

**A Discursive Analysis of the  
Representation of the Jonfrum  
Movement on Tanna.**

by

**Jane Lucy Bari**

**Submitted for the Bachelor of Arts Honours Thesis,  
Department of Social and Cultural Studies,  
Faculty of Arts,  
Victoria University of Technology  
1994**

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY



3 0001 00194 6849

FTS THESIS  
306.0899595 BAR  
30001001946849  
Bari, Jane Lucy  
A discursive analysis of the  
representation of the  
Jonfrum movement on Tanna

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the invaluable assistance of the following people in the course of producing this thesis:

Professor Ron Adams for his confronting, honest approach in examining this writing and in providing me with an appreciation of the mechanics of writing. Especially though, for his open-handed generosity in providing me with access to his historical documents and resources.

Dr Julie Stephens for her expert critical analytical skills and in providing me with an enhanced appreciation in bringing the text to life.

To Victoria University of Technology for enabling a 'high school drop-out' like me to 'get an education' and experience personal growth.

Squadron Leader Jon Harris, my tolerant husband, who has heard nothing but thesis writing and Jonfrum for the past year.

To that select group of relatives, the 'knockers', misogynists and sanctimonious moralists, who have taken every opportunity to employ guilt in order to undermine my need to become educated and who have expressed the worthlessness of educating women - eat my words!

## CONTENTS



Introduction ..... 1

### Chapter One:

Textual Objectivity ..... 6

### Chapter Two

Jonfrum and Knowledge Production ..... 25

### Chapter Three

Western Attitudes Towards Non-Textual, ..... 46  
Conflicting Ideologies

### Conclusion

The 'Savage' Paradigm in 1994 ..... 61

### Bibliography

"It is quite evident that we may expect sporadic attempts to renew the Jonfrum movements every time some mad coon gets it into his head that he is Jonfrum." (British Administration, Folio 96/1943)

## INTRODUCTION

Jonfrum, Jon Frum, John Frum, Jon Broom ... 'cargo cult', ecstatic movement, revitalisation movement, religious movement, new social movement, millenarian movement or nationalistic dissent? The principal endeavour of this thesis is to employ a discourse analysis into the written text with a view to determining how the Jonfrum movement on Tanna has been 'packaged' for western consumption.

This thesis draws upon various references as a means of gaining a deeper comprehension of the western interaction with and representation of the Jonfrum movement on Tanna, a fertile, south west Pacific island in what was formerly known as the New Hebrides but now bears the name of Vanuatu. This writing seeks to engage in discourse analysis of the Jonfrum movement as a means of locating the silent, yet pervasive, power dynamic which operates subtextually. This thesis proposes to examine the subtle relationship which exists between the word and the text, and how these combine to create a specific 'subjective' reality in terms of which one establishes meaning.

This thesis is not a polemical work but, rather, one which seeks to investigate the subtextual nuances which present a particular discourse and reveal it to be culturally constructed and contestable. An anti-positivist approach is taken as a means of challenging the notion that the authoritative narrative voice stems from an objective base. Rather, it will be shown how the constituents of the authoritative narrative voice often stem from

a white, western, masculinist basis which is, in turn, reflected in the resultant discourse production. This approach may bear similarity to a postmodern reading of documents as it confronts and contests the concept of 'objectivity'. Linnekin expresses this view succinctly:

An apparent commonality in 'postmodernist' works is the premise that every writer's narrative vision is inevitably shaped and constrained by a particular social, political, and historical context (Linnekin, 1992:252).

An awareness of the "social, political and historical context" of the author is pre-eminent when conducting a discourse analysis. The individual is a product of social conditioning which is, in turn, formed by dominant societal mores.

Chapter One is largely concerned with teasing out the subtle relationship between knowledge and objectivity which has been secured within the presumed innocence of the written text. Discourse analysis into current literature will guide the reader into the proposition that the divide between 'civilised' and 'savage' dominates western discourse.

This Chapter introduces what seems to be an almost intrinsic need of western culture to categorise and classify the unknown within the safe confines of textual 'objectivity'. The very concept of 'objectivity' is questioned in view of the social construction of the text. Following the discussion on the need to categorise the unknown, Jonfrum will be examined as an

exemplar of the western need to textually locate such movements within a fixed locus.

Consciously (and self-consciously) following the categorical approach to locating Jonfrum, a basic preview of theories surrounding the emergence and viability of 'cargo cults' will be provided with a view to exposing the general western focus of understanding. Following a discursive analytical approach, there will be no specific preference expressed in favour of one 'cargo cult' theory over another. Allocating merit to different 'cargo cult' theories is not the purpose of this writing. This thesis is largely concerned with re-reading the words which have been employed to describe Jonfrum. Representation and cross-cultural encounter will be examined with a view to testing the hypothesis that the Occident categorises itself by viewing the Orient as the unknown Other. Cross-cultural representation is the critical interest of this thesis writer as she draws on her own non-Anglo Australian experience as a means of exploring how Jonfrum, as another 'foreign' cultural practice, has been identified, discussed, written and subsequently responded to as the Other.

Chapter Two locates dominant discourses, such as colonial Administration correspondence, which will be re-read 'against the grain' to reveal how Jonfrum has been identified, classified and subsequently dealt with in a Eurocentric-specific manner. A theoretical link between comparative philology and the civilised/savage domain will be drawn. This will lead on to examining how colonial Administration, drawing from medical



metaphors, dealt with and wrote about Jonfrum in such a manner as to equate this movement (and its activists) with disease.

This Chapter deals with the selective process involved in using specific tracts of written knowledge to substantiate a particular world view. The Jonfrum 'disease' is extracted from colonial documents and re-surfaces in the print media for wider consumption. This Chapter highlights the filters of knowledge which are implicit in knowledge production, and concludes with a brief cross-cultural comparative analysis of what constitutes the truth. The role of Christianised 'natives' as vehicles in the production of knowledge is considered, as is the relationship to dreaming and subjective reality.

Chapter Three continues the discourse/power paradigm and surveys non-textual discursive strategies adopted by the Tannese in order to maintain a voice in the face of colonial control. Chapter Three centres on conflicting ideologies. This Chapter discusses the role of dance as a non-verbal discourse, which was ultimately controlled by both colonial and missionary influence, albeit for two different reasons. Whilst from a missionary perspective dance equated to moral corruption, colonial hierarchy interpreted it as an alternative expression of power which implicitly contested colonial hegemony. Dance as a form of 'native' resistance leads on to consideration of other forms of symbolic voices which are denied. The appropriation of symbolic discourse in the form of 'message' coconuts raises the prospect of another avenue of Tannese resistance and articulation. The

red colour of the nuts forms another discursive element for the increasingly silenced Tannese.

Chapter Three examines how the paternalistic attitude adopted by missionaries towards Tannese perpetuated the power/discourse paradigm in which the 'natives' came to be regarded as naive children. This section of Chapter Three highlights the reality that people who are regarded as children are denied an 'adult' voice and, thereby, are disempowered. Missionary emphasis upon the pseudo-scientific genetic inferiority of the Tannese, as another form of discursive 'castration', is also scrutinised.

The thesis concludes with a brief discourse analysis of a 1994 newspaper travel article which discusses Tanna today. The aim of this section is to convey to the reader that the civilised/savage paradigm, which has been central to the discourse/power element of this thesis, is still evident. The 'primitive', 'savage', 'native' remains available and accessible for public consumption. Said's seminal concept of Orientalism has proven its efficacy and relevance in 1994.

CHAPTER ONE:Textual Objectivity

Jonfrum is obviously closely related to the many other native movements in other places that have come into being spontaneously after a certain amount of contact with Europeans. In New Guinea and Papua they are generally known as Cargo Cults; but similar manifestations have occurred in Africa and other native countries. They may take slightly different forms but all are based on a fundamental envy of European goods ... Knowing nothing of the countries from whence they come; of their origin or manufacture, sooner or later from among the natives will arise a "prophet" who will propound the theory that these goods are really treasure from benevolent ancestors, sent to the natives but intercepted by the wily Europeans and diverted to their stores. The remedy is obvious: Get rid of the white men and the "cargo" will naturally keep coming to its rightful owners - that is, the natives (Priday, 1950:67).

What will emerge from this chapter is that attempts to describe or categorise Jonfrum provide more of an insight into western modalities of thought than they do into the perceptions or experiences of the movement's followers. In particular, the Administration and missionary responses to Jonfrum reflect the prevailing colonial culture, in terms of which the movement was viewed as a threat. British Administration records, especially, are an immensely rich resource because they can be 'read against the grain' to reveal an unofficial agenda which can be characterised as the Occident/Orientalist paradigm considered by Foucault:

Resemblances require a signature, for none of them would ever become observable were it not legibly marked ... What form constitutes a sign and endows it with its particular value as a sign? - Resemblance does. It signifies exactly in so far as it resembles what it is indicating (that is, a similitude) (Foucault, 1994:28).

The implication is that the descriptive language employed in categorising Jonfrum provides the reader with an insight into the reflective psychological processes of the authoritative narrative voice. Jonfrum may be regarded as an exemplar of the social construction of the 'native', the 'foreign', the 'exotic', the 'unknown'. The body of western literature on Jonfrum provides an insight into the power dynamic which operated between the coloniser and the colonised.

Said's concept of Orientalism provides an entry point into examining this dynamic:

Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient - dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (Said, 1991:2).

According to Said (1991:7), the structure of Orientalism is not merely a "structure of lies and myths" which has been created by the West, but is more a sign of the western power mechanism which extended over the Orient. An Orientalist perspective may be readily applied to the emergence of Jonfrum and its subsequent 'treatment' by colonial rule. The literature and colonial

documents which will be explored attest to this, as will be demonstrated in the course of this essay. Orientalism is a means of making the unknown known for the Occident. Capturing the essence of the Orient reveals the psychology of the Occident. The Self, as a central point of reference, reveals the difference in the Other.

This thesis argues that the various discourses on Jonfrum served as a sociolinguistic conduit which enabled 'legitimate' western political and cultural hegemony over 'Man Tanna' (1). Discourse analysis into various bodies of literature reveals that the Jonfrum movement was regarded as highly problematic and in need of political guidance and control because of its alternative and, from the dominant colonial Administration perspective, unacceptable symbolic universe (2). The textual surface of literature conceals a sub-textual agenda which is grounded in a fundamental lack of cross-cultural knowledge of Jonfrum.

---

(1) I use the term 'Man Tanna' with reservation as it is not gender inclusive and, as Douglas (1992:86) appropriately comments (see Footnote 7), certain societal sectors are rendered inarticulate. I am aware of the absence of women in this debate. However, for the sake of 'authenticity', I am utilising 'Man Tanna' as it appears in the various sources cited.

(2) The symbolic universe is conceived of as the matrix of all socially objectivated and subjectively real meanings; the entire historic society and the entire biography of the individual are seen as taking place within this universe (Berger & Luckmann, 1991:114).

This thesis does not wholly subscribe to a deconstruction process as a method of analysis, but it does seek to accentuate the relevance of the unwritten pauses and the use of specific semiotic descriptions in literature in an attempt to provide the reader with a richer comprehension of the socio/political dynamics which surrounded Jonfrum. One major aim of this thesis, then, is to look beyond the characterisation of Jonfrum in existing discourses, with a view to re-interpreting them.

