea hundreds of years ago, although the Islanders of the southern-most islands are related also to the Aboriginal people of Cape York" (Shnukal 1992:14). Beckett estimates that the "[t]otal population at contact was probably between four and five thousand..." (Beckett 1987:26). According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, based on the 2001 Census data, the resident Torres Strait Islander population is now 48,791, of whom 86% live outside the Torres Strait area (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2003). May Passi, a PRTS Islander I interviewed, observed that there are about 5000 PRTS Islanders living in

mainland Australia and Torres Strait, although this is not possible to confirm due to lack of statistical records.

The Torres Strait environment, its waters in particular, was ideal for the pearl industry which had a “pull” effect on the movement of Rotumans and other South Sea Islanders during 1860-1900. The first pearl shell station in Torres Strait was linked to the largest Pacific trading company owned by Robert Towns (Ganter, 1994:21).³ The majority of pearl shelling captains in the Torres Strait between 1860 to 1870 had share-trading agreements with financing companies in Sydney such as Towns, Burns (later Burns Philp & Company), John Bell or James Merriman. Robert Towns continued to have a share-trading arrangement with his vessels in the pearling industry till 1875 and these included *Kate Kearney (Capt Wells)*, *Australasian Packet (Capt Hovell)* and *William and Mary (Capt Parkyns)* (Ganter, 1994:22).

Pearl fishing in Australia focused on the quality of the shell lining called mother-of-pearl and not the pearl within the shells (Ganter, 1994:2). The shells were exported unprocessed, mainly for the button industry in Europe and the United States of America. The pearl-shell fishery was of the greatest importance for several areas in Northern Australia including the Torres Strait Islands. For example, “in the 1880s the annual value of mother-of-pearl exports was between £50 000 and £100 000 making it an important export earner for the North next to beef, wool and gold...” (Ganter 1994:2). The booming pearl industry created an influx of labourers from many parts of the world.

The introduction of the diving dress in 1874 enabled “European divers who were the first generation elite divers, to descend to greater depths of up to fifteen fathoms in search of pearl shells and they taught the Polynesians and Filipinos the art of diving before being displaced by them” (Shnukal and Ramsay, 2004:35). European pearl divers were paid at the rate of £40 per ton of shells

³ See Appendix 2 for a map of the Torres Strait including pearl and beche-de-mer stations.

(Kunz and Stevenson, 1908). In 1886 there were about thirty-four European divers in the Torres Strait but the number declined after 1897 due to the dangers of diving, the declining profitability of diving and competition from cheaper alien labour (Ganter, 1994:31). Chinese, Filipinos, Indonesians and later, Japanese divers traveled to the Torres Strait from the early 1870s (Shnukal and Ramsey, 2004:35). The influx of labourers from other parts of the world since the 1800s created a racially diversified community and Thursday Island became popularly known as the “Sink of the Pacific” (Beckett 1987:57). In 1890 Thursday Island had a population of 526, comprised of Europeans, Chinese, Japanese, Torres Strait Islanders, Aborigines, South Sea Islanders (including Rotumans), Malays, Filipinos, Singhalese, Indians, Thais, Arabs and Africans (Ganter 1994:15). In 1905, of the 367 divers licensed at Thursday Island, 291 were Japanese, 32 were Filipinos, 21 were Rotumans, 16 were Malays and 7 were of other nationalities (Kunz and Stevenson, 1908).



Photo: Pearl Diver emerging from the water after his dive. Photo taken at the Torres Strait Heritage Museum on Horn Island, June 2004.

The growing scarcity of pearl shells made the pearl divers' job more hazardous, with divers having to search for pearl shells in deeper waters. Evidence from a departmental commission of the Queensland Government in 1897 showed that in good weather, at a depth of ten fathoms, a diver could work from sunrise to sunset, coming to the surface only a few times. In a depth of fifteen fathoms the attendant usually asked the diver not to remain for more than fifteen minutes and, at a depth of twenty-five fathoms, a diver rarely stayed under water longer than half an hour because of the dangers of paralysis due to rapid changes in pressure. From ten to twenty-five deaths occurred in Queensland each year, with three fourths of these due to paralysis. Most of the remaining deaths resulted from suffocation. Five to ten years was the usual length of a man's diving career, although some men were able to dive for twenty-five years or more (Kunz and Stevenson, 1908).

The Northern Australia Development Commission reported in 1946 that *beri-beri* was another risk that the pearling crews were exposed to as a result of a lack of fresh fruits and vegetables and many men died of these diseases (Beckett, 1987:36). During an interview, George Mye, a Torres Strait Islander elder, mentioned that Jack Aisea was regarded as an excellent Rotuman pearl diver who later became a skipper. Aisea was able to dive to depths of 40 fathoms and barely survived from a serious bout of the bends (Mye 2004, pers.comm). His death notice showed that Aisea was born c.1879 at Rotumah, came to Queensland in c.1898, and died on 20 August 1923 of *beri-beri* at St Pauls Mission on Moa Island (Shnukal, 2004, pers.comm).

Rotuma

The Rotuman workers in the Torres Strait pearling industry originated from Rotuma, a small fertile volcanic island situated four hundred and sixty-five kilometres to the north of the Fiji group (see Appendix 3). It is approximately 43 square kilometres in area with fringing reefs and islets rich in fish and other edible sea creatures and plants. The island is not on the main sea routes and as

a result, sea services are relatively poor. Rotuma was ceded to Great Britain in 1881 whereupon it was made part of the Colony of Fiji. It remained part of Fiji politically following Fiji's independence in 1970 (Howard and Rensel, 1997).

Although Rotuma's people are culturally and linguistically distinct, they have strong historic relationships with Polynesian islands, especially Tonga and Samoa. Gardiner (1898) wrote about early canoe voyagers arriving in Rotuma from Niuafouu in Tonga, Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands, Tikopia, and Ontong Java and how this led to the mixed ancestry of many Rotumans. Voyaging over long distances, therefore, was not a totally strange matter to Rotumans. A decrease in native population in the 1800s was caused by a number of factors, including disease and emigration from Rotuma to the pearl fisheries in the Torres Strait Islands (Gardiner 1898:497). Irava (1991:153) stated that by 1886 the Resident Commissioner in his annual report said that voyages on European vessels became a type of initiation rite for young Rotuman men, contributing to migration as a way of life. Plate (2005:90) wrote that since the 1790s whaling boats made annual trips to Rotuma to take on provisions and sailors. Rotuma acquired a good reputation for its experienced and willing seamen and in the 1830s more Rotumans left on sandalwood voyages and several years later, about seven hundred men, nearly a third of the population left Rotuma to work in the Torres Strait pearling industry and "although the work was dangerous, it offered more status and money than other Pacific Islanders had access to" (Plate, 2005:93). More recently, motivation to pursue further education and employment have become the main reasons for emigrating from Rotuma (Howard and Rensel, 1997:157; Bryant, 1985:6).

Early Rotuman Migration

Rev. William Allen, a missionary in Rotuma from 1881-1886, found Rotumans to be generally hardworking in nature with good seafaring skills, which made them popular among sea captains (Allen, 1895; Forbes, 1875:226). According to Allen, nearly 200 young Rotumans were said to be occupied as divers in

connection with the Torres Strait pearl industry (Allen, 1895). Resident Commissioner William Gordon reported that there were over one hundred Rotumah men at Torres Strait and the majority were employed in the management of boats with about forty or fifty engaged as divers who earned up to £40 per month (Gordon, 1884, cited in Howard and Rensel, 2007:378), although Plate sets earnings at less than half that, asserting that Rotuman pearl divers and boatmen in the Torres Strait earned up to two hundred pounds sterling a year (Plate, 2005:93).

The temptations of city life and infrequency of ships to Rotuma posed a problem for the migrants.

Rotooma natives are employed as boatmen and divers in the Torres Strait pearl fisheries... boatmen receive at the rate of two or three pounds a month while divers, if successful, have been known to make £200 a year but very little of this money however, reaches Rotooma, as a fortnight or three weeks in Sydney is amply sufficient to dispose of it all and as a rule, with the exception, perhaps, of a box and a roll of cloth, with absolutely nothing whatsoever to show for it. It not infrequently happens, too, that on reaching Sydney a vessel is not found to be leaving Rotooma for several months, in which case, when the money is finished, there is nothing to be done but to re-engage at pearl fishing (Allardyce, 1885: 130-144).

Allardyce's account of the spending habits of Rotuman maritime workers in Sydney is supported by A. M. Hocart's fieldnote on Sopog, a Rotuman man who had traveled to the Torres Strait where he stayed for seventeen months to dive for pearls, made 100 odd pounds before going to Sydney for three weeks. During his stay in Sydney, Sopog reportedly squandered all his money on alcohol and prostitutes (Hocart, 1913:4679-80). Gordon reported that "after the short fishing season the men usually went to Sydney and were relieved of their wages by sharpers and prostitutes of the lowest class, who were on the watch for them on their arrival in Sydney" (Gordon, 1884, cited in Howard and Rensel, 2007: 378).

Movement of Pacific Islanders, including Rotumans, can also be obtained from State Records Authority of New South Wales. Shipping records are an important source of documentation. They include number of passengers, their place of origin and arrival dates in Australia throughout the late 1800s. An example from the shipping records is the *City of Melbourne* which arrived in Rockhampton and Gladstone on 4 September 1867 with twenty-six Rotuman men aboard. John Davis, who was contracted to take the twenty-six islanders to Arcadia Downs to work as labourers in the sheep industry, wrote that some labourers tried to return with him to Rockhampton. The vast and dry landscape and social isolation of a new country became a troubling factor for many Islanders; the Immigration Agent, John McDonnell, mentioned that the isolation of shepherding became a huge problem for the South Sea Islanders (Gistitin, 1995). These problems may have contributed to the return migration of some Islanders to their place of origin. Rev. Fletcher, a missionary to Rotuma, recorded on 31 January 1871 that a vessel from Rockhampton brought some fifteen Rotumans back home to Rotuma. They had left Rotuma three or four years before in a large party to Rockhampton and the remainder had decided, with the exception of two or three who had died, to stay on in Queensland (Fletcher, 1871).

Studies of early Rotuman migration portray groups of men involved in labour migration to be adventurous, hardworking and skilled in sea craft. Reports on their movements along the Australian coast into the Torres Strait and its vicinity tell of their popularity as seamen and divers, especially during the boom years of the pearling industry. Those who settled in the islands introduced new skills in craftsmanship and tilling of the land as well as some background experience of Christianity obtained through their contact with missionaries in Rotuma. The shipping logs from The State Records Authority of New South Wales provide additional data regarding their mode and direction of travel and the numbers involved (Warner, 1999).

Information obtained from the logs of the 184 voyages between the South Seas Islands and Sydney recorded between 1855 and the early 1900s indicate that a

large majority of the ships had Rotumans as members of the crew (Warner, 1999). A close examination of the records of the trips made by a selection of the ships confirmed that, apart from a small number that kept some crew members over two voyages, there was in general a large turnover. In the majority of cases new sets of Rotuman seamen were recruited. The ships in the sample examined were:

1. The *Rotumah* which made 7 trips between Sydney and the South Sea Islands from February 1865 to August 1871. Only one out of two Rotuman crew members on the 3 February 1865 trip was on the 2 September trip of the same year. This was also the case with the 25 July 1867 and January 1868 trips (Warner, 1999).
2. In the case of the *Australasian Packet*, out of the original 20 Rotuman crew members on the 6 March 1872 trip from the Torres Strait to Sydney only 5 remained on its 11 February 1874 voyage from New Guinea to Sydney; 15 new Rotuman crew members were recruited over the 23 months (Warner, 1999).
3. The *E K Bateson* made 2 trips in 1873. Out of the original 8 Rotuman crew members on the 5 February trip only 3 were on the October trip (Warner, 1999).
4. All 7 trips made by the *John Wesley* between December 1854 and October 1877 involved a new set of Rotuman crew members. Rotuman members of the crew varied on each trip, 2 being the smallest number in 1874 and 7 the largest in 1876 (Warner, 1999).

An interesting pattern is also highlighted by data obtained from the logs of ships traveling the Sydney and Torres Strait route from 1860 to 1880 (Warner, 1999). Out of the 89 voyages recorded, a sample of 11 was given greater scrutiny. The

sample revealed that a good number of Rotumans and South Sea Islanders (differentiated from Islanders/Torres Strait Islanders) traveled as crew members or passengers. Given that the sample of 12.3% of the total voyages involved 201 Rotumans and South Sea Islanders, there could have been between 1500 to 1600 all told traveling to and from the Torres Strait over that period. When those crew members from the first study who left their ships and perhaps joined the other Islanders who were seeking employment on the mainland coast and the Islands in the Torres Strait, and others who may have traveled by other routes via land and sea, are added, there were probably a few thousand South Sea Islanders, including Rotumans, involved in the traffic between 1860 and 1900. Even if individuals who joined new ships under different names were included, the numbers involved were still significant.

Given a scarcity of records on “homeward bound” Rotumans and South Seas Islanders it could be assumed that the large turnover of crew members supposedly leaving the ships at different Australian ports of call could account for some working on the mainland and others moving northwards to the Torres Strait Islands to seek employment in the pearling industry. The noticeable number of Rotumans and South Sea Islanders traveling the Torres Strait to Sydney route indicates that there could have been entry points other than the Australian mainland, that is, a South Sea Islands (including Rotuma) to Torres Strait route(s). Given the time, space and events covered in the journeys it could be correctly assumed that the impact the Rotumans had on their adopted home locations in the Torres Strait is both a reflection of their Rotuman upbringing and their rich experience while in transit.

Rotuman Presence in the Torres Strait

Anna Shnukal wrote that Rotumans lived and worked in the Torres Strait from about 1860 onwards. Many Rotumans were missionary-educated and hardworking, which helped elevate their status in Torres Strait Islander Society (Shnukal, 1992). Written evidence suggests that by the 1860s Pacific Islanders,

including Rotumans, lived on 'practically every inhabited central and north-eastern island' in the Torres Strait (letter from Jardine quoted in Shnukal, 1992:21). This confirms a Rotuman presence in the Torres Strait Islands for over 140 years. In an interview, George Mye, a former politician and one of the elders of Darnley Island, explained that when the first missionaries arrived in Darnley Island in 1871 they discovered that some Rotumans had already settled there (Mye 2004, pers.comm). Beckett (1987:33) wrote that when representatives of the London Missionary Society made their first tour of inspection in 1871 a missionary found a Rotuman 'of infamous character' on Darnley Island who

By some means has acquired an influence both among the natives and his fellow workmen which renders him a sort of king among them and enables him to act pretty much as he pleases. He has four wives for only one of whom he is allowed provisions from the establishment to which he belongs. To provide for the other three he is accustomed to take his gun and go with them to the plantations of the natives and keep guard while they help themselves (Murray 1872:32 quoted in Beckett, 1987:33).

It would be fair to conclude that the Rotuman referred to by the missionary must have lived on Darnley Island some time prior to 1871 in order to have had four wives plus some influence amongst the indigenous population of Darnley Island.

Volume VI of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to the Torres Strait, led by Alfred Cort Haddon in 1898, includes an extensive set of genealogies by W.H.R. Rivers and a discussion of the regulation of marriage in the Murray Islands. Rivers' noted that marriages to South Sea Islanders, especially Rotuman men, were very popular among the parents of daughters because of presents received from their sons-in-law. At the time, there were a large number of Rotuman men living on Murray Islands (Haddon, 1908:121). In his genealogies Rivers mentioned a number of Rotuman men, including Barney Rotumah who married a local woman called Biged and Dick Rotumah, who

married Mogi (Haddon, 1908:11-2). During my trip to the Murray Islands in June 2004 I identified Barney Rotumah's and Dick Rotumah's graves.



Photo: Dick Rotumah's grave on Murray Islands. Photo taken by Makereta Mua in June 2004

One of the most important historical events concerned the expulsion of Rotuman families and other Pacific Islanders from the Murray Islands in August 1885. Fourteen Pacific Islander men and one woman (Sopa, married to a Jamaican, Douglas Pitt) plus wives and dependants—about thirty in all from Murray Islands—were relocated to neighboring Erub, known now as Darnley Island (Shnukal, 1996). The expulsion was precipitated by a 'conflict of authority' between some Pacific Island men and the Murray Islander chief, Harry (Douglas, 1885 in Mullins, 1994). Shnukal⁴ was told a different version during the Mabo Native Title hearings in the 1980s when land issues were strikingly conspicuous—that the source of conflict that led to the expulsion was the greed of Pacific Islanders for land and the threat to custom and religious expression of Murray Islanders. Shnukal found Rev. Harry Scott's observations of the expulsion accurate and fair (Shnukal, 1996). An excerpt from Rev. Harry Scott's 'Dear Everybody' letters in May 1885 records that:

When the Pearl and Beche de mer fisheries opened up Torres Straits some few years back, great numbers of South Sea men came to find work and many have got on very well and now possess fishing boats of their own; they have this great advantage over white men, that the climate of the Straits is something similar to their own and so they can work with greater ease and besides they can and have settled on

⁴ Refer to footnote 2, page 2 in Chapter 1. An authority on TS languages and genealogies who was an observer at the Mabo Native Title hearings.

many of the islands and made their homes with the natives and for little consideration have bought the right of planting on the soil... They have paid for land and work done in clothes and other useful things and have given the natives good lessons in garden making. Now I think I have got at the root of the matter; the Murray Islanders are like the fox – they want the grapes. They see the good gardens and feel savage that strangers should be able to grow better food than they can and so they fall back upon an Act which they know exists to provide that Murray Islands be reserved for the Murray Islanders and they say we don't want these strangers any longer (Scott, 1885 in Shnukal, 1996:79-80).

As noted by Rev Scott, the climate in the Pacific Islands, [including Rotuma] was similar to the Torres Strait. The compatible weather patterns and communal lifestyles including gardening and fishing activities allowed Rotumans to adapt to Torres Strait Islander life. Gardening played a central role in both Rotuman and Murray Islander economies and was a source of prestige (see Chapter 5). According to Rev. Scott the reason for the expulsion was that the Pacific Islanders were regarded as exceptional gardeners and this caused jealousy and resentment amongst Murray Islanders which ultimately led to their expulsion.

Within three years of their arrival at Darnley Island Pacific Islanders comprised the majority of the population (Haddon, 1935 in Shnukal, 1992). The Rotumans founded families on Darnley Island and formed fictive kin relations with each other. For example, the Anson and Kiwat families, although not known to be biologically related, called each other 'brother' or 'son' depending on age (Shnukal, 1992:21). Pacific Islanders, including Rotumans, acquired wives, children, land and gardens through marriage and were much sought after because they earned good wages and because of the "imported standard of physical beauty which included light skin and straight hair" (Shnukal, 1992:24). Olive Cowley Morseu, who married Napaire Morseu [a PRTS Islander], mentioned that she chose her husband because of "the way he tossed his hair out of his eyes" and added that she did not want a dark skinned native as a husband (Shnukal, 1992:24). The children of Pacific Islanders, including Rotumans, who by the 1890s called themselves *apkas* 'half-caste' gained a

sense of superiority because Pacific Islanders ranked just below Europeans on the social status hierarchy. Claims to Rotuman ancestry did have its advantages. PRTS Islander families who lived at St Paul's Mission on Moa Island came under the responsibility of the Anglican Church which was established officially in 1908. PRTS Islanders, along with other Pacific Islanders at St Pauls Community were not subject to the same legal restrictions as other Torres Strait Islanders. This enabled them to escape strict government controls such as the prohibition on alcohol and the pass system of travel (Shnukal, n.d.:4). By 1940 PRTS Islanders formed a new elite in the Torres Strait and worked as priests, schoolteachers, storekeepers and policemen (Shnukal, 1992:24). Mullins (1994) argued that the new elite, composed of descendants of Pacific and Torres Strait Islanders, continue to wield the bulk of economic and political power in the Torres Strait.

