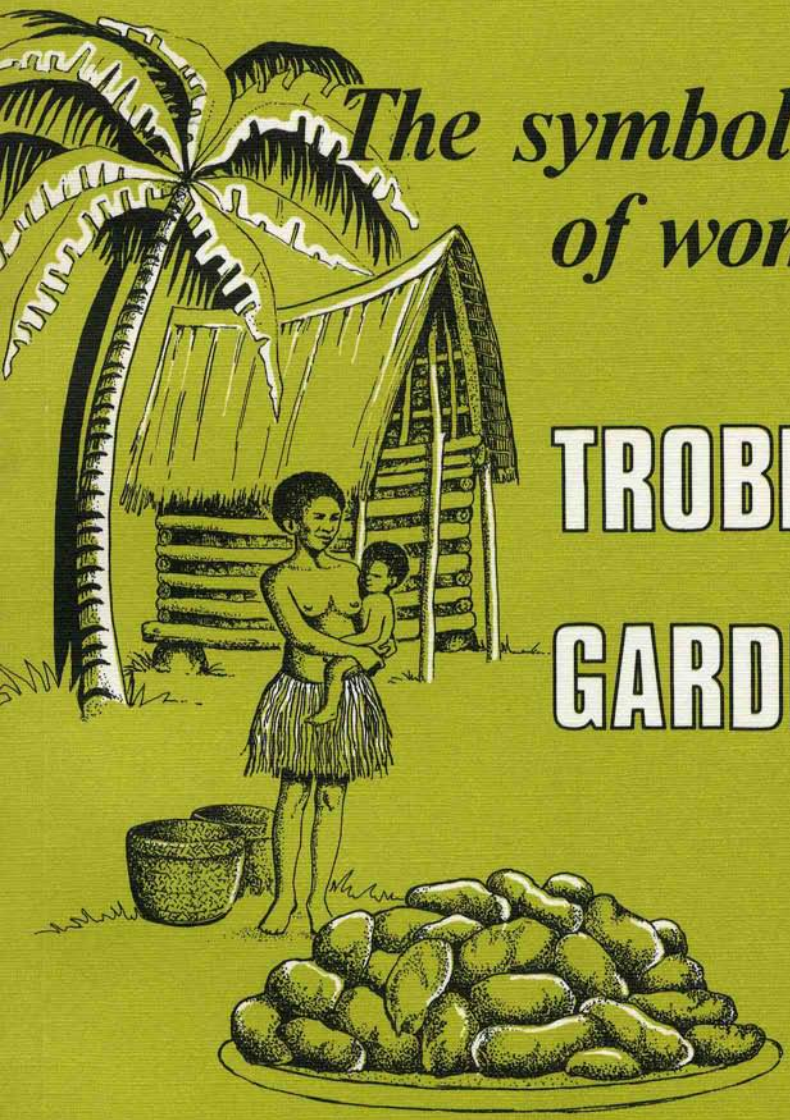

The symbolic role of women in

TROBRIAND GARDENING

M. Brindley

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I also wish to thank the following: my MA supervisor, Professor B.A. Pauw, for his help and advice, particularly with regard to ordering the material; Professor J.A.R. Blacking for his continued encouragement and interest; Dr. H.A. Powell of the University of Newcastle-on-Tyne for showing me his illuminating film of Trobriand life, for subsequent informative letters, for keeping me in touch with other Trobriand research workers, and for his helpful comments on the script prior to publication; Mr. Jerry W. Leach, formerly of Cambridge University for discussion and correspondence; Drs. S. Montague and A. Weiner for their helpful letters; Dr. N.D. Munn for permission to cite her paper (1971); the editor of the University of Papua New Guinea publication *Man in New Guinea* for assistance in trying to trace Trobriand research workers; the late Mr. R.D.J. Fearon of the Department of Ethnography of the British Museum for personal access to book and photo collections; my kind parents, who specially visited the Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu, to determine whether Trobriand material was to be found there; Prof. J. Willemse, The Unisa Director of Library Services, and the library staff for their constant friendliness and efficiency.

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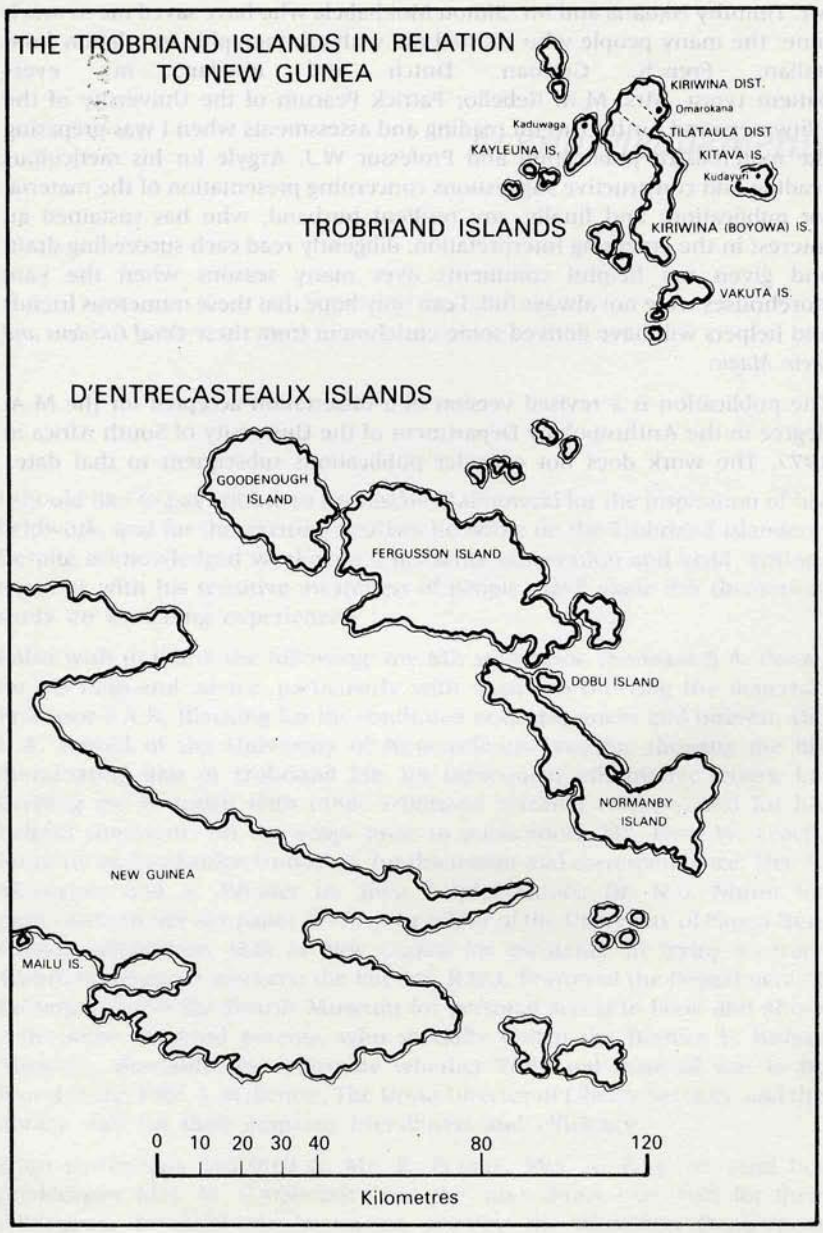
The publication is a revised version of a dissertation accepted for the M.A. degree in the Anthropology Department of the University of South Africa in 1977. The work does not consider publications subsequent to that date.



The map has been adapted from Malinowski 1967, 138 and Weiner 1976, 26.

Introduction

This study stems from my interest in the fulfilment of the individual in literate as well as non-literate societies. I am especially concerned with women because there is a lack of clarity on the position of women in the anthropological literature, which tends towards minimal documentation and the assumption that the female is generally subordinate to the male.[1] With some exceptions[2] before the seventies it seemed only too true that the study of women was "on a level little higher than the study of the ducks and fowls they commonly own".[3] My hypothesis is that woman's biological nature is a significant factor in her self-realization, provided the culture reinforces it positively; and to evaluate this I examine the position of Trobriand women with particular reference to gardening. Since gardening is the most important activity in Trobriand culture, and the growing of the small yam (*taytu*) provides the best documented material, it is selected as the focus of the study, with due regard for Malinowski's statements that women's position in this culture is of a high order.[4] I chose the Trobriand Islanders because there was sufficient high quality ethnographic data for a detailed theoretical analysis.

I have made an extensive study of published books and articles and other documentary sources such as conference papers and university dissertations and theses.[7] Every obtainable work referring to the Trobriand Islanders has been read, and as many studies as possible of other Oceanian peoples, particularly those of Melanesia. I ordered any seemingly relevant article and book without regard for the language in which it was written or the difficulty of tracing it. This detailed reading was

then supplemented by correspondence and personal discussion with scholars familiar with the Trobriand Islanders.

The analysis relies primarily on the published works of Bronislaw Malinowski. To a lesser extent I use the research of other anthropologists who have worked in the area. Although most of this research was conducted at least 30 years after that of Malinowski, I consulted every possible source, and wrote to all research workers who could be traced, for evidence that could either provide insights not available from Malinowski's treatises, or reconcile apparent contradictions and supply missing information, bearing in mind the time lag between the various studies and the effect of culture change. I could not obtain works of Guidieri, Haddon, Jansen, Julius, Meintel, Munn, Panoff, Pfund and Weiner.[5] I read Gropper's dissertation but received no reply to a request for permission to cite.[6] I am aware of research conducted in the Trobriands by Professor G G Scoditti and Reverend R Lawton but my attempts to trace relevant publications and establish contact with them through correspondence were unsuccessful.[7]

After formulating the questions in which I was interested I immersed myself in Malinowski's four most comprehensive volumes.[8] Once an initial draft had been written, I began to look for other literature related to the Trobrianders themselves, the customs of surrounding peoples, and even particular culture traits such as coconuts and platforms, in the hope of elucidating their meaning or establishing correlations. Any work that seemed at all related to women, gardening, symbolism, or the interpretation that was emerging, was examined. Most books cited by writers on Oceania were read, and a number of valuable contributions normally overlooked came to light; by this means I gained clarity on horticultural practices and their symbolic associations over a wider area, and these appeared to support the validity of the argument I was advancing.

It is inevitable that there will be certain lacunae in the ethnographic material on which a theoretical treatise is based. For instance, more information on fishing-patterns, the role of pigs, and the magic and practical work of cultivating taro would have been helpful. Such omissions will only be referred to when they particularly affect the analysis. My interpretation pertains especially to Northern Kiriwina and the village of Omarakana, this being the area in which Malinowski conducted his most intensive fieldwork. The material will therefore have a bias reflecting a high-ranking village, but cultural patterns will tend to be

more clearly defined than in a commoners' village.[9] Although there are various systems of garden magic and techniques of working the fields in the Trobriands, they are essentially similar.[10] The system used in Omarakana, the capital of Kiriwina, is regarded as the gardening paradigm.[11] This analysis will accordingly centre there unless a system from a different area provides greater clarity.

With regard to terminology, I have departed from Malinowski's nomenclature in the use of "display" storehouse for "show" storehouse.[12] Since what Malinowski calls "sub-clan" appears to have characteristics of a clan on the one hand and of a lineage on the other, Malinowski's "sub-clan" has been retained.[13] Malinowski's usage of "chief" is followed although it seems that this could often refer to a village headman.[14] Where indigenous words are unavoidable, I have retained Malinowski's spelling. Oceanian islands are referred to by the names used in the reference quoted, even though some have since altered.

In studying the position of Trobriand women in gardening I do not consider it sufficient merely to consider the physical labour performed by women in the context of the islanders' horticultural activities. I have therefore made a detailed analysis of the symbolism that dominates gardening to ascertain woman's relationship to it, and I have also made a structural analysis of the language of ritual and the terminology of gardening to try to establish how these reflect on woman. Although my primary concern is with the position of women in gardening, I finally correlate this with her position in the culture as a whole by considering certain dominant cultural themes and the interrelation of different aspects of the culture.

It should perhaps be made clear that in providing this interpretation of Trobriand symbolic behaviour I do not assume that the people themselves consciously formulate the notions which I propose, nor that the symbolic categories here presented form conscious motivation for their actions. However, I have no doubt that symbols have a profound effect on the actions of the individual, and the use of certain categories and cognitive processes as reflected in symbolic life reinforces behaviour patterns by compelling the mind to apprehend in a certain way. I also believe that if we are to understand social life more fully then we need to address the problem of interpreting the symbolic dimension of action-patterns. Since this is not a fieldwork study but a theoretical analysis of the literature available on Trobriand life, and because of the multivalent qualities of symbols, it is possible that this analysis may be considered too one-dimensional. I hope the argument that it advances

will nevertheless enable us to gain a fuller picture of the cognitive life of the Trobriand Islanders, and hence develop less simplistic assumptions of the position of women and men in preliterate society.

Notes

1 Wedgwood 1937 401–402; Evans-Pritchard 1965 38–41, 57; Heuer cited by Webster 1973 113; cf. e.g. Linton & Wingert 1946 16 (Fiji, Polynesia), 35 (Marquesas, Polynesia); Hoebel 1954 286

2 E.g. Wedgwood 1927 381–382; Wedgwood 1937; Thurnwald H. 1934; Schmidt 1935; Landes 1938; Kaberry 1939; Kaberry 1952; Leith-Ross 1939; Schapera 1940; Mountford & Harvey 1941; Opler 1943; Scheinfeld 1947; Berndt 1950; Mead 1950; Richards 1956; Scobie 1960; Paulme ed. 1963; Campbell-Purdy 1967

3 Ardener 1972 136

4 Malinowski 1966 I xix, 8–10, 12, 20, 30, 32, 34–35, 48, 52–53, 56, 80, 83; Austen 1945–46 35; Malinowski 1922 54–55, 280; Malinowski 1932 15, 23–25

5 Guidieri 1973; Haddon 1893; Jansen 1961; Julius 1960; Meintel 1969; Munn n.d.; Panoff 1972; Pfund 1972; Weiner 1973

6 Gropper 1970

7 Anon. 1973a 17; Anon. 1973b 34; Anon. 1974 14; Anon. 1971 20

8 Malinowski 1966 I, II; Malinowski 1932; Malinowski 1922

9 Malinowski 1966 I 84, 366, 430–431; Malinowski 1932 112, 386; Malinowski 1922 63, 66; Powell 1953 2

10 Malinowski 1966 I 273, 275–277; Austen 1945–46 35

11 E.g. Malinowski 1966 I 84, 86, 273

12 Malinowski 1966 I 228–232

13 Malinowski 1966 I 37–38, 345–346; Malinowski 1932 417; Malinowski 1922 70–71; Powell 1956 44–50, 98, 101–105; cf. Leach 1958 120–145; Weiner 1976 38–39, 51–52; Powell 1977b

14 Malinowski 1966 I 33, 38–39, 192, 210; Malinowski 1922 62–66; Malinowski 1932 26; cf. e.g. Seligmann 1910 692–700; Powell 1960 118–143; Uberoi 1971 7, 20, 38, 47–48; Leach 1966 xi; Brunton 1975 544-556; Weiner 1976 45–46

1

An outline of gardening activities

Gardening in the context of Trobriand culture

The Trobriand Islanders are renowned for their participation in the *kula* (overseas expedition for ceremonial exchange).[1] Although they are well-known in Papua for their excellent gardens[2] (carefully detailed by Malinowski), their horticultural activities have received little analytical attention from scholars. Besides being gardeners, they fish and tend semi-cultivated palms.[3] They evince a belief in ancestor spirits though their ritual is predominantly magical. Their political organization operates at the level of villages which are associated with matrilineal sub-clans and are interlinked through sub-clan exogamy[4] and the inland and overseas *kula*.

In the Trobriand Islands tribal life is centred on gardening in which the northern districts of Kiriwina and Tilataula are unrivalled for their horticultural excellence. Moving south from Kiriwina, the significance of gardening for subsistence tends to diminish and fishing assumes greater importance.[5] Several species of the yam family (Dioscoreaceae) are grown, the favourite and staple food especially of the north being *taytu* – a relatively small variety of yam – presumably Dioscorea esculenta.[6] Although this little yam is susceptible to pests, is destroyed by pigs and needs careful nurturing, it stores well and is the centre of much magic and ceremonial.[7]

In the more southerly and swampy areas of the main island of Boyowa (or Kiriwina) larger yams, apparently Dioscorea alata,[8] and taro (Colo-

casia esculenta)[9] have a greater economic utility than *taytu.*[10] Three crops of taro (Weiner says two) tend to be planted annually compared to one of *taytu.*[11] Sugar-cane, bananas, pumpkin, gourds, peas, sweet potatoes and large yams are grown as subsidiary crops.[12] Because they are for the most part not treated ceremonially and there is little information of relevance to this study either on them or on the semi-cultivated palms, their cultivation will not be discussed. Mixed planting of these subsidiary crops is followed by cultivation principally of *taytu* in the main gardens (*kaymata*) which form the focus of the islanders' attention and ceremonial.[13]

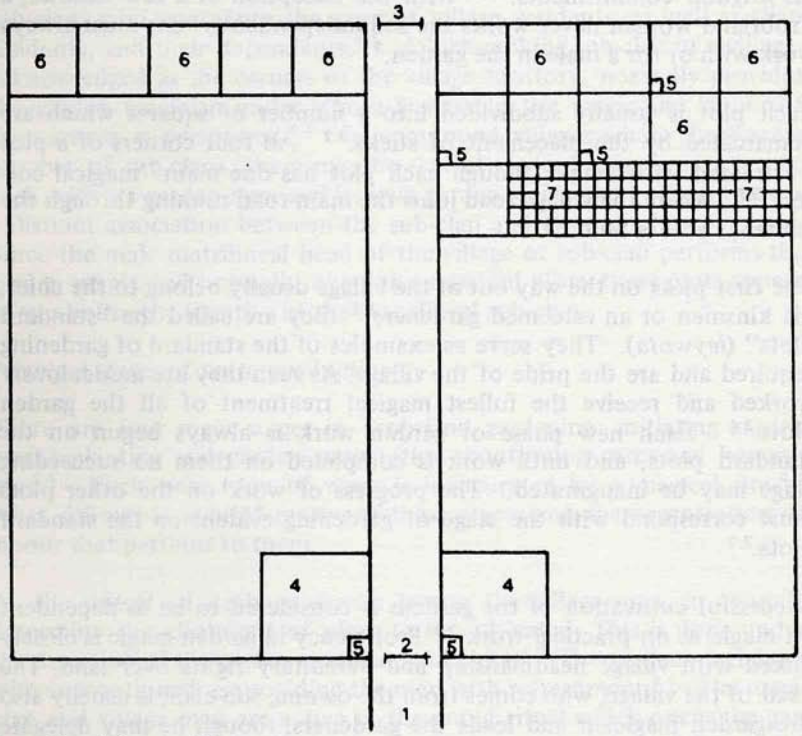
An association exists between the garden, the village and the sub-clan. The focus of the Trobriand village is a large, open, central area (*baku*).[14] The gardening council, filling of storehouses, feasts, dances and ceremonies are held here, for this is the arena of public life.[15] In some villages a magnificent *taytu* display storehouse belonging to the chief dominates the central place.[16] The village centre is typically surrounded by a circular row of display storehouses owned by men of rank.[17] They exhibit the wealth of the village received as *urigubu* (matrimonial harvest gifts) and are well-constructed, decorated and raised off the ground.[18] A circular street passes round these display storehouses, and beyond it an outer ring of somewhat shabby dwelling-houses, unostentatious and flush with the ground.[19] A number of roads pass into the village and one road leads from the village into the garden.[20]

A village is associated with one or more sub-clans. When there is only one sub-clan, members of the village, by virtue of belonging to the sub-clan or residing in its village, may exploit the village territory, ownership of the village and its territory being vested in the sub-clan concerned.[21] When the village has more than one sub-clan, one of these is dominant, and the picture of land tenure is more complicated, but the basic principle remains unchanged.[22] In theory, chieftainship is ascribed to the senior male of the highest ranking lineage of the dominant sub-clan.[23] However, Powell indicates that in most cases such leadership is achieved within the "owning" sub-clan.[24] The chief represents the village in social, magico-religious, legal and political matters and presides over the organization of gardening.[25]

Each village or part of it has cultivable land which is worked by its inhabitants.[26] The garden is associated with the territory of the village sub-clan.[27] As is indicated in Figure 1, the garden is enclosed and is

Figure 1

PRINCIPAL FEATURES OF THE GARDEN ENCLOSURE*



1 *Road from village*
2 *Village stile*
3 *Stile at far end*
4 *Standard plots*
5 *Main magical corners*
6 *Individual plots*
7 *Sticks overlaid on plots*

* Adapted from Malinowski 1966 I figure 4(89), figure 5(100)

divided into plots (*baleko*) with fixed perimeters.[28] These plots are individually owned by men.[29] Every male village member cultivates at least three plots of land within the garden enclosure, whether or not it

is his sub-clan land. The actual number of plots worked depends on the man's strength and efficiency, but he requires a minimum of one plot whose produce will support his household, as well as another to meet his *urigubu* commitments.[30] With the exception of a few widows, a Trobriand woman never works the soil independently: she must always work with or for a male in the garden.[31]

Each plot is usually subdivided into a number of squares which are demarcated by the placement of sticks.[32] All four corners of a plot are treated with magic, though each plot has one main "magical corner".[33] Where the village road joins the main road running through the garden, a stile is built.[34]

The first plots on the way out of the village usually belong to the chief, his kinsmen or an esteemed gardener;[35] they are called the "standard plots" (*leywota*). They serve as examples of the standard of gardening required and are the pride of the village. As such they are meticulously worked and receive the fullest magical treatment of all the garden plots.[36] Each new phase of garden work is always begun on the standard plots, and until work is completed on them no succeeding stage may be inaugurated. The progress of work on the other plots must correspond with the stage of gardening evident on the standard plots.[37]

Successful cultivation of the gardens is considered to be as dependent on magic as on practical work.[38] Proficiency in garden magic is closely linked with village headmanship and hereditary rights over land. The head of the village, who comes from the owning sub-clan, is usually also the garden magician and leads the gardeners, though he may delegate this function.[39] The magic of the gardens is founded in myth and performed by the male village garden magician (*towosi*) i.e. the chief who usually inherits his position and magical system matrilineally; he is the repository of magical lore.[40] He is genealogically related to the original ancestress (or ancestral sister and brother) who founded the sub-clan associated with the ownership of village land. This ancestress emerged from a hole in the area, bringing with her the system of garden magic which is still followed by her descendants who live and garden there. Thus Trobriand mythology locates the origin of the people in the soil,[41] and there is a matrilineal focus to the concepts of land and labour. Malinowski observes that land for the Trobriander "is the real mother earth who brought forth his lineage in the person of the first ancestress, who nourishes him and will receive him again into her womb".[42] It is possible that such a unified vision of mankind and the

soil will influence the nature of Trobriand horticulture and the work performed by women and men.

