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PERSONAL NAMES AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION ON TANNA, VANUATU

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In a series of recent publications, Sahlins traces the reproduction (and transformation) of cultural categories in several Pacific societies (1976, 1981a, 1981b, 1983). Among the Maori and Hawaiians, for example, "concepts of descent provide the logical means of this cultural repetition" of systemic relations which are modelled in cosmology (1981a:13). In these societies, cosmology is the paradigm by which social action and historical events are understood. "The narrative sequence and interaction of the categorical beings serves as a model, transposable to many different domains, of the right relations between things" (1981a:13). "If the present reproduces the past, it is because the denizens of this world are instances of the same kinds of being that came before. This relation of class to individual is the very notion of descent, that is, of the relation of ancestor to descendent . . ." (1983:528).

In Polynesian New Zealand, Hawaii, and also in Fiji, the "king" is the descendant, the gods and the heroes his ancestors. In these "heroic societies" (Sahlins 1983:521), history is organised as "the metaphor of mythical realities" (1983:525). These, however, are authoritative myths and unequal realities: "the main relationships of society are at once projected historically and embodied currently in the persons of authority. Contemporary ancestors, such heroic figures are structuring simply by being, insofar as the existence of other people is defined by theirs" (1983:523). These others, the unheroic, may break the rules without threatening the reproduction of structure or the facts of their being: "what ordinary people do is not systematically decisive, in comparison with the higher-order social effects sedimented by aristocratic relationships" (1983:523).

If we leave Polynesia for Melanesia, we depart the realm of Hero and enter the land of Everyman. In this paper, I examine the importance of personal names in the structural reproduction of one Melanesian society. Nomination, rather than descent, reproduces the cultural order. Here, it is not the Hero whose actions and relationships reproduce structure by making current event into cosmology and vice versa. Rather, the main relationships of society are projected historically and embodied presently in Everyman. Everyman's relationships, with ancestral namesakes and

with his fellows, are systematically decisive. From one perspective, the king is nonexistent and this is "unheroic society". An alternative description, better attuned to Melanesian ethos, might be "panheroic society". Everyman is King.

We need descend now from these Olympian heights of heroic theory to earth — to Tanna, in particular, an island in the southern district of Vanuatu. Tanna has an area of 561 km² and a population, in 1979, of 15,397 people who speak five related Austronesian languages (Government of Vanuatu 1984:4). This linguistic diversity overlies an island-wide cultural sameness. People occupy scattered villages and hamlets they build around central kava-drinking clearings. Each evening, local men convene at these clearings to prepare, infuse, and drink the root of *Piper methysticum* (Lindstrom 1981b, 1982). Bounded sets of personal names define and determine the membership of these local groups. Group members recruit heirs by nomination. A person's name determines his local group membership and also endows him with a number of rights, particularly in land.

As a structuring device, nomination stereotypically reproduces single local groups, composed of a set of named persons, emplaced within an island-wide structural network of such groups. These structures possess a durability which exceeds that generated by other principles of local group formation including descent, residence rules, and exchange. Here, it is not merely the Hero whose position within cultural order is reproduced across social time. On Tanna, Everyman receives a personal name — a particular position within a larger structure — which has always existed and which always will exist. Everyman's social existence and nominated position are defined in relation to that of everyone else's, not just the cosmic hero.

NOMINATION AND STEREOTYPIC REPRODUCTION

Following usage common in Melanesia, one might describe Tanna's localised, property-owning groups as "lineages". For reasons which will become apparent below, however, I shall use the term "name-set". These are finite sets of male and female personal names with which group members, recycling names over the generations, nominate their successors. Although people call name-set groups by the formula *nimwipwi-X*' (grandchildren of X), or *kwanakwus* (rope — cf. McDowell 1977), and although they entertain a notion of patrilineal descent and parenthood and symbolise this by the metaphor of shared blood, local group members are recruited by naming rather than by birth. Nomination rather than descent determines each individual's social personality and also the memberships of local, corporate groups.

Name-sets consolidate resources into bundles and establish the bounds of inheritance of property and other rights (to land, magical stones, chiefly titles, herbal medical recipes, rights to eat the heads of turtles, to kill hairless pigs, to prepare the ceremonial variety of kava, etc.). The specific rights controlled by the local group as a whole, including rights to plots of land, are distributed between each of its personal male names to be used by the holder of that name.