This chapter is derived from public knowledge on official records that describe the arrival and settlement of early Rotuman migrants in the Torres Strait. They adapted quickly to life in the pearling industry and became skilled divers and seamen who were in great demand. Similar weather patterns and communal lifestyles, including a love for gardening helped the Rotumans settle in quickly and led to a number of intermarriages with local women and adoption by Torres Strait Islander families. However, the Rotumans soon gained a reputation for being overachievers from a Murray Islander's standpoint and created ill-feeling and resentment amongst Murray Islanders with regard to their success at gardening. This may have led to their expulsion from the Murray Islands in 1885. While this chapter focuses on public memories based on official records, Chapter 4 deals with private memories based on private knowledge of genealogies. Genealogies are important in oral societies such as Torres Strait and Rotuma for they link memory to kin and connect kin members to one another, to their ancestors and to land as a source of their cultural identity and inheritance.

CHAPTER 4

MAKING CONNECTIONS

This chapter will focus on genealogies and stories that have grown out of ceremonies, meetings, visitations and attempts by PRTS Islanders and Rotumans to trace their history and family links. The importance of genealogies cannot be overestimated for, in societies where oral traditions predominate, genealogies help to trace the social relations between kin members based on descent and marriage and connect people to their ancestors and to the places associated with them. Cultural memories are likewise important insofar as they link kin members to one another and to the land. The symbolic significance of land lies in the connectedness of kin who share common ancestors, which determines their social relations with one another, their status in society and their land rights. This connectedness provides people with an understanding of their place in society, their social worth and more specifically, it defines who they are, where they came from and how their past and present affirm their cultural identity.

Official public records in the previous chapter show that as far as land rights are concerned, land owners can give kin members a political right to land and they can take that right away. As a result, while many PRTS Islanders appreciate their Rotuman links they see themselves first and foremost as Torres Strait Islanders because this links them to land in the Torres Strait. However, in contrast to public memories of early Rotuman migrants based on official records, this chapter focuses on the private knowledge of connections. Three of the genealogically linked stories are recorded here as case studies. Ways in which PRTS Islanders negotiate their cultural identities while facing the challenges of their current political and social environment will also be examined.

The Welcome Ceremony PRTS Islanders hosted in my honor at the Port Kennedy Hall on Saturday 22 May 2004 was a good starting point. It was an

opportunity for the hosts to express their feelings about their heritage, especially those linked to their Rotuman forefathers. It also enabled me to share my interest in the historical and kinship links between Rotuma and the Torres Strait. Connections were established that assisted me with my fieldwork but more importantly, greater interest and enthusiasm were created among the PRTS Islanders in learning more about Rotuman cultural practices and tracing their genealogies with the hope of discovering living relatives in Rotuma. A part of the Welcome Ceremony was a *mamasa*⁵ performed for me on behalf of the PRTS Islanders by Frank Petero, a full-blooded Rotuman man now living on Hammond Island.

John Abednego (Aptinko) was a PRTS Islander present at the Welcome Ceremony. John's grandfather, Billy Aptinko of Noa'tau, Rotuma, married Rachel, daughter of Harry Weano of New Caledonia and Bibi of Mabuia Island. Aptinko and Rachel had eight children, one of whom was Kamuel, John's father (Abednego 2004, pers.comm). At the time of my visit in May 2004 he was the Chief Executive Officer of Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal Corporation for Legal Services. In an emotional speech John pointed out that the PRTS Islanders were fully assimilated into Torres Strait Islander society and were first and foremost "Torres Strait Islanders" and that my presence had, for the first time, provided an opportunity for them to gather together as Part-Rotuman descendants. Although some PRTS Islanders were not certain about their Rotuman genealogical links, they did have some ideas about how their grandfathers came from Rotuma to settle in the Torres Strait through old photos and stories that were passed down from their *ate* (grandfathers) to their children.

⁵ *Mamasa* is a feast given to a person after a sea voyage (Churchward, 1940).



Left: A photo of Billy Abednego and Fred Tivao. Photo belonged to Sam Nako Kris, St Pauls, Moa Island.

The following excerpt from John's speech highlights several characteristics that are associated with the original migrants and their descendants—as hardworking, humble, generous and committed to improving their lives and

those of their people:

Our *ate* have made huge efforts and sacrifices to travel all the way from Rotuma to settle here in the Torres Strait Islands. Today, we, the Part-Rotuman-Torres Strait descendants have all helped to contribute towards Torres Strait Society in all areas, making the efforts and sacrifices of our forefathers worthwhile. We have done well for ourselves in all areas of life in the Torres Strait and we don't skite... we don't skite about it. Torres Strait is moving ahead. In the political arena we are looking for greater autonomy, better wages, better conditions, better control of our livelihood and our affairs. A *gud pasin* is described as someone who is kindhearted and generous. Our Rotuman forefathers were kindhearted and generous. All the Rotuman descendants here in the Torres Strait... we have made it worthwhile for them to come over and we carry on their worth in all the respective fields—politics, economics, social, cultural and other areas of life. We, the Rotuman descendants are proactively involved in the different areas. So we have contributed towards the development of Torres Strait today in our own little way and we don't skite about it.

(John Abednego, Interview, June 2004).

John Abednego's speech reiterates the fact that hard work, generosity and humbleness are important indicators of Rotuman cultural identity and these values helped establish and elevate the status of Rotumans in Torres Strait Islander Society both past and present. Pacific Islanders including Rotumans quickly gained wealth and status as a result and this is affirmed by Mullins (1994:116) who wrote about the important changes occurring as a result of the

contact between Pacific Islanders and Torres Strait Islanders in the pearling industry with many Pacific Islanders much sought after by pearling masters and earning higher wages than Torres Strait Islanders. Many of these affluent men [including Rotumans] settled into Torres Strait community and because of their wealth and status “exerted influence within the communities disproportionate to their numbers” (Mullins, 1994:116).



Photo: Wasie Tardent holding hymn book at Welcome Ceremony in June 2004

Wasie Tardent (nee Kiwat) and Mavis Ober sang two old Rotuman hymns during the Welcome Ceremony. The hymn book from which the hymns were taken belonged to Wasie’s grandfather, Charlie Kiwat (1864-1934).

These hymns were often sung by her grandfather and later passed down to her father. When asked whether she understood the lyrics of the hymns, Wasie replied, “No, what is important is that it is a church song, passed down to us from our Rotuman grandfather and one of my father’s [Harry’s] favorite songs and we all learnt how to sing these songs when we were children” (Tardent 2004, pers.comm). Wasie apparently reflected on what she remembered best as being important to her family—hymns that were favorites of her grandfather and father.

The little brown hymn book, yellow and torn from wear and tear over the past 100 years, was a family treasure that bore testimony to the presence of their Rotuman grandfather in the Torres Strait. The hymn book, the lyrics and music, body movements, and the pride and joy expressed when singing, represents continuity and strong translocal interconnectedness with Rotuman cultural identity that seemed to transcend the boundaries of ethnicity, time and space.

In thanking the people at the Welcome Ceremony I mentioned the importance of rekindling the Rotuman link and the title of my research was reflective of this link - *Saunōan Ka 'Eagke Maoan [Forgotten But Not Lost]: Rotuman Migration to the Torres Strait*. I also reiterated the importance of reflecting on our past and present in order to tell our stories more vividly and have them recorded for the benefit of those who follow after us. As a way of thanking the people and a reminder of the links that existed between the PRTS Islanders and Rotumans, I presented them with an *apei* (the highest ranking Rotuman fine mat), a Rotuman bible and hymn book. In May 2006 the PRTS Islanders, friends and relatives formally presented the gifts to the Gab Titui Cultural Centre on Thursday Island.

The Importance of Names

Names are an important aspect of cultural identity that symbolize important kinship ties with ancestors. Since the 1860s Pacific Islanders, including men from Rotuma, had their islands of origin reflected in their adopted surnames. Many Rotumans adopted the surname "Rotumah". One such person was Dick Rotumah also known as Cedarec or Dick Cedric or Dick Tui Rotumah (Shnukal, 1992:19-20). During my fieldwork in the Torres Strait Islands some of Dick Rotumah's descendants enquired about their Rotuman heritage and enlisted my help in their search for Dick Rotumah's relatives in Fiji.



Dick Rotumah's portrait on the left was taken from a sketch by Tom Roberts, courtesy of the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales in Shnukal (1992).

Edna Brown, a great grand-daughter of Dick Rotumah contacted Anna Shnukal who gave her the following details:

Dick Rotumah was born in 1868 in Rotuma and died on 19 January 1911 at Omai anchorage on board the lugger *Edith* of paralysis from diving. The spot where he died is now known as Cedric Passage (Shnukal 2004, pers.comm). Dick Rotumah's parents are listed as "MA" and "unknown" (Shnukal 2004, pers.comm). Rotumah's middle name Setaric is similar to the Rotuman name *Setaliki or Setariki* and *Tui or Tue* is a common Rotuman name. To date, I have not been able to trace Dick Rotumah's relatives in Fiji due largely to the lack of clarity in the name of one parent (MA) and the absence of a name for the other (unknown).

Names such as *Dick Rotumah* are cultural badges of identity that represent or identify the wearers' place of origin, thus reinforcing the importance of names as a symbolic representation of cultural identity. In a book titled *Navigating Boundaries The Asian Diaspora in Torres Strait*, the authors mention that for the coming together of five major Asian communities in the Torres Strait, the sea served as a maritime highway that connected people for reasons such as trade, navigation and kinship (Shnukal 2004 *et al*:2). To commemorate Dick Rotumah's importance as a maritime worker with special skills in pearl diving, the sea passage where he died was named Cedric Passage after him. This is an example where the sea forms an important historical link over time between Rotuman migrants and Torres Strait Islanders. In short, the sea passage embraces narratives of Rotuman cultural identity and its links to the Torres Strait pearling industry.

Case Studies

Since 2004 I have been able to compile eleven family trees of Torres Strait migrants. Several genealogies created a lot of interest and provided a wide range of stories about the Rotuman migrants and their descendants. These life stories become an integral part of memory and the search for genealogies involve a connectedness that links memory to kin, in particular the living to their

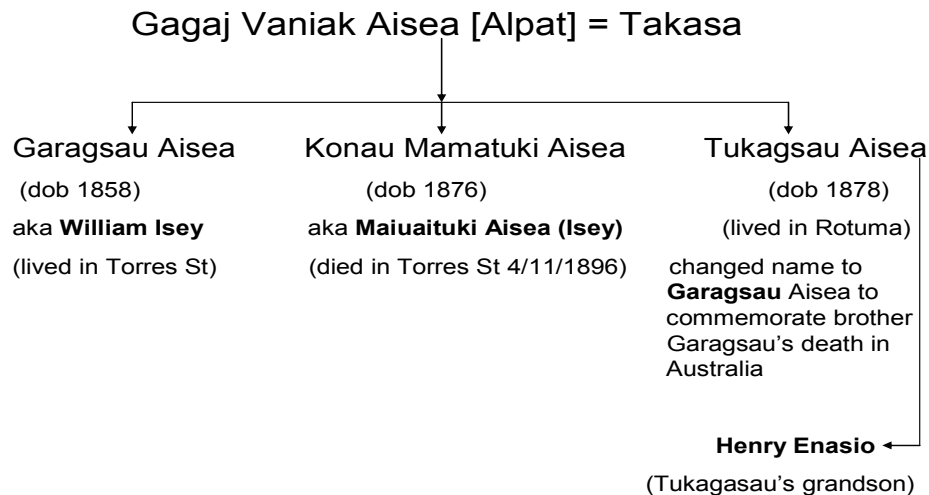
relatives, the living to the dead, the living to the land and to other places. Knowledge of this past and how this past becomes a part of the present is also essential when claiming titles and land rights. Sis, a Torres Strait Islander, stated that “Genealogy is important because you must hand the land to the right person. The genealogy must be there because there is no written tradition” (Sharp 1993:16).

In one case family links (descendants) covered an area from Rotuma, Wallis and Futuna, Torres Strait Islands, Papua New Guinea and Croker Island (Queensland), and uncovering this involved interviews, e-mails and telecommunication with a wide range of people as well as archival research. In a couple of cases families discovered that “lost” relatives had surviving descendants and soon were in contact to share their stories and to meet as families. The following case studies were developed out of three early Rotuman migrants, namely the Isey Brothers, Jack Aisea and Morseu. In all of the cases descendants of the original migrants who had supported me with my fieldwork requested assistance with tracing their Rotuman relatives.

The case of the Isey Brothers highlights the difficulties associated with poor communication over long distances. Jack Aisea involved a wide search through records and interviews and communication with a wide group in an attempt to produce evidence that is sufficiently conclusive regarding his parents and family connections. The tragic death of George Morseu highlights questionable practices and misfortunes associated with pearl-shelling. More important is the success story of Morseu’s descendants through Noritta and Danny who were raised “well” under adverse conditions to enable them to succeed in their respective careers.

Garagsau and Konau (the Isey Brothers)

Henry Enasio, a full-blooded Rotuman living in Sydney contacted me in April 2005 to seek my assistance in tracing his grand-uncles, Garagsau and Konau. Enasio's great-grandfather was Gagaj⁶ Vaniak Aisea, a high chief of Itu'ti'u, Rotuma, who was one of the gagajas who ceded Rotuma to Great Britain in 1881. After the Cession of Rotuma on 13 May 1881, Governor De Voeux bestowed on him the name Albert for the prominent role he played in the Cession of Rotuma. Since Cession he was called Gagaj Vaniak Alpat⁷ (Enasio, 2004, pers.comm). Listed below is a kinship diagram of Chief Alpat's family:



According to Enasio, Gagaj Vaniak Alpat's son's, Garagsau and Konau were described as tall, fair and well-built men, who, as chiefs, were given the responsibility of leading a group of Rotumans to the Torres Strait Islands to join the pearling industry in the late 1800s. Gagaj Alpat and his wife Takasa received

⁶ Gagaj is the Rotuman term for *chief*.

⁷ As the Rotuman alphabet did not have the letter "B" and Albert had to be spelt according to the way it was pronounced in Rotuman, it became "Alpat".

news that Garagsau and Konau were diving for pearl shells during bad weather when their compressed air hose burst. They drowned as a result (Enasio 2004, pers.comm). Gagaj Alpat and Takasa were grief-stricken when they heard the tragic news. Gagaj Alpat changed his surviving son's name to Garagsau to commemorate the death of his son. Takasa cut off two of her fingers on her left hand as her *putu*⁸ to mark the death of her two sons. Enasio's grandfather later became Gagaj Garagsau Alpat of Itu'ti'u. He was the youngest of Gagaj Alpat's children and was born in 1878 (Enasio 2004, pers.comm).

Anna Shnukal provided Enasio with additional information which suggests a fate other than drowning. Garagsau and Konau were known in the Torres Strait as the two Isey brothers, and, according to Shnukal:

1. William ISEY born c.1858 at Rotuma, son of Albert, native gagaj and Takiso, married Mary Clarke a widow born c.1850 in Durham. They married on 17/11/1888 at Cooktown, North Queensland. At that time, William Isey was a Pearl Sheller living on Thursday Island. His wife also lived on Thursday Island; her father was Christopher Wetherly (Wetherby), mining inspector, and her mother was Ellen De Bord;
2. Maiuatuki Aisea, son of Albiti, Gagaj of La Harve, Rotuma, a diver b. 1876 at Rotuma arrived in Queensland c.1891 died 4/11/1896 of phthisis (the old word for consumption and now more commonly known as tuberculosis) at Thursday Island. His sister-in-law reported his death. Her name was Mary Aisea of Thursday Island (Shnukal 2004, pers.comm).

Enasio was excited about the information provided by Anna Shnukal and confirmed that the name of the place where Gagaj Alpat and family lived was not La Harve (as shown in [2] above) but Lihava, the chiefly site beside the

⁸*Putu* is showing grief by inflicting physical injury on oneself (Churchward, 1940:292).

Methodist Church at Motusa, Itu'ti'u. The foundation at Lihava was hand built by the people of Itu'ti'u District out of volcanic rocks and mud to a height of about ten feet high. The government in turn, built a monument in front of Lihava, (which still stands today) to commemorate the cession of Rotuma and as a sign of respect for Chief Vaniak Alpat (Enasio 2005, pers.comm). The above evidence produced by Anna Shnukal provides a different story about the fate of Garagsau and Konau. Death by drowning in a diving accident that was conveyed to Rotuma was misinformation that caused unnecessary agony and suffering to their parents.

Howard and Rensel (2004) wrote about how early out-migrants from Rotuma in the nineteenth century were generally assimilated into the recipient societies and factors such as Rotuma's isolation, the infrequent shipping system and migrants not being good letter writers, made regular communication impossible. Gagaj Alpat and Takasa most certainly faced this situation and had to rely on oral accounts of their sons which in this case were false and unreliable.

Jack Aisea

May Passi and her family were keen to trace the Rotuman branch of the family of her grandfather, Jack Aisea. May said that for years their family was more involved with their father, Sam Passi's relatives. This was because their father was very proactive in Murray Islander affairs and was one of the plaintiffs in the Mabo Native Title Case (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2004). After Sam's death their mother, Rotannah asked May to trace Jack Aisea's relatives. Rotannah's earlier recollections of her father are not vivid because he died when she was only 6 years old. All that Rotannah could remember was that her father left Noa'tau District in the late 1800s with a number of his relatives on the last boat that brought migrant Polynesian seafarers from the East. He hid among the cargo because he was only 16 years old and left Rotuma without his parents' approval (Passi 2004, pers.comm).

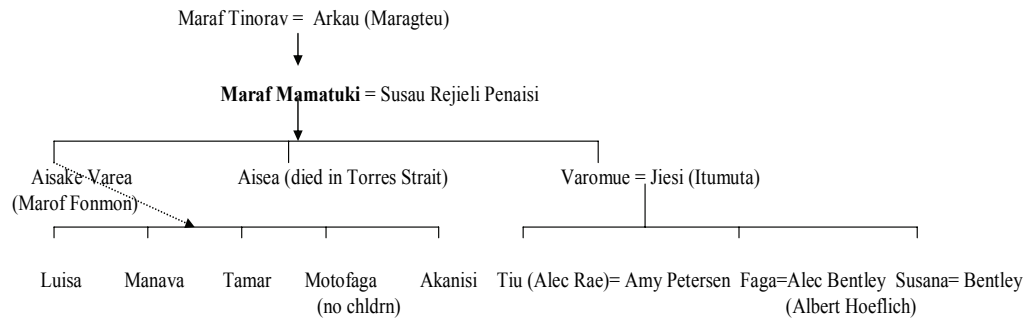
According to Anna Shnukal's records Jack Aisea's name was spelled variously as Jack Osier/Osia/Oisea/Hosea and he was born c.1879 at Rotumah. Aisea's parents were listed as TOH and Chan.⁹ He came to Queensland c.1898 and died on 20 August 1923 of *beri beri* at St Pauls Mission, Moa Island. He married Bakoi from Darnley Island on 24 February 1914 at Thursday Island (Shnukal 2004, pers.comm).

In one of my conversations with George Mye, he mentioned that Jack Aisea was an excellent pearl diver who later became a skipper. He was very fair and the only known Rotuman to have a tattoo from the waist down to his knees. May Passi explained that in a séance six years ago Aisea kept repeating the name "Varomua". According to him, Varomua, his brother, was left crying on the beach when the boat he traveled on left Rotuma (Passi 2004, pers.comm). Available clues on Jack Aisea were tattooing (waist to knees), the person named Varomua and the names *Tausia* and *Tipo* in Jack Aisea's family tree.