The group of gardeners comprises a nucleus of men of the land-owning sub-clan, who constitute the core of village residents, as well as alien residents, and their dependants.[43] A high-ranking sub-clan of a village, acknowledged as the owners of the village territory, normally provides the garden magician under whose leadership the magic and labour of the gardens is performed.[44] In compound villages where there are a number of sub-clans, there may be several gardening groups or teams, each with its garden area and its own garden magician.[45] Thus there is a distinct association between the sub-clan and an area of garden land. Since the male matrilineal head of the village or sub-clan performs the garden magic and normally owns the standard plots, these plots appear to symbolize the identity of the matrilineal sub-clan.

Principal stages of *taytu* production

There are four main stages in Trobriand gardening: initiating garden work; planting and garden preparation; continuing care; and harvesting.[46] Each new type of work is inaugurated by a magical rite.[47] What follows is a brief review of these stages and the organization of labour that pertains to them.

At the outset of each gardening season the village men, in council, determine the allotment of plots to be cultivated. This is done under the direction of the garden magician and chief.[48] The garden magician's wife is mentioned as providing the men with refreshment.[49] The magician and village men are active in the grand ritual which opens the gardens. This involves a festive meal, an offering, a recitation of the central spell in the magic of gardening (*vatuvi*), use of key magical substances and a magical rite.[50] Women only participate in so far as they prepare fish for the meal.[51]

After this ceremony the men cut the scrub. Women assist in clearing the gardens. When the brush is cut and left to dry in anticipation of the burning, festivities connected with *Milamala* (ceremony of the return of the ancestral spirits) occur. The garden magician and his assistants then immerse themselves in a prolonged burning ceremony which entails a four-day gardening taboo.[52] A woman of high rank participates in these ritual proceedings.[53] Each nuclear family is involved in preparing its own plot for planting, and removing debris and roots from the ground. There is no absolute division of labour at this stage, but the

clearing of garden refuse is predominantly executed by women, while laying out the boundary poles and sticks demarcating plot divisions is usually done by men.[54] The fence enclosing the gardens is constructed, each owner assisting by erecting that portion where his plot borders the bush. In addition a stile is built wherever a path meets the garden enclosure.[55]

The erection of a magical prismatic construction (*kamkokola*) on the principal corner of every plot is performed by the garden magician in conjunction with his acolytes.[56] But in Kurokayva, in the Kiriwina district, there is another part to the ceremony involving all the villagers, including women. The women cook *taytu* (small yams) and are present at the *taytu* distribution which takes place in the garden. The *taytu* also serve as an offering to the ancestral spirits. The women then return home with the *taytu* and the men continue with the ceremony.[57] Once it is completed the main planting of *taytu* may begin. Men predominate in this activity and customarily perform it communally. *Taytu* supports are erected.[58]

The garden magician utters a number of magical spells to promote *taytu* growth.[59] He also initiates weeding by conducting a simple magical ceremony with a spell.[60] Weeding continues steadily until the *taytu* vine is well developed. Women often weed communally, during which time the work is punctuated by competitive wagers, corporate eating and gossip.[61] Only women may weed. Men may not approach a party of women weeders: if they do, those from the women's own community may be abused verbally while strangers might be physically maltreated. Women living in the southerly areas of the island of Boyowa or on the island of Vakuta may accost any man from another village who happens to pass within sight during communal weeding.[62] At this time they have the right to degrade such a man sexually, pollute him with physically obscene behaviour, and sadistically handle and torment him by genital manipulation, defecation and micturition until he "will vomit, and vomit, and vomit".[63]

During this period of continuing care of the garden the men are no longer as absorbed in their work. Their duties are restricted to protecting the gardens from pests, repairing fences, thinning out tubers, and training and tying the vine foliage over the supports. In districts where overseas expeditions for the *kula* occur, the majority of men migrate to other villages for a number of weeks. Elsewhere, time is spent in fishing excursions and leisure activities.[64]

The garden magician, still preoccupied with the sound formation of the *taytu* (small yam), vigilantly continues pronouncing spells to that end.[65] A ceremony performed by the garden magician together with the village men, introduces the thinning of the tubers by the men.[66]

Maturation of the crops coincides with increased village excitement, which comes to a climax as the pinnacle of the gardening year is reached at harvest.[67] The garnering of large yams and taro occurs before the main harvest of *taytu*. It is ushered in by a magical ceremony involving the garden magician and village men.[68] The garnering of *taytu* is of singular importance in Trobriand life.[69] When the *taytu* vine begins to wither and droop, indicative of ripe tubers, the garden magician performs the preparatory ceremony (*okwala*). The magic of this rite is given a few days to infiltrate the tubers in the garden, after which the main ceremony (*tum*) occurs.[70] The day after the garden magician has recited the principal spell of Trobriand magic (*vatuvi*)[71] over an adze, a small group of men, women and boys accompanies him to the main standard plot where a ceremonial act of harvesting takes place.[72]

Harvesting is usually undertaken by family groups on their own plots. The man normally extracts the roots, the woman cleans and carries them to an arbour where they are stacked by the man; but the division of labour is not always strictly observed.[73] A man builds as many arbours as the number of matrimonial harvest gifts (*urigubu*) for which he is liable.[74] Finally, young women and men, related to the gardener and his wife, festively transport the *urigubu taytu* to the storehouses associated with married female members of the gardener's sub-clan.[75] These kinswomen provide refreshments to the donors and their assistants after they have filled the storehouses.[76] The garden magician (*towosi*), now termed *tovilamalia*, treats the storehouses and their new *taytu* with the *vilamalia* (magic of plenty and village prosperity).[77] The cycle of gardening is now complete.

Production of other crops

There is little specific information concerning the production of secondary crops,[78] and the extent of women's involvement with them passes unmentioned. They receive their own magical treatment; this resembles that of the main *taytu* gardens, yet is more limited. In contrast to *taytu* production for matrimonial gifts, these crops are grown for home consumption.[79] Women are said to have sweet-potato plots.[80]

In the south the ceremonial crop is taro, not *taytu*, but there is some

evidence of parallel magic with *taytu* in the inaugural rite, the burning, magic concerned with the *kamkokola* (magical prismatic construction) and growth. No weeding or thinning rites occur, however.[81] The garden magician's wife makes a brief appearance when cooking food concerned with the inaugural taro rite, and women are present at the opening feast.[82] Women primarily perform the practical tasks of clearing, heaping refuse and weeding.[83]

Extent of women's activities in gardening

Although the above summary might suggest that women participate in the majority of gardening activities, in fact Trobriand gardens are invariably the domain of men both in work and magic. The extensive Trobriand horticultural information actually makes only sporadic reference to women, particularly with regard to the ceremonial of gardening. They are mentioned mainly with regard to cooking, handicrafts, and transport.[84] The chief's wife and the wife of the garden magician are noted as assisting in a few ceremonies, principally in a culinary capacity.[85] Women are alluded to intermittently in the working of the gardens, usually in connection with the sexual division of labour and the family unit, or briefly in the grand inaugural and burning ceremonies.[86] Their presence is remarked on in the *kamkokola* (magical prismatic construction) ceremony and the main harvest.[87] They predominate in the latter part of the horticultural year at weeding.[88]

In the light of the tomes of information on gardening, such slight documentation suggests minimal female participation. It should however be noted that the mythology of gardening is matrilineal, according to which the first ancestress who emerged from the ground was a woman, and furthermore that women are cited, albeit cursorily, in a number of gardening spells.[89]

The evidence indicates that women hardly ever participate in the important horticultural ceremonies meticulously observed and esteemed by the community.[90] Nor does the ethnographic information indicate how much of the official garden magic women actually know. Malinowski writes obscurely that "the natives are familiar with every spell" and that "every member of the community is aware of each spell being performed".[91] There is vagueness in statements referring to community knowledge of gardening spells: "They have been heard by everyone, and most natives know them by heart."[92]

From such information one cannot categorically assert whether women

are included. The material creates the impression that only men are implied. Although gardening spells are uttered aloud, women are not present for the major part of all but a few magical performances[93] and thus remain unexposed to them. The spells are not esoterically guarded: Malinowski stresses that every man in Omarakana would recognize a text from his community's official magic,[94] yet it would be improper for any unsanctioned person to repeat them.[95]

Finally, the ethnographer explains that public garden magic " though very often carried out by the magician alone, is yet of such a character and performed under such circumstances that most men know the spell, are aware of its performance, are very keen that it should be properly recited and the rite impeccably carried out, so that the magic may produce its effect".[96] One can only deduce that women are not implied in Malinowski's statements concerning the possession of a full knowledge of gardening spells and magic by the community.

In practical work also, women assume a lesser role than men. They have a part to play in preparing the new gardens and in harvesting, but these activities are performed in conjunction with men. The one gardening phase which undeniably belongs to women is weeding.[97]

At first sight the horticultural evidence portrays Trobriand women as playing a minor part in this significant feature of their culture, in the manner of certain of their New Guinea counterparts.[98] However, actual involvement in horticultural activity and participation in ceremonial do not solely determine the position of woman in gardening; I believe that a people's conceptualization of an activity may also be reflected in language and that the selection of certain action-patterns and substances are symbolically meaningful. In the ensuing pages I offer a brief discussion of the terminology of gardening and how it reflects on woman; I also present a detailed analysis of the symbolism that dominates gardening in order to ascertain woman's relationship to it.

Notes

1 Malinowski 1920b 97–105; Malinowski 1922
2 Tudor 1963 381; Black 1954 2; Murray 1912 119; Austen 1939 238
3 Malinowski 1966 I 8, 16, 20–21, 300–310; Malinowski 1918 87–92; Malinowski 1921 2; Malinowski 1926b 108
4 Powell 1956 45, 56, 99, 190, 193, 273–274, 319–320, 338–341, 345, 352,

472–473, 478–479, 484; Powell 1960 121; Leach 1958 124

5 Malinowski 1966 I 13–14, 16–18, 74, 84, 273, 290; Malinowski 1922 66–67

6 Malinowski 1966 I 52, 81; Austen 1939 238; cf. Coursey 1967 51–52, 63–64; Merrill 1946 149; Young 1971 147; Lea 1964 76; Burkill 1935 818; Alexander & Coursey 1969 409–410; Weiner 1976 244, 258

7 Malinowski 1966 I 67, 76, 81, 137, 141–144, 146–151, 160, 168–171, 219–225, 242, 291; Malinowski 1966 II 90; cf. Austen 1945–46 18

8 Cf. Merrill 1946 149, 224; Burkill 1935 I 814–815; Coursey 1967 45–46; Coulter 1941 21; Barrau 1965 336; Alexander & Coursey 1969 409; Weiner 1976 244, 255

9 Cf. Merrill 1946 149; Lea 1964 76; Coulter 1941 21; Coursey 1972 216; Barrau 1965 331; Harris 1969 10

10 Malinowski 1966 I 290–291, 295–296; Powell 1956 4

11 Malinowski 1966 I 296–297; cf. Weiner 1976 201

12 Malinowski 1966 I 57–58, 122, 193, 315, 463; Powell 1953 4; cf. Weiner 1976 35

13 Malinowski 1966 I 58, 87, 122, cf. 463, 470

14 Malinowski 1966 I 24–26, 231; Malinowski 1932 8, figure 1 (between 444 & 445)

15 Malinowski 1922 56; Malinowski 1932 8–9, 210; Malinowski 1966 I 24–26, 229, 231

16 Malinowski 1932 8; Malinowski 1966 I 258

17 Malinowski 1966 I 24, 228–229; Malinowski 1932 8, 61; Malinowski 1922 55; Seligmann 1910 662

18 Malinowski 1966 I 195, 228, 231; Malinowski 1933 157; Malinowski 1922 55

19 Malinowski 1932 8; Malinowski 1966 I 24, 218, 229; Malinowski 1922 55–56

20 Malinowski 1966 I 99, 225, 235, 430; Weiner 1976 figure 1 (xviii), xix

21 Malinowski 1966 I 329, 336, 344, 346; Hoebel 1954 192; Malinowski 1932 419; Powell 1956 106, 434; Powell 1977a

22 Malinowski 1966 I 39, 332, 349–350, 355; Powell 1960 121, 124

23 Malinowski 1966 I 39, 346–347, 359; Malinowski 1932 26; Powell 1956 439, 484; Powell 1960 118, 121, 124–125

24 Powell 1960 125–126; cf. Weiner 1976 44–46; Hoebel 1954 193

25 Malinowski 1966 I 328, 332, 347; Malinowski 1922 63–65; Powell 1956 473; Powell 1960 132

26 Malinowski 1922 57, 70; Malinowski 1966 I 329–330, 354–357; Powell 1969b 581

27 Malinowski 1966 I 24, 343–344, 354; Malinowski 1932 417; Leach 1958 120, 142

28 Malinowski 1966 I 89–92; Malinowski 1966 II 138; Malinowski 1920a 51; Figure 1, 7 above

29 Malinowski 1966 I 356

30 Malinowski 1966 I 60, 79, 87, 90–91, 329; Powell 1956 421

31 Malinowski 1966 I 79, 354; Weiner 1976 34

32 Malinowski 1966 I 80–81, plate 26 (facing 88), plate 38 (facing 121),

121–124, 470
33 Malinowski 1966 I 59, 114, 123–124
34 Malinowski 1966 II 138–139; Malinowski 1966 I 90, 100
35 Malinowski 1966 I 464
36 Malinowski 1966 I 58–59, 64; Austen 1945–46 37
37 Malinowski 1966 I 104
38 Malinowski 1966 I 55, 62, 76–77; Malinowski 1948 28–29; Malinowski 1922 421
39 Malinowski 1966 I 12, 39, 64–65, 67, 84–85, 275, 328–329, 332, 347, 349, 355–356, 371, 446
40 Malinowski 1966 I 64–65, 67, 336, 348–349; Malinowski 1922 59
41 Malinowski 1966 I 60, 64–65, 336, 341–344, 348–349; Malinowski 1922 63, 410–411; Malinowski 1932 26, 155, 419; Powell 1956 45; cf. Weiner 1976 38, 40
42 Malinowski 1966 I 350
43 Malinowski 1966 I 334, 356–357; Powell 1969b 586
44 Malinowski 1966 I 332, 334, 346–347, 355
45 Malinowski 1966 I 346, 355–356; Malinowski 1932 417; Leach 1958 124; Powell 1969b 581
46 Malinowski 1966 I 61; cf. Austen 1939 247
47 Malinowski 1966 I 61; Malinowski 1921 4
48 Malinowski 1966 I 63, 87–92, 371–373; Malinowski 1921 4
49 Malinowski 1966 I 88, 108
50 Malinowski 1966 I 94–102
51 Malinowski 1966 I 95
52 Malinowski 1966 I 11, 79, 102–104, 110–115
53 Malinowski 1966 I 111, 113, plate 34 (facing 113), 274, cf. 112, 281
54 Malinowski 1966 I 79, 120, Plate 36 (facing 120), 122–123, 422–423
55 Malinowski 1966 I 123
56 Malinowski 1966 I 123–132
57 Malinowski 1966 I 282, 285–287, plate 105 (facing 284); Malinowski 1966 II 331; cf. Powell 1953 4a
58 Malinowski 1966 I 79, 124–125, 134–135, 137–138, 146
59 Malinowski 1966 I 141–144
60 Malinowski 1966 I 145
61 Malinowski 1966 I 122, 138, 144–145; Malinowski 1932 232
62 Malinowski 1966 I 61, 79, 122, 144, 158, 354; Malinowski 1932 22, 231–232; Austen 1945–46 39
63 Malinowski 1932 232
64 Malinowski 1966 I 138–139; Malinowski 1927a 210
65 Malinowski 1966 I 145–151
66 Malinowski 1966 I 61, 79, 138, 151–152
67 Malinowski 1966 I 159
68 Malinowski 1966 I 165–166
69 Malinowski 1966 I 165, 167
70 Malinowski 1966 I 167–170

71 Malinowski 1966 I 96–98
72 Malinowski 1966 I 170–171
73 Malinowski 1966 I 11, 79, 171–172; Malinowski 1932 104
74 Malinowski 1966 I 172, 189, 195, 199
75 Malinowski 1966 I 172, 176–180, 189–190, 195–196; Malinowski 1932 105–107
76 Malinowski 1966 I 223
77 Malinowski 1966 I 219–225, 233–239
78 Cf. Malinowski 1966 I 463, 470
79 Malinowski 1966 I 87, 193–194, cf. 297–298
80 Weiner 1976 34
81 Malinowski 1966 I 196, 295–296, 421–426, cf. 297–300
82 Malinowski 1966 I 421–422
83 Malinowski 1966 I 423
84 Malinowski 1966 I 21, 26, 30, plate 18 (facing 57), 57, 159, 185, 227, 293
85 Malinowski 1966 I 111, 167, 171, 427; Malinowski 1966 II 130; Austen 1945–46 37
86 Malinowski 1966 I 79–80, 354; 9–10 above
87 10–11 above
88 10 above
89 Malinowski 1966 I 69–70, 73, 84, 95–96, 98, 146, 236, 340–341, 343; Malinowski 1932 155; Malinowski 1966 II 221, 253–254, 286, 320
90 Cf. Malinowski 1966 I 87–102, 110–115, 125–132, 141–152, 165–171, 428, 436–443; Austen 1945–46 35–41
91 Malinowski 1966 II 242–243
92 Malinowski 1966 I 105, cf. 66; Malinowski 1966 II 244, 307
93 Malinowski 1966 I 112, 281–282, 285; Malinowski 1966 II 331
94 Malinowski 1966 II 243
95 Malinowski 1966 I 105, 445; Malinowski 1966 II 224–225, 243
96 Malinowski 1966 II 300
97 9–11 above
98 E.g. Kaberry 1941 237, 354–356, 359, 364; Kaberry 1941–42 215, 345; Kaberry 1965–66 339, 352–353; Lea 1966 9–11; Tuzin 1972 232; Gardi 1960 150, 159

2

The symbolism of gardening activities: procreative parallels

Linguistic evidence

Garden terminology implies a marked degree of identification between the garden and woman, and seems to suggest that women are perhaps more important in this activity than at first appears. The first indication of affinity is provided by the *vatuvi* spell which reoccurs throughout the ceremonial of gardening. It has as its key phrase "The belly of my garden swells as with a child."[1] This phrase suggests that there could be further associations between the garden and woman.