In theory, unlike lineages elsewhere in Melanesia, name-sets never disappear or die out. Larger or more successful local groups never incorporate others (along with land and personal names) even if the latter are completely emptied of members. If all men of one name-set happen to be dead, a second name-set (usually one of the several others localised at the same kava-drinking ground) has rights to place a boy into the empty group by giving him one of its available names.

As with local groups elsewhere in Melanesia, an individual's membership in a particular name-set is only one of the factors he takes into account to choose where to reside at various times of his life. Although most name-set members live together near the kava-drinking ground at which the group is localised — and where ancestral namesakes lie buried — some men live away from their group and lands. Everyone, however, has a "proper" place of residence, group membership, and land as given by his name. A goal of debaters during a land dispute, for example, is to achieve a political determination of a man's name to insist that he return to proper lands and local group. Similarly, curers often diagnose the cause of illness to be aberrant residence apart from one's name-set.

Local groups, defined and bounded by nomination, unlike groups whose memberships are recruited by means of other principles (descent, residence rules, big-man exchanging), are impervious to the vicissitudes of historical event and accident. None of these groups is subtracted from the larger pattern of local relations even if all members die or otherwise withdraw from a group. Groups are not only embodied in living members on the ground, but exist also as sets of personal names in people's memories. They are structural pieces whose existence determines and is determined by surrounding pieces of the island's cultural puzzle. This existence is grounded in land. If people wish to use the land of a defunct local group, they may legitimately do so only by reviving and repopulating the name-set, nominating their own sons with its available empty names. This reproduces the defunct group and maintains it within the structure at large.

Where nomination does not serve as the mechanism of local group recruitment, survivors may also recall the past existence of departed lineages, defunct villages, and obsolete big-man centred associations.

Because of exchange mechanics of group recruitment (which depend on the passing successes of big-men) or because of descent mechanics of group recruitment and affiliation (which depend on the less easily manipulable accidents of birth), people are powerless to recreate these exact structures. Survivors cannot recall to life the powerful big-men of the past nor can they reconstitute a dead lineage; descent runs forward only. On Tanna, however, past structures are made present and defunct groups reproduced by naming. This is a mechanism of group constitution and affiliation which men more easily manipulate and control to reproduce structural details in the face of historical and demographic events.

A small example of the socially reproductive power of nomination is given by 19th century modification in Tannese personal names which accompanied strengthening economic and political relations between islanders and outsiders. During these years, many traditional names became associated with an appended, European-derived appellation. Particular, originating historical events of name modification continue to be stereotypically reproduced according to the logic of the system. These European-derived names, given the importance of Christian knowledge and character during these years, are frequently biblical (Timothy [Timothy], Seti [Seth], Ruti [Ruth], etc.). Some names reflect the Queensland Labour Trade experience of the 19th century (Manki [Monkey], Sit [Shit]); others the more recent John Frum Movement on the island (see Guiart 1956, Lindstrom 1981a).

Historical research occasionally discovers the originating event of naming which has since been reproduced in the island's naming structures. Nariu Freeman, for example, today carries the name of the trader Freeman who purchased copra on Tanna in the 1880s (Rannie 1912:118). The missionary William Watt's two children, Thomas and Janet, born soon after the turn of the century, have their contemporary Tannese namesakes living near the site of their father's mission at Port Resolution, as does their father. The Australian journalist Stanley James, who himself used several different names including Julian Thomas and "Vagabond", met up with Koukarei, leader of Christian converts at White Sands, in 1883. Koukarei asked James to name a recently born son. James writes:

I christened him Vaga, and wrote it on my card, with the date, and a request to all white men to respect my godson. . . . In years to come, should he go as an indentured labourer to Queensland, would anyone remember my name and be kind to him on that account? Who knows? (Thomas 1886:258).

There are two boys at White Sands, today, one named Thomas Vagabond, the other Julian. These names became part of the traditional appellatives

belonging to Koukarei's name-set and have been continuously reproduced since James's act of naming 100 years ago. (There is also, of course, a contemporary Koukarei.)