This thesis attempts to expose the subtle nexus which exists between power and discourse. The Jonfrum movement was construed by colonial Administration as constituting a threat to its highly reified institutional power base. From a western religious perspective, Jonfrum was interpreted as an epistemological rival between the Tannese and the missionary establishments which sought to bring the knowledge of their particular god to these 'native heathen'. It is in this context that the prison sentences imposed upon various "seditious" Jonfrum "agitators" are to be understood. Firstly though, to self-consciously follow the accepted formula of classification, I will discuss Jonfrum as a 'cargo cult'.

Jonfrum was not a spontaneous occurrence, but one which evolved over the course of time and as a result of various events. Rice (1974:xi) provides an excellent account of how 'cargo' and the cargo messiah, Jonfrum, originated on Tanna shortly before the second world war. Jonfrum appeared over

several years. Initially, however, the first self-proclaimed Jonfrum, Manehevi, prophesied apocalyptic disaster (followed by cosmic renewal) in the form of a massive natural disaster which would result in volcanoes collapsing, followed by Tanna uniting with the surrounding islands and becoming flat and bountiful. Youth and vitality would be the order of the day, along with a general exodus of Europeans from Tanna, leaving the country in the control of the indigenous population. The movement's name was said to be a derivation of the 'native' word, "John Broom":

It has been applied to several "Tanna for the Tannese" movements among the natives in recent years. The allusion is to an expected reincarnation of St. John the Baptist who is (figuratively) to take a broom and sweep away the white man and bring the Tannese into paradise. Each time a new "Jonfrum" arises he brings new ideas with him (British Administration, Folio 87a/1943).

Eliade (1975:47-48) has discussed how such cosmogonic myths are re-enacted in widely varying cultures; not only during New Year celebrations, but at other crucial times such as the pending harvest disaster, the enthronement of a new chief, the declaration of war and in times of disease. During times of disease, the symbolic return of the past acts as a psychological catharsis. The cosmic renewal aspect of Jonfrum may be interpreted as indicative of the Tannese awareness that life, as they conceptualised it, was gone forever. The alien 'disease' had to be purged to enable a return to the mythical plenitude.

A core element of the 'disease' was Presbyterianism, with British Administration correspondence of 1943 citing the 1912



Alliance between the Tannese 'big chiefs' and the island's first British Agent, Wilkes, as instrumental to the movement's origins. This meeting was the result of native discontent with repressive measures taken by missionaries who held great influence over the Tannese. Wilkes, incidentally, regarded Island Presbyterianism as the "mailed fist type of evangelism such as I have never seen nowhere [sic] else in the Pacific" (Rice, 1974:62-63). The rejection of Christianity is an element of nearly all cargo cults (Eliade, 1969:130). Religious discontent as a foundation of Jonfrum is noted by British Administration correspondence:

The island had for some time been subjected to "mission law" which was to the native mind too strictly prohibitive of those things which the native enjoyed - e.g. prohibition of kava drinking, whores, polygamy, dancing, - with only the institution of "schools" to take the place of these things (British Administration, Folio 80/1943).

This was the context in which the island's 'big chiefs' decided to accept Condominium law, as a perceived lesser intrusive authority than "mission law". The meeting also decided that Tanna would have to await the coming of a "saviour" to return it back to "darkness". The 1941 Jonfrum emergence was witnessed by five of the seven 'big chiefs' who were present at the 1912 Alliance meeting. These men agreed that Jonfrum was indeed the saviour predicted in 1912.

However, the 1941 Jonfrum was found to be Manehevi, an imposter, and was officially exposed as such by Karaua's confession at an official inquiry (British Administration, Folio



20/1941). Manehevi was consequently imprisoned for seditious activities but the 'big chiefs' told the Tannese to keep on the watch for another "saviour". Subsequently, Neloia (who will be discussed in relation to the British and French panopticon in Chapter Two) was to emerge and take up the position (3). History aside, the problem of categorising Jonfrum becomes evident when perusing a selection of literature.

Trompf (1991:189-191) highlights the problematic process which various authorities have encountered in their attempts to provide a definitive label for Melanesian cargo cults. Trompf comments how the sociological and anthropological preference for naming these movements as a "cult" accentuates how "cargo" and "cult" have become inseparable, stating that "the word [cult] seems to stick to the phenomena like glue." Trompf also argues that "independence movement" and "adjustment movement" are inadequate labels. Trompf also rejects the theory that cargo cults are a manifestation of the psychological tension which emerges in times of rapid social change (Schwartz cited in Lindstrom, 1990:1-2). Haviland (1987:332) reiterates this theme

-----

- (3) Foucault (1991:200-201) discusses Bentham's panopticon, a building designed so as to ensure that prisoners are kept under constant institutionalised gazes. This is a stark contrast to the earlier dark dungeon prisons which kept prisoners in darkness. The merits of a panopticon arrangement means that the fear of being watched by authority is ever present. The panopticon has transcended the concrete edifice and is now part of autonomous, anonymous societal institutions. Panopticons are used in various fields of control, including that of the ever watchful eye of government instrumentalities, hospitals, the military and the judicial system.

and refers to cargo cults as "revitalization movements" which emerge in periods of cultural tension and changing social conditions. This term and concept is refuted by Trompf (1991:190) who maintains that this perception is now dated and the consensus view tends more towards cults as a vehicle for preparation of cultural transformation.

Lindstrom (1990:1-2), on the other hand, discusses how typically functionalist explanations of the emergence of cargo cults centre on several themes. A functionalist perspective hinges on the need for Melanesians to adapt to social change (Burridge cited in Lindstrom, 1990:1-2). Lindstrom links the knowledge/power paradigm to these functionalist approaches and adopts a Foucauldian dimension into the origin of cargo cults, stating that they also display a relationship between knowledge and power (Lindstrom, 1990:2).

Another interpretation, which postulates a correlation between nationalism and cargo cults, centres on cargo cults as symptomatic of indigenous dissent toward colonial presence. This theme is succinctly described by Worsley (1970:162-171; Worsley cited in Stephen, 1977:7). Stephen concentrates on the failure of cargo cults to satisfy the 'native' need for knowledge of "white man's wealth and power" and believes that at least they have provided the first step towards the paradigm shift from magico-religious to scientific based knowledge systems. This gap in conceptualisation can be successfully spanned by education and experience (Stephen, 1977:14).

Opeba (1987:62) also embraces the concept of a paradigm shift, (persuasively, to my mind) and segments cargo cults into old and new. Whilst older cargo cults were inspired by ritualistic approaches to societal changes, newer cargo cults stemmed from an anti-white/anti-colonial rule base. It was during the newer phase that cargo cults expressed a desire for material wealth. However, where and why does the need to classify Jonfrum occur? Goody problematises categories:

The trouble with the categories is that they are rooted in a we/they division which is both binary and ethnocentric, each of these features being limiting in their own way ... We speak in terms of primitive and advanced, almost as if human minds themselves differed in their structure like machines of an earlier and later design (Goody, 1987:1).

The need to classify Jonfrum is indicative of the centrality of signification to the human condition (4). Humans possess a need to categorise and classify the world in order to describe it (Spender, 1980:139). The dilemma with this process is that once classification has been applied, the object in question becomes a construction. Language serves as a definer of reality and it is only through the classification inherent in its process that the individual is able to view the world. What is problematic in this inevitable process is that language is never neutral:

- 
- (4) Berger and Luckmann (1991:50-51) discuss the human need for signification; that is, the production of signs which serve as an index of subjective meaning. It is not merely a vehicle which carries ideas. It is itself a shaper of ideas, it is the programme for mental activity (Whorf cited in Spender, 1980:139).

Sapir (cited in Feleppa, 1988:56) draws attention to the subtle correlation between language and reality. Language is instrumental in formulating subjective reality. The "real world" is moulded from culturally specific linguistic patterns and no two languages are mutually interchangeable. The language of one culture cannot ever totally accurately replace that of another culture:

No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The world in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached (Sapir cited in Feleppa, 1988:56)

This concept bears relation to the manner in which Jonfrum has been discussed; especially from the point of view of colonial Administration. This concept will be elaborated upon in Chapter Two. Language is the primary vehicle for subjective formation and the scholar/environment duality crosses over into the textual objectivity domain. In other words, language, which is instrumental in formulating subjective reality, becomes recorded within the permanency of the text. Can the text, then, be deemed 'objective'?

Said (1991:10) considers the process of separating scholars from their environment, implying that the knowledge the person produces cannot be deemed 'objective'. Sharp reiterates Said's position on discourse analysis and suggests that a reductionist approach (from a white, western stance) towards cargo cults is problematic largely because the starting point of knowledge

acquisition emanates from a socially constructed world and the seeker of knowledge may readily fall victim to an Orientalist perspective (Sharp, 1976:6). As Said comments above, can the text be separated from its environment? Is it possible to write from an outer stance, looking into another culture? Conversely, can this thesis be written from a purely 'objective' basis? The answer, of course, is no, because the writer cannot separate herself from her sociological environment from which her own conceptualisation of the world view has been formulated within the parameters of her life experience.

Another dilemma faced by this writer is that she is acutely aware that the process of writing and speaking about the past involves the "concepts and presuppositions derived from one's experience and understanding of the present" (Guha, 1989:214). Can concepts which belong to one historical context function adequately in another? Bourdieu comments that the social science domain should concern itself with "the social operations of naming and the rites of institution through which they are accomplished" (Bourdieu, 1991:105). The simple act of naming serves as a means of placing the object into a socially pre-defined parameter of conceptualisation. Nonetheless, is it legitimate to look back into the written past and view the "social operations of naming" which occurred and discuss them outside their context and environment? Does this process produce an 'authentic' representation of the 'facts' on hand or does it merely reproduce another power/discourse paradigm?

The dilemma which exists in aiming to write objectively in a subjectively 'loaded' environment which is defined by historical context is considered by Atkinson who comments on the reality/knowledge paradigm in relation to the perceived 'objectivity' of the text:

The 'factual' reportage of narration of events is never entirely devoid of textual conventions. In the first place, there is no neutral language of observation available to authors. The discourse of everyday life is itself a matter of convention. Mundane experience is itself socially constructed through discursive practices. It is the world in which we place our trust: a bedrock of taken-for-granted faith. We should not be misled by the natural attitude of everyday understanding into thinking that this discourse of the natural attitude is itself given naturally (Atkinson, 1990:40).

Douglas aptly reiterates the centrality of cultural conditioning in relation to the textual construction and suggests that the 'cultural baggage' of the author must be included:

Each kind of text, including the works of professional historians, anthropologists and archaeologists, must be read critically and creatively, rather than literally. We must be alert to the author's cultures, values and interests, and sensitive to the ways they use language to serve those values and interests (Douglas, 1993:15).

Douglas raises the pivotal issue of being aware of the writer's "interest" when reading critically. As this thesis draws upon various bodies of literature in a textual analysis of the Jonfrum movement, the relationship between the writers and their respective affiliations must be elaborated. For example, the Oceanic missionaries wrote from a religious "interest", the



British Administration from a political "interest", and anthropologists from a cross-cultural "interest" - all of which are reflected in the manner of representation. Regardless of how genuinely different writers have attempted to make a quantum cultural leap in understanding Jonfrum, the very process of forging representation, as Eagleton has commented, always inscribes an:

arbitrary closing off of the signifying chain, constricting the free play of the signifier to a spuriously determinate meaning which can then be received by the subject as natural and inevitable (Eagleton, 1991:197)

As Said observes, written language does not merely contain "a delivered presence, but a re-presence, or a representation" (Said, 1991:21). These "re-presentations" are determined by traditions and institutions which operate within a western framework of conceptualisation. Foucault's hypothesis on difference in terms of order bears similarity to Said:

One cannot know the order of things 'in their isolated nature', but by discovering that which is the simplest, then that which is the next simplest, one can progress inevitably to the most complex things of all ... In this way we establish series in which the first term is a nature that we may intuit independently of any other nature; and in which the other terms are established according to increasing differences (Foucault, 1994:53).