There is a distinct correlation in Trobriand garden terminology between the human being and the *taytu* (small yam). Like its human counterpart, the *taytu* can "wake up", "emerge", "rise", "climb up", "catch hold of", "turn round", "compete", "settle down", "recline", feel "ashamed" or even have "pimples"![2] In addition it can "hear", and has a "throat", an "eye", a "head" and a "body".[3] The hair covering the tuber is called *unu'unu*, a term used to describe the body hair of human male and female.[4] Perhaps the most explicit symbolic equation of *taytu* and human life lies in the expression: "*taytu latu-la buyagu*, '*taytu* is the child of the garden' ".[5]

That woman is symbolically represented in gardening is further suggested by the fact that the garden corners are referred to as *nunula*, meaning nipple or breast.[6] *Nunu* also means the human breast, nipple or mother's milk.[7] The garden (*buyagu*) or cultivated portion of land within an enclosure is referred to as having *lopou-la*, a "belly" or "inside".[8]

The garden thus appears to be symbolically linked with the human belly as distinct from the uncut bush (*odila*[9]). A specific area of ground surrounding the village stile is termed *mile'ula* – "clean of pollution" or excretion.[10] The Trobriand garden could thus be associated with woman and her sexual or procreative powers, with the "belly" possibly representing the womb. Since the garden is a working area for the sub-clan, and *nunu* can mean "same *dala*" (sub-clan),[11] it is possible that matrilineal features are interwoven in the metaphoric fabric.

As a tentative hypothesis I also suggest that there may be a link between the garden stile and the female genital area. That the garden stile (*kalapisila*, its stile) may have sexual overtones is suggested by the expression for ejaculation: *ipisi kala momona* (it spurts out his semen),[12] the word *momona* being used for both male and female sexual discharge.[13] The stile facing the village *(o valu*) has greater significance in the gardening ceremonial than that on the far side facing the bush;[14] the word might also be related to *valulu* or childbirth.[15] Although linguistic parallels are often striking, the conjectural nature of the latter two examples should be noted.

The theme of human female procreation also seems to pertain to the large yams (*kuvi*) and taro. Certain large yams have female-male associations. The verb *kopo'i* describes the process of extracting the large yams from the ground. It means "to take into one's arms" and refers to "the hugging and nursing of a little child".[16] With similar tenderness should the newly-born large yam be handled.

Garden terminology thus suggests a symbolic parallel between the cultivated garden area and the parturient woman, with the *taytu* being regarded as the child. This is in keeping with Oliver's statement that "men do not prize food for its nutrition value alone; they raise it to symbol status, endow it with prestige, and use it as one of their most sacred ritual paraphernalia".[17] Based on this postulate, a detailed investigation follows in which gardening activities, spells and magical objects used in the ritual are examined for further evidence of symbolism relating to woman.

Sexual congress and conception

At the beginning of the gardening cycle, each man ratifies his right of ownership over a plot of land by clearing a pathway into this area."This process of penetration, *sunini*" serves to corroborate the land decisions

reached in the gardening council and to open up each plot for the future performance of magic.[18] In Vakuta it is described as cutting open the belly of the garden.[19] If the cultivated plot represents the womb (belly) of woman, the action of the man in identifying a plot as his own may be understood as an act of "opening the way" for conception.

In the inaugural ceremony the garden magician receives fish from the village men.[20] This he apportions to the women who prepare it for a village dinner. Eating is an act of intimacy and may have sexual overtones: it is forbidden between unmarried couples in the Trobriands, as amongst certain other peoples.[21] Thus the public fact of the village males and females sharing a meal seems to signal some kind of unity amongst this group of people and between the sexes.

The garden magician presents a food-offering to the ancestral spirits and requests their sanction for the gardening venture.[22] It seems feasible to ask whether this act merely links human and plant fertility or whether it has particular implications for woman. The question will be borne in mind as the ceremonial is further investigated.

After the meal the garden magician intones the *vatuvi* (show the way) spell over a magical mixture surrounding the axe blades brought to him by the men. This magical power is enveloped in a piece of dried banana leaf; in this way the formula permeates the magical paraphernalia overnight.[23]

The *vatuvi* is pre-eminent amongst Trobriand gardening spells. Not a single important ritual is enacted without its recitation.[24] It is chanted at the inaugural garden ceremony, the burning ritual, erection of the *kamkokola* (magical prismatic construction), thinning of the tubers, and the *tum* (main) harvest of *taytu*.[25] In addition it is spoken in abridged form at the insertion of the good sapling, a ceremony aimed at imbuing the soil with fertility, and in the preparatory ceremony of the main harvest (*okwala*).[26]

The following is an abridged version of the *vatuvi* formula:

> Show the way, show the way...
> Show the way groundwards, into the deep ground...
> Show the way firmly, show the way to the firm moorings.
>
> O grandfathers of the name of Polu, O grandfathers of the name of Koleko...
> Mulabwoyta... Purayasi... and thou, new spirit, my grandfather Mwakenuwa,

and thou my father Yowana.

The belly of my garden leavens,
The belly of my garden rises,
The belly of my garden reclines,
The belly of my garden grows to the size of a bush-hen's nest,
The belly of my garden grows like an ant-hill;
The belly of my garden rises and is bowed down,
The belly of my garden rises like the iron-wood palm,
The belly of my garden lies down,
The belly of my garden swells,
The belly of my garden swells as with a child.
I sweep away...

The spell ends with a repetition of the opening three stanzas:

Show the way...
The belly of my garden swells as with a child...
I sweep away![27]

An analysis of spell content is necessary since the ethnographer maintains that the Trobrianders believe magical power resides principally in the spell.[28] Furthermore, noting the centrality of this formula to the crucial ritual events in the cycle of gardening, and the fact that no other spell achieves such prominence, it is appropriate to scrutinize its imagery. Malinowski asserts that the exordium is the most important and sacred part of a spell.[29] It is this opening ("Show the way ... The belly of my garden swells as with a child; I sweep away") that is of principal concern here.

The relevance of the ancestral spirits to bounteous growth in the garden has already been implied in the food-offering at the commencement of the inaugural garden ceremony. They reappear as powerful forces in the *vatuvi* formula, able to guarantee the fecundity of the gardens. The list of ancestors exhorted affirms the garden magician's charter and ability to direct the procreative process of the sub-clan's garden.

The garden magician's appeal to the shades "Polu ... Yowana", refers to ancestors on both the maternal and paternal sides.[30] A woman's sub-clan matrilineal ancestors are largely responsible for human conception and the living members of her father's sub-clan for ensuring successful development of the embryo.[31] Just as a woman's maternal ancestors and her living father are influential in her pregnancy, so are the garden magician's maternal and paternal ancestors in underwriting

the fruitfulness of the sub-clan's garden. Robinson, who also notes the connection, observes: "Thus it seems that the Trobrianders themselves have some sort of concept of fertility – at least that they connect a woman's pregnancy with the growing of food in the gardens."[32] Such a viewpoint would corroborate the opinion tentatively advanced on the meal opening the garden ritual, i.e. that both the matrilineal sub-clan and its affines are symbolically united in an intimate relationship in the horticultural magic.

Dominating the exordium which forms the core of the spell is the key expression "the belly of my garden". Picturesque similes liken its growth to an ant-hill and its swelling to a bush-hen's nest, which feature prominently in other horticultural spells.[33] The enormous bush-hen's nest strikes the Trobriand imagination both for its magnitude and connotations of gestation: these birds construct their massive mounds for brooding.[34] Malinowski records that the nest is linked with the *taytu* plant which swells when it has many tubers.[35]

The "belly" of the garden "rises" and "lies down". The imagery is that of heaving, fullness, growing, and the tumescent manifestations of pregnancy, ending with: "The belly of my garden swells as with a child." Malinowski states that the opening of the spell conveys the idea of firmness and permanence for the crops.[36] He concedes that "the belly of my garden" may refer to the soil's fecundity, but emphatically denies that the phrase bears any reference to animal or human fertility.[37] In support of his argument he says: *lopou-la* (belly his) and *o lopou-la* (in belly his) has become a way of saying "inside".[38] His informants, however, explain that "*taytu* is the child of the garden".[39]

The evidence thus suggests that the belly not only refers literally to the inside of the soil but metaphorically to the procreative function of woman. Tambiah also disagrees with Malinowski's dogmatic insistence that "the belly of my garden" has no metaphoric allusions: "Because of his commitment to his emotional and pragmatic view of language, Malinowski failed to connect the symbolism of the inaugural garden magic with the pregnancy ritual..."[40]

The *vatuvi* formula proceeds with a lengthy exorcism of nefarious agents which would harm the growing *taytu:*

> The grubs I sweep, I sweep away ... insects I blow, I blow away... The beetle that bores I drive, I drive off, begone... The marking blight, I send, I send off, begone... The blight that shines, I chase, I chase away, begone...[41]

With similar intention, spells are uttered over the Trobriand woman during gestation. These are meant both for her protection and to secure the sound development of the foetus.[42] The peroration re-emphasizes the theme of enceince by repeating the first part of the formula: "Show the way... The belly of my garden swells as with a child..."[43]

Thus the important *vatuvi* spell appears closely associated with propagation and the positive growth of the embryo, using as its vehicle of expression a human female metaphor. On each occasion when it is intoned it is the essential spell of the ceremony.[44] It is concerned with the protection and sound development of the unborn *taytu*, just as the spells and rites of pregnancy are concerned with the human foetus.

The men's axes, which will be used at the ceremony of the bad and good sapling, are infused with this spell of plenty, and are also surrounded by fertility substances aimed at enhancing the magical effect of the ceremony. Throughout the gardening ceremonies the magician uses these fundamental accoutrements for the beneficial effect they exercise on the *taytu.*[45] A strip of banana leaf is attached to each axe-blade as well as a specially prepared magical mixture containing leaves of creepers and a white rhizome, a portion of the spherical hornets' nest, earth from the bush-hen's nest, chalk from coral boulders, white petals of an aromatic pandanus, pieces of a plant with fragrant flowers, and above all coconut leaves.[46]

Some ingredients selected for the magic of the gardens and in particular this first rite, have connotations of fruitfulness, luxuriance, sound development, durability, desirable colour and shape.[47] Clearly there is an element of sympathetic magic here, whereby a creeper with verdant foliage is utilized to enhance the growth of the *taytu* vine or parts of a large hornets' nest to obtain bulging *taytu*. But one may discern a further symbolic dimension.

Just as the *vatuvi* (show the way) spell contains the theme of roundness, so the choice of magical items such as chalk from large coral boulders and parts of the *sasoka* tree which has huge, globular fruit,[48] reiterate the significance of the convex shape for gardening.

The magical objects are wrapped in the leaves of a banana palm which is characterized by a thick trunk bulging toward its base.[49] These palms are owned by women, and women's skirts are made from these same leaves.[50] Connotations of roundness linked with femininity are apparent, and there is a further connection with maternity. The Trobriand

mother's pregnancy mantle also consists of banana leaves.[51] The white petals of a species of pandanus, *kaybwibwi*, known for its long aerial roots, is included in the magical mixture.[52] A derivation, *nukaybwibwi*, refers to long, pendant (human) breasts.[53]

There is a widespread tendency in social life for colour to affirm a relationship between objects and ideas.[54] Thus, in Trobriand gardening ritual, leaves of a small bush plant (*ubwara*) with attractive long white tubers[55] are chosen to promote similar properties in the *taytu* tubers, as are the white petals mentioned above. Whiteness in *taytu* is a sign of excellence: those of good quality are referred to as "white" and those of bad quality as "black".[56]

The same value judgements pertain to people. In Trobriand ideology whiteness is an indication of human beauty; it occurs extensively in the pregnancy ceremony.[57] At the first pregnancy rites parts of plants associated with whiteness feature as magical substances: for example white plumed birds are invoked in the spells.[58] It would thus seem that whiteness of the magical items used for the first inaugural gardening rite is metaphorically linked with the pregnancy ceremony. The prerequisite of whiteness in the pregnancy ceremony[59] is not only allied to concepts of the beauty of motherhood but also to symbolic purity: " 'If a woman does not wash and anoint, and if her skin is black, people will say this woman is very bad, she has men in her mind, she does not look after her confinement... when her skin is white... she does not think about adultery.' "[60]

The pandanus, with its breast-like aerial roots, is also incorporated in the catalogue of magical items on account of the appealing aroma of its white petals, as is the *kubila* plant.[61] The probability that such substances are linked symbolically with the *taytu* in more than a superficial sense seems borne out by the fact that fragrance is considered a desirable attribute during the first pregnancy ceremonial.[62]

Finally, the prominent inclusion of coconut leaves or coconut oil in horticultural magic raises the issue of their significance. Malinowski remarks that each time he asked the main garden magician of Omarakana for a list of the magical ingredients of gardening, coconut leaves were mentioned first.[63] These leaves may be used for women's skirts.[64] In addition, the use of coconut oil in the first rite within the garden (together with hibiscus flowers as adornment[65]) invites associations with Trobriand beauty magic which occurs as part of the pregnancy ceremo-

nial.[66] During a woman's gestation the coconut features prominently as a fertility symbol[67] and coconut oil is used by the expectant mother not only to ensure a smooth, lovely skin, but to strengthen the infant.[68]

The next stage in the ceremonial sequence occurs on the morning after the magical treating of the axe blades: the men decorate themselves, receive their medicated axes, and in solemn single file follow the chief and garden magician to the principal standard plot for the performance of the rite of the bad and good sapling.[69] The fact that the gardening team consists of a core of sub-clan men led by the matrilineal head, who make for the plot belonging to the chief, indicates that the ensuing matters have implications for the sub-clan.

At the spot where the village road leads into the garden the stile will be built. Here the garden magician steps into the adjacent corner of the standard plot which is to become the main magical corner, cuts a sapling, charms it, and throws it over the boundary belt.[70] The spell identifies the bad sapling with the bush-pig – destructive and ugly. It expurgates influences that may prove alien to sound growth in the garden and hereby effects a symbolic cleansing. Bush-pigs are undesirable because of the extensive damage to crops caused by their rooting.[71] But a metaphoric dimension appears, namely that of cleansing the garden and establishing its symbolic identity through the concept of purity.

In the spell recited over the bad sapling the bush-pig is linked with fighting, ugliness and "evil smells".[72] Elsewhere we are told that sexual intercourse is taboo within the garden enclosure:[73] should coitus illicitly take place in or near the fields, the bush-pig would be lured by the scent, "break through the fences and destroy the gardens".[74] This may be compared with the pregnancy ceremony which stresses that improper sexual behaviour on the part of the incipient mother would jeopardize the development of the foetus and cause her skin to blacken and become ugly. The expectant mother establishes her symbolic status by associating herself with cleanliness, whiteness and beauty, particularly refraining from adultery and fruit associated with excrement.[75]

Just as an adulterous union would impede the proper development of a woman's pregnancy, so illicit sex would attract the bush-pig and harm garden growth. It is submitted that the bush-pig and bad sapling therefore symbolize impurity and adultery which are anathema to the developing garden and pregnant mother.

The bad sapling is cut down with the axe that apparently represents burgeoning purity since it has been in contact with the magical substances and infused with the procreative *vatuvi* spell. It is thrown over the garden boundary to the domain of the bush-pig, associated with disorder, disturbance and unattractiveness – the bush, where defecation must also take place.[76] The sapling is thus thrown into *yosewo*, referring to uncut jungle, evil influences and the bush-pig.[77] The term is extended to all that is lifeless and useless and thrown on a rubbish heap.[78] Significantly the garden area surrounding the stile is termed *mile'ula*, clean of pollution (including excrement).

Such contrasts and analogies are in line with others occurring in Oceania.[79] For instance, the Orokaiva of the Northern District of Papua identify the garden and taro with the female, while the male is associated with the bush and bush-pig.[80] The North Luzon Ilongot link the garden, woman and domestic pig, contrasting them with the forest, man and bush-pig.[81] It is noteworthy that to the Kiwai Papuans of New Guinea, bush-pigs are a symbol of fighting and, as in the Trobriands, are attracted by sexual intercourse.[82]

It thus seems feasible to consider the bush-pig as a symbol of disorder or adultery in the Trobriands. The act of the bad sapling, though ostensibly aimed at magically discouraging the hazard of bush-pigs, thus symbolically identifies the condition of the garden with that of a pregnant woman.

The garden magician now cuts a second sapling (which stood next to the first), inserts it into the ground at the place of the prospective *kamkokola* (magical prismatic construction), and sits beside it in the manner of a woman.[83] He sways his body and the sapling from right to left whilst reciting the brief *kayowota* (*yowota* sapling) spell:

> I cut my garden; with my charmed axe, I make the belly of my garden blossom. My garden rises, it stands up on that side; it rises, it stands up on this side.[84]

Still sitting with buttocks on the earth, the garden magician uproots a handful of weeds and with swaying motion rubs the ground whilst reciting the *yowota* (prepare the soil) formula.[85] This formula[86] has as its kernel "the belly of my garden" theme, which forms part of the *vatuvi* spell.[87]

Who sits down and blesses on all sides within the tabooed grove of Yema?

It is I... we anoint it with coconut cream, we make the *taytu* vine grow up quick and straight in the tabooed grove of Yema.

The belly of my garden lifts,
The belly of my garden rises,
The belly of my garden reclines,
The belly of my garden grows to the size of a bush-hen's nest,
The belly of my garden grows like an ant-hill,
The belly of my garden rises and is bowed down,
The belly of my garden rises like the iron-wood palm,
The belly of my garden lies down,
The belly of my garden swells,
The belly of my garden swells as with a child.

The planting of the sapling is said to instil fecundity into the soil while the rubbing of the ground makes the earth soft.[88]

In both the *kayowota* and *yowota* spells the recurrent image is one of projected tumescence and growth. The *kayowota* is particularly suggestive of penetration, since the garden magician "cuts" the sapling and inserts it in the garden, the cutting being associated with fertility (*talala* = to cut into flower, make blossom by cutting[89]). The allied *yowota* spell takes up this theme and conveys prophetic affirmations concerning fertility – the garden "swells as with a child" – the whole verse, lifted out of the *vatuvi* formula, repeating the imagery of gestation in the garden.[90] In addition the *yowota* formula refers to the anointing of the tabooed grove with coconut oil,[91] which substance is also applied to the pregnant woman.[92] The garden as tabooed area, and pregnant woman in a symbolically apart state, are thus conjoined through the common element of the coconut.

The intention of the act of the good sapling is to imbue the earth with soft fecundity.[93] The Kurokaywa (northern Kiriwina) version is particularly vivid. "The cutting of the bad stick is to drive away evil influences and to make the earth fertile. The good stick is a symbol of fertility, and the rubbing of the ground with the leaves is to make the soil good. The whole ceremony... is meant to instil the vital forces of fertility into the earth."[94]

In view of the preceding symbolic allusions to sexuality and procreation it should be considered whether the rite of the good sapling has sexual

connotations. Trobriand theories of conception maintain that an ancestor of the same sub-clan as a woman is rejuvenated and reincarnated by being placed in the woman by another ancestor spirit, usually also one of her own sub-clan.[95] It is believed that a woman's vagina must be dilated by mechanical or sexual means to allow insertion of the spirit child (*waywaya/waiwaia*) by the ancestral spirit,[96] the father's role being " 'to keep open the way' by sexual intercourse". (It should however be noted that Malinowski regards the belief in insertion through the vagina[98] as "less authoritative" than that in insertion through the head.[99])

There is ambiguity as to the stage of physiological pregnancy reached when the spirit child is inserted. According to Malinowski menstruation stops after the coming of the spirit child;[100] but Austen records the view that cessation of menstruation antecedes the insertion: pregnancy as we know it is already advanced, the breasts having begun to swell.[101] Despite uncertainty as to the exact time of "foetal" insertion, and variation in details of the beliefs, what they have in common is the idea that a spirit child is implanted into a woman.

It would therefore seem that the good sapling, which is directed into the garden and empowered with generative growth, represents the phallus or some mechanical agent symbolically penetrating and preparing the female for the reception of the foetus.