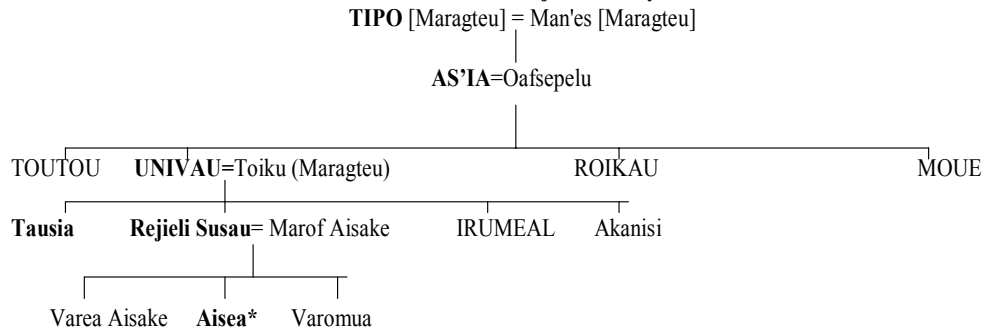
There are three genealogical records on the next two pages. The first two pages belong to Jack Aisea's father's and mother's family trees. Both have Maraf Mamatuki/Aisake and Rejieli Susau as his parents and himself (Aisea), Aisake and Varomua as their children and therefore brothers within the same family. If it were possible to substitute "TOH" and "Chan" with "Maraf Mamatuki" and "Rejieli Susau" as a correction to the records then all links would be complete. Locating the two family members Tipo and Tausia within the parents' records and Aisea's own provided further clarification. Tipo in Jack Aisea's mother's family tree is his great-grandfather and in his own family tree, Tipo is a grandson. Tausia similarly appears in his mother's family tree as a sister to his mother and an aunt of his and in his own family tree, Tausia is a daughter (see second and third kinship diagrams below).

⁹ These are not Rotuman but appear to be labels for ease of reference in the absence of proper parental names.

Jack Aisea's father's line



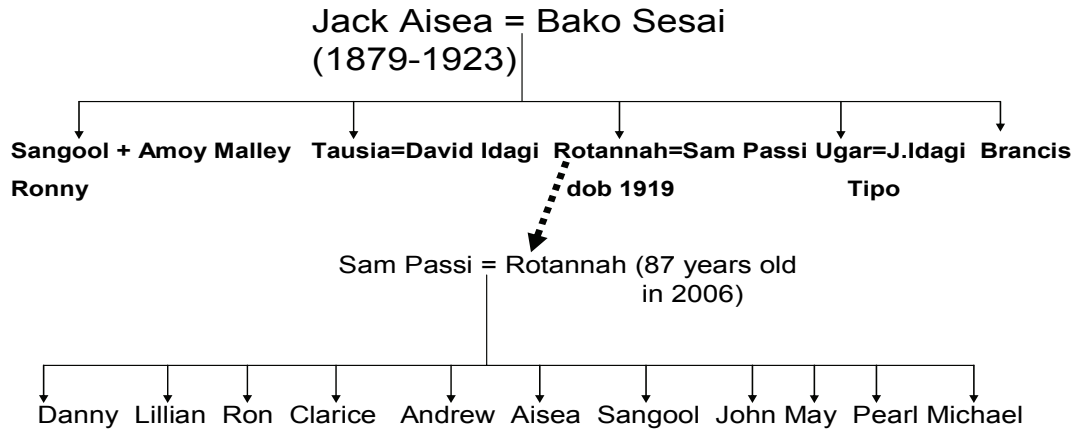
Aisea's mother Rejieli's family tree:



*In Jack Aisea's mother's line, *Tipo* is the first name on that diagram and *Tausia* is his mother's sister.

Given the above connections within the family trees and the name on his tombstone, 'Osia' which in Rotuma is similar to 'As'ia' and Aisea, the families concerned in the Torres Strait and Rotuma/Fiji were sufficiently convinced that they were descendants and relatives of Jack Aisea. The family trees derived from Hocart's genealogies of Jack Aisea's father's and mother's families were useful references (Hocart, 1913; Varea 2004, pers.comm).

Below is a copy of Jack Aisea’s family tree in the Torres Strait:



Aisea’s parents’ names, TOH and Chan could not be found in the Rotuma records. Motofaga Varea, of the Mormon Church in Suva had access to Maraf Mamatuki’s records, which contained both Aisea and Varomua (Varea 2004, pers.comm). Hocart’s work and Motofaga Varea’s records correlated well. It was necessary to pursue the other clue related by George Mye—Jack Aisea had tattoos from the waist downwards (Mye 2004, pers.comm). A search of material on Rotuman tattooing and reading Gordon Macgregor’s ethnographic *Field Notes on Rotuma* 1932, off the Rotuma Web site, produced some interesting information. Macgregor’s informant on tattooing was none other than Isaac (Aisake), who was Maraf Mamatuki’s and Susau Rejieli’s son and brother to Aisea and Varomua (Macgregor, 1932). Isaac’s description of tattooing was very similar to the tattooing that his brother Jack Aisea had from the waist down to the knees (Macgregor, 1932; Mye 2004, pers.comm).

The webmaster of the Rotuma Web site, Alan Howard¹⁰, provides the following information concerning Isaac's identity:

Almost certainly Aisake Harosio, son of Maraf Mamatuki and Rejieli Susau. He was born ca. 1866 in Noa'tau and was about 66 years old in 1932. He died in 1934. Both his parents were from Noa'tau. Macgregor listed him as a "good" informant who spoke "fair" English and had spent a long time at sea, presumably working on European vessels (Howard, n.d.).

Apart from the general queries regarding family links during my fieldwork, the Melanesian Arts Festival hosted in Suva in October 2006, provided an opportunity for PRTS Islanders to visit Fiji to personally meet their relatives. The Deep Sea Dancers from the Torres Strait were official participants. By some good fortune the majority of dancers were PRTS Islanders, descendants of the original Rotuman migrants. The Passi family members were one group and Laura Drummond, her son Anthony and daughter, Carmen, made up the other. Laura's great-grandfather, Joe Firipo or Joe Rotumah was one of the original Rotuman migrants to the Torres Strait. He was born in Rotuma in 1839, died on 25 September 1904 and was buried at Darnley Island, Torres Strait. He married Annie Charlotte from Maryborough, Central Queensland and had six children: two of whom returned to Rotuma. Daniel Pau b.c. 1883; Tom Manai b.c. 24/3/1885; Jimmy Pau b.c. 1887 at Murray Islands; George Tibau b.c. 1889, Afasio (year of birth unknown) and Annie Rotumah (year of birth unknown). According to the family Afasio and Annie were sent back to Rotuma to live with Firipo's sister. Annie was known in Rotuma as Annie Abolo 'Aboriginal' (Shnukal 2006, pers.comm).

During their visit the members of the dance group were invited to the last rehearsal of the Itu'hifu (Rotuman Seven Districts Committee) at Jone Ravai's home in Suva. The Itu'Hifu performed a *mamasa*¹¹ ceremony for May Passi and

¹⁰ Alan Howard is also one of my supervisors.

¹¹ Mamasa is a feast given to a person after a sea voyage (Churchward, 1940).

her dance group followed by dancing and feasting. May's group performed a *taibobo dance* (see Chapter 6).

On 3 November 2006, following the group's return to Australia, May Passi recorded their experiences of meeting and sharing a meal with Aisea's relatives in Suva on the Rotuma Web site. Here are extracts from her letter:

We performed the traditional Rotuman *taibobo* when we met with our Rotuman people for the *mamasa* ceremony, and when we were invited to have lunch with our relatives, descendants of Aisake, Aisea's second brother. Both occasions were very emotional times for us. We never expected such a welcoming reception from our own people and to be accepted without any questions about our ancestry.

The welcome by the Seven District Chiefs was an important occasion—an event that we will always remember and talk about to our people in the TS and mainland Australia for years to come. The most common experience that all of us had was that we felt we were actually home. The place was so familiar and we felt a sense of belonging while we were there in Fiji.

My 87 year old mother, Rotannah Passi (nee Aisea) was laughing and crying during our small welcome feast here at home when we spoke of the *mamasa* ceremony and her beautiful people's and families' reception for us in Suva

(Howard, 2006).

Jack Aisea's story is a mixture of complexity and excitement for those of us involved in the search. While not totally conclusive, linkages identified among the various family trees examined and discussions held with informants were sufficiently convincing for the Passi family and their relatives in Fiji and Rotuma. In her farewell speech for me at the Murray Islands, Del Passi waxed poetically about the importance of my coming to Torres Strait and reestablishing the connection with Rotuma. Whether she intended it or not, this put me in the position of a cultural broker, with an obligation to facilitate their learning about Rotuma just as I was learning about them. It resulted in my researching genealogies in order to find connections between the PRTS Islanders and their

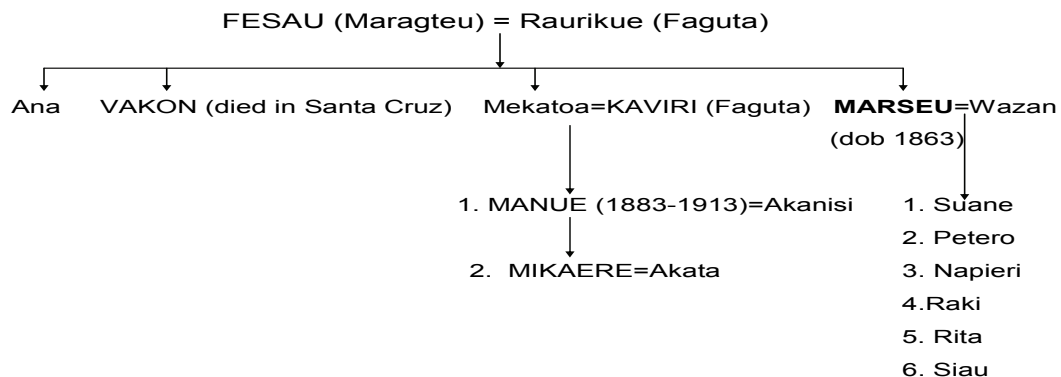
Rotuman relatives and acting as an intermediary for many things ranging from travel arrangements, accommodation and general Rotuman matters. For the Passi family, it is no longer a search in the wilderness, but a homecoming and celebration to mark a discovery that was at one stage believed to be impossible. They saw me as someone who has, in Del Passi's words, "retraced the footprints of their grandfathers" (Del 2004, pers.comm). The Passi family celebration can be correctly assumed to be just the beginning. Many more can be expected as and when connections are discovered and proven. This discovery and other similar ones portray an interesting aspect of cultural identity—a journey from the past to the present filled with many events that help to shape what and who we are. In the case of the PRTS Islanders, it also means searching for the "truth" about their origins, finding "lost" relatives and discovering how these links have influenced their identity and status in the Torres Strait. The discovery of new kin members also reveal how ideas about identity change as new information comes to light. The Passi family for example discovered that they were descendants of high chiefs of Noa'tau. Jack Aisea's grandfather, was Maraf Tinorav, the high chief of Noa'tau who battled against King Riamkau at Fag'uta. According to Rev. George Turner who visited Rotuma in 1845, the battle took place in January 1845. Maraf Tinorav and 27 Noa'tau men died and King Riamkau lost his two sons and 30 men from Fag'uta in battle (Turner 1861:365 in Howard and Kjellgren 1995:131-152). These shifts in identity are a part of selective memory that is shaped by people's historical backgrounds and experiences.

The Passi family members' visit to Fiji and experiences gained among relatives and the larger Rotuman community allowed and confirmed a number of things: the importance of family and celebrations that accompany the "home-coming" of members newly discovered; sharing of traditional practices including dances seen in the *mamasa* and performance of the *taibobo* and local Rotuman dances; the opportunities offered by the re-connection for the PRTS Islanders to reflect on the stories and experiences handed down through the generations and to

have them confirmed or adapted as necessary. Entwined in all of this is the issue of identity and how it is handled in context.

Morseu

Danny Morseu, a descendant of George Morseu, enquired about his great-grandfather, Morseu from Rotuma. Anna Shnukal's records showed that Morseu was born in 1863 in Rotuma and died on 4 September 1912. He was also known as Sweeney Morseu, Rocky Rotumah or George Rotumah). He married Wazan from the Murray Islands. His parents were Pesau and Rauregoa (Shnukal 2004, pers.comm). With the help of Hocart (1913) and Hariti Kelemeti we were able to trace Pesau and Rauregoa to a family tree with *Fesau* of Maragteu and *Raurikue* of Faguta:



According to Anna Shnukal, George Morseu was one of the best deep sea divers who lived at Zomered, Murray Islands. He died of 'supposed suicide' by drowning at sea near Calico Reef, Darnley Island. The reports say that he tied weights to his feet before jumping overboard (Shnukal 2004, pers.comm). However, Harry Captain of Darnley Island had another theory:

There was one diver called George Morsio of the Morsio family. He was a deep water diver on a boat called *Eagle*. He found a big pearl. He came from a Pacific Island called Rotuma, he was the only one amongst the Japanese. So they stayed on the lugger. One night they slept until the next morning. They woke up, looked around, couldn't find him, he was gone. He went and drowned himself because he was worrying about something. So they found him under the water that morning. So that pearl became the property of the head diver on that boat. But I suggest that the Japanese killed him and hanged him under the water, just to make it look like an accident, but the treatment was like I said it before (Harry Captain; Shnukal 2004, pers.comm)

The first lot of lugger captains came from the Loyalty Islands, Samoa, Niue and Rotumah (Beckett, 1987) and the Japanese divers who later appeared in the pearling scene soon began to gain a reputation for being the most enterprising and daring pearl divers in the Torres Strait, more daring than the Pacific Islanders. Japanese divers "undercut and outworked everyone else, requiring special legislation to stop them taking over the industry" (Bach, 1961 in Beckett, 1987:36). By 1893 they became the largest ethnic group in the pearl shell industry and caused a lot of resentment among others because of their large numbers and entrepreneurial skills (Ganter, 1994:100). In a similar fashion the Japanese viewed any success by "others" with envy and negativity. Given such a situation, this story reflects the tensions between the Japanese and the Pacific Islanders at the time.

Noritta Morseu, great-granddaughter of Morseu is currently enrolled in a PhD programme at the University of Queensland. Noritta said that Morseu's wife, Wazan died two years after him in 1914 from what some said was an attack of fits. They had ten children who were separated after Wazan died. They grew up in different families, some with Rotuman ancestry. Suane was 12 years old when his father, Morseu, died and he was raised in Darnley Island by a Rotuman called Tom Oui and his wife, Tulu (Noritta 2004, per.comm).

Noritta described how she was raised by her grandfather, Suane, along with Danny, Dick and Angie. They lived at Tamwoy on Thursday Island and had no running water, no fridge and electricity and had to walk for miles to cut firewood and fetch water. Danny mentioned that he never knew his real father, who was a white man; his mother was a Morseu. He, too, grew up with grandfather Suane, who taught him the basics of survival in life. Both Noritta and Danny grew up in a rusted corrugated iron house; water was scarce for washing clothes, dishes and showering. Yet, their grandfather still hand-watered all his plants regularly. He planted bananas, taro, cassava, sweet potato, corn, pawpaw, peanuts and medicinal plants such as *ubar*¹² so that food was plentiful throughout the year. Danny remembered how they were taught to prepare gardens and how to cook pigs in a *kup mauri* [earth oven]. A pious Christian, he always said prayers at night and read the Bible with a magnifying glass. He encouraged them to be helpful and would often say “when you do something for somebody you do it from the heart” (Noritta 2004, pers.comm). Noritta said he reminded them about the need to do well in school. She would always remember her grandfather’s words, “if you want to beat the white man at his own game, you’ve got to be just as educated as him” (Noritta and Danny Morseu 2004, pers.comm).

Danny claimed that his grandparents, particularly his grandfather, Suane, kept him focused on what they needed to do in order to survive and this kept him disciplined and focused right throughout his life and especially in his sporting career (Danny Morseu 2004, pers.comm). Danny Morseu was Project Manager for the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy based on Thursday Island and was widely recognized for his sporting achievement in basketball. Danny was a dual Olympian and the first Torres Strait Islander Olympian (1980 and 1984). He also won the award for Special Contribution to Indigenous Sports (1999), and was the first indigenous player to be inducted into

¹² Otherwise known as *noni*, a medicinal plant from a shrub or small tree in the Rubiaceae family (Wikipedia).

the Hall of Fame and member of the All Time Players List (Danny Morseu 2004, pers.comm):

Being a good sportsperson and good at my schoolwork made me feel very lucky. However, I also feel that I had a very special gift and it's all about how to take advantage of that. I think that gift comes from my forefathers—our Rotumah men with fire in their bellies who jumped into a boat and pushed off the Island and said “we've got to go and find out what life is all about out there”. I went through the same journey but experiencing it in Australia and in the process I guess I wasn't scared of anything. My granddad, Suane Morseu, taught me that fear is something that you work through and there are so many challenges and opportunities for you to discover yourself as a person and as a leader and a role model for people.

After granddad died I promised myself that I would visit Rotuma one day... just to be able to put my foot on the soil of Rotuma and say to myself, well Danny, this is where it all started... this is the place where your great-granddad Morseu came from...

(Danny Morseu, Interview, June 2004).

Selective memory of communities include not just positive memories but the remembering of a painful past as seen in George Morseu's tragic death and more importantly, people's responses to that pain. There are often silences and intervals in stories about painful events of the past and the aftermath of the pain is usually borne by surviving family members both consciously and unconsciously. In the Morseu case study, very little is known about how Wazan felt or what she went through with her ten children.

Allan Kaniu, another of Morseu's descendants, visited Fiji in November 2005. Allan mentioned that his father was Opeti and his father's father was Morseu's son, Napaeri. Instead of using the Morseu surname he opted for his mother's surname, Kaniu. His mother was a landowner in the Murray Islands and taking on his mother's family name helped them in their fight over land ownership claims at Murray Islands. Allan's adopted surname shows how identity can be a site of multiple subjective positions which can be contrary and conflicting. Moore stated that

what holds these multiple subjectivities together so they constitute agents in the world are such things as the subjective experience of identity, the physical fact of being an embodied subject and the historical continuity of the subject where past positions tend to over-determine present subject positions (Moore, 1994:55).

The basis of Torres Strait Islander identity is kinship and land. Adopting his mother's surname is for Allan, a subjective experience of identity, and a way of exhibiting multiple subject positions in the battle for land rights in Murray Islands. In this context Allan's Rotumaness is largely submerged and regarded as "other" while his Murray Islander identity (via adopting his mother's surname) becomes dominant. Although Allan exhibits a yearning and curiosity to learn more about his Rotuman ancestry, he realizes that this linkage to his Rotuman ancestry is something that must be kept private for it is not useful given the current political climate in Torres Strait Islander society where the emphasis is on Murray Islander heritage. Allan's example illustrates that identity is always linked to notions of power and is never static but always changing. It also highlights the contemporary power relations that exist between PRTS Islanders and Murray Islanders where land ownership claims are tied in with claims to indigenous Murray Islander identity. Rotuman identity becomes submerged as a result. This is a common reflection of PRTS Islanders in the Murray Islands context—when placed in an uncomfortable situation regarding their Rotuman origin, Murray Islander identity is opted for as many of their needs are addressed under that status.

John Abednego mentioned that PRTS Islanders had become fully assimilated into Torres Strait Islander society and that my presence at the Welcome Ceremony gave them the first opportunity to come together as part-Rotuman descendants. During my interviews and conversations with many PRTS Islanders, I found that they were not, in any way, differentiated from other Torres Strait Islanders. In fact they were accepted as Torres Strait Islanders and could

not affirm their Rotuman ancestry publicly because of their new loyalties to Torres Strait Islander society.