Sets of recycling personal names, which endow the named with plots of land and other resources, may have parallel structural importance for the reproduction of social groups in a number of other Pacific societies. Those societies which assign personal identity and recruit local group memberships in terms of the naming, rather than the birth, of an individual may, in the reproduction of structural detail, surpass those which use principles of descent or exchange imbalance. Forge notes that in Abelam, Iatmul, and other Sepik River societies,

clans essentially consist of a series of names: names of spirits, of totems, of ancestors, of men and women, as well as the possessions of clan members: axes, canoes, dogs, pigs, etc. The clans are essentially identical, all that differentiates them are their name sets (1972:531).

Gewertz, describing the social organisation of the nearby Chambri Lake people, writes:

Although patriclan members claim descent from their patriclan founders, it is the inheritance of totemic names, not the transmission of blood, that links them together. . . . The ownership of the land and water rights is inextricably bound to the ownership of the names which designate them. When an expanding patrilineage can secure possession of relevant totemic names, its ownership of homonymous land and water is secured as well (1977:341).

Gewertz shows how debates, in which the details of clan names are rehearsed and also restored, reproduce the general structure of clan groups and prevent group boundaries from becoming "blurred over time" and the wholesale takeover of small clans by larger ones (1977:350; see also Bateson 1932:409-10). Similarly, on Yap,

each estate itself had a name and carried a set of ancestral names that would be given to the children born on it. . . . To have a name from a given estate gave a man a claim on its land and the statuses with which it was imbued (Labby 1976:18).

The exact significance of nomination *vis-à-vis* descent, in these societies, remains in question. On Tanna, however, the constitution of local groups and the definition of social personalities depend on nomination. An individual's position within social order is given by his naming rather than by the occurrence and genealogical facts of his birth. This reliance on nomination rather than on descent permits the continuing, successful reproduction of not just single Heroes but complexly inter-related sets of Everymen.

NAMING

A Tannese child receives a name from a month to several years after birth.² A father, or other adopting namer, ponders the set of names to which he has rights. This includes, primarily, his own name. The verb *-isiaghin* means to call a child after oneself. Shared name constitutes a significant social relationship. Those who share names call each other "my namesake".³ Men also control primary rights to the names of their namer, and their namer's namer (father and grandfather, generally) and secondary rights to other names in the set. If a man remains as the surviving member of a name-set, he controls all its empty names and has a wide range of nomenclatural choice. If several men are alive, then each has primary rights to certain of the available names. In cases where he shares rights to a name, a namer asks his name-set mates' permission if selecting such a name for a child.

Naming occurs at the local kava-drinking ground where most other important public events take place (debate, dance, exchange, dispute-settlement, etc.). For a first child, the namer's wife's brother (who, if an ideal sister-exchange marriage has occurred, is also his sister's husband) should first enunciate and present the baby's name to ancestors and living alike. After deciding on a name, the namer tells this secretly to the man with rights to pronounce the name publicly. As dusk approaches, this man comes to the kava-drinking ground of the namer and, having been the first to drink, spits a mouthful of kava into the air and whispers the name into the darkness of surrounding ancestors (see Lindstrom 1980). He then pronounces it aloud and others present hear it for the first time.⁴

NAMES AND ENTITLEMENT

A Tannese personal name determines an individual's membership in a local group and entitles him to particular rights and property he inherits from his namer. A name is simultaneously a personal appellation and a title to property including land, magical stones, and positions of control along certain "roads", or formalised exchange relationships which link neighbouring local groups.

Although personal name and title may elsewhere be alternative means of categorising persons, the two types of classifier, on Tanna, are telescoped. As Lévi-Strauss notes:

There is an imperceptible transition from names to titles, which is connected not with any intrinsic property of the terms in question but with their structural role in a classificatory system from which it would be vain to claim to separate them (1966:190).

In its titular aspects, a name conjoins a person with others and endows

him with resources, situating him in the midst of a larger structure of group/land relations. The entitling appellative, however, serves also as a name identifying singularly a particular individual, disjoining him from others.

Naming, rather than birth, is the mechanism of recruitment to a local group. Birth, of course, provides a person with parentage and association with a kindred (see Scheffler 1970). Other, non-kin, aspects of his social "personality", however, devolve on the particular name he receives which he may or may not obtain from his father. Nomination provides an individual with a social personality (the still unnamed young do not wholly count as persons) and recruits members to specific local groups. Both adopted and "natural" children must be so nominated. The son of a name-set member only shares his father's affiliation if he receives one of the specific names belonging to the set.