The problem of the substance with which the ground is rubbed remains unanswered. The ethnography is unclear: Malinowski in one place states that it is rubbed with "weeds",[102] yet elsewhere it is said to be rubbed with "magical herbs".[103] If the latter is correct then the garden magician could be imbuing the earth with the procreative magical mixture associated with pregnancy. The weeds or herbs could symbolize semen, which is believed to assist in coagulating the menstrual flow.[104]

During the symbolic acts of "cutting" and rubbing the soil the garden magician adopts the sitting position of women, *sipuyatayle*.[105] Malinowski emphasizes the female nature of the act, explaining that this stance is purposely adopted to honour the two women who, according to tradition, originated the magic of the fields in Omarakana.[106] This is acceptable and need not conflict with the interpretation offered of the garden perceived as a woman whose vagina is opened in the magical act of the good sapling. Tambiah moreover points out that the garden

magician's behaviour of sitting flat on the ground with buttocks touching it is not only a feminine act, but together with his food taboos, presents him as simulating a pregnant woman.[107]

I hold that the garden magician's symbolic behaviour is not unequivocally female, and that he also manifests male behaviour such as penetration. A single rite out of the whole gardening sequence seems insufficient for ascribing purely female symbolic significance to the garden magician's role.[108] However, the important point for the present purpose is that the garden magician serves as a polysemic symbolic medium[109] enacting the drama of fertility.

At the end of this rite of symbolic penetration the garden magician rises, strikes the soil with his wand of office and utters the *kaylepa* spell:

> I strike thee, O soil, open thou up and let the crops through the ground. Shake, O soil, swell out, O soil, swell out as with a child, O soil.[110]

The men have been silent and watchful. Suddenly they scream and run to their plots with their medicated axes. Each cuts two saplings on his plot (*baleko*) dealing with them in like manner to the garden magician. Every man also clears the scrub in the corner of the plot on which the magical prismatic construction will later be erected. The garden magician's acolytes repeat only the *yowota* (prepare the soil) formula referring to the swelling of "the belly of my garden" on each plot, the soil being rubbed with weeds.[111]

The injunction given to the soil in the *kaylepa* spell is so blatant and analogous to the process of gestation and birth that it requires little additional comment, except to point out that the words simulate pregnancy and anticipate parturition. That the garden magician now uses the hereditary wand of office also suggests references to matrilineality, for he wields it as the living descendant and representative of the founders of the sub-clan.[112] The men thus convert the soil into a symbolic condition resembling that of a pregnant woman. By being the actors, they indicate their relationship with the productive capacity of the soil. This association with the soil continues throughout the horticultural cycle and has particular relevance to the female members of the sub-clan who receive the finest produce of the garden in the form of *urigubu* (matrimonial harvest gifts).[113]

After the rite of the bad and good sapling, the scrub is cut and left to dry; during this time the annual feast of *Milamala* takes place. This celebration pertains to the return to the villages of their sub-clan by the ancestral spirits. Austen suggests that the term *Milamala* could be based on the root *mila* = to simulate; Malinowski thinks *mala* might be an alternative to *malia* (= plenty).[114] *Milamala* is characterized by food distributions and an intensification of feasting, gaiety, reciprocal visiting, sexual indulgence and, above all, dancing.[115] The Trobriand dancing period may only commence once the village drums have been consecrated. The drums are of phallic nature: they are called *kupi*, a ribald synonym for the glans penis.[116] At the termination of *Milamala* the period of mourning for the deceased is lifted.[117]

Malinowski regards *Milamala* as a harvest festival.[118] But this does not explain why there is such an emphasis on Life, and why it is timed to occur between the ceremony of inauguration, with its apparent symbolic association of the garden with a purified female, whose "way" has been opened, and that of burning the fields.

Lanternari interprets the festival as a "neurosis" whose main features – sexual orgies and festivities for the dead – serve as a trigger mechanism for pent-up anxiety.[119] To him it appears that *Milamala* represents a crisis at a critical period of uncertainty in the Trobriand horticultural year, i.e. the interlude between the end of one harvest and the beginning of work for the next.[120] His statement with regard to the timing of *Milamala* is not quite accurate, for work in the gardens has in fact started, though the planting period is yet to be inaugurated.[121] Since the present study pertains to the role of women in Trobriand horticulture, it is not in place to evaluate Lanternari's argument in detail. It is necessary, however, to bear in mind his viewpoint. *Milamala* may be psychologically ambivalent, reminding people of their fallibility and mortality,[122] yet perennially affirming abundance and the renewal of life.

In order to understand *Milamala* more fully we should consider the myth of its origin:

> A woman died and some time later her pregnant daughter bore a son. The new mother, with insufficient milk for her infant, requested a dying man to ask her mother on arrival in the land of the spirits, to bring her grandson food. The spirit woman complied, brought food and roasted a yam for her grandson. She went to the bush and prepared a garden for her daughter and then proceeded to the house, but her daughter took fright and told her mother to return to the spirit land as people would not recognize her and would

regard her as a witch. The spirit woman left, saying that once a year she and the other spirits would return invisibly to the villages at *Milamala* to see the people.[123]

This myth is matrilineal (mother, daughter, son). It is concerned with death and hunger on the one hand and life and food on the other. It links the fate of produce with that of people, for the earth has no food, just as the mother has no milk. It appears reasonable, as Lanternari points out, that in this myth "the mother who lacks milk is the mythological symbol of the earth that does not yield food... The connection between the cycle of human life and the cycle of plant life finds its most open expression in the perfect coincidence of the planting of the garden, the birth of the baby and the beginning of the new year."[124] Though the coincidence is imperfect, it is close enough to suggest a correlation between yam and human life, and the relevance of woman and the ancestral spirits to the rejuvenation of life in the garden and the sub-clan.

Although it may emphasize the periodic experience of mortal danger by human death or plant dearth, *Milamala* sanctions yearly regeneration. *Milamala* does not appear to be only a harvest festival to celebrate the people's joy in overflowing storehouses, or to illustrate their desire for a worthy new crop, though such feelings may play their part. Symbolically, it seems to reveal themes of courtship, life and fertility; and in this context the presence of the ancestral spirits has important implications.

At *Milamala* the ancestral spirits (*baloma*) are feasted and welcomed to their sub-clan village.[125] They appear to be linked with the prosperity of the village and crops,[126] with the resurgence of life for mourners, and in the myth with the bringing of food to their living kinsfolk. This should be considered along with Trobriand dogma attributing human conception to a visitation by the ancestral spirits. Taking into account these factors, together with the timing of *Milamala* (after the opening of the garden and antecedent to burning), it is proposed that *Milamala* could be a festival celebrating the rebirth of life. The ancestors revisit their sub-clan villages, just as they revisit their female matrilineal representatives to bring them spirit children. They could also signal the rebirth of *taytu* as is suggested by the subsequent horticultural ceremony.

Burning is an accepted practical horticultural procedure amongst many swidden farmers.[127] The Trobrianders maintain that the soil would become sterile and infertile if they did not burn the leaves.[128] This is a

logical pragmatic statement, for inorganic nutrients are hereby added to the soil.[129]

Malinowski's description concerning the presence of women at the burning ceremonials is rather loose. It is stated that anyone, "even women", may attend, and yet that only those with special permission would participate.[130] A distinct order that people are to remain in the village is in fact given; moreover, only the chief's eldest wife is designated as being a party to the ceremonial entourage.[131] In Malinowski's earlier notes he states that men and women participate in the burning ceremony, with the garden magician's sister or daughter playing a specific part.[132] What is noteworthy is that burning apparently requires the presence of at least one woman for the first time in the magical proceedings of gardening, even though the degree of her involvement remains uncertain. Since she is marrried to, or part of, the matrilineal subclan represented by the garden magician, the activities will probably be relevant to this social group.

The Trobrianders hold the burning observances in high regard. Extensive rites are involved which suggest the possibility of a metaphoric dimension.[133] At the outset of the burning ceremony the garden magician and his helpers set the scrub ablaze with magical torches made of coconut leaves preserved from the previous harvest. At that time the garden magician permeated these with the powerful *vatuvi* spell.[134] On the second day he places some substances and torches on a mat. The torches again contain dried coconut sprouts and around the end of each is tied a strip of banana leaf.[135] Once more he utters the *vatuvi* formula: "The belly of my garden leavens... The belly of my garden reclines... The belly of my garden grows to the size of a bush-hen's nest..." and folds over the banana leaf to contain the magical essence.[136] The garden magician and his acolytes prepare magical heaps of sticks, branches and weeds on the standard plots. After a while he lights a medicated torch and sets fire to the refuse heaps which have been constructed on the standard plots, the ritual representative following his example on the other plots.[137]

On the third day the garden magician and his helpers, who carry taro tops, set out for the standard plots. Over the largest of the taro the garden magician utters a spell which, except for the opening line, is identical to that of the bad sapling,[138] expurgating malign influences. Then he plants this taro at the corner of the standard plot previously cleared (i.e. that adjacent to the village stile). The assistants treat the other

plots accordingly.[139]

On the fourth day, in the final ceremony of the burning, the garden magician plants a yam tuber of the type *kwanada* at the corner of the standard plot which is the focus for magical activity. Before the planting he squats at this corner, holds the tuber close to his mouth and in a brief spell orders it to grow.[140] Afterwards he takes a taro top from an assistant. This he gently charms, encouraging it to swell, then plants it.[141] Again, all plots are similarly treated.[142] These burning rites seem ro relate woman and her procreative properties to the horticultural cycle. The banana, coconut leaf and the *vatuvi* formula all appear again in the firing. The repeated use of the banana leaf indicates continuity of the concept of female fertility evident in the inaugural garden ceremony.[143]

The magical torches are composed of coconut fronds ostensibly for the purpose of sympathetic magic.[144] Yet the choice of these leaves is striking, and indicates that the symbolism could be functioning on different planes. The coconut leaves have been magically loaded by the *vatuvi* spell with pullulatory energy at harvest.[145] There is, in addition, the belief that the prosperity of the harvest is hereby conveyed and quality instilled into the new crop.[146]

But as was submitted in discussing the inaugural garden ceremony, the coconut in gardening magic could be associated with human fertility, for it plays a noteworthy part in the ceremonial of gestation. The magical torches made of coconut leaf could again have symbolic connotations of fecundity. What is more, they have for some months been imbued with the pivotal spell of gardening (*vatuvi*) which has as its focus of interest the successful maturation of the *taytu*. It would therefore appear that the procreative theme is clearly enunciated in the horticultural magic by repetition and incorporation of the *vatuvi* spell in key magical acts.

The banana, the coconut and the images of the *vatuvi*, connoting fertility, could be some of the main elements uniting the process of gardening with that of human pregnancy. Fire may provide another symbolic link. As in other parts of New Guinea,[147] fire in the Trobriands is intimately associated with womanhood, for its origin lies in the vagina of a culture heroine.[148] And, as elsewhere,[149] fire is a dominant protective feature of pregnancy customs in the Trobriands. As part of Trobriand puerperal rituals, the parturient mother must sit naked over a fire. This

is said to be propitious for childbirth, a deterrent of black magic and a cleansing process.[150] The ceremonial application of fire on the garden seems connected with its use in pregnancy. It may thus symbolically cleanse and engender fecundity in the fields. What emerges from the second firing (specifically of refuse) is not only the continued projection of fertility upon the garden but, by the use of fire, the conferring of symbolic purity on the plot or womb.

The action of the garden magician in relation to planting the *kwanada* yam at the magical corner of the standard plot may be interpreted as simulating the ancestor inserting the human foetus into the womb. Such an interpretation is consistent with the Trobriand belief that an ancestral spirit (*baloma*) who belongs to the same sub-clan as a woman, brings a spirit child and inserts it into her. The standard plot usually belongs to the village chief or garden magician (who is often one and the same person), or some other member of the dominant sub-clan. The garden magician is the recognized matrilineal representative of the ancestors who founded the sub-clan. He now apparently mimics the ancestral role with regard to the women of the sub-clan by causing the soil to conceive.

The incorporation of taro in this and a later *taytu* ceremonial [151] raises questions as to its meaning which cannot be ignored. Austen postulates that the presence of taro in *taytu* ritual is the result of its being the older Trobriand crop.[152] Malinowski deals cursorily with the problem, also attributing historical priority to taro cultivation in the Trobriands.[153] The documentation on existing taro magic is too inconclusive to pass judgement as to whether this magic is a vestige of former taro ceremonial. Another possible question concerning the presence of taro is whether it implies that the *taytu* ritual will have an effect on taro fields as well. It might be argued that the appearance of taro in the *taytu* ceremonies simultaneously ensures prophylactic protection for the taro crop; but for lack of data the question as to why it would differ from the other secondary crops remains unanswered.

The Trobriand material pertaining to taro and *taytu* does not lend itself to interpretation in terms of what Lévi-Strauss calls binary opposition, as it does in New Caledonia, where the gardening ceremonial involves distinctive symbolic groupings:

taro	yam
female	male
wet	dry.[154]

What should be borne in mind, however, is that taro and taro gardens may be associated with women in Oceania generally.[155]

The first act in the gardening ceremonial in which taro is involved is called "dog's excrement".[156] Excrement is taboo in the garden as are excrement-associated foods to the pregnant woman.[157] This taro ceremony bears some affinity with that of the bad sapling in that their spells are virtually the same, and both ceremonies take place in the magical corner.[158] But they differ in that the bad sapling is excised from the garden whereas taro is introduced into the garden. It is probable that the bad sapling symbolizing pollution is expelled since it is not generative of growth.[159]

The taro's symbolic function is more complex. It may be associated with blood since the weeding spell makes reference to "taro red like blood";[160] but the name of the act associates it with excrement. The implication appears to be that taro has some positive function to perform in the belly of the garden antecedent to its becoming waste, and thus it may be seen as non-polluting. Therefore it seems possible that this taro could be a metaphoric equivalent of female blood which has positive value before it assumes a negative form. Most Trobriand theories of conception stress the necessary presence of the mother's blood for the nourishment of the foetus.[161] Austen notes that the mother's blood is said to change after the entrance of the spirit child.[162]

Viewing this act of ceremonially planting taro in the context of the ceremony of striking the soil (purification and penetration) and that of the preceding act of burning the garden (cleansing) and the ensuing rite of planting a ceremonial yam (foetus)[163], the incorporation of taro at the magical corner next to the *kwanada* yam appears to connote the nourishment needed by the newly-planted yam, the taro being equated with the mother's blood that sustains the foetus.[164] This does not exclude the possibility of taro having other symbolic connotations as well.

The ceremonies governing the burning of the garden closely follow the festivities of *Milamala* in which the ancestral spirits are welcomed to their sub-clan villages, conveying the theme of the principle of life and its renewal with regard both to mankind and to the crops. In this context, it is suggested that the ceremonial firing makes the womb of the garden receptive to foetal life, symbolically implanted in the form of the *kwanada* yam. Perhaps this is why the Trobrianders consider the burning ceremony as "indispensable" to successful horticulture.[165]

Fencing in the garden is a necessary practical activity. Oceanian ethnographers state that fences keep out bush-pigs which damage the crops.[166] Austen records that no-one may traverse the fence into the Trobriand garden except by using the stiles, for pigs would scent a route and enter the enclosure at that point.[167] Once it has been fenced, the garden visually becomes a specific entity contrasting with the bush outside, and it is signalled as being in a symbolic state of purity. No-one may enter it except at the appropriate place lest bush-pigs be attracted to the place of unlawful entry. This accords with the symbolism found in the ceremony of the bad sapling: the symbolic purity of the plot, like that of the pregnant woman, must not be endangered.

In similar vein, the Enga (Western Highlands, New Guinea) surround newly-made gardens with a fence of saplings and vines to which bits of women's aprons are tied. The influence of these is so powerful that apart from the husband no man will cross them for fear of blemishing his appearance.[168] Douglas has drawn attention to the symbolic importance of bodily margins allied to concepts of pollution:[169] it seems that the Trobriand garden fence could play a similar role in signalling the confines of femaleness.

The next event in the garden cycle concerns the erection of the *kamkokola* on the magical corner of every plot. The ceremony is associated with the erection of poles (*kavatam*) to support the *taytu* vines.[170] In the limited sense of the word, *kamkokola* means the pole erected vertically at the main corner of each garden plot, but the term can also refer more generally to the entire magical prismatic construction of which the *kamkokola* pole is the perpendicular, or to the similar pyramidal structures raised on the other three corners of the plot.[171]

Prior to the *kamkokola* ceremony the garden magician inserts a special stick representative of the taboo on garden work into the ground at the magical corner of every garden plot. The first day of the *kamkokola* ceremony resembles that of the inaugural garden magic.[172] The identical magical substances are used and attached to the axes in a banana leaf. All the accoutrements are placed between two mats into which the garden magician reiterates the potent *vatuvi* spell:

> Show the way... The belly of my garden grows to the size of a bush-hen's nest, The belly of my garden grows like an ant-hill; The belly of my garden rises and is bowed down... the blight I blow, I blow away... The belly of my garden leavens ...[173]

The repetitive pattern of the symbolic actions, words and objects, as introduced in the first major ceremony of garden magic,[174] reinforces the imagery of conception, the burgeoning of the garden, and the necessity for continued vigilant magical protection against elements dangerous to the embryonic *taytu*.

On the second day the garden magician (or his delegates) makes a deep hole with a digging-stick at the corner of the standard plot.[175] A pole is rubbed with some of the standard magical mixture of gardening prepared the previous evening, and a portion is placed in the hole.[176] The pole is thus steeped in connotations of tumescence.[177] It is then secured upright in the hole; now the pole is designated *kamkokola*. Two other poles are made to rest on either side of it.[178] The garden magician ceremonially erects the *kamkokola* in the main corner of every plot; the other three are built by the owner himself.[179]

It is a recognized fact that supports help develop a tall strong yam vine and produce good yields.[180] As horticultural practitioners the Trobrianders are aware of the correlation between the successful underground development of the tubers and the height and profusion of the vine.[181] Malinowski nevertheless observes that the people view the *kamkokola* erections both practically and mystically, and that their work at this stage is characterized by a zealous pride in the aesthetic appearance of the structure erected.[182] He comments on the feelings of satisfaction aroused in the inhabitants by the *kamkokola.*[183] Considering the present theoretical inquiry one is immediately led to wonder whether the *kamkokola* poles might have some symbolic significance, and what relevance there is in the fact that the garden magician (or his assistants) personally performs the heavy task of constructing the principal *kamkokola* on all the plots.[184] An examination of the events which take place on the third day of the *kamkokola* ceremony provides an indication as to their symbolic significance.

On this day the garden magician proceeds to the standard plots, his acolytes carrying the ritually treated axes and plants chosen for their capacity to induce splendid foliage or great size.[185] A few men accompany them. The magician squats close to the *kamkokola*, lays a bunch of leaves on the ground and, facing the *kamkokola*, recites over them so that the spell will spread over the garden, infusing the soil with its power.

Anchoring, anchoring of my garden,
Taking deep root, taking deep root in my garden,
Anchoring in the name of Tudava,
Taking deep root in the name of Malita...
I shall strike the firmly moored bottom of my *taytu*.
It shall be anchored.

It shall be anchored...
My soil is anchored,
My *kamkokola*, my magical prism, shall be anchored,
My *kavatam*, my strong yam pole, shall be anchored,
My *kaysalu*, my branching pole, shall be anchored,
My *kamtuya*, my stem saved from the cutting, shall be anchored,
My *kaybudi*, my training-stick that leans against the great yam pole, shall be anchored...
My *kayluvalova*, my tabooing-stick, shall be anchored,
My *kayvaliluwa*, my great yam pole, shall be anchored.

It is anchored, my garden is anchored...[186]

Once the leaves are charmed, they are inserted into the soil at the *kamkokola* pole.[187] The garden magician then strikes the *kamkokola* with his axe, which has been empowered with the principal gardening formula: the *vatuvi* spell,[188] and utters a few ritual words indicating that this is the *kamkokola* of the garden magicians. The acolytes replicate the ceremony on the other plots.[189] The central image of this *kamkokola* spell is one of anchoring the *taytu* and securing all the garden structures which assist its growth, until finally the garden and its contents become firmly established. In addition the cultigen is invoked to root itself with a drilling, screwing movement.[190]

In contrast to Malinowski's interpretation that the *kamkokola* ceremony concerns the *taytu* poles (*kavatam*),[191] Trobriand informants were emphatic that the ceremony was associated with successful planting.[192] In magical sequence the *kamkokola* ceremony follows that of symbolic penetration and conception.[193] The singular size and decorative appearance of the *kamkokola* construction in the garden[194] and the attention it receives are meaningful. It seems possible that the triangular-shaped *kamkokola* structure is a symbolic projection of the pregnant womb. It is this vertical pole which supports the vine of the *taytu*—"foetus" (the *kwanada* yam) ceremonially implanted in the "belly of the garden" at the burning ceremony.[195] The vine twining up the *kamkokola* could then represent the umbilical cord conjoined to the womb.

Austen indicates that the ornamented *kamkokola* poles are inserted once planting is in progress or the *taytu* have begun to sprout.[196] Whether these structures antecede or follow the actual planting, there is clearly a connection between them and the planted *taytu*. Malinowski considers the *kamkokola* ceremony to be the turning point in Trobriand gardening, ending the preparatory activities inaugurating the period of growth.[197] In symbolic terms the *taytu*, like the human embryo, has been implanted and is about to develop.