Representation emanates from a specific ideological basis. In order to tease out the content of representation, one must consider the reified institution from where it emerges. A

perusal of the Jonfrum literature reveals that it emanates from a western conceptualised framework of comprehension.

The "increasing differences" issue is confirmed by Duerr, who discusses the "fence or hedge, separating the domain of the wilderness from that of culture" (Duerr, 1987:64). A reading of Condominium records presents a case where colonial rule was not willing to cross over the self-imposed "fence or hedge" but was intent on systematically removing this imagined boundary and dragging the Tannese into the 'real world' of civilisation, order, rules and regulations of the twentieth century, either with or without their consent.

Jonfrum was embedded into an ordered system of signification by Condominium rule. Jonfrum activities (and its principal participants) were observed in permanent written form by these various "interest" groups (to use Douglas's term). Jonfrum is recorded from a non-Melanesian context and this is where the dilemma of meticulous and accurate "re-presentation" occurs. A crossing of the cultural divide is fraught with problems.

For this writer, the crossing is also fraught with personal ethical problems. From my non-Anglo life experience within a dominant Anglo-centred culture, the question as to how one culture can write about another culture accurately is more than an academic issue. Each culture formulates its common stock of



knowledge from a specific Weltanschauung. (5) How an alien culture can tap into another culture's shared life experience and subsequently record these experiences faithfully needs to be addressed.

Another problematic aspect of discourse analysis is that the reader invests considerable currency in the text as the source of knowledge. Does such investment in the written word provide the reader with a 'real' view of the subject or does the reader who accords too much totality in the text risk becoming a victim of a textual attitude? (6)

When we read British Administration records, we cannot expect to discover Island administrators to have possessed a comprehensive cross-cultural appreciation. Britain's prime concern was to administer the New Hebrides jointly with the French under what is known as Condominium rule - not to record

-----

(5) Among all social groups there exists what sociologists would call a 'world view' or 'Weltanschauung.' This refers to a system of ideas and beliefs which serves to support the existing social order (Boronski, 1987:1). Berger (1986:78) believes Weltanschauung is "a conspiracy" because the conspirators who construct the social situation increasingly become entangled in the mesh of basic assumptions, which the taken-for-granted reality becoming absorbed by the individual to constitute the truth.

(6) Said (rather harshly, to my mind) says that "it is a fallacy to assume that the swarming, unpredictable, and problematic mess in which human beings live can be understood on the basis of what books - texts - say; to apply what one learns out of a book literally to reality is to risk folly or ruin (Said, 1991:93).

the perceived cultural differences which existed between the indigenous peoples and the colonisers. Accordingly, the historical records reveal that Britain was more concerned with ensuring that the colonial machinery operated efficiently. Keeping one step ahead of any Jonfrum "manifestation" was ensured by regular production of "Jonfrum Quarterly Reports" in which the Condominium panopticon recorded in written form any 'unusual' native behaviour, 'problem' natives who could pose a threat to colonial rule and prolific speculation as to when the next "outbreak" would occur and how to quell it.

Jonfrum activities resembled a socio/political landscape which the colonisers 'discovered' surveyed, charted, labelled and ultimately controlled. They achieved this by restricting the production and content of Island discourse, and by the selective/effective use of banishments and "Confining Orders" to control the physical mobility of known 'problem native' individuals who possessed the audacity to speak of Jonfrum. Condominium records reveal a textual bias which silenced the colonised into a passive state. (7) For example, two Jonfrum

---

(7) Douglas (1992:86) expresses the view that social historians are in the process of redefinition to redress the inequality of representation of "women's, peasant's, workers', the colonized - rendered inarticulate by textual bias." This thesis acknowledges the textual bias against Jonfrum believers and is concerned with exposing the power/discourse dynamic which perpetuates this view.

members, Nekaio and Mailes, were made to sign the following declaration removing themselves from any Jonfrum-related activities:

We the undersigned, Nekaio and Mailes of Ipekkel, do hereby declare and promise that we will have nothing more to do with the affair of Jonfrum or any other matter of a seditious nature which may directly or indirectly affect the peace and tranquillity of the people of Tanna. We promise that if we hear any talk of any such movement we will at once report it to the Government and will do everything in our power to stamp it out. We know now that we were wrong in having anything to do with this movement before and we now sign this declaration as an earnest of our desire to work with the Government for the betterment of our people so that we may all live in peace and contentment without the fear of such troubles to disorganise native life (British Administration, Folio 351a/1949).

What did signing a declaration mean to these men, members of a still predominantly oral culture? Nothing unusual according to a file note to the British Resident Commissioner which proclaims that the Tannese did invest credence in the written word:

The Tannese, as a whole, consider themselves bound by the written word to a far greater extent than by the spoken promise (British Administration, Folio 240/1947).

This issue is addressed by Ong (1988:11) who proposes that writing has the ability to "make 'words' appear similar to things". Literary-based cultures regard words as the central signifier, words are the "visible marks" by which the object becomes defined. Ong remarks that "written words are residue" and oral cultures do not possess such visible traces. In oral

cultures, the ability to recount an event exists only within the human potential to do so. In the written declaration cited above, Nekaio and Mailes are 'requested' to promise to report any 'Jonfrum talk' to colonial authority, thus ensuring that knowledge ceases to be circulated. The declaration relates Jonfrum to "seditious" activity. However, from a Tannese perspective, which is more "seditious"; participating in Jonfrum as a tangible means of conceptualising the changing objective world into a comprehensible subjectivity, or being forced to cease the circulation of knowledge by the only means possible - the spoken word? The 'native' becomes silenced by the power of the text. Again, the issue of literary legitimation is raised.

One reason why cargo cults have not been adequately examined within the cultural parameters of the Melanesian context relates to the belief that non-literary cultures equate to naive modes of existence (Sharp, 1976:8; Farrall, 1981:71). In literary-based cultures, religion has a theological base. In non-literary cultures, the transmission of religious truths is via a "social relational form" (Sharp, 1976:23). This difference leads one to consider the possibility that Tannese investment in Jonfrum as a religion was not viewed as 'legitimate' by colonial rule because of its non-literary based form of knowledge transmittal. This possibility is reinforced by Rice's comments on the European pre-occupation with a linear concept of history which is heavily invested in the authority of written documents. According to Rice (1974:73), Melanesians base their "moral, intellectual and conceptual structure on myths."

On Tanna, discourse is controlled non-discursively. In this oral culture, discourse is allocated sanctioned physical space such as public clearings and specific private roads which link villages. Restriction on physical mobility is another factor which controls discourse (Lindstrom, 1990:21). Colonial rule meted out Banishment Orders as a means of controlling 'seditious natives'. Mailes of Ipekel, Tanna, for example, was "confined for five years from 21 December 1943 to town of Vila" because he was deemed to be "dangerous to the peace and good order of that island" (British Administration, Folio 141a/1943) (8). A variety of island discourses will be taken up in Chapter Two.

---

(8) Incidentally, "peace and good order" as a legitimating act of 'native' repression, appears throughout Condominium records.

CHAPTER TWOJonfrum and Knowledge Production

The colonial possessions, as everyone so frankly called them, were properties to be administered ... kindly administered, naturally - nobody but the most frightful bounder could possibly question our sincerity about that - but firmly too, my boy, firmly too, lest the school-children of Empire forgot who were the prefects and who the fags (Grimble, 1981:1).

Power manifests itself in the seemingly innocent process of recording information on the activities of Jonfrum. Reading isolated documents conceals this dynamic but a sustained reading of folio after folio confirms Davis's contention that:

Colonial power relations find expression in words as much as in actions. Relations of power are embedded in European colonial discourses, which create hierarchies and typologies that establish difference, render silent, exclude or incorporate indigenous Others (Davis, 1992:49).

The suggestion that words are central to the exercise of colonial power forms the basis of this chapter, which examines the power/discourse nexus embodied in the colonial and medical reaction towards the Tannese. The perceived madness and irrationality of certain Tannese individuals will be explored as an exemplar of the subtextual control mechanism put in place by Condominium rule after consultation with western medical expertise. Reference to Melanesian conceptualisation of dreams and visions will also be explored as a means of culturally



contextualising the significance in the "manifestation" of Jonfrum. Such application will attempt to reveal that western reaction to Jonfrum was embedded in a fundamental lack of cross-cultural appreciation. The deficiency in part relates to the comparative method of conceptualisation, which had its genesis in comparative philology.

Sir William Jones's comparative work on Latin, Greek and Sanskrit in 1785 lay the foundation of comparative philology (9). This discipline was later taken up by German scholars and further applied to the "scientific model for the comparative study of law, religion and society" (Cohn, 1985:326). In the nineteenth century, the comparative method of study drew together various disciplines and came to be regarded as the basis of comprehension for the origin of things. The comparative method enabled the classification of texts for the purposes of creating a linear chronology. Such application facilitated the classification of language in a genealogical sense; that is, the location of one original language as constituting the origin of all other languages in a specific order of descent.

Applied to colonial Administration and missionary domains, the comparative method of conceptualisation created a division between 'civilised' and 'savage'. That is, the 'civilised'

-----

(9) See also Kuper (1988:32-33) for further comment on the scientific historical method of comparison as a means of locating 'primitive' society.

element of society regarded itself as the central referent and placed the 'savage' on the periphery. Such division calls for specific rules of management. The binary division and classification of 'us' and 'them' is evident in British Administration correspondence. Steinbauer's work, with its pragmatically organised comparative numerical listing of cargo cults, provides such an example (Steinbauer, 1979:85).

European reaction to Jonfrum was indicative of a culturally specific framework of conceptualisation which emanated within confined parameters. Missionaries, colonial Administrators, settlers, doctors and the military all exhibited their own particular response to Jonfrum within specifically defined boundaries.

In a wider conceptual sense, the adverse regard for Jonfrum can be linked to the fervent colonial pre-occupation for observation and ultimately to the Foucauldian notion of the panopticon: the all-seeing, all-controlling, elevated construction of the institutional gaze (Foucault, 1991:200-201). The gaze observes and records the Other within the permanent boundaries of the written document. British Administration records are replete with the pre-occupation of watching suspected 'natives' who may be implicated in Jonfrum activities. Joe Nalpin, for example, who was implicated in a Jonfrum "manifestation", falls under the pervasive institutional gaze of British District Agent Nicol who:



Seized letter from Private Nalpin instruction [sic] Nako build house for Jonfrum at Lenakel. Also two letters from prisoner Bill at gaol (British Administration, Folio 32/1941).

Colonial rule decides that Joe Nalpin should be "confined" to a particular town so that he may be watched intensively in order to stop Jonfrum gaining further control:

I consider it undesirable that he should do compulsory residence in the town as he would have too many opportunities for propaganda work. I think after having served his term of detention he should be kept in a place where his activities can be supervised, and as a Policeman the task is rendered much easier (British Administration, Folio 39/1941).