The issues covered in this chapter reflect the link between cultural identity, power and memory and the changes that impact on them over time. It is clear from interviews and case studies that while PRTS Islanders express a desire to learn more about their Rotuman heritage, in the final analysis, their very existence and future is as indigenous Torres Strait Islanders. The fight for political autonomy and land ownership rights and the need to present a united front demand total commitment as Torres Strait Islanders. Ultimately, their indigenous Torres Strait Islander identity is dominant as this is of strategic importance in relation to land claims and their very existence. Tracing family links to their Rotuman forefathers and relatives is therefore an aspect of their cultural identity based on private family memories and sentimental links to their Rotuman families. Chapter 5 looks at other aspects of identity—practices that PRTS Islanders and others identify as being Rotuman. Those who shared their stories related what they could remember from personal experience, or in many cases, from stories handed down by grandparents and parents.

CHAPTER 5

CONCEPTIONS OF ROTUMA AND ROTUMAN CULTURE

This chapter captures the private memories that PRTS Islanders have of their Rotuman ancestry through cultural practices such as gardening and cooking methods. These practices create meaning by providing people with a sense of belonging and linking them to their ancestors, to one another, to their land, oral traditions and belief systems. PRTS Islanders conceptions of themselves as Part-Rotumans including comments they make about themselves and the ways they associate their private lives with their understanding of “Rotumanness” will also be discussed.

The early Rotuman migrants were endowed with gardening and cooking skills which they successfully applied when they intermarried and settled in the Torres Strait. Gardening and cooking methods were important because of their role in producing and processing food which was central to Rotuman and Murray Islander cultural identity. Food abundance was synonymous with prosperity and social status in society. Apart from the positive image created by early Rotuman migrants with respect to gardening, some PRTS Islanders encountered racism as a result of their physical appearance and their stories are outlined in this chapter.

Gardening

Land is bound up in a complex socio-cultural system where the physical, social and spiritual aspects of land are linked to cultural identity. In Rotuma, kinship is traced bilineally and a person can claim membership in a *kainaga* or kin group based on common descent from an ancestor who resided at, and held rights in, a given house site known as *fuag ri* and the garden sites associated with it (Rensel, 1977:187 in Fatiaki *et al.*,1977). House sites are named and people describe their affiliation by referring to these names, thus forging an identity and

sense of belonging. People's place of birth, residence and burial are of special interest. The Island itself has a distinct east-west orientation with the "east associated with sunrise, birth, male vitality and chieftainship while the west is associated with sunset, death, female domesticity and commoner status" (Howard, 1985 in Inia, 1998:28). Land itself is seen as a living being, embodying the spirits of the ancestors. In land disputes, it is widely believed that 'the land has eyes' and ancestral spirits of the disputants will punish the party in the wrong with those in the right prospering and those in the wrong suffering ill-fortune (Howard and Rensel in Inia, 1998:247).

In the Murray Islands, land is important because it gives people a sense of belonging and identity, for it is connected to kin groups and embodies the spirit of ancestors and gods and is seen as a physical, cultural and spiritual link between the past and the present. *Giz* means root of a tree or origin while *Ged* means home or place or homeland. For an unborn child *ged* is the mother's womb. At birth a child moves to the *ged* belonging to his/her father (Sharp, 1993:49). *Giz ged* is central to Murray Islander identity because it links kin members to one another, to their ancestors, to their land and to the sea.

PRTS Islanders are fully integrated into Murray Islander society and share the same beliefs and values. Murray Islanders define themselves in relation to their homeland or *ged*, to one another and to seasonal time. The movement of nature, which includes the seas, winds, the celestial world and the land produces the seasonal calendar. Each season has its own rhythm within a larger circle of birth and growth, maturity and decline (Sharp, 1993:53). Historically, many Murray Islanders were able to read the clouds, the stars, winds and tides and they knew how to garden, when to plant and when to harvest. Au Bala, an informant, mentioned that he learnt to plant as a little boy and was taught to read the stars and study the atmosphere and the clouds. He knew the right time to plant cassava, banana, yam and sweet potatoes (Au Bala 1993, pers.comm in Sharp, 1993:80).

Pacific Islanders, including Rotumans, acquired land and gardens in Torres Strait through marriage and adoption. On Darnley Island, land was obtained through marriage and Pacific Islanders could lease or purchase land (Harry Kiwat, pers.comm in Shnukal, 1992:22). According to Sam Passi, Pacific Islanders were allowed the use of land in Murray Islands but were forbidden to acquire it through marriage, although they could obtain land through adoption. For instance, a Murray Islander brother and sister adopted Douglas Pitt, a Jamaican pearler, as a 'brother' and gave him land at Umar in Murray Islands where he built his home. He also bought another plot at Murray Islands from the Dawita family (Shnukal, 1992:22).

Gardening had a focal position in both Rotuman and Murray Islander cultural identity due to its importance as their main food-producing activity. Because it was predominantly performed by men, it gave them more status and prestige than women in society. According to Rev. William Allen, who served as Methodist missionary on Rotuma from 1881-1886, women helped their husbands cut copra, fetched water from the wells, wove their mats, looked after their children and did the domestic chores (Allen, 1895). Land was valued for its food-producing capacity, and rights to the land were held by extended kin groups known as *ho'aga*. Shifting agriculture was practiced with the head of the *ho'aga* responsible for regularly reappportioning a part of the land to remain fallow for allocated periods (Howard and Rensel, 2007:242). Gardening provided much of the staple foods such as taro, yam and banana (Gardiner, 1898). Men usually fished with lantern and spear and would use hook and line while fishing in the deep sea beyond the reef. Women, on the other hand, did most of the daylight reef fishing with nets (Howard, 1964).

Men could acquire a reputation for being hard working and gain status and prestige by developing big gardens and contributing towards public gatherings such as marriages or funerals. Reverend Allen stated that the soil in Rotuma

was very fertile and described every Rotuman as a cultivator of the soil. He added that men took a great deal of pride in their work with many of them in their gardens at sunrise to provide all their food crop requirements (Allen, 1895). This was confirmed by Alan Howard during his visit to Rotuma from 1959-1960. He noted that a man's worth was measured by his competence as a food producer and that food production was given prestige with the awarding of prizes for the biggest (heaviest and longest) root crops at the annual Cession Day celebrations (Howard in Fatiaki A. et al, 1977:229). Abundance of food at a feast was praised as a 'male thing' and success in providing food was equated with one's worth as a human being (Howard and Rensel in Inia, 1998:223).



Photo: Gardening land at St Pauls, Moa Island called *Noa'tau* (with coconut trees in the background) named after Billy Aptinko's birthplace, Noa'tau in Rotuma. Photo taken by Makereta Mua in June, 2004.

Dora Uiduldam, a Torres Strait Islander living at St Pauls stated that Billy Abednego, George Eroa and Fred Pedro were known for their good gardening skills. She remembers them climbing up the hill every morning to attend to their crops. At feasting times, Fred Pedro would also wake them up at 4.00am to go

out to Saveka Point to fish; he cooked octopus and ate it with cassava, taro and sweet potato (Uiduldam 2004, pers.comm). Sam Nako Kris spoke about his Rotuman father whom he described as a good seaman and gardener, planting yams, bananas and cassava on Moa Island. Yam gardens were always planted in October and harvested in July. Sam always had big yam gardens to ensure a plentiful supply all year round (Kris 2004, pers.comm).

Murray Islanders relied on bananas and yams as their staple foods cultivated by the slash and burn technique. Gardeners worked during the planting season from September to November to have enough yams in their storehouse to carry them through the 'hungry time' (Beckett, 1987:114). Murray Islanders regarded exceptional gardening skills as a source of prestige. Gardeners competed to produce a 'show garden' by a display of crops at the annual harvest festival (Beckett, 1987:119) or by the redistribution of food at key public ceremonies. At marriage ceremonies the man's and woman's kin were required to exchange food for as long as the celebrations lasted (Beckett, 1987:115). While both the Rotumans and Murray Islanders valued gardening and rewarded successful gardeners, the Rotumans gained a reputation for being exceptional gardeners. As reported in Chapter 3, the expulsion of the Rotumans from the Murray Islands in 1885 was attributed by some to the envy among Murray Islanders created by Rotuman gardening success. Dora and Sam's views about the good gardening skills of early Rotuman migrants and the abundance of food at feasts is an affirmation of the Rotumans' moral worthiness in competition with Torres Strait Islanders.

Gardening is no longer being practiced in its original form in the Torres Strait. Many Islanders now rely on welfare payouts every fortnight and buy their food and root vegetables from supermarkets. Sam Nako Kris stated that "people are too lazy nowadays to plant and in the morning they won't go to the gardens" (Kris 2004, pers.comm). Kenny Bedford, a PRTS Islander, stated that the change from communalism to individualism has led to the breakdown of family

values such as caring and sharing, where families used to work together and share food, roles and responsibilities with other members of the community. Bedford said the drastic change from fresh food from the gardens to imported food from the supermarkets has led to health problems such as diabetes (Bedford 2004, pers.comm). The change from subsistence economy to cash economy has meant a greater reliance on money to meet family needs.

There has also been a shift from extended families to nuclear families. Josephine David-Petero commented that there were fewer people living in a house, so overcrowding was not a problem for many families with more people relying on social security and earning more money (David-Petero 2004, pers.comm). The change from extended family to nuclear family households is indicative of the changing social structure of families to meet the present-day family needs in a cash-based economy.

Food is now being bought in supermarkets, thus making the practice of gardening irrelevant at the present time. Some PRTS Islanders idealized the gardening success of early migrants because it made them feel good about themselves and accorded them some status in society. Sam Kris and Kenny Bedford idealized this past activity in order to critique the current social and health problems faced by Torres Strait Islanders which could be alleviated by a return to gardening.

Closely associated with gardening is cooking methods, which involves the processing of food. Elisapetia Inia wrote that there is a Rotuman saying "*A'hāe se 'ou koheā ta*" "Think of your kitchen" which meant that men, particularly husbands, were reminded about the need to provide food for their households at all times (Inia, 1998:4). This saying reflects the concerns for food and eating in Rotuman culture where the saying equates success in providing food with moral worthiness.

Methods of Cooking

Cooking methods include the making of a pudding from starch, coconut cream and sugar which is served during joyful celebrations. In Rotuma it is called *fekei*, in Torres Strait, *pakalolo*. *Fekei* is a Rotuman delicacy that is linked to cultural identity because of its social importance during feasts. The order and presentation of *fekei* to persons of chiefly rank was of utmost importance. *Fekei* was served before the fruits, sugarcane and coconuts (Inia, 2001:98). According to Varomua, an informant of Gordon Macgregor, when *fekei* was served to a chief, a leaf was always placed on top and this was tied around the stem of the package (Macgregor, 1932). *Pakalolo* is very rarely made nowadays in Torres Strait.

A number of PRTS Islanders spoke highly of the *pakalolo* dessert and the range of ingredients used on a cassava base to give it some variety. Thomas Sebasio remembered his grandfather, Sebasio, making *pakalolo*, which involved scraping the cassava, squeezing coconut milk over it and wrapping it in banana leaves before placing it in the *kup mauri* or earth oven (Sebasio 2004, pers.comm). Noritta Morseu, mentioned that her grandfather Suane mixed pumpkin with the cassava (Morseu 2004, pers.comm). Sam Nako Kris of St Pauls, Moa Island had a recipe for *pakalolo* that included adding sugar and coconut milk after cooking (Kris 2004, pers.comm).

Cooking pig whole and cooking it in its own blood is another method associated with Rotumans. John Abednego mentioned that at the time of my research there was no livestock on Thursday Island because of strict quarantine laws to control the outbreak of pests and diseases. For example there was evidence of widespread Japanese encephalitis (JE) virus activity throughout the outer islands of the Torres Strait. The JE virus is maintained in a natural cycle involving water birds such as herons. Pigs are very efficient amplifying hosts for

the virus and therefore almost always contribute to outbreaks of JE in human populations. Migratory birds and/or wind-blown mosquitoes could have imported the virus into the Torres Strait from Papua New Guinea, thereby initiating the outbreak. A combination of environmental factors, with large numbers of domestic pigs in close proximity to human dwellings and mosquito breeding sites, undoubtedly facilitated the outbreak on Badu Island in the Torres Strait resulting in three cases of JE, two of them fatal, occurring in 1995 (CDC, 1995). Pigs had to be flown in from the Australian mainland at great cost and the butchers kept pig blood so the Islanders could order it. It was evident from my fieldwork that only a handful of the older generation could still remember the method for cooking pig. These practices are no longer widely talked about. For the handful of PRTS Islanders that did have some recollection of these cooking methods, their private memories reflected their sentimental links to their Rotuman forefathers.

The following methods of cooking pig are claimed to be Rotuman practices by PRTS Islanders and the communities they live in. However these practices are irrelevant in the current context due to strict quarantine laws that prohibit livestock [pigs] on most Torres Strait Islands.

Josephine David-Petero said that Kapiere taught her grandfather, Mikaere how to cook a whole pig in the *kup mauri*. Cooking the pig *whole* was distinctively Rotuman. According to Howard and Rensel (1994), although there was no evidence that Rotumans ever engaged in human sacrifice, their myths indicate that pigs are a substitute for human beings at ceremonial feasts. Because of this, pigs must be cooked *whole*. They would lose their essential quality as sacrificial animals if they were cut into pieces before being cooked. Howard and Rensel added that sacrifice was a way of feeding the gods and infusing them with life.

May Passi's father, Sam Passi, said that the Rotumans taught the Murray Islanders how to cook pigs, turtles, yams and sweet potatoes in the earth oven and this method was called *Kup Mauri*. Since then the practice has spread and now the Murray Islanders, Darnley Islanders and Stephen Islanders cook their pigs whole in the earth oven (Passi 2004, pers.comm).

If cooking the pig whole was a Rotuman specialty, Abednego noted that a variation was cooking the pig in its own blood. This cooking method was passed down from father to son over the years. The pig was usually washed down with hot water, dried and hung up whilst still alive. A sharp knife was inserted in the pig's throat and moved down to the heart with a bucket directly below the pig to collect the blood. It was believed that if the pig did not squeal whilst the knife was being inserted into its throat, this was the sign of a "true Rotumah man". John noticed his father Kemuel's pride and joy whenever he witnessed the perfect killing of a pig—judged by the pig's silence during the operation. The pig was then cut up; the rib section was diced up and steamed in its own juice. Ginger and lemongrass were added to the pig. Vinegar was mixed with blood separately to prevent thickening before cooking it slowly over the fire. Pig cooked in its blood was a compulsory dish for PRTS family weddings (Abednego 2004, pers.comm). Both cooking methods were especially associated with Rotuman men.

The method of killing pigs and cooking them in their own blood is not currently practiced by Rotumans in Fiji. Rotuman elders and those who had conducted extensive research on Rotuman history and culture confirmed that they were not able to link this to known Rotuman practices (Kaurasi 2004, pers.comm; Inia 2004, pers.comm; Howard 2004, pers.comm). Cooking pig in its blood, which PRTS Islanders claim to be a 'Rotuman' traditional practice, appears to be a recent creation by the original Rotuman migrants and their descendants in the Torres Strait. The unavailability of pigs on the Islands has led to the demise of that cultural practice. The fact that cooking pig in its own blood is a recent

creation makes this practice an *invention of tradition* that has since been rendered irrelevant nowadays with PRTS Islanders and Murray Islanders cooking pigs in the *kup mauri* during feasts. Gardening and cooking methods are very rarely discussed amongst PRTS Islanders. The few who remember these practices expressed fondness and appreciation of their forefathers when recalling their stories.

Hard Working Trait

Throughout this study, reference has been made to the Rotumans' industrious nature—a hard working people. Two women relate their experiences below.

Lala Leftwich mentioned that her mother, Onice Kiwat, Charlie Kiwat's daughter, was a good cook and very particular about domestic chores and housekeeping matters. As a result their home was always kept spotlessly clean (Leftwich 2004, pers.comm). Rotannah Passi also mentioned that she worked very hard during her years of marriage and could cook, sew and do the gardening as well. She said she grew up raking the leaves outside their home right up to the beachfront very early in the morning on a daily basis. As soon as visitors walked in through the door she would offer them tea and scones. Rotannah said that due to her old age (85 in 2004) she was unable to do much of the work she used to do and this was a source of frustration and disappointment (Passi 2004, pers.comm).

Rotannah and Lala wondered whether the desire or need to work hard was a Rotuman trait. Several people in earlier sections including Gertie, Dora and Daisy asserted that the Rotumans were industrious, honest and generous people who introduced new gardening and cooking practices to the Torres Strait Islanders. They excelled in their daily work and in most things they were involved in. Howard and Rensel (in Inia, 1998:220-223) said that in general, Rotumans earned the reputation for being diligent and responsible and were valued as sailors by Europeans sea captains because of these traits. On the

Island of Rotuma, men's work revolved around the gardening of root crops and copra production while women's work involved the making of mats and keeping the home and its surrounding well-groomed. Of equal importance was communal effort and work on behalf of the church and community with feasting a central part of most communal activities. Rotuman attitudes towards work are best summed up in the Rotuman saying "*Kop la pumahan*" "You have to sweat" which meant that success is a result of hard work and only hard workers deserve success (Howard and Rensel in Inia, 1998 :221-222).

These beliefs and practices are linked to the idea of *objectification* of culture which "denotes the way in which people may come to talk about or exaggerate certain beliefs and practices as signifiers of their identity" (Norton, 1993:742). The objectification of Rotuman practices and values such as hard work and honesty have contributed to a widely perceived notion by many PRTS Islanders and Torres Strait Islanders that this was the 'Rotuman way of life'. These beliefs and practices have been firmly embedded in social relationships within PRTS families and integrated into various fields. Pedro Stephen, John Abednego, Danny and Noritta Morseu are a very small sample of many PRTS Islanders who have aptly exemplified these traits in the important positions they hold or have held in their respective communities.

Racism

Among the many stories I listened to there were those about how some PRTS Islanders were teased about their Rotuman ancestry and how they reacted to the challenge. One option was to gain acceptance by attempting to cover up one's Rotuman identity. In other instances some PRTS Islanders were forced to downplay or deny their Rotuman ancestry to gain acceptance in Torres Strait Islander society. In an interview, May Passi related how, whilst growing up, she noticed that her mother, Rotannah, did not look like other Torres Strait Islander women. When she asked her mother why she did not look like the other women

she replied she was from Rotuma. Here is one of several experiences May had at school:

When I went to school the children asked me “Hey, your mother, why does she look so different?” and I would say “Oh, her father comes from Rotuma wherever that is” and they would say, “Oh May, Rotuma doesn’t exist, it exists only in your head”. I grew up in tears (May Passi, Interview, 2004).

May’s hair was straight and wavy like her mother’s and because she was constantly teased about her mother’s Rotuman ethnicity, she experienced episodes of frustration about her appearance. This induced her to cut her hair to give it a fuzzier local appearance in order to gain acceptance from the dominant Torres Strait Islander Community. May’s dilemma was compounded by the fact that they did not have any conception of Rotuma or Rotuman culture until a few years ago when she looked Rotuma up on the internet (May 2004, pers.comm). Fanon’s book *Black Skin, White Masks* explains the alienation that one feels from embodying Otherness and being forced to identify with dominant representations (Fanon, 1967). May’s story about the submergence of Rotuman identity because of the influence of Western and Aboriginal and Torres Strait cultures reflects Stuart Hall’s point that cultural identity is a complicated and often agonistic process where people continue to struggle, resist, negotiate and accommodate the normative or regulative rules with which they confront and regulate themselves (Hall, 1996:14). In the case of Josephine-David Petero, the option was to excel at school and perform better than the others. Here is Josephine David-Petero’s story:

Whilst growing up we [Josephine and Philomena] were called “bingais” because of our dark skin and curly (kurid) hair. We were often teased as different people (*pigai* in Rotuman). Some of the kids in school who were half-caste (Filipino descendants) called us *bingai*. Our mother encouraged us not to be ashamed about ourselves. She told us that our great-grandfather came from a place called Rotuma. That was the first time she mentioned ‘Rotuma’ to us. She added, “When you grow up you go and find this place called Rotuma. You’ve got Filipino blood too. On dad’s side your great

grandfather is a Filipino. You be proud of who you are.” Our mother had never mentioned those things to us before. “But mum, why are we so dark?” I asked. “Don’t worry - on your TS island side, you are descendants from the warrior clan” said mum.