After the *kamkokola* ceremony a short rite is conducted, aimed at preventing pests from entering the gardens.[198] Earth from the bush-hen's nest is mixed with a plant and burnt in the *kamkokola* corner, the mixture having first been imbued with the words:

> O *nabugwa taytu*,
> O *nakoya taytu*,
> O *teyo'u* plant,
> Boil in the belly of my garden,
> Go on boiling in the corner of my garden.[199]

This little magical act revives intentions already seen in the inaugural gardening ceremony:[200] eradication of influences injurious to the growing tropophyte.[201] It is a theme consistently followed in the horticultural ceremonies and important to that of pregnancy.[202] Parts of the bush-hen's nest are now brought into direct contact with the *kamkokola*. Already incorporated in the symbolism for its connotations of hugeness and brooding,[203] the bush-hen's nest is also associated with heat, a theme taken up in the spell. The "belly of my garden" image reappears and the verb "boil" is utilized, appropriately suggestive of heat, activity and movement. Heat is also relevant to the human foetus and mother in the puerperal ceremonies where it features as an aid to parturition, as a cleansing agent, and as a prophylactic against all ills that might befall the mother and child.[204]

Now the actual, as opposed to the ritual, planting of *taytu* begins. I do not attach much importance to the fact that women may help the men in planting the secondary crops,[205] for these do not have the symbolic importance of the principal yield of *taytu*.[206] Occasionally women will help with the main planting but essentially this is done by men.[207] Basically planting is a practical activity: the man in a single prolonged action squats and loosens the clods of soil with his digging-stick in his right hand, while his left, "with a swift, caressing movement" sifts roots

and stones from the loosened soil. He then embeds the seed tuber.[208]

Men usually plant communally and during this time some unspecified taboos are in evidence.[209] They also indulge in special cries, competitive challenges, and songs, forbidden at other stages of gardening. Certain planting melodies are directed at the sound development of the tubers.[210] One of the chants uttered while the work is in progress is:

> "Bogina'i (name of a woman about whom nothing else is known) is recently deflowered", with the rejoinder: "But your vulva, Bomigawaga (an equally obscure female personality), over there at the corner of the fence, has for long time had a considerable circumference."[211]

Malinowski offers the following comment: "The obscene allusions... are connected with the planting; the deeper the soil is broken up at the planting-spot, and the more thoroughly it is worked, the better will grow the *taytu*. Hence the parallel of the sexual act. This was the interpretation given to me by my native informants."[212]

An analogy to the abovementioned relationship of the breaking up of the soil and sexual intercourse presents itself in the Trobriand theory of procreation and of their origin as a people. The genesis myth says that the autochthonous ancestress was unable to give birth to people until her vagina had been opened or pierced, no matter by what agent.[213] Human conception is similarly explained.[214] A woman's vagina must be opened in order to conceive: "once opened up – in the normal course of events this is done by sexual intercourse – there is no need for male and female to come together in order to produce a child".[215] A woman who has a great deal of intercourse will have a more dilated vagina, facilitating the entrance of a spirit child.[216]

It seems possible that the above "opening" action preceding the implanting of the *taytu* into the soil[217] could be a practical correlate of the symbolic dilation of the vulva of the garden (ceremony of the good sapling)[218] prior to insertion of the embryo (rite of the *kwanada* yam).[219] Since planting is primarily the activity of men, it may be seen as male penetration of the female, and the pointed digging-stick with its vigorous probing activity, as a phallic symbol. In South Pentecost (New Hebrides) it is said that "men wield the digging-sticks because the act of jabbing them into the ground is metaphorically viewed as sexual penetration".[220]

Reference to female genitals in the quoted planting formula in context of the corpus of horticultural spells concerned with "the belly of my garden",[221] plus reference to an analogy between planting and sexual intercourse, seems to affirm male-female interaction in the process. It is open to debate whether or not such visible acknowledgement that the male has a part in preparing for insertion of the *taytu*, or foetus, indicates Trobriand awareness of the physical facts of procreation. For a fuller understanding of this important problem reference should be made to the extensive literature on the subject.[222] Certainly the method of planting complements the cultural exposition of procreation, i.e. that males (or some object) must prepare the way for the insertion of the foetus into the belly or womb.[223]

I think that the action of males in planting[224] demonstrates a sex-linked activity and appears to recognize the male's contribution to preparations for the embryo. In a simple, personal way each male Trobriand planter re-enacts the principle presented in abstract form by the garden magician in the ceremony of the good sapling (penetration)[225] and insertion of the *kwanada* yam (conception)[226] with relation to the feminine earth. The cultural dogma still holds: the male prepares the way for the implantation of the foetus in the womb, and in planting he carefully embeds the *taytu* just as the ancestor would the human foetus.

My argument thus far is that not only are there linguistic associations likening the garden to woman, but that the symbolic action-patterns of the gardeners reinforce an analogy between the process of horticultural growth and that of human procreation. As with a woman, the garden must be penetrated symbolically for conception to take place; the garden formulae and magical substances used express images of tumescence and fecundity, and the burning of the gardens and concept of heat are linked with plant and human fertility and cleansing. Finally, the yam is inserted into the female earth as is a spirit child into a woman. In the next chapter I will pursue this analogous developmental process as the tuber grows and is harvested.

Notes

1 Malinowski 1966 I 97

2 Malinowski 1966 I 141–142, 154; Malinowski 1966 II 142, 163, 165, 167, 209, 281–283, 301–302, 306

3 Malinowski 1966 I 140–142; Malinowski 1966 II 138, 169, 171–172, 174, 209, 299

4 Malinowski 1966 I 172; Malinowski 1932 253
5 Malinowski 1966 II 263
6 Malinowski 1966 II 140
7 Malinowski 1932 254; Weiner 1976 92
8 Malinowski 1966 II 83–86, 144, 262
9 Malinowski 1966 I 76, 89, 286; Malinowski 1966 II 16, 29, 43, 68, 87, 89.
10 Malinowski 1966 II 139
11 Weiner 1976 92
12 Leach J.W. 1974
13 Malinowski 1932 142
14 Malinowski 1966 II 139; Malinowski 1966 I 90, 100
15 Cf. Malinowski 1920a 68
16 Malinowski 1966 II 102, 137, cf. 100
17 Oliver 1942a 36
18 Malinowski 1966 I 92–93.
19 Malinowski 1966 I 421
20 Malinowski 1966 I 93
21 Malinowski 1932 64, 372; Malinowski 1966 I 203; Harrington 1967 359; Weiner 1976 171, 173, 184, 195; See e.g. Tambiah 1973 128, 131 (Thailand); Yalman 1969 91 (Sinhalese, Ceylon); Malinowski 1915 566–567 (Mailu, New Guinea); Hunt 1899 10 (Murray Islands, Torres Straits)
22 Malinowski 1966 I 95–96
23 Malinowski 1966 I 95–96, 99; Malinowski 1966 II 257
24 Malinowski 1966 I 96; Malinowski 1966 II 215, 257
25 Malinowski 1966 I 96–98, 113, 127, 152, 170
26 Malinowski 1966 I 101–102, 169
27 Malinowski 1966 I 96–98
28 Malinowski 1922 403; Malinowski 1926b 112; Malinowski 1916 388
29 Malinowski 1966 II 258
30 Malinowski 1966 I 85, 468; Malinowski 1966 II 262; Robinson 1962 148–149
31 Malinowski 1916 403–406; Malinowski 1932 146–149, 152, 180–196; Robinson 1962 141–142, 144, 149
32 Robinson 1962 149
33 Malinowski 1966 I 101, 146, 169
34 Malinowski 1966 I 105; Malinowski 1966 II 330
35 Malinowski 1966 II 221
36 Malinowski 1966 II 262
37 Malinowski 1966 II 262–263
38 Malinowski 1966 II 262
39 Malinowski 1966 II 263
40 Tambiah 1968 195
41 Malinowski 1966 I 97–98
42 Malinowski 1932 179–190
43 Malinowski 1966 I 98

44 Malinowski 1966 II 257
45 Malinowski 1966 I 105–106, 127, 152
46 Malinowski 1966 I 94–95, 105–106
47 Malinowski 1966 I 105–106
48 Malinowski 1966 I 105–106
49 Malinowski 1966 I 106; Malinowski 1966 II 114
50 Malinowski 1966 I 312; Malinowski 1966 II 114; Weiner 1976 94
51 Malinowski 1932 180
52 Malinowski 1966 I 106
53 Malinowski 1932 254
54 Cf. Mauss 1972 77
55 Malinowski 1966 I 106
56 Malinowski 1966 I 152; cf. Munn 1971 6
57 Malinowski 1932 181–183, 191–192, 255; cf. Tambiah 1968 203
58 Malinowski 1932 181–184
59 Tambiah 1968 196
60 Malinowski 1932 191
61 Malinowski 1966 I 106
62 Malinowski 1932 187
63 Malinowski 1966 I 105
64 Malinowski 1932 256; Weiner 1976 6, 95
65 Malinowski 1966 I 99, cf. 283
66 Malinowski 1932 298–301
67 Malinowski 1932 186
68 Malinowski 1932 187, 198
69 Malinowski 1966 I 99–100
70 Malinowski 1966 I 99–101
71 Malinowski 1966 II 221; Malinowski 1966 I 67; Austen 1945–46 38
72 Malinowski 1966 I 100
73 Malinowski 1966 I 119
74 Malinowski 1932 415; cf. Malinowski 1966 II 178
75 Cf. Malinowski 1932 192
76 Malinowski 1932 375
77 Malinowski 1966 I 99–101
78 Malinowski 1966 II 83
79 Cf. Barrau 1965 343–344
80 Schwimmer 1973 162
81 Rosaldo & Atkinson 1975 56
82 Landtman 1917 340, 391; cf. Saville 1926 173 (Mailu, New Guinea)
83 Malinowski 1966 I 101
84 Malinowski 1966 I 101
85 Malinowski 1966 II 158
86 Malinowski 1966 I 101
87 19–20 above
88 Malinowski 1966 I 101–102
89 Malinowski 1966 II 158
90 21–22 above

91 Malinowski 1966 II 268–269
92 24 above
93 Malinowski 1966 I 101–102
94 Malinowski 1966 I 280
95 Weiner 1976 121; Malinowski 1920c 805; Malinowski 1924 298; Malinowski 1929 402; Austen 1934 107–108
96 Malinowski 1932 154; Malinowski 1916 412; Austen 1934 102, 105
97 Rentoul 1931 154
98 Malinowski 1916 403
99 Malinowski 1932 149
100 Malinowski 1932 149, cf. 179
101 Austen 1934 103, 108–110; cf. Powell 1956 277
102 Malinowski 1966 I 101, 107; Malinowski 1966 II 268
103 Malinowski 1966 II 254; Malinowski 1966 I 280
104 Cf. Powell 1969b 603
105 Malinowski 1966 II 254
106 Malinowski 1966 I 101
107 Tambiah 1968 197
108 Tambiah 1968 197; cf. Malinowski 1922 413–414, 419; Malinowski 1966 I 447
109 Cf. Turner 1969 37, 48, 51
110 Malinowski 1966 I 102
111 Malinowski 1966 I 102
112 Cf. Malinowski 1916 387; Malinowski 1966 I 93, 99; Malinowski 1966 II 148.
113 Malinowski 1933 157; Powell 1953 13
114 Austen 1945–46 28; Malinowski 1966 II 119
115 Malinowski 1916 370–374, 378, 384; Malinowski 1932 211; Powell 1953 12
116 Malinowski 1916 372, 380 n.1, n.3
117 Malinowski 1916 382
118 Malinowski 1916 371; Malinowski 1927a 213; cf. Baldwin 1945 201
119 Lanternari 1955 406, 409, 417, 419
120 Lanternari 1955 416–417
121 9–10 above
122 Lanternari 1955 416–417, 419
123 Malinowski 1926b 96–97
124 Lanternari 1955 419 (translated from Italian)
125 Malinowski 1926b 99–100; Malinowski 1916 370, 376–378, 384; Powell 1953 14
126 Cf. Malinowski 1916 376–379; Malinowski 1966 I 468
127 Beattie 1964 185; Brookfield & Brown 1963 165; cf. e.g. Williamson 1912 195 (Mafulu, New Guinea); Gitlow 1947 62 (Mount Hagen Tribes, New Guinea); Conklin 1954 198 (Yagaw Hanunóo, Philippines)
128 Malinowski 1966 I 77, 110; cf. Conklin 1957 64, 71 (Yagaw Hanunóo, Philippines); Freeman 1955 44 (Iban, Sarawak)
129 Gourou 1958 26–27, 31; Watters 1960 81; Coursey 1967 69; Conroy 1953 26; Spate 1953 170 (New Guinea)

130 Malinowski 1966 I 112, 281
131 Malinowski 1966 I 111
132 Malinowski 1966 I 274
133 Malinowski 1966 I 112–115
134 Malinowski 1966 I 111, 170; Powell 1953 3
135 Malinowski 1966 I 112–113
136 Malinowski 1966 I 113
137 Malinowski 1966 I 113
138 Malinowski 1966 I 113–114; cf. Malinowski 1966 I 100
139 Malinowski 1966 I 114
140 Malinowski 1966 I 114
141 Malinowski 1966 I 114–115
142 Malinowski 1966 I 115
143 22 above
144 Malinowski 1966 I 116
145 Cf. Malinowski 1966 I 170
146 Malinowski 1966 I 116
147 Forge 1970 274 n.5 (Abelam); Van Baal 1966 273 (Marind-Anim); Seligmann & Giblin 1910 379–380 (Wagawaga); Frazer 1930 44–45 (Dobu, D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago); Speiser 1923 238 (Melanesia)
148 Malinowski 1927a 205; Malinowski 1927b 115; Frazer 1930 48–49
149 E.g. Hough 1926 174; Skeat 1900 342–343 (Malays); Cole 1945 116, 154–155, 280 (Malaysia)
150 Malinowski 1932 194–197
151 Malinowski 1966 I 145, 165–166
152 Austen 1945–46 42
153 Malinowski 1966 I 119, 459, 469–470; cf. Barrau 1965 331, cf. 340
154 Leenhardt 1937 63
155 E.g. Burkill 1951 446; Mason 1968 317 (Ulithi, Micronesia); Lane 1965 259 (South Pentecost, New Hebrides); Hogbin 1934 410 (Ontong Java); Hogbin 1935 319 (Wogeo Island, Schouten Group); Schwimmer 1973 117 (Orokaiva, Papua); Oliver 1942a 35 (Nagovisi, Bougainville); Mead 1934 378 (Arapesh New Guinea); Kaberry 1941 354, 363 (Abelam, New Guinea); Williamson 1912 63, 198 (Mafulu, New Guinea)
156 Malinowski 1966 I 113
157 Malinowski 1966 I 119; Malinowski 1932 192
158 Malinowski 1966 I 114, cf. 100
159 24–25 above
160 Malinowski 1966 I 145
161 Malinowski 1932 149; Powell 1956 277; Austen 1934 108–109
162 Austen 1934 109
163 28–33 above
164 Malinowski 1932 149; but cf. Montague 1971 359
165 Malinowski 1966 I 112
166 E.g. Powell 1953 4 (Trobriand Islands); Newton 1914 44, 122 (New Guinea); Saville 1926 172 (Mailu, New Guinea); Riley 1925 93 (Kiwai, New Guinea); Kaberry 1941 350 (Abelam, New Guinea); Hogbin 1938 134

(Wogeo Island, Schouten Group); Oliver 1942b [180] (Bougainville, Solomon Islands); Coombe 1911 4 (Raga, Pentecost); Humphreys 1926 63–64 (southern New Hebrides)

167 Austen 1945–46 38
168 Meggitt 1958 308
169 Douglas 1966 145
170 Malinowski 1966 I 124, 131, cf. 470 n.14
171 Malinowski 1966 I 123–124, 127–128; Malinowski 1966 II 161
172 Malinowski 1966 I 125–127
173 Malinowski 1966 I 96–98
174 19–21 above
175 Malinowski 1966 I 127; cf. 64, 286
176 Malinowski 1966 I 127–128
177 22–23 above
178 Malinowski 1966 I 127–128
179 Malinowski 1966 I 127–128
180 Coursey 1967 83–84; Alexander & Coursey 1969 407; Galang 1920 71–72; Mahoney & Lawrence 1959 4 (Ponape, Micronesia)
181 Malinowski 1966 I 129
182 Malinowski 1966 I 59, 77, 128–129
183 Malinowski 1966 I 123–124, 128
184 Cf. Malinowski 1966 I 128
185 Malinowski 1966 I 129
186 Malinowski 1966 I 129–130
187 Malinowski 1966 I 130
188 19–20 above
189 Malinowski 1966 I 130–131
190 Malinowski 1966 II 277
191 Cf. 35 above
192 Malinowski 1966 I 124, 131
193 28, 33 above
194 Malinowski 1922 59
195 32–33 above; Malinowski 1966 I 128
196 Austen 1945–46 39
197 Malinowski 1966 I 132
198 Malinowski 1966 I 131–132
199 Malinowski 1966 I 131
200 19, 21 above
201 Malinowski 1966 I 132
202 21–25 above
203 21 above
204 32–33 above; Malinowski 1932 194–197
205 Malinowski 1966 I 123, 125
206 6 above
207 Malinowski 1966 I 79, 134
208 Malinowski 1966 I 133–134

209 Malinowski 1966 I 125
210 Malinowski 1966 I 125, 134–135
211 Malinowski 1966 I 135–136
212 Malinowski 1966 I 136
213 Mackay 1909 70; Murray 1912 123; Malinowski 1932 155–156; Malinowski 1916 411–412; Holdsworth 1970 59–60
214 27 above
215 Malinowski 1923 111; cf. Malinowski 1916 407
216 Malinowski 1916 412
217 38–39 above
218 25–28 above
219 32–33 above
220 Lane 1965 259
221 E.g. 19–20 above
222 From 85 items traced, the following serve as examples: Frazer 1914 96–107; Malinowski 1916 406–418 (Trobriand Islanders); Jones 1925 115–128; Malinowski 1932 140–178 (Trobriand Islanders); Thomson 1936 374–379, 383–393 (Wik Monkan, Gulf of Carpentaria); Ashley-Montagu 1937 (Australian Aborigines); Warner 1958 21–24 (Australian Aborigines); Schneider 1968 126–129; Spiro 1968 242–261; Powell 1968 651–652 (Trobriand Islanders); Leach 1969 85–110; Barnes 1973 65–73; Scheffler 1973 747–756; Monberg 1975 34–40; Weiner 1976 121
223 39 above
224 38–39 above
225 25–28, 39 above
226 33, 39 above

3

Further symbolism: foetal growth, birth and the child

Malinowski divides the horticultural year into two phases. The first, dealt with in the previous chapter, begins about July with the inaugural garden ceremony and ends in November after planting.[1] This is a period of intense and almost exclusively male activity in both magical and practical work. Of interest is the fact that during this time of horticulture sunshine is a prerequisite;[2] in New Caledonia the time of the sun and the concept of dryness are associated with maleness.[3] The second period extends approximately from December to June, a time of essentially subterranean *taytu* activity and plant development;[4] it is a phase virtually dominated by women[5] and quiet but energetic growth in the gardens. As in New Caledonia,[6] in contrast to the first phase, this is the rainy season,[7] which suggests that symbolically wetness could be associated with femaleness in the Trobriands.[8]

Foetal growth

When the fresh shoots appear above ground and twine round the supports, plants and weeds grow rapidly.[9] In consequence the garden magician inaugurates the weeding session by conducting a short magical act which incorporates a mime of weeding. On every plot he repeats the rite and "sweeping clean" spell:

> I sweep, I sweep away.
> I sweep, I sweep away.
>
> Cut thy top, O taro root; split thy leaf, O taro.
> Thy stalk bows over.

O taro of the *kalakayguya* kind; O taro red like blood:
O taro of the *kalipadaka* kind, O taro of the *namtamata* kind.[10]

Sweeping is a domestic activity aimed at keeping the village clean.[11] The garden magician as representative of the mythical founders of the sub-clan and retainer of its magical potency[12] briefly recites the weeding spell on each plot, thus apparently signalling that the activity relates to that area owned by every male.[13] I have tentatively suggested that the second act of the burning ceremony which specifically concentrates on the firing of weeds and refuse, projects the idea of purifying the garden;[14] likewise weeding appears to accord with the imagery of cleansing the garden plot. Weeding is distinctly women's work.[15] There are two major themes in the weeding spell: the first, brushing or sweeping clean. This concept of the need for purification of the garden recurs in ideas concerning human procreation in which the pregnant woman has to pay particular attention to cleanliness and guard against adultery.[16] The other main theme of the spell concerns the ripening taro.