Power dynamics are heavily embedded within the presumed neutrality of discourse. The text is seriously implicated. A sustained reading of British Administration records exhibits an undercurrent of power play, not only from coloniser to colonised but spilling across the Administrative hierarchy as well and even downwards to European settlers residing on Tanna. British Administration's compulsion for written reports is indicative of a control mechanism.

Colonial rule's panoptic gaze ensured that members of the white populace came under its domain of power. Bannister, a store owner who experienced a 'native' raid on his goods, is soundly criticised within the privileged confines of the colonial text. Bannister's transgression was to send a 'native' to obtain the Assessor, Seloki, who happened to reside one hour's distance from the store. Historical documents record that Bannister

should have informed British Administration first as Seloki's honesty is called into question. Can the 'native' be trusted?:

Seloki himself could have done nothing, and would undoubtedly have come across to report to us. It was only the intelligence of the native Moses who, being unable to find Seloki, immediately told the story to Nalau Kotiama, and accompanied him with all speed across the island, that enabled us to take the essential quick and drastic action that we did (British Administration, Folio 210/1947).

Bannister is subjected to further criticism in colonial documents as he made no effort to transmit written knowledge of the incident. Colonial rule's currency is the written text which must elaborate all information clearly, articulately and poste haste:

He made no effort to send a letter or a written report, sent no direct message to us, and only supplied the necessary official report on being specifically asked for it in writing by my colleague - and then only in a somewhat sketchy manner (British Administration, Folio 210/1947).

Colonial rule placed importance on a specific type of written discourse as constitutive of power/control. Colonial hierarchy fails to consider the possibility that Bannister may not possess adequate literacy skills to provide a report. District Agent Nicol is repeatedly criticised by colonial hierarchy for not providing prompt, elaborate and concise details on Jonfrum activities. The dynamics behind this seemingly innocent criticism must be examined within the discourse/power domain. The bottom line of persistent criticism levelled towards

Nicol relates to power as colonial hierarchy seeks to control the quantity and quality of discourse as a means of maintaining its power base. Nicol is compelled to submit the written text on a regular basis to facilitate the colonial panopticon's operations:

His Excellency has noted with satisfaction the action taken by you in connection with the discovery of the ringleaders of the movement and wishes to be kept fully informed of any developments and of any fresh incidents which may occur. I should be glad, therefore, if you will review concisely but clearly the progress of events ... This should be forwarded in three copies by next mail without fail and followed by every mail without fail by a "progress report" (British Administration, Folio 51/1941).

Nicol's perceived failure to provide discourse upon request is subjected to increasingly acerbic criticism by colonial hierarchy, as it requests him to "be explicit and do not economize time or telegram" (British Administration, Folio 77/1942). Cross-cultural power relations between British and French officials are revealed in the following correspondence which further criticises Nicol's perceived lax literary skills. The power dynamic below, which relates to the French/British Condominium rule, hints at possible loss of British face in the eyes of French rule. Nicol becomes the metaphorical whipping post:

Both replies are long overdue. Please continue to be more methodical in such matters in future as non-compliance with such instructions causes embarrassment here. You should in future report recommendations on all detained or banished natives at least one month before due date of release (British Administration, Folio 11/1942).

Colonial rule's almost obsessive regard for written records points to the role of language as the major definer of reality and as the primary vehicle which provides a layer of logic upon the objectivated social world (Berger & Luckmann, 1991:20). Language is central to constructing legitimacy and imbuing this to the institutional order. The institutional order rationalises this logic and places it into the common stock of knowledge. Institutionalised knowledge becomes regarded as a valid truth and any form of deviance becomes regarded problematic and is categorised into the realm of irrationality:

Such a deviance may be designated as moral depravity, mental disease, or just plain ignorance (Berger & Luckmann, 1991:83).

The institutional order produces its own specific discourse which defines and orders objects (Foucault, 1972:49). However, the institutional order may draw upon other institutions as a means of validating general 'truths'. Colonial Administration garnered institutionalised knowledge and validated 'truths' from the medical profession as a means of dealing with Jonfrum. Medical knowledge was an instrumental feature of colonial control, not only physically (as will be discussed in relation to Neloia), but linguistically. Medical terminology which occurs repeatedly in British Administration files evokes the impression that Jonfrum was a contagious disease with the potential to sweep out of control across Tanna. Medical terminology, emanating from a highly reified and respected institution, aided in the substantiation of the generalised

validated truth about Jonfrum. Alone, the medical institution could not significantly alter the outcome of Jonfrum. Collectively, within the auspices of colonial rule, medical knowledge created an enonce of legitimated repressive measures to contain Jonfrum.

Foucault discusses the notion of enonce (statement) constituting a core element of knowledge (During, 1992:95). When "strung together and framed", enonces formulate a discourse. British Administration correspondence contains instances of enonces which describe Jonfrum activities. Singularly, these enonces appear innocuous but their potency becomes apparent when they are collated over a time period. Certain words, such as "manifestation" and "outbreak" continually surface to create a discourse of disease; one which must be isolated and controlled, not unlike how the lepers were treated in the Middle Ages (Foucault, 1991:198-200):

Although I feel sure that it may be considered that the latest outbreak of Jonfrum agitation has been effectively stopped, I think it may reasonably presumed that further outbreaks are quite likely to occur (British Administration, Folio 80/1943).

Here, colonial rule relies upon speculation and not concrete 'facts' in order to act administratively:

The French District Agent and I, in the absence of any precise information as to the extent and danger of this latest manifestation, agreed that immediate and drastic action was necessary in order to prevent a possible spread of the movement (British Administration, Folio 202/1947).

The Jonfrum 'disease' had the capability to spread, like a deadly scourge, across the controlled landscape:

The Jonfrum movement is not dead by any means, but all we can do is to await the next manifestation and deal with it even more severely (British Administration, Folio 211/1947).

The Jonfrum "movement" is undoubtedly of very old origin, but it did not flare up (into the limelight) till the later 1930s ... Your conclusions in this respect are, I think, more or less correct, but the Agreement was, and may well remain, a great step forward in keeping the movement under control (British Administration, Folio 285/1948).

Disease legitimates the use of restrictive treatment before it escapes and carries out untold harm. Medical intervention is employed as a method of containing and controlling the 'native' body. Such intervention was not only at the metaphorical level but carried over to the physical.

The madness label emerges as a focal motif in a variety of Jonfrum literature, especially from the point of view of the British Administration, which had to 'deal' with 'problem natives' on a primary basis. Alleged insanity on the part of Jonfrumites legitimated repressive measures on behalf of the British empire. For example, the second self-proclaimed Jonfrum, Neloiaq, was discussed intensively by colonial rule, subsequently labelled insane by the efficient colonial machinery and legally sequestered. Neloiaq was a symbolic representation of the site



of conflict between two distinctive cultures. (10) He came to represent the docile indigenous body which was controlled and confined by colonial text and colonial power. Neloiaq became an ideological leper.

Neloiaq was the son of one of the original 'big chiefs' who formulated the 1912 Alliance (Barrow, 1952:10). Neloiaq pronounced himself to be the King of America and that he had been "charged by the Americans to construct a landing-field which would enable his father to fly in with all sorts of trade-goods" (Priday, 1950:61).

Neloiaq's sanity is speculated upon with considerable energy within British Administration correspondence. "Person named Loiaq is quite mad", declared Nicol in 1943 (British Administration, Folio 61/1943). On another occasion, Nicol was more expansive. Note how the use of the term "tales" lends a derogatory flavour to Neloiaq's account:

The accused, although sensible on some points seems to be quite mad on others. He has given us two tales as to how and why he became Jonfrum. All we can do is to consider his guilt or otherwise of causing trouble in Tanna and then leave him under observation (British Administration, Folio 78a/1943).

---

(10) The medical intervention and subsequent control of Neloiaq by colonial rule bears a striking similarity to treatment placed upon Indian plague victims by the British Raj. Colonial rule and medical rule intervened to engender far reaching indigenous control (Arnold, 1987:55-56).

This observation leads on to reasons for Neloiaq's condition. The speculative genetic factor is taken into consideration by colonial rule as a means of adding to Neloiaq's perceived mental instability. After all, if insanity 'runs in the family', then the probability that Neloiaq must be insane emerges. "They say his mother was mad", declares Nicol (British Administration, Folio 78a/1943). This comment leads to the 'natural' presumption and adoption of the madness thesis higher up the colonial Administrative scale of authority. A letter emanating from the British Residency declares that, "it must be borne in mind that Neloiaq is insane" (British Administration, Folio 80/1943).

Finally, the medical panopticon is employed to justify and legitimise the official discourse:

Report on the Mental Condition of the Tanna man,  
Neloiaq, 22 November 1943.

Neloiaq was first seen by me on the 4th. instant. He was quiet, and answered questions moderately well, but not naturally. All told, his responses were not those of a normal person.

When seen again on the 8th. he appeared to be more rational, and I thought that there was an improvement in his behaviour.

When seen again on the 20th. he was even less normal than when first seen on the 4th (British Administration, Folio 89/1943).

The "mental condition" report on Neloiaq further consults expert medical comment for validation of its scientific findings. The medical officer acknowledges that 'independent' opinion must be



sought to substantiate the madness thesis and seeks to locate "facts":

In a case such as this such reliance has to be placed in the reports of others, and I have learnt the following facts:

From Mr. Seagoe -- Prisoner on several occasions has been apparently quite rational on being interviewed, but on being left has made a great noise which, a minute later, he denied. He has been violent, rattling the cell bars, and so on.

From Mr. Johnson -- Showed delusion of grandeur, claiming that destroyers passed at sea were his, and that he had many aeroplanes.

From police guard -- Many exhibitions of violence (British Administration, Folio 89/1943).

The process of legitimation follows a strikingly similar format to the formulaic path taken by academic writing. Firstly, the hypothesis evolves. Secondly, external reference is sought to validate the hypothesis. Thirdly, the hypothesis is upheld because external reference agrees with the original hypothesis and a general validated truth has become an actuality. Independent 'facts' accumulated from rational authorities add credibility to the hypothesis. The medical officer, upon consultation with 'independent authorities', creates a general validated statement which reveals an aura of 'truth'. The end result for Neloig is imprisonment under the institutional gaze:

I would say that prisoner is mentally unbalanced. He might become better or worse. He should be kept under constant observation, and while he shows any evidence of violence, under lock and key (British Administration, Folio 89/1943).

The madness of Jonfrum is now part of the taken-for-granted reality. The repetition of Neloia's perceived madness has become a taken-for-granted, concrete reality. This reality becomes known as the 'truth'. The alternative symbolic universe of Jonfrum activists is featured in other written texts, apart from official colonial correspondence. Jonfrum's connection with insanity becomes public knowledge via literary journals, such as the Pacific Islands Monthly.

Priday's references to 'native' madness/sanity struck a chord with Pacific Island Monthly readers who would have shared a similar conceptual framework, a similar symbolic universe:

This form of native madness is well known to anthropologists who have recorded outbreaks from most native countries at some time or other

As Father O'Reilly says at the conclusion of his article, the only cure for it is sane education

As well as adding to our knowledge of this primitive psychological kink (Priday, 1950:67).