The Tannese are mononymous (although their names may subsume an additional European component) as opposed to other, polynymous societies in which individuals enjoy a plurality of often context-sensitive names. The significance of mononymy rests in the association between name and local group membership. In that a man becomes a member of a local group by receiving one of its names, he possesses only one name at a time as he may belong to only one local group at a time.

Every name-set owns various plots of land circling the kava-drinking ground at which it is localised. It also owns a set of personal names including names for men, for women, and for pigs. Name-sets of south-east Tanna, for which I have data, generally possess 10 or fewer male names. Each male name holder receives from his namer several plots of land. On one of these usually stands a coconut plantation. Other plots scatter along the range of name-set territory from valley floor to ridge top. Some of these plots are entailments of a particular personal name. The association between name and land plot, however, is often not neat. Two names may have rights to the same plot ("both eat off the same land," as the Tannese say). Presently, in south-east Tanna, namers may decide which of their plots each of their several named heirs will receive. Moreover, in the case of certain plots, people have vague or conflicting knowledge about entailment, plot size, and boundaries. They may debate the entitling relationship between a name and a land plot over the lifetime of a name-holder. Name/land relations are for some plots *ad hoc* compromises which depend on the particular land claims made and subsequent public decisions about the details of entitlement. Nevertheless, people keep in mind the ideal of a customarily entitling relationship between a particular name, its land, and other associated rights.

Personal names, like name-sets as a whole, are never subtracted from

larger structure. They, too, are stereotypically reproduced. Individual members of a local group (named persons within a name-set) are nominated and die but their names endure within the set. If a personal name is temporarily out of use, some man will possess the right to bestow it; he also enjoys usufruct over name-entailed property until he transfers the name to another, usually a young boy. Vested rights in a name belong first to the named's fellow group members (who are likely also to be members of his kindred — his brothers), then to men of other name-sets localised at the same kava-drinking ground. Inheritance consists of succeeding a previous title-holder in his name and lands. The person who gives a name obtains various guardianship rights in the named, including rights to agree to and arrange the named's marriage. A person's namer is usually, but not always, also his father. One might inherit entailed land and rights from a namer and receive other goods (money, rights in a vehicle, etc.) from a father.

Men also bestow names on their daughters (unless some other person adopts a girl by naming her so as to control her subsequent marriage). Traditional women's names, however, do not entitle a person to any rights in property. Before marriage, most women reside with their namers. After marriage, women reside virilocally, joining the local groups of their husbands. Some women, nowadays, receive only a European-derived name from their namers. Women have only use rights in their names and may not pass these down to their children. The men of a woman's name-set (her brothers, usually) remain in control of her name, eventually to bestow this on one of their own daughters. Thus, a man's sister and his daughter are frequently namesakes.

STRUCTURAL REPAIR

In heroic societies, as Sahlins notes, the deviations of unheroic, ordinary people do not lead to structural transformation in so far as it is only the actions of the hero-king which have "higher-order social effects" and determine successful structural reproduction (1983:523). In panheroic society, however, the actions of anyone are potentially systematically decisive. Tannese local group structure meets the occurrence of deviant individual relations and events principally by renaming the individuals involved. This renaming diffuses the challenge of deviance by incorporating the event within governing frameworks. Structure, thus, is repaired and reproduces itself (in further naming) without significant transformation.

An individual's death, for example, occasionally instances renaming as available named social personalities are reshuffled among surviving individual members of a name-set. The event of an individual's death does not directly threaten the structural configuration of a local group.

but it does free up a name; a death may set off a chain reaction of renaming. If the deceased does not already have a living namesake, another member of the name-set may choose to assume his now empty name, which may have valuable entailed rights (to a chiefly title, to control of a significant "road" linking two local groups, etc.).

In a typical instance, Rosiau's death occasioned several shifts of name within his name-set. Rosiau had no children of his own but had recruited name-set members by bestowing his available names on the sons of men of other name-sets localised at his kava-drinking ground. One of these young men, named Tio, although not yet married, himself recruited an additional name-set member (the son of Tio's father's brother) whom he and Rosiau named Iahua. A month after Rosiau's sudden death, Tio organised a renaming ceremony — a ritual similar to that of naming. Men gathered at the local kava-drinking ground, drank kava, and spat out the dregs to inform the dead Rosiau that Tio was assuming his name. This renaming emptied the name Tio as the old Tio became the new Rosiau. Subsequently, Iahua, the remaining member of the name-set, was renamed Tio. Iahua at the time was a small boy of three years who accepted his new name and social personality with equanimity. If asked his name, he with certainty and dignity replied, "Tio". The renamed Rosiau has since had a son of his own, whom he named Iahua.