This was when we first faced discrimination. I would have been about 8 years old in grade 3. From that day on we never looked back. Mother said “You’ve got the sense for school. Are you smart at school?” I said “Yeah mum, I come first in the class.” She said “so what are you ashamed of?” We never took any notice from that day onwards; we topped the class every year right through grade 7. We never looked back. She never boasted about us; we did well at school. The discrimination was a driving force...

(Josephine David-Petero, Interview, June 2004).



Left: Josephine David-Petero and Edna Brown (great-grand-daughter of Dick Rotumah) taken at the Welcome Ceremony in May 2004. Photo taken by Makereta Mua.

Josephine and Philomena experienced alienation in school and were often teased and described as “*bingai*” by other school children. *Bingai* was a derogatory tag for ‘blackened skinned natives with fuzzy hair’ (David-Petero 2004, pers.comm). I explained to Josephine that the term ‘*bingai*’ was similar to the Rotuman term ‘*pigai*’, used for Australian Aborigines or other very black persons (Churchward, 1940). Skin color was a major factor in choosing marital partners. Pacific Islanders prioritized their ‘blood’ or ancestry when finding

suitable marital partners in order to “preserve the integrity and identity of the descent group” (Shnukal, 1992:24). Polynesian men were often regarded as good looking because of their light skin color and straight hair. Olive Morseu recounted how she chose her PRTS husband because of the way he tossed his hair out of his eyes (Shnukal, 1992:24). Straight hair was associated with Polynesians and differed from fuzzy hair that was common amongst Torres Strait Islanders. Josephine and Philomena dealt with this derogation and alienation by excelling in their studies as a way of overcoming discrimination—to prove that they were just as good or even better irrespective of their ancestry. This drive could be a possible explanation for the successes of some PRTS Islanders—the desire to prove a point of superiority among the majority by serious and dedicated application to study and work in general.

Cultural identity is no longer rooted in sameness, stability and permanence where people supposedly shared the same identity because they belonged to a group or society which shared the same history and was considered solid and unchangeable. With migration, globalization and inter-ethnic mixing, cultural identity has shifted from singular identity to multiple identities that are constructed along different, often intersecting and antagonizing discourses and positions. Identities cannot be defined in isolation of other identities because they obtain their meaning mainly from the identity of the other with whom self is contrasted. Migration and identity have created a permanent state of flux where identities are always being constructed and reconstructed to suit different social situations. Upon their arrival in the Torres Strait, the early Rotuman migrants had to work diligently in order to adapt and make a life for themselves in their new environment. The negative reactions that May Passi encountered made May negotiate her cultural identity by cutting her hair to make it fuzzier in appearance and more acceptable in the eyes of Murray Islanders. Stuart Hall (1996:1-17) described cultural identity as a nexus at which different constructions of self coincide and sometimes also collide. May suffered a dilemma as her construction of self collided—her loyalty to her Murray Islander

identity collided with her Rotuman identity. By cutting her hair, May gave dominance to her Murray Islander identity and her Rotuman identity became submerged in the process.

On the whole PRTS Islanders have successfully integrated into Torres Strait Islander society and regard themselves as Torres Strait Islanders. Cultural practices such as gardening and cooking methods have become irrelevant in the current context due to intermarriage, adoption and the impact of globalization. Gardening and cooking methods are now a part of PRTS Islanders' private memories that provide them with fond reminiscences of their Rotuman forefathers which they cannot publicly affirm because of their new loyalties and status as Torres Strait Islanders. Despite the submergence of Rotuman identity at the present time, Chapter 6 focuses on *tabibobo* chants and dances and suggests a new form of affirmation of Rotuman cultural identity. *Taibobo* chants and dances reflect the whole migration experience and connect people to one another, to the seasons, seas, birds and land.

CHAPTER 6

TAIBOBO CHANTS AND DANCES

Taibobo chants and their application in dance emerge as one of the most prominent cultural practices linking Rotuma and its migrant maritime workers with Torres Strait Islanders. In this chapter, I will explain how and why the PRTS Islanders and Murray Islanders have retained *taibobo* since the arrival of the Rotumans in the 1860s and the ways in which *taibobo* has helped to shape the PRTS Islanders' sense of Rotuman identity and the cultural memories they have of their Rotuman forefathers. I will also explore the emerging differences of opinion regarding the ownership and rights to perform *taibobo* between the Murray Islanders and PRTS Islanders and the re-emergence of Rotuman identity in the context of successful integration into Torres Strait Islander Society.

Relevant to this study is the notion that music and dance are a very portable part of the 'bundle of culture' (Costigan and Neuenfeldt 2002) and an effective way to help shape group and individual identity (Frith, 1996, cited in Costigan and Neuenfeldt 2002). Portable infers ease of movement or transfer and this, in some ways, reflects the transition of *taibobo*. During my interviews I was told by several Murray Islanders that they had memorized the dances and songs of *taibobo* without understanding what they were dancing to or singing (Mabo 2004, pers.comm; Noah 2004, pers.comm). After witnessing *taibobo* dancing and singing, I was struck by how similar the body movements were to traditional Rotuman dancing and how well the Torres Strait Islanders had captured and preserved the old Rotuman dances for well over one hundred years without understanding the lyrics. Connerton made reference to social memory and how "we experience our present world in a context causally connected with past events and objects" (Connerton, 1989:2). *Taibobo* would fall under what he termed "habit memory"—the capacity to reproduce a certain performance as a

complete and uninterrupted whole (Connerton, 1989:22). Performances such as *taibobo* form the mechanism for conveying and sustaining images and recollections of the past (Connerton, 1989:39).

Jeremy Beckett's earlier research and findings in the Torres Strait lay the foundation on which some background will be developed, supported by the findings and theories established by other researchers. The bulk of the chapter will focus on the perceptions and reflections (including transliterations to assist with clarity) of Rotuman elders and others well versed in Rotuman language and culture, something they did with great enthusiasm. In his commentary and notes titled *Modern Music of Torres Strait*, Beckett wrote that, during his first tour of fieldwork between 1958 and 1960, he "heard an old man strike a chant of a kind that was unmistakably different and he found out that it was *taibobo* from Rotuma" (Beckett, 1981:1). Beckett returned nine months later and approached a number of old men from the Murray Islands to record *taibobo*. In 2004 he passed a copy of *taibobo* music on tape to me in the hope that I would be able to analyze the music with the help of Rotuman elders.

Beckett (1981:1) stated that Torres Strait Islander music and dance, including *taibobo*, were not traditional to the Torres Strait but were introduced in the second half of the nineteenth century when large numbers of Pacific Islanders settled into the region as missionaries and divers in the pearling industry. Beckett stated that:

The songs or chants are sung in two parts which never run together, but overlap. The first part strikes a phrase but before it stops the second part starts, continuing until the first part begins again. Sung in this way, the chant can continue uninterrupted indefinitely. The Rotumans themselves did not use drums, producing a duller beat on a rolled up mat. The hand claps of dancers provided further intermittent percussion.

The dancers are placed in ranks facing the audience, each going through the same set movements as his fellows. Instructors tell their

pupils to hold themselves as though they were sitting on a non-existent chair, torso erect and knees apart. In the form called *tag-tag* the performer dances on the spot, moving his body so that his weight shifts from one leg to the other. The main movement is with the arms, which go through a series of actions reminiscent of winding, hauling, and turning the wheel of a boat. These are punctuated by hand claps and the clapping of one hand over the flexed arm pressed against the chest, producing on a muscular body, a noise like a gun shot. At intervals the dancers pause, allowing the rear ranks to pass through the front. In *tugifo*, the beat is faster and the dancers are in perpetual motion with the back row advancing in a 'crocodile' along one side of the team to take their place in the front (Beckett, 1981: 2-3).

The recording of *taibobo* by Beckett enabled me to play the chants to a number of Rotumans and this certainly sparked off great interest and a genuine desire to revive the old Rotuman chants as a way of maintaining Rotuman identity and culture. Rotuman elders in Suva and Rotuma who listened to *taibobo* all agreed that the Murray Islanders had done a truly remarkable job in preserving the "old" Rotuman chants. Konrote Isimeli, a Rotuman elder and retired high school principal, found *taibobo* "innovative" and a means of traveling back in time to his childhood in Rotuma. His impressions, noted below, portray his feelings about the value and pleasure he derived from his experiences in childhood with his elders:

When I first heard *taibobo* music from the Torres Strait Islands I was utterly taken by its rhythm, power and, above all, by its deep familiarity. It seemed as if some latent part of me was being awakened. I responded to the lilting chants with guttural sounds of my own. It was my music. I was born in it, grew up with it as a young boy in Rotuma, and here it was being replayed by Islanders from a completely new part of the world.

It was such a curious and yet mystifying experience. I have always felt throughout my life that the true music of Rotuma is in its traditional chants. The "*sua*" in the *tautoga* as practiced and demonstrated nowadays is only a mild indication of what our forefathers developed as traditional chants, composed out of the forceful emotions and power of expressive war music.

As a young ten-year-old boy growing up in Malha'a I had heard of similar chants to *taibobo* chants. As young children in Pepehaua, we would often gather at the "*marae*" to play traditional games in the evenings after dinner. The time would be about half-past seven. And later, at about nine o'clock in the evening, the old men would gather under the moonlit shade of the breadfruit tree. There would be Taraua (a man from Juju married to a Malha'a woman), Jimione of Pepjei connections, Muamea'ta of Fayavai, Isimeli, Mos, Hanfiro originally from Hapmafau and often other old men from Else'e and Elsio in Malha'a.

These men, who were born in the late 1800s, would sit around a small '*tanoa*' and probably reminisce their young adventurous days around the turn of the twentieth century. In comparison to current parties on the Island these evening gatherings appeared to facilitate the expression of an identity that belonged more to the nineteenth century rather than the 1950s. The kava they were drinking was merely a facilitating agent and never was the main purpose of these gatherings.

To me, on reflection of those evening observational experiences, the main aim was to relive their youth and chant the old music. For this was what a small boy in those evenings would hear—a gentle almost inaudible clap of the hands, a throttle sound deep from within, and alternating chants audible only within twenty metres of the group in the quiet moonlit shade of the breadfruit tree at about eleven o'clock in the evening (Konrote Isimeli 2004, pers.comm).

The Rotuman elders differed in their interpretation of *taibobo*. They separately indicated that *taibobo* chants and dances had similarities to several Rotuman chants and dances. The *tautoga* is divided into three categories [*sua*, *tiap hi*, *tiap furau*]. *Temo*, *Hual ta* and *Ki* are the other Rotuman chants. *Temo* are old Rotuman chants which were sung by men while they were sitting. Men sang slowly and softly with occasional light clapping. According to Russell (1942) *temo* were formerly only sung for the supreme *sau* of Rotuma. Elisapeti Inia wrote that *temo* were often sung by a group of elderly men when the body of a chief was lying in state and *temo* chants included stories of voyages, wars and heroic deeds (Inia 2001:60). *Hual ta* is a wrestling chant and the *Ki* is a war chant. *Temo*, *hual ta* and *ki* are no longer performed although the *tautoga* is still danced by Rotumans in Fiji and abroad. According to Mosese Kaurasi the wrestling chants and war chants that were practiced during the eighteenth and

nineteenth centuries are no longer popular and are not even known by the present generation. He added that it may be due to the fact that certain sports were too competitive and the losers would have to pay their wagers which were traditionally pigs. Such a gamble would be too expensive in this day and age (Kaurasi in Fatiaki *et al*, 1977:150-151). The discontinuity of these cultural practices shows the limitations of selective memory as a living memory because it can only retain those things that still live in the consciousness of groups of people keeping the memory alive.

As observed by Beckett (1981), *taibobo* chants are sung in two parts—the first is similar to what is commonly referred to in Rotuman as “*sua*” which means “to sing” and the second is called “*tari*” which means “to support”. While this type of singing is now rare, Rotumans, like *taibobo* singers, still use folded mats which are beaten by sticks to provide rhythm and music for the chanters and dancers. The body movements of *taibobo* dancers are similar to those who perform the traditional Rotuman *tautoga*, which includes the *sua*, *tiap hi* and a third category of the recent past called *tiap furau*. The hand actions of some *taibobo* dances are like the *tu siu* in the *sua*, where dancers lift their hands from the sides, clasping them together at the front of one’s waist and then releasing them to the sides again. Another common thread that links *taibobo* chants and dances and *tautoga* is the singing of “*iiiieeee*” to signal to the performers that they are approaching the end of the chant (Kaurasi 2004, pers.comm). Regarding the movement of ranks in dancing, Beckett (1981) observed that a ‘crocodile’ of *taibobo* dancers come from the back around the side of the other dancers to the front. Mosese Kaurasi said that Rotumans similarly danced in ranks and the dancers moved from the side of other dancers to the front (Kaurasi, 2004 pers.comm).

Also interesting is Jeremy Beckett’s observation of the pouring of powder over *taibobo* dancers in the Torres Strait (Beckett, 1981). Sprinkling powder and perfume on dancers is a common practice during *fara* or traditional Rotuman dancing when Rotumans go dancing from house to house, especially during the

Christmas season (Hereniko, 1991:136). The sprinkling of powder and spraying with perfume on dancers is also done during *tautoga* performances, which is closer to the context of *taibobo* than *fara*. My Murray Islander informants, including PRTS Islanders, could not confirm that the practice was introduced by the early Rotuman settlers.

Attempting to identify and establish the Rotuman origin of *taibobo* is like a jigsaw puzzle with many missing pieces. There is no definitive answer, only some identifiable similarities to Rotuman chants and dances of the recent past. Available literature and discussions with Torres Strait Islanders and Rotumans in Fiji and Rotuma have not provided an answer in a neat package. The Murray Islanders and PRTS Islanders appear to treat *taibobo* as a complete entity, a combination of chant and dance as one. Indigenous Murray Islanders emphatically explained that *taibobo* was a “gift” given to them by the Rotuman migrants and they claimed ownership of it (Mabo 2004, pers.comm).

Could early Rotuman migrants have given *taibobo* as a gift to Murray Islanders in order to facilitate their acceptance and integration into Murray Islander society? This is possible given the intermarriage between Rotumans and Murray Islanders. Intermarriages caused a general feeling of ambivalence towards Rotumans, particularly amongst Murray Islander men. Rivers wrote that in the Murray Islands, the largest number of marriages were to Rotuman men. He added that some of these marriages may only have been temporary or dissolved when Rotuman men returned to Rotuma. However, there were many children from these marriages living on the Island. Murray Islander parents favored Rotuman men because of the presents received from their sons-in-law and this made it increasingly difficult for young Murray Islanders to obtain wives (Rivers in Haddon, 1908:121). The difficulty of obtaining wives would have caused some resentment amongst Murray Islanders toward the Rotumans.

The Rotumans, on the other hand, may have offered *taibobo* as a way of maintaining peaceful relations and showing the Murray Islanders that through intermarriage and sharing of their songs and dances, they were really “one” people. There were, however, some Rotumans who were received favorably in the local community. Sam Passi stated that Jack Ansey (1870-1938) married Jenny Rotumah and lived on Murray Island. Ansey was a pearl diver. He and Barney Rotumah were the only Pacific Islanders allowed to remain on Murray Islands after the expulsion of the Rotumans in 1885 (Shnukal, 1981 pers.comm). Mimi Ansey, a grandson of Jack Ansey, mentioned that Ansey was well-liked amongst Murray Islanders and often contributed his food, labor, money and time to the local community. In 1885, when other Pacific Islanders were sent away to Darnley Island, Ansey and his family were asked by the chief and Murray Islanders to stay behind (Ansey 2004, pers.comm). While the Murray Islanders publicly claimed *taibobo* as a gift from the Rotuman migrants, PRTS Islanders, on the other hand, accepted it as part of their heritage passed on by their forefathers.

In the Rotuman context, informants who listened to *taibobo* chants and watched video clips of the dance, were able to offer a variety of interpretations based on a number of identifiable links and fragmented parts of an unidentifiable whole from the distant past. References were made to the similarities between *taibobo* and Rotuman musical forms, but without reference to a similar chant and dance as a complete whole. The following pages cover the Rotuman elders’ attempts to establish similarities and links between *taibobo* and traditional Rotuman chants and dances. There were also similarities between *taibobo* and Murray Islander dancing. Bua Mabo commented that traditional Murray Islander dancing was similar to *taibobo* and the early Rotuman migrants found it easy to teach *taibobo* to Murray Islanders because of the similarity of body movements (Mabo 2004, pers.comm). During Mabo Day celebrations in June 2004 I noticed the similarity between Murray Islander dancing and *tautoga*. Murray Islander

men danced with their feet apart and slightly bent and their body movements were strikingly similar to the Rotuman men who performed the *tautoga*.

Elisapeti Inia, a retired schoolteacher and esteemed elder of the Rotuman community, showed a lot of interest in *taibobo* chants and transliterated them in order to examine their Rotuman roots. Fourteen tracks on the *taibobo* recording by Jeremy Beckett were analyzed by Elisapeti Inia with the English versions included. Note how she has identified some words and phrases out of many that are derived from Rotuman, Fijian and other Pacific languages. These suggest that the Pacific Islander migrants had an impact on the language and practices of the indigenous people of the Torres Strait.

Taibobo reflects important aspects of the migration experience. Tracks 11 and 15 are about canoe voyaging. The chants refer to canoes and movement of Rotumans and Torres Strait Islanders, whose knowledge of the wind, stars and ocean currents helped steer their canoes on their sea voyages. The canoe was, for Torres Strait Islanders, the most significant symbol of a man's wealth and status, for not only did it allow them to exploit the marine resources, it was also used for hunting, trading and raiding expeditions. Torres Strait Islanders traded turtle shell, conus shell armbands and pearl shell breast plates for canoes from Papua New Guinea. Torres Strait Islanders were dextrous sailors who could navigate by the stars and understand the rhythms of shifting tides and currents (Mullins, 1994:11-13).

Track 11

Au davo¹³ moi, taeo moi

Ruena Paulo si aue
Sine ta raea täväke

I lay down to sleep, not really
sleeping

Paulo¹⁴ is moving, farted oh!
Sina saw a täväke¹⁵

¹³ Fijian.

¹⁴ man's name.

¹⁵ Bird.

Sina vajäea uli aue

Sina searched for the steering
oar.

Hi! oa

Track 15

Låg ta 'irim'e la ne låg

The wind is blowing from the
horizon

Ta rue, te'rue' 'osa matag (2)

That is why our canoe is moving

Låg ta ifom, iate ma rån (2)

It blows from that direction at
dawn,

Te'rue ti'ume 'osa matåg

Causing our canoe to move a lot.

Hi! oa

The emphasis on the winds in Tracks 11 and 15 reflect the wind-circle of Murray Islander identities. People await and welcome their own winds by singing songs and dancing as 'southwest people' or as 'southeast people' and in singing their songs they are singing about all the winds which are always in movement round the circle of the year (Sharp, 1993:55). But the movement of people and songs have extended beyond the Torres Strait Islands. *Taibobo* was adopted by the Kiwai people and other groups of people in the southern coast of Western Province, Papua New Guinea. The *Kiwai* dance is derived from *taibobo* in the Torres Strait Islands (Niles, 2000).

Track 12 is a *taibobo* chant titled *Tugifo* by the Murray Islanders. Elisapeti Inia and Maria Teresia Fiu, a Rotuman elder, confirmed that *tugifo* was indeed an old *tiap hi*, a traditional Rotuman chant and dance that is part of the *tautoga*:

Track 12

Mạn ta is se Mạn ta o (4)

A bird called, a bird answered

Tei rau mai, tei rau mai (2)

Where are the dried tobacco
leaves?