At a rudimentary level, editorial comment in the Pacific Islands Monthly, serves as a vehicle for perpetuating the "vast accumulations of meaning and experience" (Berger & Luckmann, 1990:52). This information is disseminated via an established institution; one which possesses both the legitimating factors of 'history' - an objective patina of 'authority' and credible facticity. That is, the independent authority (the editorial author) presents the written work in a factually credible

journal. These elements combine to present the reader with an Orientalist perspective by a knowledgeable institution which purports to be objective, elaborating universal truths about Jonfrum.

Contrary to Priday's initial comment, the reader does not experience a "clear and unbiased account" of Jonfrum but is exposed to the opinion that the Tannese are 'primitive' in behaviour and belief. The editorial comment superimposes a layer of objective reality upon the article to ensure that the reader adopts this view. The editor acts as a representative of an institution which deals with the collecting, filtering and publishing of knowledge and does so in such a manner as to confirm the 'native madness' thesis. In this way, Jonfrum successfully escapes the confines of colonial correspondence and is ready for public consumption. The disease is now public knowledge available to feed back into and legitimate the colonial perspective.

In such unlikely out of the way places as Warrnambool in Western Victoria, the madness of Jonfrum followers is 'objectively' presented to western readers. The Warrnambool Standard, celebrating the centenary of mission establishment in the New Hebrides, describes the earlier cannibalistic tendencies of the 'natives' and the process by which they gradually became Christianised through tireless missionary effort. However, in 1940, a "violent revolt against the whites and their standards

of living" arose which called for repressive measures on behalf of Condominium rule. Military reinforcements were sent in to quash dissent:

The natives were frightened into submission by rifle fire and hand grenades. Care was taken that none was killed or wounded (Warrnambool Standard, 17 April 1948 edition, cited in British Administration, Folio 261/1948).

The invention of hand grenades highlights the problem of 'media beat-up' and points us to the way in which 'facts' are constructed to suit the occasion. The perceived danger towards whites is accentuated when the newspaper report is re-read against the original military report, compiled by Major Patten of Headquarters III Island Command, who states that the artillery employed consisted of ten rounds apiece from rifles, tommy guns and a Bren gun. There is no mention made of any hand grenades being lobbed into the fracas. Patten notes that, "as a farewell gesture a small grass hut on the edge of the clearing was set afire" (British Administration, Folio 87a/1943). The grass hut fire is a symbolic gesture of controlling the infectious plague before it spreads. Fire purifies, cleanses and contains disease.

Whilst the western representation of Jonfrum was permitted to ravage out of control over far flung regions (such as Warrnambool), the Tannese 'native' was simultaneously precluded from contributing to Island talk. The highly reified colonial institution employed the use of legitimated legal codes (and, as seen above, medical intervention) as a means of controlling

Island talk. Certain 'problem natives', who were seen as possessing more than the expected levels of intelligence usually accorded to Islanders, could be severely dealt with under the auspices of the 'legitimate' colonial legal machinery:

It appears to me that "talk" and alleged "messages" which are being disseminated in Tanna could suitably be dealt with under Art II of Native Code. It would be interesting to learn whether this "talk" and "messages" alleged to emanate from Vila in fact have their origin in Vila, or whether they are not the invention of some of the "clever" natives resident on Tanna (British Administration, Folio 4/1942).

By placing the word "clever" in inverted commas, colonial rule reveals the disparaging regard it has for the Tannese. Also, in another sense, the term "clever" relates to a 'native' who possesses the power to help those under the influence of sorcery and illness (11).

The subject of 'talk' also raises the issue of what constitutes the truth. As discussed earlier, legitimised knowledge which emanates from highly reified institutions constitute a core truth and any perceived deviation is deemed problematic and bordering on lunacy. What constitutes the truth varies cross-culturally. In Tanna, for example, "wider conversational relations, not detached evidence", form the basis

---

(11) A "kleva" 'native' is able to draw upon spirits to heal or help people in need (Camden, 1977:49).

of what is regarded truthful or otherwise (Lindstrom, 1990:5). Colonial rule displays no sign of such cross cultural awareness in correspondence, which regards Jonfrum talk as "rumours" which are subject to being "twisted" in meaning. However, the writer is aware of 'natives' who have become "disgruntled" since the movement was quelled, but believes them to be "peeved" rather than disempowered; though, the very choice of this word trivialises the movement altogether:

I have the honour to report that I have during the past eight weeks followed many rumours in regard to Jonfrum. On every occasion I have found these rumours have sprung from quite an innocent remark which had been well and truly twisted on being passed from one to the other. There are of course a number of disgruntled natives who had some importance during the Jonfrum period. These natives now have no say and are inclined to be peeved (British Administration, Folio 13/1942).

Island talk dynamics did not only stem from coloniser to colonised. 'Talk' was contributed to from within Tannese ranks. Discursive dynamics were evident from Christianised 'native's' regard towards island talk, not just Condominium rule. In a letter to the British Resident Commissioner, the British District Agent discusses the concern that Christian 'natives' have in relation to Jonfrum:

If one talks to the leading Christian natives, many of whom are assessors, they will tell you alarming and mysterious stories of the operations of Jonfrum (British Administration, Folio 58/1943).



The possibility that 'native' assessors spread stories in order to uphold their position must be contemplated. Were the stories spread done so in order to perpetuate the marginalisation of Jonfrum so as to enhance the assessors' position? Such 'talk' implies that a political division emerged between pagan and Christianised 'native'. This division is criticised by British District Agent Rentoul who ascribes the problem to early Christian missionaries who insisted in separating heathen from 'natives' who had seen the light:

I have gone into the matter seeking for the causes of the unrest. When I see that in years gone past the missions took it upon themselves to segregate their converts in villages separated from the "people of Darkness" and under a rather dreary regimen, a reaction in time was only to be expected (British Administration, Folio 53/1943).

The missionary zeal in segregating heathen from enlightened was implicit, therefore, in creating a binary division within Tannese society as well as across the divide of coloniser and colonised.

Island talk dynamics discussed so far centre on the conventionally accepted face to face situation. However, this western view ignores the possibility that talk may emerge in other forms, with dimensions which may constitute a Tannese reality beyond the comprehension of the western mind. For example, the significance of dreaming is dismissed by Europeans as yet another "manifestation" of Jonfrum, rather than accepted as a legitimate discourse. Neloia's dreaming about being



Jonfrum is an example of this cultural derision of alternative symbolic universes.

Not only are 'native stories' discussed widely by colonial rule but the significance of dreams in relation to Jonfrum is commented upon. Dreams and dreaming are regarded by colonial rule within a western framework of conceptualisation which leads to a cross cultural misunderstanding of their significance. A western interpretation places dreaming within a sleeping/unconscious context:

A succession of images or ideas present in the mind during sleep ... The sleeping state in which this occurs ... An object seen in a dream ... An involuntary vision occurring to one awake: a waking dream ... A vision voluntarily indulged in while awake; daydream; reverie (Delbridge et al, 1982:201)

Dreams have been studied seriously in a western context, largely through the field of psychology. Freud, the originator of psychoanalysis, wrote extensively on dreams and their ability to be interpreted:

For 'interpreting' a dream implies assigning a 'meaning' to it - that is, replacing it by something which fits into the chain of our mental acts as a link having a validity and importance equal to the rest (Strachey et al, 1986:96)

Jung contributed to the dream thesis, especially in relation to the primitive/civilised divide of humanity. Jung stated that "primitive man" was much more in tune with instinct than "civilised man" who was able to divide consciousness from the

dark, instinctive side of reality. Whereas "primitive man" was able to tap into instinctive and psychic behaviour, "civilised man" could only achieve this through dream images (Jung et al, 1983:52). Jung expressed the view that the interpretation of dream symbolism should take into consideration the philosophical, religious and moral convictions of the individual (Jung, 1983:184).

The dream motif emerges with the "manifestation" of Jonfrum. Neloia, who is 'declared' insane, claims to have dreamt that he was Jonfrum. In the Freudian sense, Neloia does ascribe meaning to his dream yet Colonial rule casually dismisses Neloia's statement as suspect because he provides two different accounts:

It must be borne in mind that Neloia is insane. He sometimes claims that he dreamed that he was Jonfrum, and other times says that it came to him whilst he was drinking kava (British Administration, Folio 80/1943).

In the Melanesian context, there is not the same distinction drawn between the conscious and unconscious state of mind in relation to dreaming (Trompf, 1991:106). Melanesians accept dreaming as another form of consciousness and believe that a person may even travel to such places when dreaming. The social significance of Melanesian dreaming emanates from a completely different set of cultural rules from the western framework.

The disdain displayed by colonial rule towards Neloiaq's story about experiencing a dream in relation to actually being Jonfrum is a case in point. The colonial attitude that surrounds Neloiaq's belief in being Jonfrum is one of general disbelief. The correspondence reminds the reader to consider Neloiaq's insanity when considering the dreaming of being Jonfrum. In other words, Neloiaq is insane and his reference to dreaming of actually being Jonfrum substantiates this. Therefore, the only logical conclusion is for the reader to disregard Neloiaq's credibility entirely.

If "civilised man" could tap into the psychic world via dreaming, why was Neloiaq's dreaming ridiculed and declared to emanate from the point of insanity? Is this a case of one set of rules for 'civilised humanity' and another for the 'savage', the Other? 'Island talk' raises the distinct possibility that discourse may appropriate many non-textual guises. These alternative forms of articulation will be the subject matter of Chapter Three.

CHAPTER THREEWestern Attitudes Towards  
Non-Textual, Conflicting Ideologies

This chapter examines various non-literary based discourses in which the Tannese participated, as an additional exploration of the power/discourse paradigm which is central to this thesis. 'Native' dancing and the use of coconuts as a symbolic vehicle for sending messages from Jonfrum to the wider Tannese populace will be offered as examples of discourses which were identified by colonial rule and missionaries and subsequently stymied as a means of exerting control for the purposes of fostering an ideological shift.

A concise history of the role of dance will be examined, then applied to the Tannese context. Early 20th century missionary opposition to Tannese dance will be surveyed briefly as a means of contextualising the later increased opposition to dance in relation to the 'native' celebration of Jonfrum. The missionary aversion to dance as a sexual discourse will become evident, as will the colonial rule's aversion to dance as a seditious, political act. The emergence of Jonfrum ensured colonial opposition to dance. This Chapter will also briefly touch upon how the paternalistic attitude adopted by both colonial rule and missionaries ensured that Tannese 'natives' were denied an 'adult voice' within the power/discourse domain.

Initially, the discursive element of dance will be reviewed and applied to the Tannese context of articulation and colonial resistance.

Dance may be considered a form of discourse, a non verbal communication. Hanna (1988:14) argues that the correlation between dance and verbal communication stems from an identical conceptual framework. Both dance and verbal communication contain vocabulary (dance has steps/gestures), grammar (how to position the steps/gestures) and semantics (meaning). The popularity of dance has waxed and waned since Greek antiquity. During this time, dance was a critical feature of religious ritual (Lange, 1975:4). The decline of the Greek empire witnessed a similar pattern in the perceived respectability of dance. Dance became an activity confined to entertainment, finally performed by oriental slaves in Rome. Cicero was of the opinion that dance was a degenerative process favoured by marginals, arguing that, "nobody dances, unless he is drunk or unbalanced mentally" (Lange, 1975:4). European culture resurrected dance as a respectable form of religious worship during the third century. So called 'barbaric' nations converted to Christianity adopted dance as a means of expressing a superficial regard towards the conquering Christianised peoples. Dance, as it related to Christianity, was practised by 'heathens'.