More serious challenge to structure arises from circumstances and events which lead individuals to withdraw or be ejected from a particular local group. Again, in these instances, structure is repaired by renaming the individuals concerned. Individuals may transfer from one name-set to another for several reasons. Warfare, in the past, was one of these. People taking permanent refuge in a host name-set were renamed with local name-set names, giving up the appellatives associated with their lost lands and identities. Murder offers a second sort of challenge. Exchange, on Tanna, is one of identities rather than equivalences (Lindstrom 1984). A murdered person's worth is inexpressible in some equivalent medium of exchange (e.g., pigs) as it is in other Melanesian societies. Only his identity — another person — is an acceptable return to restore relations between local groups. People balance a killing by offering to the victim's family a replacement individual (often the killer). This person thereupon assumes the name and social personality of his murdered namesake. Finally, divorce is a third (although uncommon) event which occasionally ruptures relations between individuals and name-sets. A divorced wife may return to her namer's local group (usually her father's) with one or more of her children. These children will be assigned new names and become members of their mother's namer's name-set (and lose membership in that of their original namer's, usually their father's).

Disputes between name-set members over land or other resources may engender attempts to dename a name-set member. This denaming, if successful, strips the individual of his entitled rights. Denaming attacks are levelled at name-set members who are not the sons of another name-set member and who violate expected norms of group solidarity (who reside, for example, apart from their peers). The denamed are directed to return to the name-set of their fathers for replacement personal names, entailed lands, and other rights.

Nuvavo, for example, who lives apart from the rest of his name-set and has a name with entailed rights in valuable coconut plantations, has been threatened several times with denaming at dispute-settlement moots convened by his fellow name-set members. Nuvavo's father belonged to a second name-set to which his peers hope to force him to return by removing his name. To the present these denaming attempts have been unsuccessful. Nuvavo has mustered enough local support to deny their legitimacy. He also takes care to contribute to the marriage, circumcision and other feasts his fellow name-set members organise.

Recent national political competition has also engendered attempts to dename wayward name-set members who support a political party in opposition to that of the rest of their name-set. Gideon Nampas, a Vanuaaku Party member of Parliament, received his name from a name-set which supports the John Frum Movement, part of the Opposition Federal Party in Vanuatu. After an initial altercation between Nampas's supporters and his opponents, John Frum leaders carried out their attempt to dename Nampas in the pages of *Tru Toktok: Journal de Parti Fédéral Des Nouvelles Hébrides*:

Kidion Nambas: Nambas emi wan big name long Tanna. Trifala brata ya nao (Peoda, Aissea, mo Josuah) oli kivem long Kidion. Tetaem we ol trabol ya i kamoat nao, ol Tsif blong "John Frum" mo "Kapiel" oli luk se, Kidion emi flas mo emi stap yusum name ya long rabis wei, oli disaedem blong tekemot name ya bakegen. Nao, oli nomo kolem em Kidion Nambas, bat Kidion nomo, forom name ya, emi bisnis blong ol man Tanna nomo (1979:3, Bislama orthography sic).

Gideon Nampas: Nampas is an important name on Tanna. Three brothers (Poita, Isaiah and Joshua) gave this name to Gideon. At the time when trouble broke out, every Chief of the John Frum and Kapiel organisations had decided that Gideon was too proud and was using this name in an improper manner, and decided to remove the name from him. Now, all no longer call him Gideon Nampas but only Gideon. This name is the concern of only the Tannese (my translation).

This attempt, too, failed to dename. but it illustrates the capacity of

structure to repair itself by means of renaming. Deviations of historical event and individual relations are encompassed by renaming. These do not result, therefore, in transformations of the structural details of the local group system which might arise if individuals transferred membership between groups without also relinquishing personal names and entitled rights.

TRANSFORMATION

Local group structures may find some events impossible to encompass without transformation. As Sahlins notes, "the worldly circumstances of human action are under no inevitable obligation to conform to the categories by which certain people perceive them" (1981a:67). Naming practice encountering certain indigestible events may unwittingly bring about transformations in local group structure: "Here the cultural encompassment of the event is at once conservative and innovative" (Sahlins 1981a:68). Local groups which reproduce themselves by recruiting members by means of finite and (in Tannese ideal) frozen sets of personal names face obvious challenges of demographic event.