As has been noted, reference to taro may be a vestige of a former taro magical system.[17] Be that as it may, taro was planted and mentioned in the ceremony of burning, associated with conception; it was also observed that in parts of Oceania taro is considered a feminine plant or one tended by women. Significantly, taro now reappears in a period of female activity. The taro reference in the weeding spell concerns a state of maturity, for the stalk is bent over.[18] Taro and weeds are linked and yet differentiated: both grow in the garden and are a part of it, but the weeds are swept away as refuse while the taro becomes ripe and nourishing, like the blood of woman in gestation.[19] The garden magician specifically likens taro to human blood.[20] In anticipation of the pending harvest associated with birth this seems to symbolize the placenta, in which blood is joined with, yet distinct from the human foetus. It is significant that in taro cultivation the main taro tuber is termed "mother"; those sprouting from it are "siblings", and the germinating young plant is "the child".[21] When it is harvested, that part remaining in the ground is called *bam*, the afterbirth.[22] Viewed in this way the taro symbolism would appear to be a necessary part of the story of the growth of the *taytu*.

It seems strange that Tambiah does not consider red in the Trobriands to be linked with blood, even though he acknowledges the indigenous procreative dogma that the infant receives flesh and blood from the mother.[23] In general he links Trobriand redness with "radiance, anima-

tion, irresistible physical charm" and beauty magic.[24] Weiner links redness with female sexuality since it is the colour of women's skirts which are in turn indices of wealth.[25] Munn has associated redness with excitement and erotic seduction[26] though she has subsequently indicated the need for revision of this interpretation.[27] Baldwin for his part regards Trobriand red as a symbol of "life and happiness".[28] The idea of the life-principle being associated with redness is noteworthy,[29] but at the present stage of our superficial knowledge of the Trobriand cognitive process such generalizations should perhaps be viewed with caution.

Weeding normally starts in the fifth or sixth gardening month.[30] It is introduced with the "sweeping clean" spell which contains images of cleansing, of redness and of blood, and hence, it seems, of femininity.[31] Women often weed communally, and the work is punctuated by competitive wagers (no detail available), joint eating and gossip.[32] Men are forbidden access to such a weeding group on pain of sexual abuse.[33] The strict privacy of weeding together with its sexual overtones exposes it as something particularly feminine, private, fulfilling and powerful.

Men have been active in the early stages of gardening in opening the way to the plot and in planting the *taytu* embryos. But once the *taytu* embryo develops, the male is superfluous, for the belly of the garden alone can nurture it; and because of the identification of the garden with woman, it appears that weeding is exclusively apportioned to women. Similarly in the later stages of pregnancy the woman's sexual desire diminishes: she becomes self-absorbed and introspective in her creative process. In Trobriand procreative dogma, once a woman's vagina has been dilated by sexual intercourse – or some other means – and the spirit foetus inserted, she primarily sustains foetal growth.[34] Furthermore, sexual intercourse between a man and his pregnant wife is taboo during the later stage of pregnancy.[35]

Thus during the latter stage of these two processes, the garden, like the woman, is removed from the ambit of men. Weeding, like pregnancy, confers special privileges on women and stresses their biological difference from men. During this activity even men of their own village may not approach them. The orgiastic assaults on strange men who come near them, which are the privilege of women during communal weeding in some parts of the Trobriands, are particularly illuminating.[36] The women who practise this custom, known as *yausa*, allegedly rip off a man's pubic leaf, induce ejaculation and may cover him in excreta.[37]

It is perhaps significant that a watch is kept over the Trobriand mother in late pregnancy which is termed *yausa*;[38] it suggests a symbolic correlation between weeding and gestation. A pregnant woman's male maternal relatives guard her from male sorcerers who might attempt to approach and cast the magic of *vatula bam* (paralysis of the uterus) on her, hereby adversely affecting her childbirth.[39] In practical terms the *yausa* custom which is associated with weeding can be said to prevent women from being molested by strangers, at least during the day, and to enable them to pursue their work efficiently. However, the apartness and sanctioned aggressive behaviour at this time, which coincides with the *kula* of the men,[40] appears as a protective device and as a signal denoting a feminine domain into which any kind of intrusion is forbidden.

Standardized sexual aggression and obscenity as evinced in the horticultural *yausa* appear to be a symbolic expression of dominance, in this case over the publicly important Trobriand male. The *yausa* behaviour is perhaps the most powerful manifestation of dominance a female can employ, even refuting the dictum that though males can rape females, the female cannot rape a male. By revelling in his pain and revulsion the women can force a man to wince at his masculinity[41] and can sexually display their superior and unique status.

Malinowski does not interpret the *yausa* custom, though he mentions how his informants avidly described it, particularly when discussing gardening or the position of women. He says that the only parallel to this *yausa* custom is found in the legend of Kaytalugi, the land inhabited by sexually insatiable women.[42] The present interpretation of the *yausa* custom is consistent with this legend in so far as the practice illuminates female sexuality; however, the *yausa* does not seem to suggest sexual demand[43] so much as sexual dominance. Covering of the male victim with excreta together with the display and ridicule of the phallus seem to indicate sexual satiation and abhorrence; whereas the behaviour of the Kaytalugi women suggests sexual desire.

The *yausa* therefore emphasizes an important theme of weeding and pregnancy: the need to maintain the symbolic purity of the female body;[44] hence strange males are anathema and even men of their own village should keep their distance. The symbolic statement is that pregnancy is the sole prerogative of women and their source of inalienable power, for which men have no counterpart. The organization of weeding therefore tends to reveal the garden as a female body with

women alone preoccupied in attending to it. The *yausa* custom in particular exposes weeding as a complement to the process of pregnancy and as signalling an area of female dominance.

The *yausa* custom certainly poses the question as to the purpose served by obscenity. Evans-Pritchard, from his research in Africa, concludes that collective and prescribed obscenity accentuate the social value of the activity with which they are associated.[45] Turner expands on this: "The raw energies released in overt symbolisms of sexuality and hostility between the sexes are channelled towards master symbols representative of structural order, and values and virtues on which that order depends."[46] In the case of the *yausa*, the importance of female sexuality and procreation associated with the perpetuation of the matrilineal sub-clan, and the values of cleanliness, beauty and purity of the female body seem to be expressed.

During the period of growth the *taytu* plant becomes the focus of magical activity.[47] The magical procedure accompanying the development of the *taytu* is basically that of reciting a series of fertility spells designed to promote growth in the young cultivar.[48] Familiar similes of the ant-hill and bush-hen's nest reappear,[49] and with them the concomitant associations of plant and human fecundity. I do not accept Weiner's point that this stage of the gardening ceremonial reflects male sexuality. She assumes, but does not prove, that "come out", "shoot" and "anchor" are male activities.[50]

Just as the pregnant mother is surrounded by ceremonies ensuring her purity, and the development of the foetus is given added impetus by magical means,[51] so the garden magician, dissociated from the men and women of the village, alone permeates the gardens of the sub-clan and of each individual man with spells which assure successful growth and well-formed *taytu*. These spells, providing magical assistance to development of the tubers, evoke the conventional fertility images of roundness and warmth: "The yam rises and swells like a baking-mound"; there are images of plenty "Make mop upon mop of leaves, O head of my *taytu*", and the tubers are encouraged to multiply and become securely anchored.[52]

During this period the villagers tell one another interminable, often ribald tales to assist the growth of their *taytu*.[53] The *taytu* is endowed with a receptive, almost human disposition.[54] Oral encouragement to the growing tropophyte is a notable feature of certain Melanesian yam-

gardeners as the peoples of Kai (New Guinea) and Bwaidoga (Good-enough Island) evince.[55] The supposition is that the yam can hear, that it is responsive to the telling of tales, receives succour from the stories and is thus encouraged to develop. The growing *taytu* plant requires careful nurturing.[56] Much of the practical activity is necessary for purely horticultural reasons – such as inserting larger *taytu* poles, training the vines, or thinning and removing bad tubers.[57] But a ceremony introducing the thinning of the tubers[58] entails the use of the standard magical repertory of substances associated with roundness, whiteness and pullulation[59] and the oft-repeated *vatuvi* spell: "Show the way... into the deep ground... The belly of my garden leavens..."[60]

Repetition in both animal and human behaviour serves to reduce the ambiguity of a signal:[61] continued reiteration of the *vatuvi* formula has the effect of echoing the procreative theme throughout the horticultural cycle. Thus, although thinning is a practical necessity,[62] the spell and associated substances which accompany the act colour the work with a hue of fecundity.

As has been mentioned, the horticultural process is divided into two periods: in the initial drier months the men are active and in the latter half of the season during plant development, women prevail.[63] There is a close structural resemblance between these two phases of Trobriand horticultural activity and those of pregnancy, which is confirmed in an article by Margot-Duclot and Vernant.[64] There are also two phases in Trobriand pregnancy, the one corresponding to a male presence and conception, the other to development within the womb and a predominantly female presence.[65] The authors emphasize the important break of the fifth month in the pregnancy sequence, pointing out that "after the fifth month the foetus is thought to grow and develop, and it is this peaceful development – away from the male and the sun, in the shadow of the pregnancy cloak, under the sign of the water and under the watchful protection of women – that the taboos and rules of pregnancy aim to ensure, by means of the predominance of the female influence".[66] The neglected analysis of Margot-Duclot and Vernant which agrees in principle with that pursued in this treatise, shows that unless the complex interweaving roles of both male and female are taken into account, the magic and symbolism of horticulture cannot be explained.[67]

Birth

The zenith of the gardening year is reached when the crops have matured.

At the commencement of the preliminary harvest, that of taro and large yams, the garden magician is to be found in his house reciting the *isunapulo* formula, here abridged, over a pearl shell.

> Full moon here! Full moon then, full moon here ever. Round off in the north, round off here in the south...
>
> Taro round off, taro round off...
> The belly of my taro – taro round off...
> The top of my taro – taro round off, taro round off –
> The foundation of my taro tuber – taro round off...
> The leaves of my taro – taro round off, taro round off.
>
> They eat the taro...
> The *tuvata'u* weed grows out of the taro rotting in the garden...
> The belly of my garden becomes smooth like a trimming-board.
> The belly of my garden becomes smooth like a pounding-board.
> The holes in the belly of my garden are as the holes the mangrove mollusc bores in the mud.
>
> I shall go to the village laden with *taytu*.[68]

The garden magician proceeds to wrap the pearl shell in a dried banana leaf in order to contain the magical power.[69]

That an association with the process of human birth is being drawn is tenable in that a hole of emergence of the eponymous ancestress may be referred to by the same term as the harvest: *isunapulo* – her "spot of emergence".[70] As has been mentioned, every Trobriander is associated by birth or descent with a distinct spot through which his first ancestress emerged and the adjoining locality forms the land of his sub-clan.[71] In this way the affinity between the birth of mankind and that of the crops is annually reaffirmed.

In this *isunapulo* preliminary harvest spell the parallel of birth begins with the rounding off of the foetus. Use of the banana leaf and verbal allusions to rotundity continue to project suggestions of human fecundity. Use of a pearl shell may also contain connotations of birth: it is used in the pregnancy ceremonial in which it is associated with beauty magic.[72] Malinowski concedes that the gist of the spell concerns roundness and fullness, yet is adamant that neither lunar mythology nor extraordinary ideas concerning the moon are implied.[73] He maintains that the moon "is simply used as a magical simile, the mere utterance of its name being potent in itself".[74]

The information from other cultures in New Guinea indicates that the moon may be sex-linked and associated with creative growth. The Abelam,[75] Enga[76] and Kuman[77] consider the moon female, and the Iatmul regard it as a female fertility symbol.[78] Thus there are Melanesians who consider the moon to be closely identified with woman; and the Trobrianders, it appears, share a similar outlook: in one story the moon is born of a woman, in another it is a personified female.[79] Furthermore, a Kiriwinan mother will lift up her newly-born infant to the first full moon that the child might grow quickly and soon learn to talk.[80] Therefore when the full moon is mentioned in the *isunapulo* spell it needs to be viewed against a backdrop depicting femaleness, sound development and maturity or ripeness.

From such imagery the creative growth in the garden is given the incentive to reach its conclusion. The theme becomes explicit when the spell advances the wish that the taro finalize its growth. As already discussed in the burning and weeding ceremonies,[81] taro seems magically linked with the formation of the *taytu* or foetus. In similar manner to the placenta it now becomes waste. Consistent with this interpretation is the fact that the spell says the weeds, connoting refuse, grow from the rotting taro. Again the procreative imagery is reinforced by likening the garden to a trimming- or pounding-board, both being perfectly smooth and used by women.[82] After birth, the belly of the garden will be as smooth as these boards. Use of the word "belly" together with such similes again reminds us of the female nature of the garden.

The last line of the *isunapulo* spell presents an interesting development. Although the subject of the spell is taro, it is hereby conjoined to *taytu*: the ultimate statement concerns the economically and ceremonially important harvest of the small yams. Implicitly then, despite a superficial relevance to taro harvesting, the spell enunciates the concluding stages of *taytu* growth by reference to the contributory developmental agent – taro.

The garnering of *taytu* is an important occasion for the Trobriander. It is initiated through the preparatory (*okwala*) and the main (*tum*) harvest ceremonies. In the preparatory harvest ceremony the garden magician recites the *okwala* spell on the standard and all other plots to lend final momentum to the ripening tubers.[83] The second stanza of the formula makes reference to the various structural supports constructed for the growing vines, such as the training-stick and *kamkokola*

(magical prism) about which the repeatedly mentioned "dolphin plays".[84] The dolphin's undulating movements metaphorically represent the twining of the vine.[85] The last stanza[86] repeats the early section of the spell central to gardening magic, the *vatuvi* with its dominantly creative imagery: "The belly of my garden rises..." Although this part seems semantically divorced from the rest of the spell, there is a logical progression in the poetry from the initial reference of the dolphin to the metaphor of the spiralling *taytu* vine, which may be symbolic of the umbilical cord,[87] to the image of the tumescent belly of a woman with child.

The main harvest ceremony (*tum*)[88] is the final occasion when the garden magician recites once again the pivotal formula of garden magic, the *vatuvi*:

> Show the way firmly, show the way to the firm moorings... The grubs I sweep, I sweep away... The blight I drive, I drive off, begone... The belly of my garden leavens... The belly of my garden lies down... The belly of my garden swells as with a child...[89]

The spell is chanted over an adze of which the cutting edge has scented leaves attached: these will give the *taytu* a sweet aroma. Banana leaves are also fastened to it, in order that the *taytu* can emulate the bulging shape of the palm.[90] The reciting of the *vatuvi* spell is said to be the quintessential act of the *tum* ceremony.[91]

The repetition of the entire *vatuvi* formula at the harvest climax seems to underscore the magic of the gardens which induces procreation and drives away malevolent influences. In like manner during pregnancy and childbirth, curative formulae are uttered against black magic which would harm the human foetus and provoke difficult labour for the Trobriand mother.[92] Other corollaries to the pregnancy ceremony present themselves in the common use of aromatic and banana leaves.[93]

On the day following the recitation of "the belly of my garden" spell, the garden magician goes to the main standard plot accompanied by a small entourage. The plant to be harvested grows against the vertical *kamkokola* pole in the magical corner. The garden magician ceremonially cuts the stalk of the specially planted *kwanada* yam with his charmed axe, breaks the sod and extracts the tubers. Next he cuts the stalk of an ordinary *taytu* plant, but preferably one winding around the *kamkokola*. The lower section of the stalk sags onto the ground, whereupon

he squats over it, tears up a handful of weeds, and puts these over the stalk which is lying on the ground. He weighs down the entire heap by means of a stone, hence the name *tum* (pressing, weighing down).[94] The harvest is now inaugurated. It should be noted that similar treatment is accorded the umbilical cord. After being severed, it is buried in the garden together with the afterbirth.[95]

The severing of the *kwanada* yam vine inserted at the burning ceremony (conception) may be seen as the symbolic cutting of the umbilical cord (the vine growing against the *kamkokola*).[96] The garden magician behaves partially like a parturient mother when he squats as a woman in labour[97] over the flopped stalk on the ground, covering it with weeds. The vine and its associated ceremony appear to represent the navel string, and the weeds the refuse of afterbirth.

Although Malinowski shows obvious concern at not being able to explain this ceremony,[98] he provides useful data in registering that the act is called *tum* (pressing down), and that the term describes the entire ceremony.[99] It is noteworthy that women similarly weigh down upon the Trobriand mother during labour: "[A] woman presses on the parturient one so that the baby may fall out quickly."[100] The *tum* harvest thus appears as a metaphoric enactment of the birth of the human infant. It is salient that both *taytu*[101] and human embryos mature nine months after conception.

The child

The *taytu*-human analogy is pursued through the harvest customs in which the woman handles the *taytu* for the first time once it has been extracted from the earth.[102] Hairs bearing the same name as human body hair (*unu'unu*) are removed from the *taytu*.[103] Both husband and wife have specific duties to perform with regard to the newly-harvested *taytu*:[104] just as their ways of caring for their human offspring complement one another each is solicitous to nurture the new Trobriander.[105]

Arbours are constructed from the now obsolete garden poles – the *kamkokola* (magical prismatic construction) and vine supports. *Taytu* vines are attached to the structure and the roof is made of coconut leaves.[106] The crops are graded as they are stacked in the arbour. The finest *taytu* are destined for matrimonial harvest gifts (*urigubu*). They are arranged in the centre of the arbour in a conical mound. Inferior

and damaged *taytu* are placed in smaller heaps around the *urigubu*: they will be eaten without being ceremonially stored.[107] Later the *urigubu taytu* will be measured in circular baskets, then with much ostentatious conveyance ceremonially presented to one or more households in another village. Coconut leaves will cover the conical *taytu* heap built in front of the recipient's storehouse.[108]

Malinowski says that the energy expended on the *taytu* display serves to satisfy the gardener's ambition;[109] while Austen suggests that the stacking of *taytu* in the garden simply serves to prevent rotting.[110] But the predominant shape, the substances and customary forms of behaviour associated with the arbour are too closely related to the entire gardening symbolism to be disregarded. The *taytu* heap is conical and in the horticultural symbolism this shape is suggestive of pregnancy.[111] The materials used in construction of the arbour appear to endorse and promote the procreative theme: coconut leaves, a symbol of fecundity,[112] the *kamkokola* and the *taytu* vines, seemingly symbols of the womb and umbilical cord respectively.[113]

The content of the arbour is the little yam, *taytu*, symbol of the child.[114] Friends from the gardener's own or a neighbouring village view his arbours and admire his displayed *urigubu taytu* as custom requires.[115] Similarly a Trobriand mother displays to admiring villagers her newly-born infant at its coming-out ceremony.[116]

Finally the gardener's *taytu* are placed in the storehouse of a matrilineal kinswoman's husband (e.g. sister's husband) in the form of *urigubu* (matrimonial harvest gift); and the garden magician, now called village magician, performs the two ceremonies of *vilamalia* (magic of plenty and village prosperity).[117] The aim in both ceremonies is essentially one of conservation: to ensure the durability of the *taytu*,[118] and also to diminish the people's appetite.[119] The Trobrianders are noted for allowing their *taytu* to rot in the storehouses and for reaping a crop in excess of their needs;[120] perhaps it is the symbolic affinity of the *taytu* and child which partly underlies the cultural reluctance to consume their cherished crop.[121]

I have argued that the division of the gardening calendar into two stages correlates with that in Trobriand pregnancy ceremonial. In the first stage the male was seen to be active in preparing the way for conception to take place. The second phase presented similarities in the symbolism pertaining to foetal growth: the *yausa* weeding custom with its power-

ful signal that pregnancy is the domain of women, and the comparison between the harvest of *taytu* and human parturition.

In trying to ascertain woman's relationship to gardening it appears to me that if the activities of gardening are taken literally the woman seems to be of minor importance, but if read symbolically, it is the Trobriand man who functions as an assistant in this grand scheme of life. His role is that of organizing the life of the sub-clan which woman perpetuates. Even when she is physically absent from work or excluded from the performance of magic, woman's presence is acknowledged through metaphor. The rhythm of woman's body and the procreative process in her is the drama enacted in the soil; and it is woman's procreative power that absorbs the magic and imagination of men.

The horticultural ceremonial picture thus projects the garden as a woman and the produce as her child. It is a theme pursued in the *urigubu* institution which will be dealt with in the following chapter.