Tui se rau lo

Ready to be rolled.

Hi! oa

Tugifo is sung and danced to by Murray Islanders and this is their version of the chant:

1st part: Mamda ise Mamda ise
2nd part: Mamda ho Mamda ho
(clap) (clap)

1st part: Perongoi perongoi tute]
Ongoi perongoi aulo] repeated
(Beckett, 1981:10).

The Rotuman version of *Tugifo* (track 12) clearly demonstrated that *Mamda ise mamda ho* was in fact *Mān ta is se Mān ta o*. Several Rotumans mentioned that the old Rotuman chants contained verses that were half sung and that sometimes the meanings were hidden and even unintelligible (Fatiaki 2004, pers.comm). For example, *Mān ta* was the shortened version of *Mān mān ta* which meant “bird” in Rotuman. Akanisi Vaurasi supported this argument and stated that the *rijaujau* was sung in such a way that the words were shortened and had hidden meanings, typical of the old Rotuman chants (Vaurasi 2004, pers.comm).

Track 14

La teatea rau lo, oya ¹⁶ isa la vāe ¹⁷ (2)	To plant tobacco, that will separate us
‘Āpi e ¹⁸ na uto ni yalona oya	He made up his mind to stay
Koya ¹⁹ is la vāe ²⁰ (2)	We’ll soon be parted.
Hi! oa	

¹⁶ Fijian.

¹⁷ Rotuman.

¹⁸ Rotuman.

¹⁹ Fijian.

²⁰ Rotuman.

Tracks 12 and 14 refer to the planting and rolling of tobacco. Tobacco was an important article for trade and gift exchange in the Torres Strait Islands. Smoking tobacco was a favorite pastime for many Rotuman men during the evenings. The smoking pipe was a large bamboo segment with a small piece of wood inserted in a hole in the top, with smoke sucked into the bamboo through one end. The pipe was passed from one person to another, each drawing the smoke into their lungs before passing it on (Haddon, 1935:35).

Firomena, a Rotuman woman living in Suva, is a granddaughter of Aisea who was born in the Torres Strait in 1875 and returned to Rotuma at the age of 8 years. Firomena wrote that while English tobacco was available, many Islanders chose to smoke Rotuman tobacco and her grandfather, along with other Rotuman men, would sit around a kerosene lamp and compose songs in the evenings while smoking their tobacco. Aisea planted tobacco and Firomena would often help by picking the brown tobacco leaves and putting them aside. Four tobacco leaves were tied to a piece of string, and several sets of these were hung to dry. After drying the leaves would be stacked on top of each other before picking the spine of each tobacco leaf and placing the leaves in a wooden case. Once the case was full it was covered with a wooden plank and left for about four weeks. After four weeks, the case was opened and the tobacco slab was ready for use (Pickering, July 2004).

Track 4

Lalavi ma ota ia rere (2)

They were making ota
leaves (plaiting)

Ma ta ira e, ma lu ta ir o (2)

They were making for a
shade

Hi! o...a

Foar tauna'i, la a'fai (2)

Call a meeting to hear
Wallis newcomers, have
come to open the
meeting.

Forau Uvea, lem ma saea (2)

Hi! Oa...

Moses Kaurasi, a Rotuman elder, said that Track 4 was similar to *temo*. Elisapeti Inia explained that *temo* were really poems commemorating important events sung by men in the evenings after dinner under the stars and moonlight. A group of three or more men could sing a *temo*, as long as there were others to clap and do the “*kaf faksara*” (a sound produced by clapping with the middle finger of the right hand bent and hidden 'tem') (Inia 2004, pers.comm). *Temo* were sung while sitting. Men composed songs about war heroes or about sailors braving the seas and sailing to far off lands. Track 4 reminisces about sea voyages and migration with the arrival of people from *Uvea* or Wallis and Futuna Islands. Legends suggest that Rotuma had intermittent contacts with Futuna prior to European intrusion (Churchward 1939). Hocart (1913:4660) stated that *temo* were sung low, unlike the *tautoga*, and were usually sung at the death of the *sau*. A group of men would perform *temo* on the night of the funeral until daylight when the body was taken for burial.

Moses Kaurasi told me that *temo* were popular among the older generation and sung by men only. Men would sit together and chant *temo* during funeral gatherings as a way of lamenting the dead and soothing the feelings of the bereaved. This was a common practice before the arrival of the early missionaries and the printing of the Rotuman hymn book. Nowadays, *temo* are very rarely heard and hymns are sung instead at funeral gatherings (Kaurasi 2004, pers.comm). He added that *temo* were a version of Rotuman funeral lamentations and not songs like the *tautoga*. In some instances they refer to people traveling abroad and in other instances they tell of conflict, especially during wars. Reverend Iven Fatiaki said that *temo* were storytelling songs sung by *kau oroang he* or a group of men chanting about events of the past. He added that the word *temo* was derived from the word *tem*, to “go underneath or hide” (Fatiaki 2004, pers.comm). *Temo*, therefore, contained a lot of slurred words that were hidden in the chant so that, except for the composer and chanters, the meaning of the chant was difficult to understand. *Temo* were

usually sung during men's leisure time when they reminisced about Rotuman historical events, battles and heroic deeds.

Track 5 of *taibobo* is about war with warriors chanting the *Ki*, a war chant. Track 7 is a wrestling chant. A *ki* summoned the spirits of ancestors in war, funerals and in wrestling matches (*hual ta*) and whenever strength was needed (Inia, 2001:62).

Track 5

La pelue le man tegagatei maṃmaṃ soro	To war: Bless us Lord, as we float to and fro (a simile) when warriors sung the "ki" which is a Rotuman war chant
Haroa, Ki he ta re (2) Maṃ soro, maṃ pipi maṃsoro maṃmaṃ pipi ta rē (2)	At Haroa ²¹ , a "Ki" was sung Floating to and fro as pipi ²²
La haveia 'e Tue	The warriors gathered to sunbathe at Tue.
Hi! oa	

Mosese Kaurasi wrote that in the Rotuman system of warfare, singing of the chant was used to boost the morale of warriors prior to the actual clubbing of the opposition. The singing would help warriors concentrate on slaughtering the enemy and to fight ruthlessly until the enemy was slain (Kaurasi, in Fatiaki, 1991:148).

Mullins (1994:9-17) wrote that in the Torres Strait *bipotaim* was the era before the arrival of Christianity in 1871. For Torres Strait Islanders, sickness, accident and death were almost always caused by malevolent magic and the aggrieved party would carry out their revenge by performing a raid on the wrongdoers. The Islanders were head-hunters and men were admired for their fighting skills and the taking of heads enhanced personal prestige and spiritual power. Skulls

²¹ place in Motusa, Rotuma.

²² inedible fruit from a certain type of tree in Rotuma whose kernel is used for scented oil.

were preserved as a means of communicating with the spirit worlds and to evoke productivity in the garden or success in turtle hunting.

Track 7

Heituē tu, heituā (2)
Au tasere, veitamani (2)²³
Hi! oa

Alas! Alas!
I'm free, Father and Son.

Elisaptei Inia mentioned that track 7, which began with “Heituē tu, heituā” was similar to the *hual ta* (wresting chant). She provided the following example of *hual ta*.

Hual Ta

Fā 'e av ta 'or fuan kikia ma peak 'on uf fakse hā'la ne av te'is.

Kaut la fal tit, mir mean oris foro ma tākim 'oris túrag het se utut ne hual ta la re,
ka kaut la tār iris. Túrag ne la tākim iris la mak ag'ākim 'e sal pup roat ne iris leum.

A. Kaf se, 'po', hulahula ma jei ta to
Kaf se, 'po', hulahula ma jei ta to
'Ap si' la kel hula, tö filo'ua le'e he rua

Hanue te gat ke haina
Utu marā gaogao 'ia

B. Hāua 'au la suep se mo
Hāua 'au la suep se mo
Sal te' pa ma moue no
lok turua Hi! Hitua, Hi! (4 times)

²³ Fijian.

lok turua e (ma fer se rere ma rü'tutu).

Translation

- A. Clap, then smack both arms (below shoulders) wrestle until
Crickets sing (dusk)
(Elders) walking with their hands clasped at their backs to watch the
wrestling match, the heads of two were being broken.

There are only women in this place
For the ground is empty (meaning the men are cowards and ran away).

- B. All of you will be conquered (twice)
This road has been blocked (by wrestlers)
It's a war cry (4 times) to frighten everybody.

In Rotuma, wrestling chants were sung in an aggressive manner in order to frighten and weaken the opposition before the match began. The chant would be shouted out in the village square (*mara'e*) several times at the start of the match to attract the attention of wrestlers and supporters. The songs can also ridicule the opposition. The above lyrics suggest that the square is full of women with no men to be seen, implying that the men are cowards and have run away. The hosts would retaliate by singing their own wrestling chants. The party would consist of 50-100 people with about 15 wrestlers present (Kaurasi, in Fatiaki 1991:147). Wrestling matches were also popular on the Murray Islands. Three ships, the *Mary Anne*, *Almorah* and *Richmond* arrived on Murray Islands in June 1822 and after their trade there was an archery contest and a wrestling match. It was reported that the whole affair was carried out in good humour (Mullins, 1994:19).

While war and wrestling were characteristic of Island life, gardening was considered the most valued economic activity in Rotuma and the Murray Islands. Track 13 is a chant on gardening and food. In the Rotuman language, 'Toa' is the name for a person strong in fight and a champion or hero (Churchward, 1940:334).

Track 13

Tela'a 'en Toa, 'otou asa le Toa Food for Toa, my name is Toa
(2)

La ho'a 'e noa, ma sigena 'e täea Too weary to carry it, he fell
(2) down there.

Hi! oa....

Track 27 is a Rotuman chant usually sung by men from Oinafa District after working in their plantations. The track was separately recorded by Wolfgang Laade in 1964 in Mabuiag Island (Jervis Island) in Western Torres Strait. Laade wrote that Rotuman dances were popular at the time of his visit and they were still performed by the older women and men as entertainment during weddings (Laade, 1977). The two songs were sung by Mrs Kelam Wop (49, died 1964), Jimmie Luffman and Manesse Bani (Laade, 1977). After listening to the songs I immediately recognized the No. 27 song *Nonopua-a* as a chant that is still performed by the people of Oinafa District, Rotuma. Akanisi Vaurasi, a Rotuman elder, reported that Track 27 was titled *Nonopua*:

<u>Actual words</u>	<u>Expanded Rotuman Version</u>
Nonopu-a nonopu-a sa	(Nono la is la pu agesea) (Warning friends that it was time to go home together)
Fafimo ia sa fafimo ia sa	(Faf'ia gou se sal ta) (To meet at a certain time on the road).

Tracks 13 and 27 reflect the significance of gardening and food in Rotuman and Murray Islander societies. Food abundance was synonymous with prosperity and well-being. Sharing of food with kin members and providing food for feasts resulted in achieving high social status and prestige in society. In Rotuma, cassava was planted to feed the pigs and was referred to as “pig’s food”. Rotumans would make fun of those who ate cassava because it was seen as inferior food and those who ate it were regarded as “lazy” (Firomena, 2004). As mentioned in Chapter 5, yams were usually regarded as prized food in Rotuma. Haddon wrote that yams or *ketai* were basic foodstuff in most Torres Strait Islands. There were certain types of *ketai* which grew wild but others were cultivated especially in the Eastern Islands (Haddon, 1935:23).

Track 8 shows how songs include the “musical expressions of longing and belonging where music is used to connect people to country, to each other and sound to emotion” (Neuenfeldt, 2002:111).

Track 8

La' tuena ma lem ma'ea	Went off course! Came and said
Alama Rotuama rāe	Can't find Rotuma
La pipi maŋ maŋu ma rāe (2)	Can you see pipi floating?
La sua Rotuama rāe	Keep on paddling then Rotuma will be sighted.
Hi! oa	

The early Rotuman migrants would often reminisce about Rotuma and their loved ones left behind. Track 8 expresses their emotions, particularly their yearning to return to Rotuma. PRTS Islanders express private sentiments regarding their Rotuman ancestry when discussing genealogies and cultural practices such as gardening, cooking methods stories and in the songs they sing.

Azzie Noah, a Murray Islander, indicated he would start teaching *taibobo* to the younger generation in order to preserve it. He added that the PRTS Islanders at St Pauls Community on Moa Island did not do *taibobo* because the Anglican Church regarded *taibobo* as a heathen practice and forbade it. In the Murray Islands, certain people were chosen to be the main vocalists, bass and tenors, but almost all of them have since died. However, some Murray Islanders still carry on the rhythm, movements, words and tunes today. Azzie said that *taibobo* was usually performed during Ascension Day after Easter and it was sung by both men and women before and during the feasting (Azzie, pers.comm).

May Passi, one of my PRTS informants, formed a dance group called *Hoas ne Hoi* with her Part-Rotuman mother's support and performed *taibobo* as a part of her show. Here are the lyrics of May's *taibobo*:

1st chant

Tausue lelei faitalamai fau lue se oi (repeat 6 times)

2nd chant

Rausi piripiria rausi piripiri (repeat twice)

Rausi tari taria rausi tari taria (repeat twice).

I noticed that her actions were similar to the Rotuman way of dancing. The words sounded like Rotuman words. For example, "*lelei*" in Rotuman means "okay or good"; "*rau*" can mean "leaf" or "to count"; "*tari*" or "*taria*" means "to wait"; "*piripir*" means "curly". May's mother, Rotannah, had encouraged her to continue performing *taibobo* and to teach her children and other young girls as a way of upholding their Rotuman identity. May's public performance of *taibobo* is a way of reaffirming her Rotuman identity in opposition to Murray Islander identity. With the integration of PRTS Islanders into Torres Strait Islander society May's reaffirmation of Rotuman identity is, in a way, a reaffirmation of a 'foreign' identity in opposition to Murray Islander identity at the present time.

There was opposition to May's dance group—she received a lot of criticism in the *Torres News* and on the radio, with several Murray Islanders arguing that *taibobo* was given to the Murray Islanders by the Rotumans and she should not perform *taibobo* publicly without the approval of the Murray Islander elders (Mabo 2004, pers.comm). Some PRTS Islanders believed *taibobo* was a “man's” dance and women should not be performing it in public. May believed that because her mother was of Rotuman descent and her father a Murray Islander, there was no harm in performing *taibobo* as a way of celebrating a very important part of her Rotuman identity and heritage.



Photo: The late Rotannah Passi on Murray Islands in June 2004.

This incident raises issues of identity and ownership. May is one of a scattered group of part-Rotumans who continue to perform *taibobo* as one of several ways of maintaining their Rotuman heritage and identity and through their children, to promote and project them into the future. Against this is the indigenous Murray Islanders' claim to ownership. Cultural identity is a matter of “becoming” as well as “being”—it belongs to the future as much as the past. It has something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation (Hall, 1990:225).

Taibobo chants are an example of the diaspora of culture in music and dance and how, in this case, it impinges upon part-Rotuman and Murray Islander

identity in the Torres Strait. Adapting to Murray Islander life was not a totally new experience for early Rotuman migrants because of the similarity in lifestyles including the love of gardening. It is proposed that the Rotumans gave *taibobo* as a “gift” to Murray Islanders to facilitate their integration into Murray Islander society. Over time their descendants have also been successfully assimilated. May’s reaffirmation of Rotuman cultural identity at the present time reveals more than just sentiments so far expressed in previous chapters by other PRTS Islanders. By expressing her right to perform *taibobo* May is reaffirming a ‘foreign’ identity, which is likely to cause potential problems in the fight for ownership and rights to perform *taibobo* between the PRTS Islanders and the Murray Islanders. *Taibobo* chants and dances reflect the whole migration experience which includes people’s emotions and their connectedness to one another, to the dead, their ancestral spirits, to nature, the skies, stars, seasons, winds, seas, ocean currents, sea creatures, birds and land. *Taibobo* are songs about journeys across seas, meeting new people, seeing new places and settling in new environments with some returning to their homeland and others reminiscing about ancestors and families across the seas.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This thesis has tried to establish the PRTS Islanders' sense of Rotuman identity, their conceptions of Rotuma and Rotuman culture and aspects of the culture that interest them most through selective memories that they have of their Rotuman forefathers. Selective memories are those retained from the past and are still alive or capable of living in the consciousness of PRTS Islanders who are keeping the memory alive.

The advent of globalization, along with migration and rapid changes in the organization of societies, caused a shift in cultural identity from singular to multiple identities that were constructed along different, often intersecting and conflicting discourses and positions. Voyaging on European vessels was an early initiation rite for many young Rotumans as well as an opportunity to travel in search of work and to see the world. Early Rotuman migrants took with them navigational skills, seafaring prowess and an adventurous spirit which they applied and adapted successfully to suit the new context created by the Torres Strait pearling industry. In addition they took with them rich practical knowledge and experience of the land and all that it meant in their daily lives. Many settled in the Torres Strait Islands and introduced new cultural practices or new approaches to existing practices based on their knowledge and experience of the land and the sea and the new experience gained while in transit. Adoption by local families and intermarriage with local women established relationships on a firmer basis.

The physical integration of Rotumans in the Torres Strait—symbolized by relocation, land acquisition, intermarriage and adoption by Torres Strait Islanders led to new and shifting images of identity for many Rotuman migrants. Fictive kin relationships were formed through the act of developing 'brother' relationships with their fellow Rotumans and then with their local co-workers on

the pearling boats and this was done through name exchange or through the act of calling another man *bala* 'brother' (Shnukal, n.d.). The stitching together of their old and new identities is best summed up by Cohen (2000) who stated that people are constantly 'suturing' themselves to different articulations between discourse and practice which leads to different moments of identification.

While early Rotuman migrants were generally accepted among the indigenous population in Australia there were also envious and negative reactions against their progress. Their expulsion from Murray Islands in 1885 is an example of this. The expulsion of Pacific Islanders is an example of domination and marginalization, insofar as the Murray Islanders used their political rights as landowners to impose their interpretation and understanding of the situation—that the Pacific Islanders were greedy for land—on others. The official version, that of the Murray Islanders, gained the appearance of authenticity while the unofficial versions of non-Murray Islanders and Pacific Islanders were marginalized.

Gardening and cooking methods were a significant part of the selective memories that PRTS Islanders had of their Rotuman forefathers. These practices had one thing in common—the significance of land. Land was and is symbolic, bound to a complex socio-cultural system inter-relating the physical, spiritual, economic and social aspects of that system. As a living entity embodying the spirits of ancestors land connects people to each other and to itself and the sea.

During my stay on Moa Island I was shown a piece of gardening land called *Noa'tau* at St Pauls. Hall (1980) analyzed the relationship between people and concrete places by using a spatial metaphor to describe the stance that persons adopt within a web of relationships. People assign localities and landscapes with their own meanings and in this way they construct for themselves places of intimacy and community that become a part of their cultural identity (cited in

Kempf and Hermann (2005:370)). The naming of *Noa'tau* was, for Aptinko's family, a symbolic representation of Billy Aptinko's place of birth in Rotuma.

Gardening and its food producing capabilities had a focal position in Rotuman and Murray Islander cultures. Gardening was predominantly men's work and exceptional gardeners were accorded status and prestige in both societies. Food has social importance in Rotuman and Murray Islander societies and abundance of food was linked to prosperity and social status. These cultural practices are irrelevant at the present time due to intermarriage and globalization. PRTS Islanders have successfully assimilated into Torres Strait Islander society and Rotuman practices are now a part of selective memories which they cannot publicly affirm due to the possible negative reaction from the indigenous population.