One such structural embarrassment may have been population movements associated with warfare (perhaps exacerbated by access to new European weaponry). Migrations of this sort threaten the matrix of local groups emplaced on particular lands. Naming practice possibly could meet this challenge, however, with available renaming mechanisms of structural repair. Humphreys, who interviewed old warriors in the 1920s, records that they denied ever seizing the territory and kava-drinking grounds of the vanquished (1926:60). Guiart (1956:99) reports that refugees always thought to return home. If they did not, however, they received new names with entitled lands from host name-sets. If victors did appropriate territory, they probably also took local names and assumed the social personalities of the vanquished, thus repairing a structural fabric torn by war-induced population movement.

Population movement also occurred following the successful missionisation of the majority of the island's populace early in this century. Many of the Christianised moved to newly established villages, mostly coastal. These villages endured, however, only a few decades. People began returning to local lands in the 1920s and 1930s (Guiart 1956:150). The outbreak of the John Frum Movement, in 1940, led to a final structural reconstitution as most remaining Christians returned to home name-set lands and kava-drinking grounds (Guiart 1956:163).

Population growth or decline, if uncontrolled, also sets obvious problems for Tanna naming practice. A number of structural mechanisms address demographic growth and decline within name-sets, balancing

available names and potential group membership. The most important of these mechanisms is adoption. Of 22 males who are members of name-sets localised at Iankahar kava-drinking ground, for example, nine (41 percent) are members of name-sets different from those of their fathers. If one set runs short of names to bestow on sons of members, men of other name-sets absorb these excess babies to redress their own surfeit of personal names (and land) and paucity of members. Children are also adopted within a name-set if one member has primary rights to more available name-set names than another. The decision to adopt is a personal one. Men do not make this in terms of whether their name-set, as a collective, is long or short in members but in terms of providing themselves with heirs to receive the entitled names, magical stones, knowledge, and land they control. Namers also adopt girls by naming an available baby with one of their female personal names if they have insufficient daughters of their own in order to assure wives for their male heirs. (Tannese sister-exchange marriage depends on the exchange of identity rather than equivalence.)

A second mechanism which adjusts available individual/personal name ratios is name sharing. A namer names a namesake and two men, the one usually old and the other young, share the same title, social personality and entailed lands. The older namesake usually uses the traditional name as a personal appellation while the younger uses its appended European name until he succeeds completely to the title at the death of his namesake. Here, two men occupy one name, thus reducing pressure on the set as a whole.

A third adjusting mechanism appears to be name splitting. In many name-sets, one finds generic/specific types of names (Napau Rosioto, Napau Iamaimeri, Napau Natuagin). This sort of nomenclatural splitting recalls the creation of specific from generic taxa names in ethnobotany. (Berlin 1972) and is probably associated with a parallel splitting of entitled rights.

These adjusting mechanisms adequately transfer individuals from crowded to empty name-sets and provide additional, if temporary, "room" in a set by manipulating its stock of names. Naming practice, however, may be less able to encompass recent population increases which have affected unevenly different areas of the island. Population density for the island as a whole in 1979 (the last national census) was 27.4 people/km² (Government of Vanuatu 1984:4). Densities, however, vary markedly from locality to locality. Surplus names and available entitled lands are nearly exhausted in areas which, because of the accident of mission station placement and a resulting economic centrality, have experienced large population increases. During the past century,

people moved into these areas to stay, legitimately (receiving a local name) or not. Whereas in the Kwamera language area of the south-east, local structures continue to be stereotypically reproduced by nomination, in the White Sands/Weasisi area (site of the main Christian mission in East Tanna), nomination mechanisms of local group constitution have transformed into descent. In 1979, south-east Tanna had a population of 1637 while the White Sands/Weasisi area, many km² smaller, had a population of 3420.