Notes

1 Malinowski 1927a 211, 214; Malinowski 1966 I figure 3 (50–51), 52, 136, 149, figure 14 (436–441)
2 Malinowski 1966 I figure 3 (50–51), 54
3 Leenhardt 1930 114; 33 above
4 Malinowski 1966 I figure 3 (50–51), 149, 171, figure 14 (440–443)
5 12 above
6 Leenhardt 1930 114; cf. 58
7 Malinowski 1966 I figure 3 (50–51), 54, 144; Malinowski 1927a 207; Malinowski 1926b 24
8 Cf. Malinowski 1966 I 343; Malinowski 1966 II 290
9 Malinowski 1966 I 144
10 Malinowski 1966 I 145
11 Malinowski 1932 375
12 8 above
13 Cf. 6–8 above
14 31, 33 above
15 10, 13 above
16 23 above
17 33 above; cf. Malinowski 1966 I 145
18 Malinowski 1966 II 285
19 Cf. 34 above
20 Malinowski 1966 II 285; cf. Lehner 1928 443–444 (Melanesians)
21 Malinowski 1966 II 105–106
22 Malinowski 1966 II 106

23 Tambiah 1968 204
24 Tambiah 1968 204
25 Weiner 1976 92, 118–119
26 Munn 1971 8, table 5
27 Munn 1977
28 Baldwin 1950 283
29 Cf. Lehner 1928 442 (Melanesians)
30 Cf. 47 above; Malinowski 1966 I figure 3 (50–51), 61 n.3
31 47–48 above
32 Malinowski 1966 I 144
33 10 above; cf. Róheim 1950a 178 (Normanby Island, D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago)
34 27, 33, 39–40 above; cf. Weiner 1976 121–123
35 Malinowski 1932 171, 192–193
36 10 above
37 Malinowski 1932 232
38 Malinowski 1932 194
39 Malinowski 1932 193–195
40 10 above
41 Cf. Malinowski 1932 232
42 Malinowski 1932 234, 356–358; Malinowski 1922 223
43 Cf. Malinowski 1932 356
44 48 above; Malinowski 1932 191–192, 291
45 Evans-Pritchard 1965 97
46 Turner 1969 79
47 Malinowski 1966 I 137
48 Malinowski 1966 I 142–144
49 Malinowski 1966 I 146, 151
50 Weiner 1976 196
51 22–23 above
52 Malinowski 1966 I 146–151
53 Malinowski 1966 I 156–157; Malinowski 1966 II 179–181; Malinowski 1926b 25; Malinowski 1932 339–347; Peacock 1969 167–168
54 17 above; cf. Mead 1934 378 (Arapesh, New Guinea)
55 Keysser 1911 125; Jenness & Ballantyne 1928 144
56 Malinowski 1966 I 137
57 Malinowski 1966 I 137–138, 151–152
58 Malinowski 1966 I 152
59 22–24 above
60 19–20 above
61 Cf. Lorenz 1966 281; Lévi-Strauss 1955 443
62 Austen 1939 250; Austen 1945–46 40
63 47 above
64 Margot-Duclot & Vernant 1946 27–28
65 Margot-Duclot & Vernant 1946 22
66 Margot-Duclot & Vernant 1946 22 (translated from French)

67 Margot-Duclot & Vernant 1946 22, 27
68 Malinowski 1966 I 165
69 Malinowski 1966 I 165–166
70 Malinowski 1966 I 341–344
71 8–9 above
72 Malinowski 1932 181–183, 186–187, 298–299
73 Malinowski 1966 II 307–308
74 Malinowski 1966 II 308
75 Kaberry 1941 346
76 Meggitt 1958 307
77 Nilles 1950 58
78 Binder 1972 26
79 Malinowski 1927a 205–206; Frazer 1930 48
80 Brown 1910 37
81 32–34, 48 above
82 Malinowski 1966 I 155; Weiner 1976 247 n.8
83 Malinowski 1966 I 169
84 Malinowski 1966 I 169
85 Malinowski 1966 I 170
86 Malinowski 1966 I 169
87 Cf. 37–38 above
88 Malinowski 1966 I 170–171
89 Malinowski 1966 I 96–98; cf. 19–20 above
90 Malinowski 1966 I 170
91 Malinowski 1966 I 170
92 Malinowski 1932 188, 193–195
93 Cf. Malinowski 1932 187; 22–23 above
94 Malinowski 1966 I 171
95 Malinowski 1932 196
96 37–38 above
97 Cf. Malinowski 1932 194–195
98 Malinowski 1966 I 473 n.22
99 Malinowski 1966 I 171
100 Malinowski 1932 195; cf. Saville 1926 96 (Mailu, New Guinea); Handy 1923 72 (Marquesas, Polynesia)
101 Cf. Galang 1920 65 (Philippines); Defngin 1959 56–57 (Yap, Micronesia); Jenness & Ballantyne 1920 30 (D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago); Williamson 1912 197 (Mafulu, New Guinea)
102 Malinowski 1966 I 172
103 17 above
104 11 above
105 Cf. Malinowski 1932 17–18, 171, 176; Malinowski 1927b 10, 23–24
106 Malinowski 1966 I 172
107 Malinowski 1966 I 172–173, 193–194, 230
108 Malinowski 1966 I 177, 179–180
109 Malinowski 1926a 36; Malinowski 1922 169; cf. Malinowski 1932 108–109

110 Austen 1945–46 40
111 21–23 above
112 23–24 above
113 36–38, 56 above
114 17–18 above
115 Malinowski 1966 I 172–173, 175; Malinowski 1932 105; Malinowski 1922 170
116 Malinowski 1932 197
117 11 above
118 Malinowski 1966 I 220, 226; Malinowski 1922 169
119 Malinowski 1966 I 226–228; Malinowski 1922 169
120 Malinowski 1936 446; Malinowski 1966 I 8, 231; Malinowski 1922 58, 169; Uberoi 1969 1148; cf. Austen 1945–46 17–18, 44; Harris 1959 191–192; Sahlins 1960 407
121 Cf. Malinowski 1966 I 227–228

4

Symbolism of the distribution of garden produce

Each Trobriand household retains and eats the secondary produce it has grown.[1] Inferior *taytu* of the principal crop are consumed by the producing household, small tubers being reserved as seed.[2] The greater proportion of *taytu* grown is destined to become *urigubu* (matrimonial harvest gifts); these are the most important garden produce.[3] In the south, and in other areas where taro constitutes the *urigubu*, it does not store well and accordingly is extracted from the ground as required by the recipient.[4] Since *urigubu* has particular relevance for the position of woman, it calls for detailed discussion. Usage of the term *urigubu* will follow that of Malinowski.[5]

Basically *urigubu* refers to the matrimonial harvest gifts a man usually receives from his wife's nearest matrilineal kinsman, i.e. her brother, maternal uncle, and later her son or sister's son.[6] From each man's crops a large and high quality quota must be given annually to a close matrilineal kinswoman in order to fill the "open well" of her husband's main storehouse.[7] Malinowski estimates that at least half a man's yield goes to his sister's household, the presentation usually consisting of *taytu*.[8]

The Trobriand man is the owner of the garden plot which bears his name,[9] although according to Weiner, [10] it may be "marked" in the name of a close matrilineal kinswoman for *urigubu* purposes. He obtains his principal prestige from the amount of high quality *taytu* he is able to cultivate.[11] The matrilineal kinswoman who receives it, and who is usually his sister,[12] derives her renown from the size of the *uri-*

gubu which accrues to her and her husband.[13]

The following are the diacritical features of the *urigubu taytu*: they are the select crop, the only ones stacked into conical heaps in the arbour, flamboyantly carried to the village, and ceremonially displayed in the storehouse; only over these is the magic of abundance and endurance pronounced; they alone are referred to as "real *taytu*".[14] In the storage and removal of crops from the arbours a distinction is made between the ordinary *taytu*, modestly stored, and the *urigubu* displayed as show food and retained "as long as possible for festive occasions, gifts and exchanges".[15]

Urigubu is one of the duties incidental to marriage.[16] Malinowski says the *urigubu* is given by name to the husband,[17] yet it is closely linked to the wife, for at the transfer in cases of rank (when the ceremonial is most explicit) the words pronounced are: "Thy heap, O So-and-so. It is the *urugubu* [sic] gift of So-and-so [the wife's name]."[18] Should the wife leave the husband or die, *urigubu* payment is discontinued. "It is because of her, for her and for her children's maintenance that the annual gift is given."[19] Weiner considers *urigubu* to be given in the woman's name but also regards the husband as a recipient.[20]

Marriage not only implies bearing children but also the *urigubu* endowment.[21] A married woman thus unites the two items of value, *taytu* and children. I have postulated that Trobriand horticultural ceremonial replicates woman's ability to create life. Through the process of creation and birth Trobriand woman regenerates her sub-clan with children who fall under the guardianship of a male of this group, specifically her brother.[22] Symbolically, the ceremonial of gardening mirrors her procreative act, but instead of humans, *taytu* are involved. The interpretation follows that the male owner of the plot annually renders his matrilineally significant female partner his garden's "offspring", the *urigubu taytu* tubers, as the nearest possible equivalent to children, just as the woman provides him, and thus the sub-clan, with children.[23] Significantly, children and *urigubu* tubers move in opposite directions: children to the guardianship (and male children often also to the residence) of sub-clan males,[24] *taytu* to the residence of sub-clan females.

Since the descendants of men do not belong to their lineage in a matrilineal system, and since the Trobriand theory of procreation denies the male any procreative ability, by giving *taytu* to the female members of the sub-clan, Trobriand men are able to produce the equivalent of

children for its perpetuation. Therefore the child-*taytu* exchange expresses the social roles of female and male sub-clan members and ensures the survival and solidarity of the sub-clan. It is understandable that a man should not use the *urigubu* he receives from his wife's sub-clan to meet his own *urigubu* obligations,[25] for he would then be exchanging the *taytu* of a sub-clan to which he does not belong.

Exogamy obliges a woman to marry a man who is not of her sub-clan, in whose village she must live until the end of her marriage or life.[26] Malinowski interprets the *urigubu* institution as representing and recognizing a woman's rights in her ancestral soil:[27] the annual harvest gift makes explicit her claim to a share in its produce. Her spatial removal does not diminish her importance to the sub-clan, for her position is annually reaffirmed by way of *urigubu*.[28] The giving of *urigubu* revives the tie of the localized sub-clan with its scattered female members.

Powell and Montague reject Malinowski's assertion that the gift of *taytu* harvested for Trobriand woman articulates her continued identification with the fertility of her matrilineal soil. In contrast to the male avunculocal residence recorded by Malinowski,[29] Powell found men of the same sub-clan living in various villages (or sections thereof), and Montague states that Kaduwagan men (Kayleuna Island) spend their lives patrilocally in their natal villages.[30] Both these later fieldworkers emphasize other kinds of *urigubu*, rather than isolating that of brother to sister as Malinowski tended to do.[31]

Powell argues that because the sub-clan is not localized, *urigubu* will not necessarily be produced on sub-clan land[32] (although most members of those sub-clans that own land will be found in the villages associated with their sub-clan[33]). He nevertheless agrees with Malinowski that *urigubu* represents sub-clan "corporateness"; and his statistical data indicate that the most common (although not exclusive) type of harvest gift is from brother to sister.[34]

Montague disagrees with both Malinowski and Powell that the sub-clan "corporately" owns land.[35] She argues from direct questioning of her informants that land ownership is individual.[36] To some extent, as Malinowski himself explicitly adduces, Trobriand land ownership is individual in the sense that each man owns a garden plot;[37] but Malinowski's criticism of the "verbal approach, the collecting of statements about who is the owner"[38] should be noted. The myths of origin and gardening, the role of the garden magician and chief, the annual ratifi-

cation of plots in the presence of the matrilineal head, and the rules of land inheritance reveal that the sub-clan does in fact own the rights to a territory and supervises its gardens.[39]

The individual's personal identity in the *urigubu* transaction should certainly be acknowledged. However, individuality and the existence of other types of *urigubu* transactions do not negate the validity of that category of *urigubu* connected with a person's sub-clan membership which signals its unity via the male-female food gift. This type of *urigubu* formed the majority of such transactions in Powell's time.

Montague states that "harvest gifts may only be given through woman" and that *urigubu* "is usually spoken of in terms of the woman because she weeds and harvests it".[40] She views *urigubu* correctly, though in limited fashion, when she sees it as one of four exchange cycles.[41] She recognizes a raw-cooked, female-male dichotomy in the culture,[42] but it is inadequate to explain that *urigubu* "is only given to married men [not widowers] because the right to cook it belongs only to married women".[43] This leaves unconsidered its relevance to the ceremonial and the symbolism of the horticultural cycle, and does not explain why women derive greater renown from the receipt of *urigubu* than men. The matter is further complicated in that in Kaduwaga *urigubu* primarily consists of taro,[44] not *taytu* (small yams) as in Omarakana, Kiriwina.[45]

However, the major reservation concerning Montague's arguments is that she fails to realize the implications of her study occurring 50 years after that of Malinowski and 20 years after that of Powell.[46] There is in her disagreement an assumption that such a non-literate culture is static; accordingly she points out that the sibling incest taboo is not as stringent as Malinowski portrayed it,[47] and that there is no evidence of the *bukumatula* (bachelors' house) in her village.[48]

Montague notes, but only superficially evaluates, the impact of westernization with its hallmark of individualism on the people's way of life.[49] The village of Kaduwaga reveals definite signs of westernization: it has within it not only an Aid Post and Co-operative Society but a school and church which are regularly attended.[50] Even during the period in 1914-20 when Malinowski conducted his fieldwork, the effect of missionary and western pressures on the culture was evident, and even then the number of *bukumatula* (bachelors' houses) had decreased.[51] Carter and others make mention of the social changes wrought since

Malinowski's period of fieldwork.[52]

There is little doubt that social patterns even in Malinowski's time will not have been as uniform as his work might superficially suggest, for the reality of any field situation is complicated by myriad individual factors. Malinowski is aware of the problem, but also of the necessity of deducing generalized principles of social structure which form the framework for social behaviour.[53]

Weiner's fieldwork poses its own problems largely because she fails to relate her findings sufficiently to those of Malinowski. She makes the puzzling statement that a man's married daughter is the first woman for whom he makes an exchange garden,[54] not his mother or sister[55] as would seem more likely. She refutes Malinowski's and other field-workers' interpretation of *urigubu* as presentations of *taytu*, maintaining that *urigubu* refers to coconut and areca palms, betel pepper plants and pork. "Yam exchange gardens", she says, Malinowski would term *urigubu*, but are in fact referred to by such other names as *kaymata* and *kaymwila*.[56] Malinowski's work,[57] however, shows that he was aware of all the names she mentions in this regard.[58] Weiner's[59] but not Malinowski's evidence[60] suggests that the "*urigubu*" on which Malinowski concentrated in Kiriwina – from brother to sister – would stem from the *kaymwila* plot. Powell says[61] that his informants in 1950-51 used *urigubu* in Malinowski's sense: as referring primarily to the annual harvest gift grown in the main garden plots [*kaymata*]. The term may be extended to include any service or gift, such as pork or areca nut, which a man makes to his sister's husband. Powell witnessed *urigubu* transfers in Kwaybwaga, northern Kiriwina (Weiner's village), where the term was used in the way that his and Malinowski's informants used it.

Thus although *urigubu* is not exclusively linked with sub-clan land, and the term may have wider meanings, and its usage may be changing, the archetype of this kind of transfer is indicated by the phrase: "True brothers garden for their sisters."[62] It is this fundamental type of *urigubu*, associated with the unity of the sub-clan, that is of interest to this study. (Powell has offered me an interpretation of *urigubu* in which he focuses on the relationship it establishes between men, particularly the sister's husband, wife's brother and his heirs. The reader is also referred to his 1969 articles which are based on a different approach, and which fall beyond the scope and focus of this book.) The receipt of *urigubu* seems to be an important link in the wife-husband unit. The

harvest gift appears to increase a husband's dependence on his wife for economic security and social wellbeing.[63] It also adds to the wife's dependence, for although she derives most credit from the gift, it is publicly given to her husband.

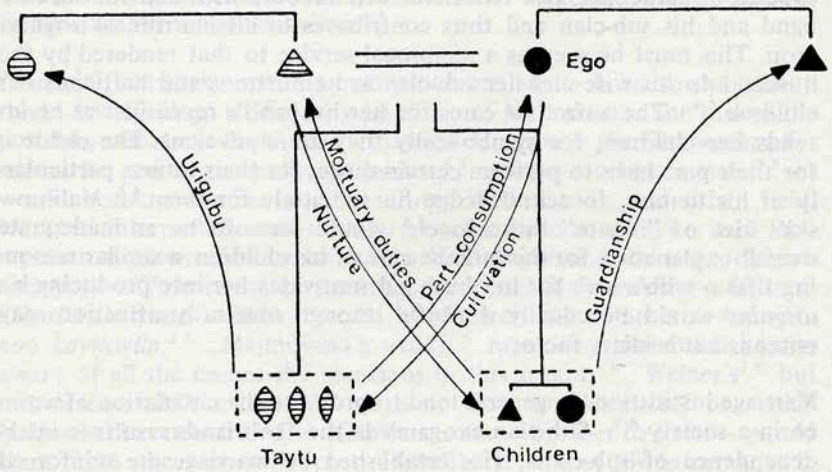
The *urigubu* lends meaning to the marital relationship. In the actual process of gardening, the Trobriand wife labours with and for her husband and his sub-clan and thus contributes to his matrilineal *urigubu* crop. This must be seen as a reciprocal service to that rendered by the husband to his wife and her sub-clan as he nurtures and befriends her children.[64] The wife thus cares for her husband's *taytu* just as he attends her children, for symbolically they are equivalent. The children for their part have to perform certain duties for their father, particularly at his demise, to acknowledge his solicitude for them.[65] Malinowski's idea of "innate" father-love[66] would seem to be an inadequate overall explanation for the father's care of his children; a similar reasoning that a wife's love for her husband motivates her into producing his *urigubu* would be equally doubtful, though obviously affection may enter as a subsidiary factor.

Marriage institutions in general tend to promote the circulation of women in a society.[67] Sub-clan exogamy in the Trobriands results in interdependence of sub-clans. Ties established by marriage are reinforced by the associated institution of *urigubu* in which the fertility of woman is symbolically endorsed as she receives *taytu*. The husband's interest in receiving *urigubu* is sustained since he derives prestige from the gift[68] and must reimburse his affinal kinsman with a suitable gift of valuables (*youlo*) at a later stage.[69] This *youlo* gift is a duty, maintaining, as Uberoi observes,[70] an affinal alliance between two sub-clans.

It should be noted that the Trobriand husband is a social "outsider" to his wife.[71] According to Malinowski he is not her acknowledged legal guardian – that is the function of the wife's brother;[72] his bond with her is essentially one of friendship, emotion and sexuality.[73] A man does not primarily cultivate his gardens for his wife but rather for his mother or sister or another close matrilineal kinswoman. The important kinship group is the minimal matrilineal unit: a man, his sister and her children.[74] A Trobriand wife who helps provide the *urigubu* for her husband's sister, receives from the latter at mortuary ceremonies skirts or bundles of banana leaves (*kabiyamila*) signifying women's wealth.[75] This may be seen as a similar relationship to the *youlo* gift which passes between affinal males.

Figure 2

THE CONJUGAL PAIR, THEIR CHILDREN AND *TAYTU*

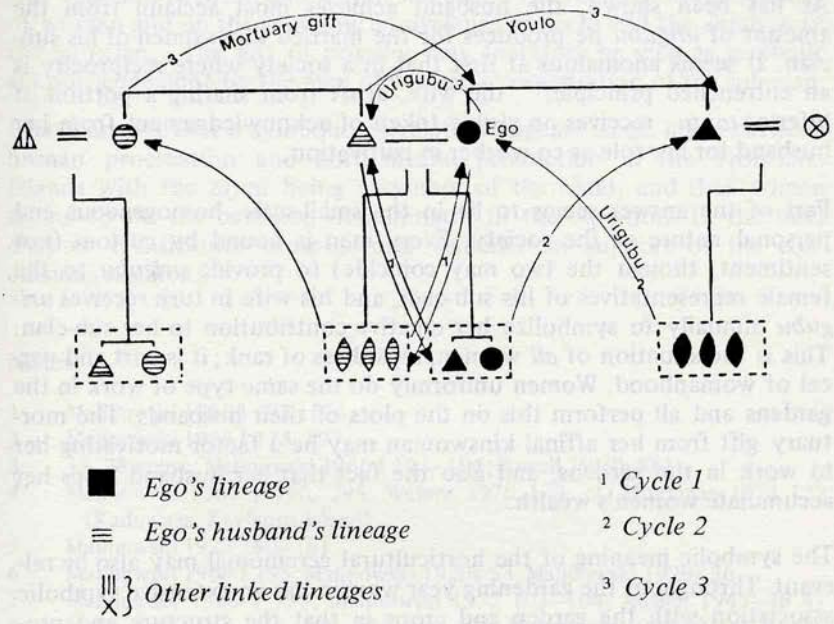


The *urigubu* gift therefore ensures regular interaction between at least two disparate sub-clans; and with women marrying exogamously a number of sub-clans become interlinked. That a man receives most renown from giving *urigubu*, and a woman from being the recipient of it, also reflects positively on different sub-clans. In a simplified manner Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the symbolic equivalence of the *taytu* and child, and the network of relationships established through recognition of the procreative capacities of Trobriand woman. Three cycles of links are discernible.