The Middle Ages witnessed a steady decline in the relevance and respectability of dance according to the Christian doctrine. It was during this period that the Church actively preached against dance, believing that it contained a 'heathen' content that connected participants to old ideologies which were being stamped out in favour of Christianity. The Renaissance brought about a dance resurgence; only for the upper classes, not for the general populace as occurred during the Greek antiquity. In 1788, the third edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica commented on dancing:

As barbarous people are observed to have the strongest passions, so they are also observed to be the most easily affected by sounds, and the most addicted to dancing (Lange, 1975:11)

Ethnographic literature of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries overflows with comment on dance, usually fixing the activity within the confines of the custom/music paradigm. Although the following 1920 missionary publication acknowledges dance as a discursive formation, the author places the activity within the dubious heathen context:

A week before the steamer came I had some experience of a heathen "sing-sing." As the heathen population diminishes these dances are less frequent and less demoralising. They are, of course, purely a heathen institution, but through the influence of the Christian community much of the evil attached to the "sing-sings" on Tanna has disappeared (Rae, 1920:10)

Reverend Rae accepts that the content of every dance contains discursive symbolism but expresses difficulty in imagining that

Tannese dance movements could possibly signify anything at all. The culturally different dance movements are embedded within the heathen label. 'Heathen' equates to different, primitive and unenlightened:

Every dance is supposed to represent something - from the growth of the cocoanut tree to a cat catching rats, but no one could imagine that there could be any meaning in the wild dances, the weird noises, and the extraordinary contortions of these heathen (Rae, 1920:11).

The discursive symbolism of Tannese dance is judged problematic from a colonial perspective because of its differing symbolic universe. Christian objection to Tannese dance was not an isolated incidence; objection occurred throughout the Empire, including Africa, where similar political and religious ideological warfare was being waged against the heathen 'native' populace:

The introduction of Christianity into Africa had emasculating consequences on many forms of dance. Europeans recognized that dance was intertwined with indigenous religion and morality, and so, even though African dances often had universal themes and origins comparable to those of European folk dances, their performance was seen as the manifestation of savage heathenism and antagonistic to the "true faith" (Hanna, 1987:191).

The Reverend Bell of Tanna does acknowledge that it is unethical to remove the Tannese from "all their natives ways" and adds that some alternative activities should be fostered. Ironically, Bell comments that "we should not foist on to them alien ways ... we are not here to destroy but to fulfil" (Bell,



1940:11). Despite protestations that Christianity does not wish to "foist on to them alien ways and thought", Bell recommends 'healthier' activities which should be partaken by 'natives' in the place of morally bankrupting dance which leads down the darkened path of spiritual damnation:

Plays we encourage. They are wonderful mimics and are really clever at dramatisation. These have superseded the old dances in some other islands and to some extent here. Football, cricket, etc, we also encourage in every way. "Satan finds work for idle hands to do" and native hands can be very idle at times (Bell, 1940:11).

The Christian/heathen divide was alluded to by Reverend Watt when he described attending a farewell ceremony after working on Tanna for nearly forty-two years as a missionary:

Instead of the naked painted savages was a company of clean and decently dressed men and women, and the songs of Zion had taken the place of their lewd heathen songs (Watt, 1921:20).

'Satan' appeared in the form of 'native' idleness but another theme of rampant sexuality emerged. Watt's reference to "lewd heathen songs" points to a third relationship to heathen dancing; that of primitive, uncontrolled sexuality. Body movement is equated to potent, unleashed sexuality:

Additionally, dances appeared to many of the authors of that time as very "exotic", "wild" and "indecent", and they were sometimes explained as manifestations of lower developed peoples. The "civilised" observers themselves would never have dreamt of performing such kinds of uninhibited movement (Lange, 1975:18).

The libido must be contained for the sake of upright, moral decency. The Reverend Bell wrote disapprovingly of dancing in the Quarterly Jottings from the New Hebrides:

Another village was a trouble for long and caused us much soreness of heart. Continually they lapsed into dancing and other heathen ways (Bell, 1940:11).

The 'lapse' into dancing and other heathen ways suggests a subtextual connection with the lapse of Adam and Eve into corrupt knowledge. Bell advances a solution in that he recommends that fallen 'natives' who succumb to immoral expression be removed from the Communion Roll. The highly reified institution of Christianity threatens to close the doors upon the guilty. Expulsion of guilty parties to the margin of Tannese society proves partially successful. Bell adds further comment as to the questionable content of Tanna dance, relating the practice to immorality:

Tanna dancing is not ceremonial in any way. Were it clean and healthy then one could allow it to be part of their lives ... As already implied, however, Tanna dancing is evil. It takes place only at night and generally there is kava to help on the hours until dawn end the festivities. But during those hours passions have been aroused by actions and often words designed to that end and much licentiousness has occurred. I have sought evidence from south to north and everyone says Tanna does not know a clean dance. That is why we cannot allow it (Bell, 1940:11).

With reference to 'idle hands', the Protestant work ethic features throughout these historical records. The Christian

connection is repeatedly made between dance and illicit sexual activity and the nexus between idleness and evil ways:

These people have little enough in their lives and idle hands and minds offer fruitful ground for temptation. It must be remembered that in heathenism dancing with its extensive preparation occupied a large part of their lives and exercised a powerful appeal. Tanna dances were unequivocally evil, but a gap remains and something must be given for their hours of leisure (Bell, 1941:11).

Bell's acknowledgement of the powerful appeal of dance, of its centrality to Tannese life, supports the notion that dance may be considered a total discourse in a non-verbal sense. Hanna (1987:129) maintains that as a "language of command and control", dance may be regarded as a political symbol and a subsequent power statement. Dance has the ability to function as an articulation of power relations:

Dance may be both the object and the agent of social control. Since it may enculturate and maintain political and religious values, implement norms and enforce juridical functions, the powerless and powerful seek to control aspects of the dance phenomenon (Hanna, 1987:138).

In a non-literate society like Tanna, the position that dance holds in the maintenance and perpetuation of knowledge is paramount. In the Tannese cultural context, dance functions as a discourse which, given the discourse/power nexus, created problems for colonial and missionary rule alike.

British Administration correspondence reveals an awareness of Tannese dance as a discourse. However, this connection is implied rather than discussed frankly. British District Agent Nicol's involvement with the suppression of 'native' dance is recorded. Unlike the missionary correlation between dancing and sexual activity, colonial rule is willing to risk an upsurge in sexual expression in favour of occupying the 'native' mind so that it does not become cluttered with the potentially liberating force of Jonfrum:

Nicol seems to be making a stab at the dancing, but to my mind even at the risk of promiscuous fornication among the inhabitants, I do not think it should be discouraged (British Administration, Folio MP13/6/1942).

The missionary and colonial attitude on Tannese dance, though disparate, merge towards a heightened concern with the "manifestation" of Jonfrum. From the missionary aspect, the upsurge in Jonfrum activities meant that 'natives' participated in dancing as a symbolic return to paganism, to "Man Darkness". Paganism, with all its associated 'licentious' ways, irritated the morally upright missionary mind. Jonfrum's emergence added impetus for a general ban on dancing but the hidden agenda from the missionary's point of view was uninhibited sexuality.

From the colonial perspective, Tannese dancing came to be associated with Jonfrum. British Administration records declare that the Tannese must obtain permission to hold dances. That permission had to be sought prior to holding a dance is indicative

of colonial rule's symbolic appropriation of the 'native' body, its movement and the physical space it occupied:

We are giving orders to all assessors and bosses that ... permission to hold all dances must be obtained from the District Agent (British Administration, Folio 452/1952).

Tannese dance became a suspect activity and had to be controlled by colonial rule in order to ultimately control the pervasive Jonfrum. The 'native' body in motion equated to a seditious political act against the benevolent colonial rule. The control of free movement within the expressive parameters of dance meant that the Tannese, once again, were stymied from expressing themselves within a legitimate discourse. The foreign imposed colonial discourse disempowered the 'native' body, both linguistically and physically.

The Tannese, as members of a non-literary based culture, employed alternative, non-textual, means of communicating within the increasingly repressive confines of colonial rule. In this way, the seemingly simple act of planting coconuts by Tannese was to emerge, from the ever vigilant colonial perspective, as yet another "seditious" Jonfrum activity.

In 1947, British Administration became aware of subversive Jonfrum activity operating out of Lamap. A 'native', Nace, had travelled to Lamap to spend Christmas with some Jonfrum activists who had been 'detained' courtesy of the Condominium panopticon. Nace returned to Vila with four coconuts, given to him by Nampas,

a prominent Jonfrum activist. Nace passed the coconuts on to a 'native', Peter. On arrival in Tanna, the coconuts were received at Sulphur Bay where two were judiciously planted out by Sopuat. Each coconut was planted outside the homes of two leading Jonfrum activists who were being detained at Lamap (British Administration, Folio 233/1947).

The symbolic gesture of the coconuts did not pass unnoticed by colonial rule who duly "interrogated" three 'native' Assessors, Sofu, Maluen and Kokari. The Assessors agreed that the coconuts had been sent to Sulphur Bay by the Jonfrum activists in detention but argued that the nuts were of a different type from that traditionally grown on Tanna, hence the desirability to plant them. Another four coconuts were transported to Tanna. The British District Agent obtained all the nuts and meted out criticism against the Jonfrum activists and the manner in which they possessed the unmitigated gall to openly pursue their seditious discourse:

Whatever the outcome of the investigations here, it is clear that the six detainees at Lamap can, and do, continue to communicate with their friends on Tanna, and it is this fact which concerns me most at the moment. These men are largely responsible for keeping Jonfrum alive on Tanna, and they will no doubt continue to do so while they can keep open their lines of communication (British Administration, Folio 230/1947).

The British District Agent continues to comment that the six 'native' detainees at Lamap may be in breach of their "Confining Orders" by having sent the coconuts to Sulphur Bay. This

suggestion provides a keen indicator of the District Agent's frustration at witnessing the imprisoned natives as continuing to possess power through their clandestine discourse in a representative symbolic form.

What the British element of the Condominium rule failed to conceptualise was the secret discourse, in that the coconuts would be red in colour on the tree and they would mature at an early age. This information was provided by Peter of Tanna who had to contribute a formal statement to the colonial panopticon (British Administration, Folio 233/1947). In earlier correspondence relating to the 'native' raid on Bannister's store, certain price tags of particular hues were removed. Blue tags (meaning "sickness"), yellow tags (meaning "death") and red tags (meaning "blood") were removed (British Administration, Folio 202/1947).

The symbolic power of the early maturing red coconuts may have meant that the Jonfrum activists presumed they would not be spending a long time away from Sulphur Bay and that, upon return, they would be seeking the 'blood' of their perceived enemy - the Condominium rule. If my hypothesis is correct and if the British had realised the symbolic discourse of red coconuts, one may wonder whether the Jonfrum activists would have suffered far harsher treatment as a consequence.



This is purely hypothetical. What is concrete, however, relates to the third power/discourse paradigmatic element; that of the paternalistic attitude displayed by coloniser over the colonised. To adopt a paternalistic attitude implies that the recipient does not possess an 'adult voice'. The recipient is child-like and innocent, and must be guided into an upright moral existence by the responsible adult in charge.