Wilkinson reports for Weasisi that while, in the past, "the giving of a name conferred rights to land" and the ideal was for a man to have a single heir who inherited his name (1979:75, note 11), at present, men inherit land from fathers, not namesakes. She noted only five cases of adoption in the villages she studied (1979:74). Here, the entitling relation between names, land, and local group membership has broken. People still name children, but personal names no longer define membership in local, land-owning corporations. Instead, inheritance of resources and local group membership depend on patrilineal descent. Whereas in south-east Tanna every male has a traditional name, around White Sands some receive European-derived appellatives only. This is particularly so of children born out of marriage with no responsible guardian namer. While in the south-east illegitimate male children are incorporated into a name-set with an available name (particularly that of the mother's father or brothers), around White Sands, illegitimate male children — with only a European name and no socially recognised father — have no proprietary rights to land (only usufruct they obtain from maternal kin).

Steady population increase causes local groups to run short of names with entitled land rights. Neighbouring name-sets, over-populated themselves, can no longer absorb the over-production of individuals through adoption. Adoption and renaming practice, which once repaired structure by distributing individuals among name-sets, ceases. Local group members are constrained to endow their sons rather than their namesakes with land and other rights. Land plots, moreover, once associated with a single name, are divided among several heirs, breaking traditional entitlements of personal name. Namers, attempting to operate in terms of traditional naming practice, find that they have transformed local group structures. Name-sets transform into lineages.

HISTORY AND PERSON

I conclude with some speculative thoughts about cultural concepts of history and person in panheroic societies. As Sahlins notes, different cultural orders have their own historicities (1983:525). What of history on Tanna, where social personalities, and the web of local group rela-

tions in which these are emplaced, are stereotypically reproduced?

Although concrete experience of temporal duration is a human universal, "there is no absolute necessity for an historical image of duration to arise, or to become dominant" (Barden 1975:332; see Howe 1981:223). If people do not stretch duration beyond the bounds of their own lives, historical time may not exist. Moreover, where history does exist, a number of alternative concepts and metaphors govern its understanding. The relation of the past to the present may be one of progressive continuity, of cyclical reproduction, or of "episodic", instantaneous change in which the past is unconnected to the present and vice versa (see Errington 1974:257; Kahn 1983:110).

Barden, discussing Australian Aboriginal notions of time, suggests that, as opposed to the diachronic Nuer system which encompasses a certain, if shallow, historical time depth conceptualised in terms of genealogy, the Aboriginal system is synchronic. Constantly reproduced kin sections (similar in this regard to Tannese name-sets) establish the main atemporal framework of social classification: "In the desert system there is no time at all, duration is overcome by the constant repetition of the pattern" (1975:333).

This suppression of a historical understanding of duration by a system of social classification differs from conceptualisation and elite control of history in heroic societies. Here, Sahlins suggests a "division of labor in historical consciousness" (1983:521). For the elite, social time is calculated in dynastic genealogies: "... collective history resides in royal traditions" (1983:523). Ordinary people, however, "verge on 'historylessness'" (1983:524) and, in this, resemble the panheroic Tannese. In Hawaii, the unheroic have only "news" of the past and personal recollections in place of genealogical memory.

On Tanna there is no such division of labour. Everyman's genealogy is shallow, rarely extending more than three generations into the past. Genealogies, after all, are associated with diachronic descent rather than synchronic nomination; they depend on a system of social classification and history which does not suppress duration. Where stereotypic reproduction of Everyman succeeds, historical duration is superfluous.

Tannese do have images of "then" and "now". The present is not the past. Barden argues that in stereotypically reproduced synchronic social orders, duration is "overcome" by being perceived as contrast: "... duration is the elementary experience, but the conception of this experience is in terms of contrasts between states" (1975:336). Then and now are connected, but not by means of some progressive, continuous time conceptualised socially in terms of a genealogy of successive generations. Now is notable because it is in some remarkable fashion different

from then, rather than taking its principal value from being after then or before then.

The several spatial metaphors of time stretch poorly to cover this sort of historicity. Lines, cycles, spirals, oscillations between points all fail to capture exactly the organisation and suppression of historical duration in terms of stereotypically reproduced named social personalities within local groups.

I have borrowed from Leenhardt the term "social personality" to refer to a named member of a name-set. Describing naming systems of New Caledonia, Leenhardt notes:

. . . the ancestral name, periodically restored over the generations, actualizes the former personage by investing a new person in the society with his august personality. . . names return periodically, marking a rhythm of original personalities which are the group's strength (1979:156, 158).