The genealogical case studies and their own stories of success and misfortune helped to connect PRTS Islanders to their Rotuman ancestors and relatives and the rediscovery of these links helped them make sense of their past and of who they are within the Torres Strait Islander context. The discovery of kin members and new information on their Rotuman ancestry has, in several cases, influenced identity change. The knowledge that one's ancestors were well-liked and were accorded some status in society invokes pleasant memories, while knowledge and experience of a painful past can cause embarrassment or, as the case studies reveal, ignite a more determined effort by PRTS Islanders to succeed in life as some of them did admirably well. Despite private expressions of pride in their Rotuman ancestry, PRTS Islanders regard themselves first and foremost as Torres Strait Islanders. Real life benefits such as welfare funding and access to land come with their Torres Strait Islander identity and status.

Unlike the private memories of PRTS Islanders concerning gardening, cooking methods and genealogies there was a reaffirmation of Rotuman cultural identity through *taibobo* chants and dances. Music and dance are portable bundles of

culture and early Rotuman migrants brought with them *taibobo* songs and dances to the Torres Strait. They taught *taibobo* to the Murray Islanders, some of which Jeremy Beckett recorded in 1960. Rotuman elders displayed great interest in hearing Torres Strait's *taibobo* and while they differed in their interpretations they all agreed that the Murray Islanders had preserved the chants and dances remarkably well.

The Murray Islanders treat *taibobo* as a complete entity with the combination of chant and song into one. Rotumans, on the other hand, have not provided an answer in a neat package, but instead offered a variety of interpretations based on several Rotuman chants. Using Simon Frith's analysis, PRTS Islanders and Murray Islanders are partially defined by their musical activities found in the actual cultural activity itself. The performance of *taibobo* becomes a musical experience and the loss of meaning of the lyrics is not as important as the identity that is produced out of the performance.

Marcel Mauss, a French anthropologist, noted considerable ways in which different social groups within and across societies use their bodies. He noted how there were different ways or techniques of dancing. Mauss said that men's dancing was distinguished from women's dancing. He noticed that in patrilineal societies men took great pleasure in moving about while dancing and in matrilineal societies, women tend to dance in one spot. Polynesians and in particular the Maoris shake a great deal on a spot or move about when they have the space to do so. Mauss argued that body techniques are learned and there are certain fundamental trainings that make them instinctive. Body techniques are learned through imitation and performed in very precise ways that become internalized and habitualised (Mauss, 1973). One of the shortcomings of Mauss' bodily habits is that he does not explain why certain societies, gender groups or age groups value movement in a particular way and not another way. Despite this, his argument that body techniques are learned,

internalized and habitualised is similar to Paul Connerton's views on bodily practices.

Paul Connerton discusses how the collective memories of groups are conveyed and sustained over time and how images and recollected knowledge of the past are sustained by bodily practices such as dancing (Connerton, 1989:1). Members of a society who collectively and repetitively perform the same gestures, actions and body movements to the same music over time reinforce the memory of their body systems into a habitual state. Music and dance allow for a story of the lives of members through posture, gesture and body movements. *Tabibobo* chants and dances suggest a new form of affirmation of Rotuman cultural identity through the bodily enactment of cultural identity. The lyrics in Track 8 that state "Went off course!/Came and said/Can't find Rotuma/Can you see pipi floating?/Keep on paddling then Rotuma will be sighted" portray a sense of longing and belonging where music and lyrics express Rotuman migrant's emotions and their yearning to return to Rotuma.

Analysis of the *taibobo* reveals a story about the whole migration experience. Tracks 11 and 15 refer to canoe voyaging and the movement of sailors across the sea using their knowledge of the stars, winds and ocean currents to help them navigate across oceans. Track 12 was recognized by Rotuman elders as a traditional Rotuman chant on tobacco planting and smoking. Tobacco smoking was a favorite pastime of Rotuman men especially during the evenings. In the Torres Strait tobacco was an item used for trade and gift exchange. Tracks 5 and 7 dealt with war. In Rotuma the *ki* was a chant sung to summon the spirits of ancestors in war, funerals and wrestling matches. Track 13 was on gardening and food and reflected the significance of land to Rotumans and Murray Islanders.

The early Rotuman migrants gave *taibobo* as a gift to the Murray Islanders as a way of facilitating their acceptance and integration into Murray Islander society.

May Passi's public performance of the *taibobo* sparked off a lot of negativity amongst Murray Islanders who claim that the *taibobo* belonged to them and warranted the approval of Murray Islander elders. May argued that because her mother was of Rotuman descent, she had every right to perform the *taibobo* publicly without seeking anyone's approval. By expressing her right to perform the *taibobo* May is in fact publicly reaffirming her Rotuman identity in opposition to Murray Islander identity. Reaffirming a 'foreign' identity in opposition to Murray Islander identity could lead to potential problems in the future if the ownership of the *taibobo* chants and dances is not resolved.

On the whole PRTS Islanders have successfully integrated into Torres Strait Islander society and regard themselves as Torres Strait Islanders. The facts and the context suggest that access to land and support within the current political situation is through one's Torres Strait Islander identity and status. The resurgence and interest in tracing genealogies has gone beyond the realm of cultural memories. The rediscovery and meeting of new kin members through genealogies has added a physical presence to the migration experience and connects PRTS Islanders to kin across the Pacific, in Rotuma and in Fiji.

While gardening and cooking methods are cultural practices that are irrelevant in the current context, they, along with the interest in genealogies, all play a crucial role in the formation of selective memories for they are the products of a reconstruction of the past to cope with present day concerns and day to day living. The title of my thesis *Saunōan Ka 'Eagke Maoan* (Forgotten But Not Lost) reflects the idea that as long as memory does not completely fade away from a group of people, those past cultural practices are still important aspects of cultural identity because they live in the hearts and minds of PRTS Islanders. As summed up by Hall (1996:6) cultural identity then, is a never-ending process, always incomplete, unfinished and open-ended. PRTS Islanders benefit through these memories because they provide them with a sense of well-being in the midst of their current day-to-day lives and experiences. A new form of

affirmation of Rotuman cultural identity is a bodily enactment of the whole migration experience heard and seen in *taibobo* chants and dances which connect people to one another and to Rotuma. The Passi event suggests a renewed interest in what it means to be a PRTS Islander as opposed to a Murray Islander, which has a political impact.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies [AITSIS] NTRU Research Resource, 2004. *The Mabo Case*. <http://ntru.aiatsis.gov.au/research/mabo/pdf>

Allardyce, W. L. (1885-6). *Rotooma and the Rotoomans*. Proceedings of the Queensland Branch of the Geographical Society of Australasia 1:130-144

Allen, Rev. W., 1895. *Rotuma*. Paper read in Section E, Geography, of the Meeting of Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, 6th Meeting, held at Brisbane, Queensland, January 1895

Alufurai, A, *et al* 1986. *Pacific Rituals: Living or Dying*, Institute of Pacific Studies, USP, Suva

Anson, E. 1988. 'Child Rearing on Darnley Island: an Islander's Account', *Queensland Researcher*, Vol 4, No. 1, 1988 pp67-74

Arthur, W.S. (with the assistance of Josephine David-Petero) 2000. *Achieving Career Goals: Strategies and Obstacles for Young People in Torres Strait* 1999, CAEPR Discussion Paper No. 2002.1, ANU Canberra

Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2003 *Population Characteristics of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians: 2001 Census*. Accessed on 20 July 2007 <http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/4B01828AAE8653CDCA256DCE007F78E2>

Barclay, P. 2000. *Noel Pearson Background Briefing* ABC Radio National <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/bbing/stories/s203074.htm>

Beckett, J. 1977. 'The Torres Strait Islanders and the Pearling Industry: A Case of Internal Colonialism', *Aboriginal History*, 1(1-2):77-104

Beckett, J. 1981. *Modern Music of Torres Strait: Commentary and Notes by Jeremy Beckett with Translations and Transcriptions by Ephraim Bani, Sania Townson, Koiko Mabo and Dana Ober*, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra

Beckett, J. 1987. *Torres Strait Islanders: Custom and Colonialism* Cambridge University Press, Melbourne

Berndt, R.M. 1948. 'Badu, Islands of the Spirits', *Oceania*: Volume XIX, Number 2 pp 93-103

Boyd, M. 1989. 'Family and Personal Networks in Migration' *International Migration Review*, Special Anniversary Issue, 23:3

Bryant, J. 1985. *Rotuman Migration to Fiji: A Unique Case?* Institute of Australian Geographers Conference, The University of the South Pacific. School of Social and Economic Development, Suva

Butler, J. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and Subversion of Identity* Routledge, New York

Campbell, I. 1989. *A History of the Pacific Islands* University of Canterbury Press, Christchurch

Caroll, J.M. (ed), 1969. 'Journey into Torres Straits', *Queensland Heritage*, Vol 2: Number 1, pp35-42

Castles, S. & Miller, M.J. 1998. *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* Macmillan Press Ltd, London

Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 1995. Japanese Encephalitis Acquired in Australia in *Emerging Infectious Diseases (EID)* Vol 1, No. 3 July-September 1995

Chappell, D.A. 1997. *Double Ghosts: Oceanic Voyages of Euroamerican Ships*. M.E. Sharpe, Armonk

Churchward, C. M. 1938. 'Rotuman Legends', *Oceania* 9:102-126

Churchward, C.M.1939. *Tales of a Lonely Island* Australian Medical Publishing Co. Ltd, Sydney

Churchward, C.M. 1940. *Rotuman Grammar and Dictionary*, Australasian Medical Publishing Co Ltd, Sydney

Clifford, J. 1997. *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late 20th Century* Harvard University Press, Cambridge

Clifford, J. 2000. Taking Identity Politics Seriously: The Contradictory Stony Ground...' in P. Gilroy, L. Grossberg and A. McRobbie (eds) *Without Guarantees: In Honour of Stuart Hall*, pp94-12 Verso, London

Cohen, A.P. (ed) 2000. *Signifying Identities: Anthropological Perspectives on Boundaries and Contested Values* Routledge, London

Connerton, P. 1989. *How Societies Remember* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Costigan, L. & Neuenfeldt, K. 2002. Torres Strait Islander Music and Dance in Informal and Formal Educational Contexts in *Australia in Research Studies in Music Education*, Number 19, 2002

Dines, G. & Humez J. 1995 eds. *Gender, Race and Class in the Media*. Thousand Oaks, Sage, CA

Docker, E.W. 1970. *The Blackbirders: The Recruiting of South Seas Labour for Queensland, 1863-1907*. Angus and Robertson, Sydney

Dutton, T. 1985. *Police Motu: Iena Sivarai (Its Story)* The University of Papua New Guinea Press, Port Moresby

Evans, R. et al 1988. *Race Relations in Colonial Queensland: A History of Exclusion, Exploitation and Extermination*, University of Queensland Press, London

Eyde, D. 1954. *A Preliminary Study of a Group of Samoan Migrants in Hawaii*, University of Hawaii, Honolulu

Fanon, F. 1967. *Black Skin, White Masks*, Grove Weidenfield, New York

Fatiaki, A, et al., 1977. *Rotuma: Hanua Pumue: Precious Land*, Institute of Pacific Studies, USP, Suva

Fiji Government, n.d. *Fijian Culture and Tradition*. http://www.fiji.gov.fj/publish/history_culture.shtml

Firomena, 2004. Grandfather's News in *Marseu Family Newsletter July 2004*. <http://www.marseu.com>

Fletcher, Rev. 1871. Letter written on 31 January 1871 in *Missionary Notices, 1871*

Flick, U. 2002. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, SAGE Publications Ltd, London

Forbes, L.1875. *Two Years in Fiji*, Longmans, Green, and Co., London

Forman, C.W. 1982. Christian Ethics in a South Sea Setting in *The Island Churches in the South Pacific: Emergence in the Twentieth Century* Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY

Foucault, M. 1978. *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction*. Tr. Robert Hurley. Random House, NY

Foucault, M. 1980. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*,

- 1972–1977. Edited by Colin Gordon. Pantheon Books, NY
- Frith, S. 1996. 'Music and Identity' in Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (eds), *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Sage, London pp 108-127
- Ganter, R. 1994. *The Pearl-Shellers of Torres Strait: Resource Use, Development and Decline, 1860s-1960s*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne
- Gardiner, J.S. 1898. The Natives of Rotuma in *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 27:396-435, 457-524
- Gilroy, P. 2002. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* Verso, London
- Gistitin, C. 1995. *Quite a Colony: South Sea Islanders in Central Queensland 1867-1993* AEBIS Publishing, Brisbane
- Goffman, E. 1956. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. University of Edinburgh: Social Science Research Center
- Haddon, A.C. 1908. *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits*, Cambridge: at the University Press, Vol VI, pp 65-104;121
- Haddon, A.C. 1912. *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits*, Cambridge: at the University Press, Vol 1
- Haddon, A.C. 1912. *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits*, Cambridge: at the University Press, Vol IV
- Haddon, A.C. 1912. *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits*, Cambridge: at the University Press, Vol V
- Haddon, AC (ed) 1935. *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits Vol 1: General Ethnography*. Cambridge University Press
- Halbwachs, M. 1980. *The Collective Memory* Harper & Row, New York
- Hall, S. 1980. Race, *Articulation and Societies Structured in Dominance in Sociological Theories: Race and Colonisation*, pp305-345 UNESCO Press, Paris
- Hall, S. 1990. 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', in J. Rutherford (ed) *Identity: Community, Culture and Difference*, London: Lawrence and Wishart, pp222-237.
- Hall, S. 1995. 'Negotiating Caribbean Identities' *New Left Review* 1/209, January-February 1995 pp 3–14

Hall, S. 1996. 'Who Needs Identity?' In S. Hall and P. du Gay (eds) *Questions of Cultural Identity* Sage, London pp 1-17

Hall, S. 1997 ed., *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* Sage Publications, London

Hart, C. 1998. *Doing a Literature Review*, SAGE Publications Ltd, London

Hereniko, V et al., 1991. *Rotuma: Hanua Pumue Precious Land* Institute of Pacific Studies, USP, Suva

Histoire de la Station Notre Dame de Victoires, Sumi, Rotuma 1868-1881, Notebook II, 2, Catholic Diocesan Office, Suva, Fiji [Pacific Manuscript Bureau (PMB) Reel 159]

Hobsbawm, E. & Ranger, T (eds) 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Hocart, A.M. 1913. Unpublished Field Notes, Rotuma. Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand

Howard, A. n.d. Gordon Macgregor's Rotuma Notes archived at Bishop Museum, Honolulu, Hawaii. Macgregor's notes are presented on the Rotuma Web site, edited and with marginal notations by Alan Howard. Accessed on December 2005
<http://www.rotuma.net/os/Macgregor/Macgregor.html>

Howard, A. 1964. 'Pre-Marital Sex and Social Control among the Rotumans' *American Anthropologist* 66:266-283

Howard, A. & Howard, I. 1977 Rotumans in Fiji: The Genesis of an Ethnic Group in *Exiles and Migrants in Oceania*, edited by M. Lieber University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu

Howard, A. & Kjellgren, E. 1995. 'Martyrs, Progress and Political Ambition: Reexamining Rotuma's 'Religious Wars'' *Journal of Pacific History* 29:131-152

Howard, A & Rensel, J. 1994. Rotuma in the 1990s: From Hinterland to Neighbourhood in *Journal of the Rotuma: Interpreting a Wedding in Portraits of Culture: Ethnographic Originals*, edited by Melvin Ember, Carol Ember and David Levinson, Prentice Hall

Howard, A. 1996. 'Speak of the Devils: Discourse and Belief in Spirits on Rotuma in *Spirits in Culture, History and Mind*', edited by Jeannette Mageo and Alan Howard, Routledge, NY pp. 121-145

Howard, A. & Rensel, J. in Lal B. *et.al* , (ed) 1997. *Fiji in Transition*, Vol. 1, Fiji Constitution Review Commission Research Papers. School of Social and Economic Development, The University of the South Pacific

Howard, A. & Rensel, J. 2001. 'Where Has Rotuman Culture Gone? And What is it Doing There?' *Pacific Studies* 24 (1/2): 63-88

Howard, A. & Rensel, J 2004. Rotuman Identity in the Electronic Age in *Shifting Images of Identity in the Pacific*, edited by Toon van Meiji and Jelle Miedema Leiden, KITLV Press pp. 219-236

Howard, A. 2006. *Note from May Passi on their Suva trip*. Rotuma Web site <http://www.rotuma.net/os/NewsArchive/Archive2006/archive0611.htm>

Howard, A. and Rensel, J. 2007. *Island Legacy: A History of the Rotuman People* Trafford Press, Victoria B.C.

Howe, K.R., Kiste, R.C., Lal, B.V. (ed) 1994. *Tides of History* Allen & Unwin, NSW

HSC Online – photo by Gail Mabo in http://hsc.csu.edu.au/ab_studies/rights/global/social_justice_global/sjwelcome.re sponsenew6.html

Inia, E. 1998. *Fäeag 'es Fūaga Rotuman Proverbs* Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva

Inia, E. 2001. *Kato'aga Rotuman Ceremonies* Institute of Pacific Studies, USP, Suva

Irava, I. *et al* 1991. 'The Emigration of Rotumans to Fiji' *Rotuma: Hanua Pumue* Institute of Pacific Studies, USP pp153-160

Keesing, R.M. 1989 Creating the Past: Custom and Identity in the Contemporary Pacific *The Contemporary Pacific* (Spring/Fall 1989) 1 and 2:19-42

Kellner, D. 1995. Cultural Studies, Multiculturalism and Media Culture. In G. Dines & J. Humez (Eds.), *Gender, Race, and Class in Media* Sage Press, CA pp5-17

Kempf, W. & Hermann, E. 2005. Reconfigurations of Place and Ethnicity: Positionings, Performances and Politics of Relocated Banabans in Fiji in *Oceania* Sep-Dec 2005; 75, 4, pp 368-386

Kunz, G F & Stevenson, C H 1908. *The Book of the Pearl: The History, Art, Science and Industry of the Queen of Gems*; Chapter Nine Pearl Fisheries of the South Sea Islands accessed on 20 July 2007

<<http://divingforpearls.wordpress.com/2007/02/18/pearl-fisheries-of-the-south-sea-islands>>

Laade, 1964. *Traditional Songs of the Western Torres Straits, South Pacific* in Folkways Records Album No. FE 4025

Lawrie, M. 1970. *Myths and Legends of Torres Strait*, University of Queensland Press, QLD

Linnekin, J. S. 1983. Defining Traditions: Variations on the Hawaiian Identity. *American Ethnologist* 10:153-167

Lofland, J & Lofland, L.H., 1984. *Analysing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*, Wadsworth Publishing Company, Belmont

Macgregor, G. 1932. Macgregor's *Field Notes on Rotuma*, are housed at Bishop Museum in Honolulu. Macgregor did ethnographic field work on Rotuma in 1932, but did not publish any extensive accounts although he organized his notes systematically. The notes are presented here, edited and with marginal notations by Hans Schmidt and Alan Howard <http://www.rotuma.net/os/Macgregor/McTatoo.html>

Mackay 1908. Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Working of the Pearl-shell and Beche-de-mer Industries, QVP, Vol. 2 pp210

Maude H.E. 1981. *Slavers in Paradise: the Peruvian Labour Trade in Polynesia, 1862–1864*. Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva

Mauss, M. 1973. *Techniques of the Body*. *Economy and Society* 2(1): 70-88

McKenzie, M. 1976. *Mission to Arnhem Land*, Rigby Limited, Adelaide

Monsell, W. 1869. Copies of Extracts of all Correspondence Relating to the Importation of South Sea Islanders into Queensland ordered by the House of Commons, 9 August 1869

Moore, D.R, 1984. *The Torres Strait Collections of A.C.Haddon: a Descriptive Catalogue*, British Museum Publications Ltd, London

Moore, H.L. 1994. *A Passion for Difference: Essays in Anthropology and Gender*, Cambridge: Polity Press

Mullins, S. 1994. *Torres Strait: A History of Colonial Occupation and Culture Contact 1864-1897*, Central Queensland University Press, Rockhampton