Paternalistic attitudes towards the Tannese are noted by British Administration correspondence, though the object of criticism is aimed at missionary rule:

It is my candid opinion that if the missions wish to recapture their influence with the Tanna natives, they will have to adopt a more generous and broad-minded attitude towards these people and avoid treating grown men like schoolchildren (British Administration, Folio 53/1943).

Further criticism targeted towards missionary rule is evident in British Administration correspondence which hypothesises that Jonfrum "manifestations" are the result of several political/economic/religious factors. Blame is accorded to the limited missionary education meted out to 'natives':

In the sphere of education they have to date been offered nothing wider than bible-reading and hymn-singing bound up with a series of "don'ts" on most pleasures of life (British Administration, Folio 281/1948).

Individual opinion within colonial Administration varied on the matter of 'native' education. District Agent Nicol, for example,

expressed the opinion that he agreed with Dr Gunn (a missionary) who declared that "the New Hebridean cannot be educated above the 14 year old standard (British Administration, Folio 59/1942).

Religious and moral instruction may be readily associated with the education of immature children, not mature adults. The belief that 'natives' are akin to children was justified in some missionary circles by a pseudo-scientific appeal to a supposed inferior genetic composition. Reverend Frater, believing 'natives' to be "born with a highly developed inferiority complex", argues that 'natives' do not possess any desire to be treated as equals by racially superior whites:

They do not feel flattered to be regarded on an equality with white men. They are terribly insulted to be treated as animals while to deal with them like children meets with their silent and manifest approval. But they are growing children, capable of a healthy and normal development, and it is not surprising that the more intelligent should resent the arrogance of white men, when, as often happens, it amounts to nothing more than an assumption of superiority (Frater, 1940:15).

Is "their silent and manifest approval" actually approval or an acknowledgement that 'native' silence is the only possible means of existence in the face of potent missionary influence in 'native' affairs? Reverend Frater continues with the child-like 'native' concept and draws upon the legitimating factors in the scientific realm of anthropology to substantiate his thesis:

Science relegates the inhabitants of the South Seas to a place amongst the child races of the world. The native is only awakening out of a sleep that has lasted thousands of years. The eyes of the people are dim and their ears dull of hearing. In spite of their big strong bodies they are but children. The brown man, with the mind of a child and the body of a man, is the acute problem of the New Hebrides (Frater, 1940:15).

Nevertheless, Reverend Frater claims that anthropological study has proven that the simple, child-like 'native' mind is not one of arrested mentality but one which may benefit from education. Frater subscribes then, to what might be termed religio/eugenics, with the 'natives' condescendingly regarded as children in need of improvement, refinement and education in order to raise their genetic standard.

Frater concludes that the prevalent sentiment is that Europeans "must maintain their authority" (over the 'native'):

But real authority is only possible if the European commands the respect of the native. There is no question about the superiority of the white man. "Belong white man" is the native formula for expressing their sense of wonder over some achievement which is beyond their comprehension. The Islander does not understand that this superiority in mechanical construction is really an indication of mental and spiritual attainment (Frater, 1940:15).

There being "no question over the superiority of the white man" is another form of silencing. Can an inferior human being contribute to the well being of society or must the superior human being show the inferior one the pathway to improvement?

In terms of the discourse/power paradigm, the teaching of specific institutionalised discourse upon the perceived 'naive' mind of the 'native' ensures that the pupil becomes a product of specific knowledge. Power dynamics are reproduced, especially with the legitimised 'scientific' knowledge that the Island 'native' is of inferior stock and possesses a child's mind in a "grown brown body."

The authority of an adult voice is denied the 'native'. Children are seen and rarely heard as legitimate voices. Whether the child-like 'native', denied an adult voice by the legitimating powers of anthropology, or the threatening 'native', denied permission to express an alternative discourse through movement and dance, becomes contained and homogenised into the amorphous Other. The 'native' is forced into becoming a silent, discursively disempowered Other. The 'native', as the threatening Other, is defined through the centrality of the text, which as the dominant voice, presumes to define subjective realities.

CONCLUSIONThe 'Savage' Paradigm in 1994

This thesis has explored the power/discourse paradigm surrounding the dynamics of Jonfrum from various discursive entry points. Jonfrum has been identified, classified and controlled in a culturally specific manner. The Occident provided the physical and emotional boundaries via the privileged position of the written text which ensured the political and epistemological silencing of the 'native'.

Just how effective the text has been in presenting and re-presenting the 'native' as a foreign, 'savage' body must be considered in light of a recent newspaper article. For all the current intellectual debate which exists in relation to cross-cultural encounters, the article indicates that the paradigm of the 'savage' is far from extinct. The 'savage' is produced for general public consumption, with the reader provided with titillating knowledge of the exotic Tannese.

The article appeared in The Age, a credible Melbourne newspaper, on 6 August this year. The article, "Kava and the Cargo Cult", is a travel feature in the weekend edition of this newspaper. The first page alone of this article adopts the use of specific linguistic devices which leave ample room for the armchair traveller's imagination to run rife.

The article commences with a description of the author's lucky escape from an unexpected minor volcanic eruption. A brief history of the naming of the country is expounded followed by a description of the genetic features of the ni-Vanuatu. The author has to mention that the ni-Vanuatu mainly wear western clothes and the women wear mother Hubbards (a loose fitting shift-style of dress introduced by missionaries to cover naked corruption).

The narcotic effect of kava is recounted. A flight to Pentecost Island is related to the western appropriation of the "original bungy jumpers". Cannibalism emerges quite early in this article as the writer recounts the grisly historical evidence in Erromango's unofficial name, "the Martyr's Isle, with its history of cannibalism" (Mansfield, 1994:1).

Tanna is described as "remote and isolated" and where "Vanuatu progresses from the curious to the truly bizarre." Jonfrum is discussed and a Jonfrum religious gathering is likened to a "revivalist meeting in the Bible belt." (Mansfield, 1994:4) However, the writer ensures a level of normality in this religious fervour, stating that the Jonfrum meeting is, "weird, but by this stage, entirely consistent with life on Tanna" (Mansfield, 1994:1).

Not sufficiently highlighted early on in this article, the indiscriminate Tannese custom of eating 'anything that moves' is talked about once again: "the Tannese, in fact, are not above

eating anything that takes their fancy" (Mansfield, 1994:1). In the remote event that the travel reader has not understood the subtle message in relation to 'peculiar' Tannese eating habits, the writer recounts yet another potential epicurean delight:

We had settled in at the Tanna Beach Resort, a pleasant collection of thatched fares on the west coast, whose friendly assistant manager kept a terrier, evidently with some anxiety. "I can't let her out of the resort," he said. "The islanders would eat her ... (Mansfield, 1994:1)

The travel writer successfully engages the reader's horror with this comment, as he draws upon the western adage of a dog being man's (and woman's!) best friend. The Tannese Other is brought into an Australian framework of conceptualisation with the aid of a loveable terrier - a breed renowned for its constancy. The terrier provides a symbolic link between the acceptable Australian penchant for keeping dogs as friendly, faithful companions and the perceived disgusting, totally savage Tannese propensity for eating them. The terrier, as a literary device, momentarily crosses over the cultural divide in order to ensure that the western reader will maintain a definite distinction between the Occident and the Orient, between 'us' as a civilised people who keep dogs out of love and 'them' as primitive savages who eat them.

The article features three photographs: a thatched tourist bungalow, a group of villagers "on Tanna Island, where a cargo cult flourishes", performing a custom dance and a 'native' wearing the traditional scant costume (a grass penis wrapper).



Why is a 'native' in traditional costume shown when the writer ensures the reader that mostly western clothes are worn by



Tannese nowadays? The photographs conceal a critical element of the social construction of the 'native' as the Other. The assumption that the photographs were taken by the writer proved to be incorrect. The photographs are available for purchase from the Austral International Picture Library in Sydney, New South Wales. This organisation produces a photographic selection catalogue from which clients may purchase ready-made photographs to suit their particular needs. The photographs cost \$150.00 each. In other words, instant images may be procured at a moment's notice.

The article, with its carefully chosen text and selected photographs, raises, yet again, the power/discourse paradigm. This credible publication provides a particular discourse about the 'native', with the stereotypical photographs reinforcing the Tannese as the Other.

In 1924, C. E. Fox contested the prevailing western world view of the Melanesian mind being too impenetrable and complex for the average "civilised Englishman":

It is not the savage's mind, but his environment and history that are different ... I do not believe their minds are "different" in some mysterious way; we only think so because of our complete ignorance of their life (Fox cited in Hilliard, 1978:192).

In 1994, can we honestly argue that this great cultural divide between 'civilised' and 'savage' has dissolved? The stereotypical 'savage native' flourishes through the use of discourse. Discourse is power. The western text has silenced the 'native'. The text is permanent and bears the dubious privilege of containing the final word. The text has contributed to our subjective realities and continues to do so. The text is a western currency which devalues alternative cultural currencies. Jonfrum as a movement and personification in the form of Neloiaq, was controlled. The 'native' body, the spirit, the intellect and, ultimately even today, the photographic image, has suffered under the confining auspices of Orientalism.

-----

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, R. 1992 "'Good Stories": The Epistemological Status of Oral Traditions on Tanna, Vanuatu" in Rubinstein, D.H. (ed) Pacific History: Papers from the 8th Pacific History Association Conference, University of Guam Press & Micronesian Area Research Centre, Mangilao: Guam.

Arnold, D. 1987 "Touching the Body: Perspectives on the Indian Plague, 1896-1900" in Guha, R. Subaltern Studies V: Writings on South Asian History and Society, Oxford University Press: Delhi.

Atkinson, P. 1990 The Ethnographic Imagination: Textual Constructions of Reality, Routledge: London.

Barrow, G.L. 1952 The Story of Jon Frum, Report to the Western Pacific High Commission.

Bell, Reverend H.M. 1940 "Heathen Dancing on Tanna" in The John G. Paton Mission, New Hebrides, Quarterly Jottings from the New Hebrides, No. 190.

--1941 "The Need for More Occupations for the Natives" in The John G. Paton Mission, New Hebrides, Quarterly Jottings from the New Hebrides, No. 194.

Berger, P. 1986 (1963) Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective, Penguin: Harmondsworth, England.

Berger, P. & Luckmann, T., 1991 (1966) The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge, Penguin: London.

Boronski, T. 1987 Sociology in Focus: Knowledge, Longman: New York.

Bourdieu, P. 1991 (1982) Language and Symbolic Power, Thompson, J.B. (ed & trans) Polity Press: Cambridge.

British Administration Correspondence: (Provided by Ron Adams,  
Victoria University of Technology)

- Folio 20, 6 June 1941:  
Letter: British District Agent Nicol to British and French Resident Commissioners.
- Folio 32, 23 September 1941:  
Letter: British District Agent Nicol to British Resident Commissioner.
- Folio 39, 5 November 1941:  
Letter to British Resident Commissioner.
- Folio 51, 2 December 1941:  
Letter: British Resident Commissioner to British District Agent Nicol.
- Folio 4, 5 August 1942:  
Telegram: British Resident Commissioner Blandy to British District Agent, Southern District Nicol.
- Folio 11, 1 October 1942:  
Telegram: British Resident Commissioner to British District Agent Nicol.
- Folio MP 13/6, 27 January 1942:  
Letter: British Resident Commissioner.
- Folio 13, 29 September 1942:  
Letter: British District Agent, Southern District Nicol, to British Resident Commissioner.
- Folio 59, 6 January 1942:  
Letter: British District Agent Nicol to British Resident Commissioner Blandy.
- Folio 77, 16 July 1942:  
Letter: British Resident Commissioner to British District Agent Nicol.
- Folio 53, 23 August 1943:  
Letter: British District Agent Rentoul to British Resident Commissioner Blandy.