Although individuals are born and die, social personalities remain always on stage (or recallable with the assignment of an empty personal name). Specific personal rights and a place within a general structure of local relations also are properly changeless, taken up again each time an individual is nominated with a local group title.⁴

Sahlins describes the "heroic I" — the use by kings of the first person singular pronoun to refer to the actions of past ancestral heroes (1983:523; see also Sahlins 1962:254, 1981a:14). This is an expression of "positional succession" where contemporaries enact the structural positions of ancestors. On Tanna, where Everyman is a contemporary namesake, we find the "panheroic I". Everyone may use the first person singular pronoun *iou* to refer to the action of past namesakes. Iaukarupwi, for example, when discussing his historical 19th century namesake, who had dealings with various European visitors to Tanna (see Steel 1880:456; Palmer 1871:38, 46; Goodenough 1876:275), speaks of these bygone acts as his own: *Iou* 'I did it'.

Silverstein calls manipulated personal pronouns of this sort "pragmatic metaphors" (1976:39), but the meaning of this panheroic I differs from that which Silverstein adduces for those metaphors he discusses (i.e., to index speaker-hearer deference). Instead, it expresses "positional replacement" (rather than the positional succession of heroic society). I am I now. I am also all that my namesakes were then. A similar "metaphorical" usage occurs in the application of kin terms of address. A man may sing out "grandfather" or "father" when summoning his sons if these carry the names of his recent ancestors. This again marks positional replacement: a boy assumes the position within kin terminological relations once occupied by his dead namesake.

If, socially, an individual is nobody without a given personal place within structure, we can still locate an individuality within historyless personality. Individuals experience and sometimes cannot avoid acknowledging temporal duration (if only as contrast) along with other real aspects of circumstance and event. Although the lexeme for personal name (*naghu-*) is a member of that inalienable class of nouns taking possessive suffixes, along with most body parts and some kin terms (cf. Codrington 1891:29), individuals are not completely inseparable from their named social personalities. They may, in fact, "alienate" these. Some individuals replace one name with another (this is serial mononymy) and, thus, during their lives may be two or more social personalities as they take on new names (changing position within a name-set or losing names in disputes). An important part of one's nominated social personality consists of all the rights, duties and actions of all one's past namesakes (these acts often are codified in song). Here is a window in structure open to transformation. The actions of individuals, and the circumstances they create and encounter (including gain or loss of land), accrete to their named social personalities. These acts become part of nominated structural position, if succeeding namesakes remember them.

On Tanna, Hero-King, genealogical descent, positional succession, and a division of labour in historical consciousness are supplanted by Everyman, nomination, positional replacement, and "historylessness". In heroic society, social reproduction is made possible by various devices the most important of which is a distinction in social significance between the weighty acts of the elite and the invisibility of the unheroic. In panheroic society, where everyone's being defines that of everyone else's, reproduction proceeds by defining and constituting local groups and social personalities with naming rather than at birth. The problem, here, is not just to reproduce the singular cosmic-copy hero in order to maintain a system of right relations between categories, but to reproduce an entire Hall of Fame. Happily, nomination, much more so than descent, is immune from most inconstancies of demography and event. The entire society of nominated Everyman — not just one descending Hero — is thus made reproducible in its detail.

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NOTES

1. In accordance with Lynch (1978) the symbol / represents a mid-central vowel and g a velar nasal stop.
2. Increasing importance of civil recording of island births is, in some cases, shortening this time. This creates problems if namers need time to arrange to use a name controlled by another or if a determination still needs making as to the father (and therefore most responsible namer) of a child.
3. Similar names occur in name-sets across the island (perhaps refracted by language difference: Nilua becomes Nirua, for example). Shared name ideally makes relations easy between two men who call each other namesake to underline social closeness in addition to nomenclatural identity.
4. Traditional names are sometimes referentially opaque (but may be drawn from other languages of southern Vanuatu) and sometimes transparent. The latter, for example, include Rapi (he cries), Paupauk (butterfly), Nase (adopted one), Kira (ladder), Kahi (biter), and many kinds of trees and plants. In that naming is a recreative rather than creative act, people do not normally keep name meanings in mind. The same name may be a male appellation in one name-set and a female in another.
5. Nineteenth century epidemics and associated steady population decline undoubtedly also had an effect, perhaps transformational, on local group structure.
6. People also suppose that the named take on aspects of character and skill possessed by previous namesakes in addition to their social positions (Gregory n.d.:28; see also Feinberg 1982:582, and Labby 1976:18).

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