Neuenfeldt, K. 2002. 'Examples of Torres Strait Songs of Longing and Belonging', *Journal of Australian Studies*, 75 pp111-116

Niles, D. 2000. 'Polynesian Hymns in Papua: The Synthesis of a Christian Educational Tool and Local Creative Expression', *Journal of International Development and Cooperation*, Vol 6, No. 1, 2000. pp 145-158

Norton, R. 1993. Culture and Identity in the South Pacific: a Comparative Analysis in *MAN: the Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* Vol 28, No. 4 December 1993 pp 741–759

Oliver, D.L. 1989a. *The Native Cultures of Australia and the Pacific Islands*, 2 vols. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu

Parke, A.L. 2001 ed. *Seksek 'e Hatana: Strolling on Hatana* Institute of Pacific Studies, USP, Suva

Patrick, Y., Koster, V., Rakuita, T. 2005. *Negotiating Cultural Identity in the Age of ICT: A Case Study of Fijian Immigrants in Brisbane, Australia* Department of Sociology, SSED, USP, Suva

Pickering, O. 2004. *Marseu Family Newsletter (July 2004)* in <http://www.marseu.com>

Plate, C. 2005. *Restless Spirits* Pan Macmillan Ltd, Sydney

Plummer, K et al 2001. *Handbook of Ethnography* SAGE Publications, London

Rensel, J. 1997. From Thatch to Cement: Social Implications of Housing Change on Rotuma in *Home in the Islands: Housing and Social Change in the Pacific*, edited by Jan Rensel and Margaret Rodman. University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu

Rubin, J. & Rubin, I.S, 1995. *Qualitative Interviewing: the Art of Hearing Data*, SAGE Publications, California

Russell, W.E. 1942. Rotuma: Its History, Traditions and Customs in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* in December, 1942. Russell was Acting Resident Commissioner on Rotuma during 1926-27

Salih, R. 2003. *Gender in Transnationalism: Home, Longing and Belonging Among Moroccan Migrant Women*, Routledge, London

Sawicki, J., 1988. 'Feminism and the Power of Discourse' in J. Arac ed. *After Foucault: Humanistic Knowledge, Postmodern Challenges*, Rutgers University Press, 1988, pp. 161-178. New Brunswick and London

Scott, H. 'Dear Everybody' Letters, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, unpublished MS, 1884-1987, Scott 1885: Portfolio :6:14 (Scott's, emphasis)

Sharp, N. 1993. *Stars of Tagai: The Torres Strait Islanders*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra

Shnukal, A. 1992. 'Pacific Islanders and Torres Strait 1860-1940', *Journal of Australian Aboriginal Studies*, 1992/Number 1, pp 14-27

Shnukal, 1996. 'The Expulsion of Pacific Islanders from Mer (Murray Island): Contemporary and Modern Interpretations in *Oral History Association of Australia Journal*, No. 18, 1996 pp 79-83

Shnukal, n.d. *Locals, Immigrants and Outsiders: Refiguring Identity in Torres Strait* presented at the Fullbright Symposium <http://www.larryzimmerman.com/fullbright/abstracts/shnukal.htm>

Shnukal, A. Ramsay, G. Nagata, Y., Eds., 2004. *Navigating Boundaries: the Asian Diaspora in Torres Strait* Pandanus Books, Canberra

Singe, J. 1979. *The Torres Strait: People and History*, University Queensland Press, Brisbane

Storey, J. 1996. *Cultural Studies and the Study of Popular Culture*. University of Georgia Press, GA Athens

Taito, Rev. F. A. n.d. *The Aborigines of the North* Methodist Overseas Mission of Australia, Sydney

Taito, M. n.d. *Ma'piga and Hopo* in Fiji Speakers Corner website <http://www.fijispeakerscorner.com/index.php>

Taylor, P. 1992. *Telling It like It Is: a Guide to Making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander History*, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Brisbane

The State Authority Records of NSW *Mariners and Ships in Australian Waters*. Accessed 20 July 2007 from <<http://mariners.records.nsw.gov.au>>

Thomas, N. 1992. The Inversion of Tradition in *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (May, 1992), pp. 213-232

Tongamo, S. T. 1987. *Migration, Remittances and Development: A Tongan Perspective* Unpublished MA thesis, University of Sydney, Sydney

Trask, H. 1991. Natives and Anthropologists: The Colonial Struggle in *The Contemporary Pacific* (Spring 1991) 3(1): 159-67

Turner, G. 1861. *Nineteen Years in Polynesia*, London, 1861 p.356

Turner, J.W. 1997. Continuity and Constraint: Reconstructing the Concept of Tradition from a Pacific Perspective. *The Contemporary Pacific*, Volume 90, Number 2, Fall 1997, 345-381

Va'a, L. F. 2001. *Saili Matagi: Samoan Migrants in Australia* Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, Suva

Warner, M. 1999. *Mariners and Ships in Australian Waters* The State Records Authority of NSW accessed on 24 July 2007 <http://mariners.records.nsw.gov.au/index.htm>

Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 2004. Accessed 6 December 2004 from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chant>

Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 2004 *Noni, a Medicinal Plant from a Shrub or Small Tree in the Rubiaceae Family*. Accessed January 2005 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noni>

Wilson, L. *Thathilgaw Emeret Lu: a Handbook of Traditional Torres Strait Islands Material Culture*, Department of Education, Queensland

Personal Communications

Akanisi Vaurasi, Suva, July 2004

Aliti Wiliame, Suva, March 2005

Allan Kaniu, Suva, November 2005

Anna Shukal, January-November 2004 (email correspondence)

Aven Noah, Thursday Island, June 2004

Azzie Noah, Suva, December 2004

Bua Mabo, Murray Island, June 2, 2004

Coleen Saveka, St Pauls Mission, Moa Island, June 2004

Daisy Aptinko, Mer, June 2004

Danny Morseu, Thursday Island, June 2004

Del Passi, Murray Islands, June 2004

Donald Mosby, Thursday Island, June 2004

Dora Uiduldam, Moa Island, June 2004

Elisapeti Inia, Rotuma and Suva, July-September 2004

Father Soane Fotutata , Suva, December 2004

Frank Cook, Thursday Island, June 2004

Fuata, Suva, October 2004

George Mye, Thursday Island, 23 May 2004
George Pedro, Thursday Island, June 2004
Gertie Levi, Moa Island, June 2004
Hariti Kelemeti, Suva, January 2004 to the present
Henry Enasio, April 2005
Herena Mose, Rotuma October 2004
Jieni Ieli, May 2005
John Abednego, June 2004
Joseph Iseger, April 2006
Josephine David-Petero, Thursday Island, June 2004
Kenny Bedford, Thursday Island, June 2004
Lala Leftwich, Bamaga, June 2004
Lavenia Mua, Rotuma, n.d.
Lency Pedro, Thursday Island, June 2004
Lorraine Williams, Darwin, January 2004
Louisa Cowley, Murray Islands, June 2004
Marcus Pedro, Brisbane, June 2004
Mareta Morrison, Thursday Island, June 2004
Mary Regione, Papua New Guinea, October 2004
Mayor Pedro Stephen, June 2004
Mere Taito, Suva, November 2006
Mervalesi Poonan, Suva, May 2004
Mimi Ansey, Thursday Island, June 2004
Mosese Kaurasi, Suva, August 2004
Motofaga Varea, Suva, January 2004
Noritta Morseu, Brisbane, June 2004
Olivia Pickering, New Zealand, May 2004
Pastor Kemuel Kiwat, Darnley Island, April 2004
Peter Holt, Thursday Island, June 2004
Regina Ganter, Australia, June 2004
Rev. Iven Fatiaki, Suva, August 2004
Rotannah Passi, Murray Islands, June 2004
Rutagrere Tigarea, Suva, October 2004
Sam Nako Kris, Moa Island, June 2004
Steve Mullins, Australia, June 2004
Susana Alexander, Suva, June 2004
Susau Antonio, Suva, August 2004
Thomas Sebasio, Brisbane, June 2004
Titom Tamwoy, Bamaga, June 2004
Tukaha Mua, Suva, April 2004
Victor Abednego, Moa Island, June 2004
Vito Kelekele, Suva, August 2004
Wasie Tardent, June 2004

Appendix 1

WELCOME SPEECH

by Makereta Mua

To the traditional owners, Kaurareg nation, Mayor Pedro Stephen, elders, pastors and all who are gathered here today. Thank you most sincerely for the wonderful reception and for being just so NICE!

Noa'ia e mauri aus Kainag on famor Rotuma ne noh vae e vasa ne tanu ma e ava.

Is kat noh haikelega e mafa, ka aus kat mao ra e ahae ma maeva on famor Rotuma.

Gou teis leum se ausa ma heahea lelei on famor Rotuma e hun se mal ne os te mamfua noh maur e amisa, fak ma ne amis inea mal ne os te mamfua noh maur e ausa tapema

The English translation of what I've just mentioned goes something like this:

Greetings to you all our Rotuman relations who live so far away in distance and time.

We have had no contact but you are not forgotten; you remain in the hearts and minds of our people.

I have come with the good wishes of our people who still hold dear the memories of our forefathers who left Rotuma for these islands as I know you still hold dear the memories of your forefathers who have come from Rotuma.

This leads me to the topic of my research which is as follows:

*Saunōan Ka 'Eagke Maoan: Forgotten But Not Lost
Rotuman Migration to the Torres Strait*

We have one thing in common—while our forefathers have passed on they are not lost in our memories. This, I would like to believe, has brought us together today and will urge us to reflect on our past and present so that we can tell our stories more vividly.

I was warned by two of the many people I have been in contact with that often people who come on short study visits are called “blow-ins—people who blow in and out with the wind”, suggesting overnight experts who have not really understood the cultural and traditional fabric that weaves the members of a society together and the changes that have taken place over time, some necessary and made by the people themselves and others forced through Western powers and colonialism. It is also said that many of these people

appear on the scene, write academic and professional articles without proper consultation and disappear, never to return again. Please do not categorise me as a blow-in for my visit here has more depth than an academic exercise. I am Rotuman and back in history, from the 1860s onwards, groups of Rotuman men such as Aisea, Kapieri, Sevasio, Morseu, Raki, Kauata, Saveka, Eroa, Aptinko, Pau'u, Oui, Kiripo and Anise to name but a few, left our shores for yours and since then very little has been known and recorded about what happened to them. Should their stories and those of their descendants be left to die in the waves of time or are there sufficient reasons for capturing the little there is of their past? And what of their descendants and families here and back home in Rotuma and Fiji? A member of my father's family was part of the migration that took place. My father, Tukaha was named after his great grand-uncle, Tukaha, who arrived in your Islands in the 1860s as a pearl diver. After many years of diving, Tukaha grew old, he developed blurred vision and was neglected and destitute. He refused to return to Rotuma. Tukaha's nephew who was 18 years old at the time joined a sailing ship as a crew member to travel to your Islands to bring his uncle home to Rotuma in the 1890s.

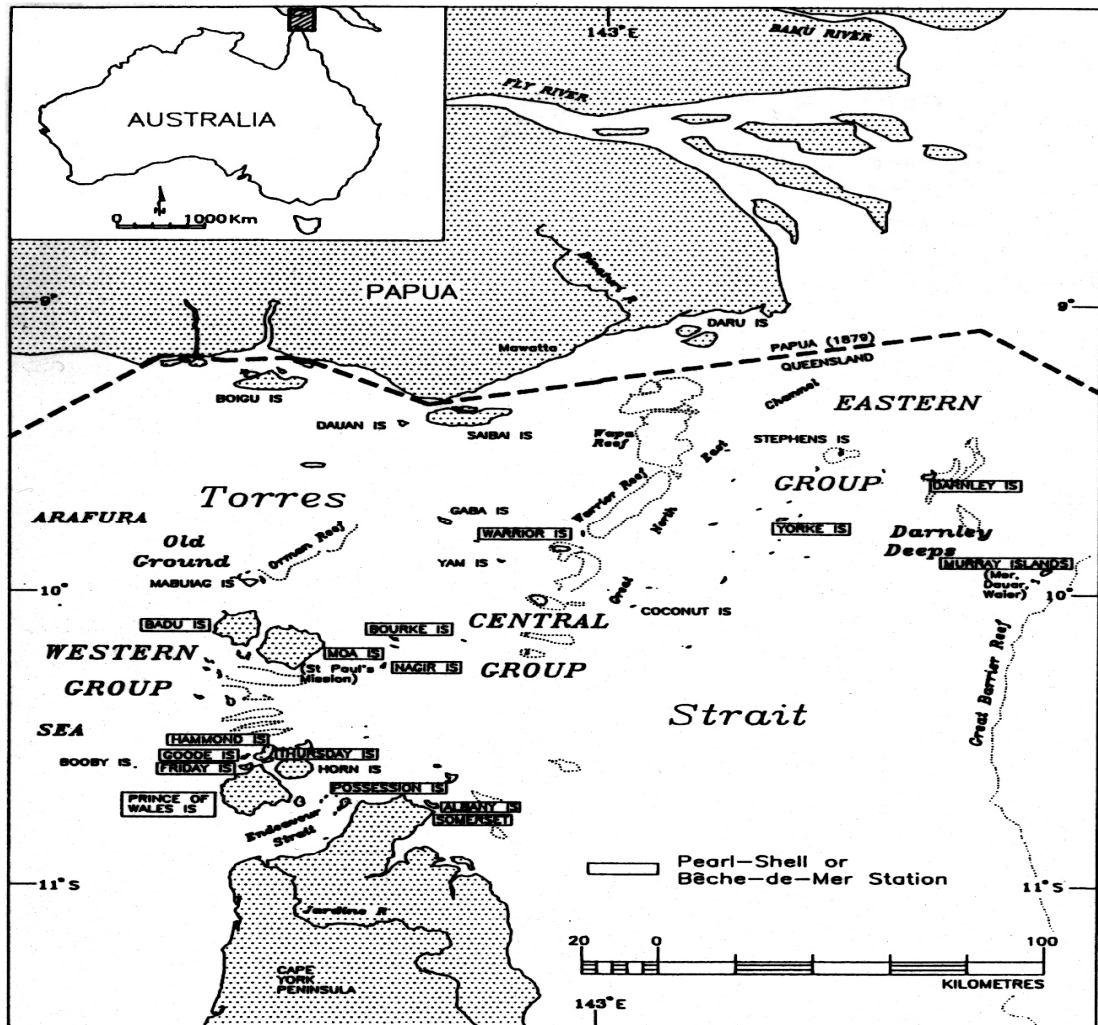
I believe that we, who are historically linked through the early migration of Rotumans to this part of the world, have a duty and a right to collectively tell our stories and have them recorded for the benefit of those who follow after us. It simply means knowing ourselves better and appreciating our importance in the shaping of the society we live in. That sounds like a long-winded argument but I want you to understand that while my stay will be brief, my intentions are sincere and I will be depending on your support in my attempt to begin what may turn out to be a long and interesting story.

When preparing my travel plans I had the good fortune to be given several names of people in the area and I was able, therefore, to make contact with descendants and members of the Torres Strait Islander community. I wish to thank May and Rotannah Passi, Josephine David-Petero, Danny Morseu, Noritta Morseu-Diop, Nancy Sailor, Pastor Kemuel Kiwat, Jen Enosa and Coleen Saveka for receiving my emails and phone calls with understanding and a sincere wish to offer assistance. They have made a positive difference and your presence here today is a definite boost to what has been quite a difficult journey.

Before leaving home, members of my family decided that I should bring along something of cultural significance to leave with you as part of your community collection. This *APEI* is highly valued in traditional ceremonies and is accompanied by the 'eap ma 'on faua. I hope that when you and members of your families see the *apei* in its new home you will be able to say, "that came from our home in the clouds".

Once again, thank you for this wonderful reception and for being so welcoming and friendly. I hope that at the end of all of this I will be able to do justice to your generosity by beginning the long story of our forefathers. *Faiaksea*.

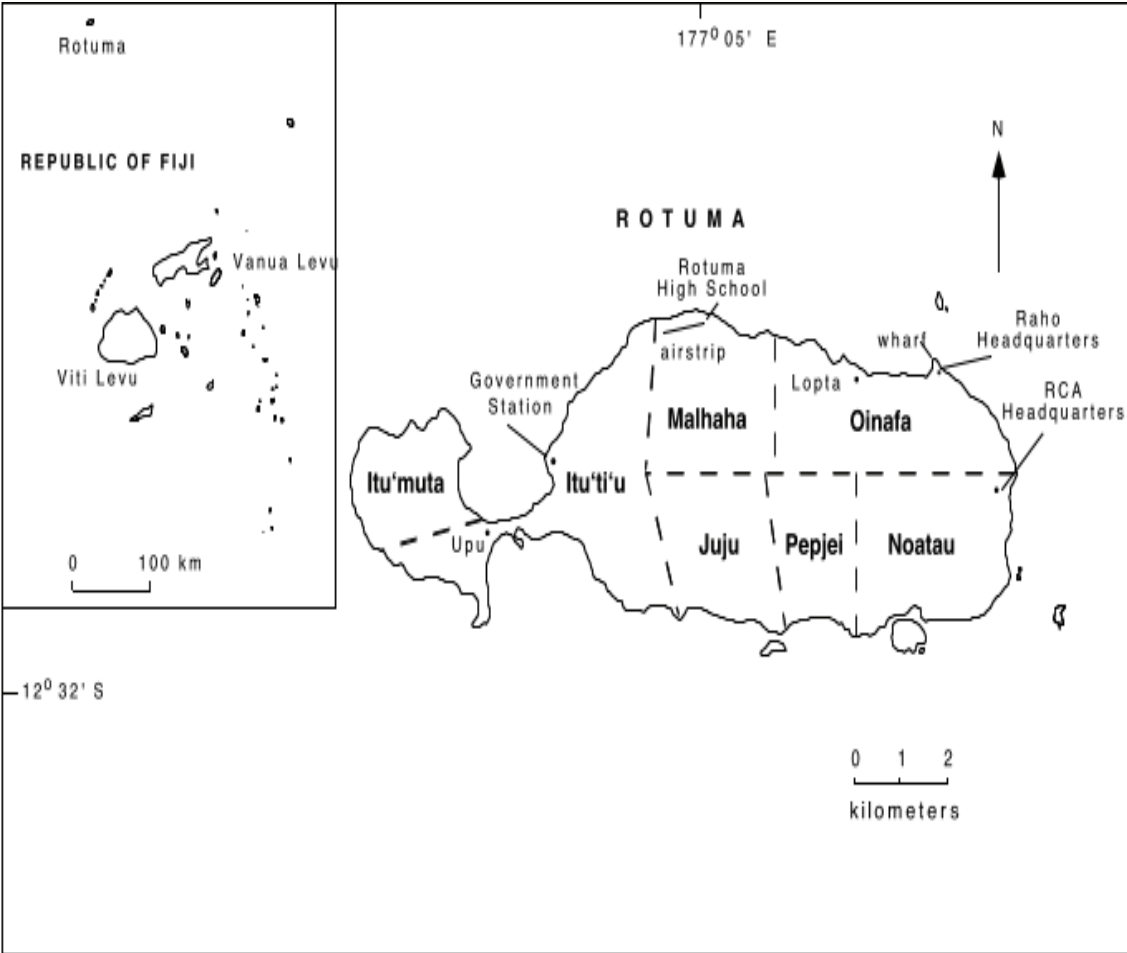
Appendix 2



Map 1 Torres Strait—pearl-shell and bêche-de-mer stations

Source: Ganter, R. 1994. *The Pearl-Shellers of Torres Strait: Resource Use, Development and Decline, 1860s-1960s*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne

Appendix 3



Adapted from maps drawn by Joan Lawrence.

Source: Howard, A & Rensel, J. 1994. 'Rotuma in the 1990s: From Hinterland to Neighbourhood' *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 103:227-254