- Folio 58, 30 September 1943:  
Letter: British District Agent Rentoul to British Resident Commissioner Blandy.
- Folio 61, 18 October 1943:  
Telegram: British District Agent, Southern District, Nicol, to British Resident Commissioner Blandy.
- Folio 78a, 26 September 1943:  
Native Court Notes: Written by British District Agent, Southern District Nicol.
- Folio 80, 28 October 1943:  
Letter: Acting Administrative Officer Johnson to British Resident Commissioner.
- Folio 87a, 18 November 1943:  
Report: Headquarters III Island Command, written by Major Patten.
- Folio 89, 22 November 1943:  
Report on the Mental Condition of the Tanna man, Neloia, from Medical Officer to British Resident Commissioner.
- Folio 96, 15 November 1943:  
Supplementary Report on the JonFrums Movement by British Resident Agent, Southern District, Nicol, to British Resident Commissioner.
- Folio 141a, 13 December 1943:  
Confining Order.
- Folio 202, 15 April 1947:  
Letter: British District Agent, Southern District, Colley, to British Resident Agent.
- Folio 210, 14 May 1947:  
Letter: British District Agent to British Resident Commissioner.
- Folio 211, 24 May 1947:  
Letter: British District Agent, Southern District, Colley, to British Resident Commissioner.



--Folio 230, 1 October 1947:

Letter: British District Agent, Southern District,  
Colley to British Resident Commissioner.

--Folio 233, 31 October 1947:

Letter and Statements: British District Agent, Southern  
District, to British Resident Commissioner.

--Folio 240, 15 December 1947:

File Note to British Resident Commissioner regarding  
Tanna Agreement.

---Folio 261, 17 April 1948:

Facsimile: "Missionary Outlines Work in New Hebrides"  
in Warrnambool Standard.

--Folio 281, 30 September 1948:

Letter: British District Agent to British Resident  
Commissioner, regarding JonFrum Report - Quarter  
Ending 39/9/48.

--Folio 285, 18 October 1948:

Memorandum, British District Agent, for British  
Resident Commissioner, Blandy.

--Folio 351a, 16 May 1949:

Declaration written by French and British District  
Agents, Southern District, signed by Nekaio and Mailes.

--Folio 452, 18 July 1952:

Letter, British District Agent to British Resident  
Commissioner.

Burridge, K.O.L. 1972 (1965) "Tangu, Northern Madang District"  
in Lawrence, P. & Meggitt, M.J. (eds) Gods, Ghosts and Men in  
Melanesia: Some Religions of Australian New Guinea and the New  
Hebrides, Oxford University Press: London.

Burton, J.W. 1955 The First Century: The Missionary Adventure  
of Australasian Methodism 1855-1955, Methodist Overseas Missions:  
Sydney.

Camden, Pastor B. 1977 A Descriptive Dictionary: Bislama to  
English, Maropa Bookshop, Vila: New Hebrides.

Cohn, B.S. 1985 "The Command of Language and the Language of Command" in Guha, R. (ed) Subaltern Studies IV: Writings on South Asian History and Society, Oxford University Press: Delhi.

Davis, M. 1992 "Colonial Discourses, Representation and the Construction of Otherness: Case Studies from Papua" in Rubinstein, D.H. (ed) Pacific History: Papers from the 8th Pacific History Association Conference, University of Guam Press & Micronesian Area Research Centre: Mangilao, Guam.

Delbridge, A., Bernard, J.R.L., Blair, D., Ramson, W.S., Butler, S. & Butler, J. (eds) 1982 The Budget Macquarie Dictionary, Macquarie Library: McMahons Point, NSW.

Douglas, B. 1992 "Doing Ethnographic History: The Case of Fighting in New Caledonia" in Carrier, J.G. (ed) History and Tradition in Melanesian Anthropology, University of California Press: Berkley & Los Angeles.

--1993 "Pre-European Societies in the Pacific Islands" in Quanchi, M. & Adams, R. Culture Contact in the Pacific, Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge: Cambridge.

Duerr, H.P. 1987 (1985) Dreamtime: Concerning the Boundary between Wilderness and Civilisation, Basil Blackwell: Oxford.

During, S. 1992 Foucault and Literature: Towards a Genealogy of Writing, Routledge: London.

Eagleton, T. 1991 Ideology: An Introduction, Verso: London.

Eliade, M. 1969 (1962) The Two and The One, (Cohen, J.M. trans.) (first published as *Mep'istopheles et l'Androgyne*), Harper & Row: New York.

--1975 (1957) Myths, Dreams and Mysteries: The Encounter between Contemporary Faiths and Archaic Realities, (Mairet, P. trans.) (first published as *Mythes, Reves et Mysteres*), Harper & Rowe: New York.

Farrall, L. 1981 "Knowledge and its Preservation in Oral Cultures", in Denoon, D. & Lacey, R. (eds) Oral Tradition in Melanesia, The University of Papua New Guinea and the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies: Port Moresby.



Feleppa, R. 1988 Convention, Translation, and Understanding: Philosophical Problems in the Comparative Study of Culture, State University of New York Press: Albany.

Frater, Reverend M. 1940 "The South Sea Islander's Awakening" in The John G. Paton Mission, New Hebrides, Quarterly Jottings from the New Hebrides, No. 189.

--1940 "Courtesy and Authority" in The John G. Paton Mission, New Hebrides, Quarterly Jottings from the New Hebrides, No. 189.

Foucault, M. 1972 (1969) The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language, (first published as L'Archeologie du Savoir) (Sheridan Smith, A.M. trans.) Pantheon: New York.

--1991 (1975) Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, (first published as Surveiller et punir) (Sheridan, A. trans.) Penguin: London.

--1994 (1970) The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences, (first published as Les Mots et les choses) Vintage: New York.

Goody, J. 1987 (1977) The Domestication of the Savage Mind, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Gordon, C. (ed) 1980 (1972) Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977 Michel Foucault, Pantheon Books: New York.

Grimble, A. 1981 (1952) A Pattern of Islands, Penguin: London.

Guha, R. 1989 "Dominance Without Hegemony and its Historiography" in Guha, R. (ed) Subaltern Studies VI: Writings on South Asian History and Society, Oxford University Press: Delhi.

Guiart, J. 1952 "John Frum Movement in Tanna", Oceania, Vol. XXII, No. 3.

Hanna, J.L. 1987 To Dance is Human: A Theory of Nonverbal Communication, The University of Chicago Press: Chicago and London.

--1988 Dance, Sex and Gender: Signs of Identity, Dominance, Defiance, and Desire, The University of Chicago Press: Chicago and London.

Haviland, W. A. 1987 Cultural Anthropology, Holt, Rinehart & Winston: Vermont.

Hilliard, D. 1978 God's Gentlemen: A History of the Melanesian Mission 1849-1942, University of Queensland Press: St Lucia.

Jolly, M. & Thomas, N. 1992 "The Politics of Tradition in the Pacific" in Beckett, J. R. & Merlan, F. C. (eds) Oceania, Vol. 62, No. 4, University of Sydney: New South Wales.

Jung, C.G. 1983 Jung: Selected Writings, (Storr, A. selector & introducer) (orig. pub. Jung, C.G. 1934) "The Practical Use of Dream-analysis") Fontana: Great Britain.

Kuper, A. 1988 The Invention of Primitive Society: Transformations of an Illusion, Routledge: London.

Lange, R. 1975 The Nature of Dance: An Anthropological Perspective, Macdonald & Evans: London.

Lawrence, P. 1967 (1964) Road Belong Cargo: A Study of the Cargo Movement in the Southern Madang District New Guinea, Melbourne University Press: Carlton, Victoria.

Lindstrom, L. 1990 Knowledge and Power in a South Pacific Society, Smithsonian Institution Press: Washington, London.

Linnekin, J. 1992 "On the Theory and Politics of Cultural Construction in the Pacific" In Beckett, J. R. & Merlan, F. C. (eds) Oceania, Vol. 62, No. 4, University of Sydney: New South Wales.

Mansfield, P. "Kava and the Cargo Cult" in Ghent, A. (ed) The Age, 6 August 1994 edition.

Ong, W.J. 1988 (1982) Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word, Routledge: London.

Opeba, W.J. 1987 "Melanesian Cult Movements as Traditional Religious and Ritual Responses to Change" in Trompf, G.W. The Gospel is not Western: Black Theologies from the South West Pacific, Orbis Books: Maryknoll, New York.

O'Reilly, P. 1957 Hebridais Repertoire bio-bibliographique des Nouvelles-Hebrides, Publications de la Societe des Oceanistes, No. 6, Musee de l'Homme: Paris.

--1958 Bibliographie Methodique, Analytique et Critique des Nouvelles-Hebrides, Societe des Oceanistes, No. 8, Musee de l'Homme: Paris.

Parsonson, G.S. n.d. The Wages of Anarchy: The Origins of the John Frum Cargo Cult on Tanna, paper presented to the Institute of Commonwealth Studies Postgraduate Seminar on Colonial Rule and Local Response in the 19th and 20th Centuries, University of London.

Priday, H. 1950 "Jonfrum is a New Hebridean "Cargo Cult".", Pacific Islands Monthly, (January):67-70; (February):59-64.

Rae, Reverend J. Campbell 1920 "A Heathen "Sing-Sing"" in The John G. Paton Mission, New Hebrides, Quarterly Jottings from the New Hebrides, No. 190.

Rice, E. 1974 Jon Frum He Come: Cargo Cults and Cargo Messiahs in the South Pacific: A Polemical Work About a Black Tragedy, Doubleday: New York.

Rosaldo, R. 1989 Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis, Beacon Press: Boston.

Said, E. W. 1991 (1978) Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient, Penguin: London.

--1993 Culture and Imperialism, Vintage: London.

Sharp, N. 1976 Millenarian Movements: Their Meaning in Melanesia, Paper No. 25, Department of Sociology, La Trobe University: Bundoora.

Spender, D. 1980 Man-Made Language, Routledge and Kegan Paul: London.

Steinbauer, F. 1979 (1971) Melanesian Cargo Cults: New Salvation Movements in the South Pacific, (Wohlwill, M. trans.) University of Queensland Press: St Lucia.

Stephen, M. 1977 Cargo Cult Hysteria: Symptom of Despair or Technique of Ecstasy?, Occasional Paper No. 1, Research Centre for Southwest Pacific Studies, La Trobe University: Bundoora.

Strachey, J. (ed. & trans.), Freud, A., Strachey, A. & Tyson, A. (eds) 1986 Freud, S. (1900) The Interpretation of Dreams (First Part), Vol. IV, The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis: London.

Trompf, G. W. 1991 Melanesian Religion, Cambridge University Press: United Kingdom.

Watt, Reverend W. 1921 "Heathen Song Changed into Christian Hymns" in The John G. Paton Mission, New Hebrides, Quarterly Jottings from the New Hebrides, No. 114.

Wilkinson, J.F. 1979 A Study of a Political and Religious Division on Tanna, New Hebrides, PhD thesis, University of Cambridge.

Worsley, P. 1970 (1957) The Trumpet Shall Sound: A Study of 'Cargo' Cults in Melanesia, Paladin: London.

-----