Cycle 1: The tie between the spouses is enhanced through the woman as wife assisting in the production of the husband's *urigubu taytu* and he in caring for her children. These children will have mortuary duties towards this man and thus reinforce the ties their mother maintains with their father's sub-clan, while she will share in the consumption of

Figure 3

MATRILINEAL AND AFFINAL RELATIONSHIPS EMPHASIZED THROUGH THE PROCREATIVITY OF WOMAN



■ *Ego's lineage*

≡ *Ego's husband's lineage*

Other linked lineages

1 *Cycle 1*

2 *Cycle 2*

3 *Cycle 3*

part of the retained *taytu* crop grown as *urigubu* for a female member of the father's sub-clan. The wife also receives assistance from her husband in accruing banana leaf skirts and bundles which signify women's wealth and which she will distribute in mortuary ceremonies.[76]

Cycle 2: The woman perpetuates her sub-clan by bearing children for it; the brother consolidates its unity by giving the lineage-perpetuator *urigubu taytu.*

Cycle 3: The relationship between a woman's brother and her husband

is strengthened through the husband officially receiving the *urigubu* of his wife and returning this recognition with the *youlo* gift of valuables; in like manner the wife and husband's sister forge their relationship through acknowledgement of the *urigubu* contribution in mortuary gifts. Thus they unite their respective sub-clans in a working relationship.

As has been shown, the husband achieves most acclaim from the amount of *urigubu* he produces for the married kinswomen of his sub-clan. It seems anomalous at first that in a society where reciprocity is an entrenched principle,[77] the wife, apart from sharing a portion of inferior *taytu*, receives no visible token of acknowledgement from her husband for her role as co-worker in cultivation.

Part of the answer seems to lie in the small-scale, homogeneous and personal nature of the society. Every man is bound by custom (not sentiment, though the two may coincide) to provide *urigubu* to the female representatives of his sub-clan, and his wife in turn receives *urigubu* annually to symbolize her creative contribution to her sub-clan. This is the situation of *all* women, regardless of rank; it is part and parcel of womanhood. Women uniformly do the same type of work in the gardens and all perform this on the plots of their husbands. The mortuary gift from her affinal kinswoman may be a factor motivating her to work in the gardens, and also the fact that her husband helps her accumulate women's wealth.

The symbolic meaning of the horticultural ceremonial may also be relevant. Throughout the gardening year woman has an extensive symbolic association with the garden and crops in that the structure and process of the economic cycle metaphorically seem to reiterate that of human procreation. Woman thus serves as common denominator linking two creative processes, economic and human; through these she also interrelates two sub-clans.

Urigubu distributes the wealth of Trobriand society in the form of *taytu*, which I have suggested are analogous to children. The symbolic equation which emerges is that in the Trobriands, males "own" garden land, the produce of which is destined for women; women "own" their bodies, but the "produce" falls under the guardianship of men. Herein apparently lies an important part of the structural answer to the question of the wife's "unpaid" services to her husband: she assists him produce the *taytu* for his sub-clan, for he helps her rear children for her

sub-clan.

Malinowski stresses that "the marriage gift is the chief and most ostentatious product of the garden work".[78] The harvest of the Trobriand Islanders is not mere economic yield produced for the purposes of consumption and ease of living.[79] It sets in motion an important distribution of wealth and interaction of people promoting communication and cohesion between and within sub-clans. The focus is on the fertility of woman and on the symbolic equivalence of *taytu* and the children of the sub-clan. The gift of *urigubu* may therefore be seen as symbolic acknowledgement by the men of women's perpetuation of the sub-clan.

I have argued that a symbolic correlation appears to be made between human procreation and horticultural production in the Trobriand Islands with the *taytu* being a symbol of the child, and that woman seems to be the common denominator in the equation. In the next chapter I introduce cross-cultural evidence in support of the conclusions reached.

Notes

1 Malinowski 1966 I 193–194
2 Malinowski 1966 I 173, 193
3 11, 28 above; Malinowski 1966 I 193–194; Powell 1969b 581
4 Malinowski 1966 I 196, 295; Weiner 1976 139; cf. Montague 1974 122 (Kaduwaga, Kayleuna Island)
5 Malinowski 1922 180–181
6 Malinowski 1966 I 195; Malinowski 1920a 53; Malinowski 1926a 36
7 Malinowski 1966 I 195; Malinowski 1932 103–104; Austen 1945–46 41
8 Malinowski 1966 I 46, 189, 194, 196, 230; Malinowski 1932 103; cf. Powell 1956 76; Powell 1969b 581
9 7–8 above; Malinowski 1966 I 380, 427
10 Weiner 1976 197; cf. Malinowski 1966 I 329
11 Malinowski 1966 I 79, 82–83, 208; Malinowski 1932 105; Malinowski 1922 61
12 Malinowski 1966 I 189–190, 195–196, 353
13 Malinowski 1966 I 79, cf. 473–474 n.24
14 Malinowski 1966 I 56, 189, 194–195
15 Malinowski 1966 I 195; cf. Malinowski 1966 I 230–231
16 Malinowski 1966 I 196, 199; Malinowski 1932 103
17 Malinowski 1966 I 190; cf. Powell 1956 393; Powell 1969b 583
18 Malinowski 1966 I 179
19 Malinowski 1966 I 190, 353
20 Weiner 1976 197
21 Malinowski 1966 I 202, 352; Malinowski 1932 70, 166, 170–172

22 Malinowski 1926a 35, 37; Malinowski 1932 6, 30, 72, 110
23 Cf. Weiner 1976 210
24 Malinowski 1966 I 191, 205, 207, 352–353; Malinowski 1932 6; Malinowski 1927b 44–45; Kroeber 1938 300–301
25 Powell 1969b 584
26 Malinowski 1966 I 203, 336, 352; Malinowski 1927b 45; Malinowski 1932 5; Powell 1956 56, 190, 276; Weiner 1976 51; Robinson 1962 125
27 Malinowski 1966 I 333
28 Malinowski 1966 I 336, 352–354
29 Malinowski 1926a 108; 104
30 E.g. Powell 1956 53, 56, 95, 170, 434, 437, table 2a, table 4; Powell 1960 table (120–121); Powell 1969a 188–192; Montague 1974 23; cf. Weiner 1976 42, 154
31 E.g. Powell 1956 385–386, 389, 392–395, 403–406; Powell 1969b 583–584; Montague 1974 103, 121–122, 124–125; but cf. Malinowski 1966 I 393–395, 409
32 Powell 1956 409; Powell 1969b 580–581, 583–587
33 Powell 1969a 188
34 Powell 1956 384–385, 387, 408, 413–414, 430, 479, 565; Powell 1969b 581, 584–585, table 3 (586), 587, 592
35 Cf. e.g. Malinowski 1922 70; Malinowski 1966 I 329, 378; Powell 1956 48, n.37, 371
36 Montague 1974 39–40, 47, 103–104
37 102 above; Malinowski 1966 I 329, 371, 379–380
38 Malinowski 1966 I 379; cf. Malinowski 1966 I 318, 332, 370–373
39 6, 8–9, 28 above; Powell 1956 343, 371–372, 415, 474, 513; Malinowski 1966 I 74, 334–336, 420; cf. Montague 1974 46
40 Montague 1974 125, 127
41 Montague 1974 106
42 Montague 1974 111, 113, 197; cf. Malinowski 1932 9; Lévi-Strauss 1963 137
43 Montague 1974 197
44 Montague 1974 122
45 Malinowski 1966 I 196–197
46 Cf. e.g. Malinowski 1922 xix; Powell 1956 vii; Montague 1974 v. 2. 19
47 Montague 1974 29–31; cf. Malinowski 1932 437–440, 448
48 Montague 1974 33; cf. Malinowski 1932 53, 56, 59–63
49 Cf. Montague 1974 212–213
50 Montague 1974 34–38
51 E.g. Malinowski 1932 61, 218, 230, 403, 428, 475–476; Malinowski 1922 154–155, 464–465; cf. Powell 1956 140
52 Carter 1971 21–25; cf. Powell 1956 401, 447, 487, 492, 498, 504–505, 523 529, 535–562; Weiner 1976 31–33
53 Malinowski 1922 17, 83–84; Malinowski 1966 I 90, 317, 320, 342; Malinowski 1932 428–429
54 Weiner 1976 196
55 Malinowski 1932 104

56 Weiner 1976 140, cf. 204
57 Cf. Malinowski 1966 I 54, 58, 87, 122, 196, 208, 223, 295–296, 299, 413, 422, 463, n.2; Malinowski 1966 II 86, 186
58 Cf. Weiner 1976 140
59 Weiner 1976 255, cf. 140
60 Malinowski 1966 I 422 (Vakuta), cf. 87
61 Powell 1977b
62 Powell 1956 150
63 Malinowski 1966 I 192, 195, 230; cf. Powell 1969b 583–584; Powell 1956 66
64 Cf. Malinowski 1966 I 203–204; Malinowski 1932 5, 17, 171; Powell 1956 141; Weiner 1976 125
65 Malinowski 1966 I 36, 205–206; Malinowski 1932 133; cf. Robinson 1962 137
66 Malinowski 1924 307–308; Malinowski 1932 17–18, 81; cf. Malinowski 1926a 101–111; Malinowski 1922 71–72
67 Cf. Lévi-Strauss 1963 60; Powell 1969b 595
68 Cf. Malinowski 1966 I 192, 195
69 Malinowski 1966 I 190, 295; Malinowski 1922 180–181, 280; Malinowski 1926a 37; Malinowski 1932 108
70 Uberoi 1971 102–104; cf. Brunton 1973 109
71 Malinowski 1932 4; Malinowski 1966 I 200; Powell 1969a 178; cf. Sider 1967 93, 103–107; Weiner 1976 124
72 Malinowski 1926a 35; Malinowski 1932 24, 30, 72, 110, 439; Malinowski 1966 I 202, 206; Harrington 1967 360
73 Malinowski 1966 I 201–202
74 Cf. Malinowski 1966 I 200, 207
75 Weiner 1976 105, 197, 254, cf. 91
76 Weiner 1976 197–198, 208
77 Malinowski 1922 167; Malinowski 1926a 22–27, 33–48; cf. Seagle 1937 275–290; Hoebel 1954 180–190, 203–204, 210
78 Malinowski 1932 105
79 Cf. Malinowski 1922 60–62; Malinowski 1932 109

5

The symbolic significance of women in specific cultures

Most of the comparative material in this chapter derives from Oceanian cultures. To date there is no single theory of the migration and habitation of Oceania,[1] contemporary opinion inclining to the belief that the people originally came from Southeast Asia, which was also the home of the yam.[2] Despite diverse environments and relative isolation, particularly of the island cultures, there has been contact (through sailing) and cultural interflow between the peoples of "Melanesia", "Micronesia" and "Polynesia".[3] The Trobriand Islands may be regarded as part of the Massim in the Melanesian area, hitherto renowned for its seeming cultural complexity.[4] It is with Melanesian cultures that we are mainly concerned, and those in which the yam has symbolic connotations will receive particular attention.

Anthropologists have in the past recognized the power and uniqueness attributed to women in non-literate societies by virtue of their procreative capacities;[5] other scholars have also noticed a relationship between the "maternal womb" and "the symbolic womb of the earth".[6] There is a prevailing concept that the earth is like a woman's body. The Melanesians of South Pentecost Island (New Hebrides) and the Marind-Anim of New Guinea, regard the earth as female.[7] The New Zealand Maori believe in an earth mother, in contrast to a sky father.[8] During the eighth Maori month when plant growth occurs the people say: "Now the Earth Mother embraces her grandchildren."[9] They use a feminine image to describe an earthquake: "It is the Earth Mother shaking her breasts..."[10] The Polynesian Tuamotu[11] and Mangaia[12]

also consider the earth as a woman.

In the Madang District of New Guinea the Tangu regard the earth as female.[13] Before a Tangu man and woman are fully married they have to live in one another's homes,[14] and the groom's mother's brother deflowers the woman by coitus interruptus. The resultant sexual secretions are mixed with pieces of her underskirt and herbs, and added to the milk of a bisected coconut. The groom drinks the substance. The intention is to "ensure the birth of children and the fertility of garden crops".[15] The fluids of sexual union are seen as necessary for sound crop growth, the coconut featuring prominently as a fertility substance just as it does with the Trobriand Islanders. It thus follows that when Tangu husband and wife set out to form an independent household, the wife should be pregnant so that this event can coincide with the making of a new garden.[16] And when they begin their first independent garden, they have sexual congress, mix the secretions with leaves, soil and coconut milk, and disseminate the mixture over and in the new garden. The practice is usually repeated annually after clearing and before planting.[17]

Another widespread phenomenon is the association of woman with the principal crop. The idea of a crop "mother" is frequently accompanied by that of a "child". In the Malay Peninsula a sheaf symbolizes the rice-mother and her child.[18] A midwife sows the first seedling.[19] Then rice is planted early in the morning since this is the time when infants awake;[20] the people conduct themselves quietly in the field lest they should frighten the rice soul and cause it subsequently to miscarry.[21] The rice in bloom is given food regarded as nutritious for a pregnant woman and the rice-ears are given the food of human infants.[22] The village midwife[23] usually cuts the rice baby from a bulging "female" part of the field, kisses, anoints, fumigates, wraps it in swaddling clothes and places it in an oval-shaped basket. When it is brought to the field-owner's home, his wife remarks: "Yonder comes One swinging (her) arms; That (methinks) is a child of mine." The rice-child is placed on a sleeping-mat, and the farmer's wife observes post-partum taboos.[24] The mother sheaf is reaped by the field-owner's wife and treated as a new mother.[25] Frazer remarks that such Indonesian beliefs of rice-mother and child evince "natural and obvious comparisons of the breeding plant to a breeding woman".[26]

The identification of woman's procreative powers with crops is acknowledged among different peoples and in many ways, as the sub-

sequent section with regard to woman and yam symbolism will illustrate. Amongst the New Guinea Arapesh, But-district people, Kai, Graged, Yabim and Normanby Islanders (D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago), there is a myth of the woman who originally produced yams and other crops from her body.[27] Even such Oceanian peoples as the Maori (New Zealand) and Toradja (Central Celebes) sustain the belief.[28]

Anthropomorphism is attributed to the yam by Dobuans living south of the Trobriand Archipelago in the D'Entrecasteaux Islands. Their yams have ears responsive to the human voice[29] and listen to speech attentively. "They grow big for our calling on them."[30] They can smell,[31] and at night, though the vines remain in the garden, the tubers leave the earth and roam around.[32] This is why if people approach a garden in the dark they do so quietly lest the yam, like a person, take fright.[33]

Like Dobuan women, yams give birth to children[34] and "the comparison between human child-bearing and yam seed fertility is in its most literal sense insisted upon".[35] In addition each human matrilineage has its distinctive yam matrilineage.[36] *Tomot*, a word that refers to man, woman and child, regardless of age or sex, is frequently used for yams.[37] Thus, amongst one of the Trobrianders' close trading and ceremonial partners,[38] "yams are persons".[39]

Amongst the Kiwai Papuans of New Guinea an earth-woman gave birth to the yam.[40] During planting an old woman and man ceremonially promote yam growth by having sexual intercourse in the garden.[41] Fluids from the woman's vulva are smeared over the first yam, on the strings for tying the vine and on the digging-stick.[42] She also teaches the yam vine how to twine by passing a string and later the vine around her neck.[43]

Her role as mother is explicit when, to boost yam growth, she and her husband clear away the ground above the principal yam, making it visible. The woman removes her skirt, sits on the tuber, touches it and pushes with her genitals to cause its enlargement.[44] Then at the harvest of the ceremonially important tuber she stands astride over the yam plant. The man is behind her and proceeds to root out the yam from between her legs. He uses a digging-stick smeared with secretion from her vulva.[45] The woman takes the yam, places it beneath her skirt, holds it between her legs, walks a few steps, and drops the tuber on the ground.[46] The intimate association of woman and the gardens is further revealed in a private act in which a woman unties the string holding

her skirt in the garden, fastens it to a yam and pulls out the root.[47] The skirt string is alleged to symbolize the navel cord.[48] The Kiwai Papuans thus transparently mime the importance of sexual congress for yam growth, the value of female secretions for embryonic development, and the closeness in identity between the human embryo and yam.

On Frederik-Hendrik Island in West New Guinea live the Kimaam. They have a myth concerning the origin of the yam born of a human woman.[49] When its mother is about to commit infanticide, the yam child speaks to her in a dream: "Why must I be buried? Am I not a human being?"[50] Kimaam call the seed-yam tuber "mother" and the shoot "child".[51] The separation of the shoot from the mother-tuber is likened to the delivery of a human child.[52] During this period the young tuber like the new-born infant is weak and susceptible to harm,[53] and men sing:

> *Namamu* [mother[54]], I am not very strong yet
> I have only just gone into the earth
> Do not approach father too closely
> Or else I shall die.[55]

There is a taboo on sexual congress between a Kimaam man and his wife until the child's navel cord has dropped off, for he would be "using the child's road",[56] and would prevent it from passing "through the first difficult period of its life".[57] Reference to "the child's road", referring to the woman's vagina, also occurs during the yam planting period.[58] At this time all Kimaam men must rigorously adhere to a taboo on sexual intercourse lest they impede the cultigen's growth.[59]

The Kimaam draw on the image of human pregnancy in their ceremonial attitude to the yam. As the yam grows to maturity, fertility rites are practised.[60] The men share a ceremonial feast in honour of the ancestral spirits. They prepare a mixture containing coconuts and bananas, and a bunch of red leaves is waved over it[61] while the men sing:

> Mother I am in the earth
> You will not see me again
> but soon I shall come out
> of the earth and then you will eat me.
>
> Mother, I do not come out
> of the earth, but presently all
> the *kwanda*-friends will

measure me with a stick
and you will see how big I am.[62]

Beings that are to give birth to the yams are invoked to become pregnant. Other songs referring to foetal growth in the womb, follow.[63]

The magical mixture mentioned above is made into the shape of a plant mound which the Kimaam call *puri* or pregnant; this signifies a pregnant woman's belly.[64] A rod-shaped object representing the yam is moulded at the top of the mound.[65] A bunch of red leaves is placed on top of it and coconut shells now cover the mixture. A man cuts the mound and the others sing:

Why am I being split
Am I not a human being?[66]

Should the tropophyte not grow satisfactorily, then in a certain Kimaam village the planter and his wife break the taboo on coitus during yam development. As Serpenti recognizes, the custom reveals that "sexuality is in itself a condition for the flourishing of the crop... That is why *symbolical* sexuality has to take place."[67] Ordinary sexual intercourse, however, remains dangerous on account of "using the child's road". When the yam leaves wither, the largest tubers are measured whilst still in the ground. This procedure is executed with great care lest the roots are damaged. It is a hazardous undertaking to loosen the yam from the soil for "the 'child' may not be strong enough yet to undergo this operation".[68] The largest tubers are never consumed by the planter or his close kin, for the idea repels the Kimaam; instead they are exchanged.[69] The Kimaam and their yams are so closely identified that a person's tubers are destroyed at his death.[70]

Despite associations of yams and maleness in New Caledonia (south Melanesia), there are also positive indications of womanhood: "everything that appertains to woman is favourable for the yam".[71] The Caledonians equate yam horticultural ceremonies with those of human pregnancy: particularly vivid is the use of a sculpted pole with magical bundle called *koea*. Leenhardt explains that the term evokes thoughts of interlaced lianas or viscera, and pregnancy.[72] In gestation this bouquet is said to act on the placenta and foetus, the painful body of the mother, and on the liquids ejected at birth.[73] It is concerned with the full formation of the child in the womb of the mother.[74] The *koea* of the yams serves the same function. It acts upon the tuber during its

formation.[75] When the yams are finalizing their growth the people say they are "making the *koea* of a woman" for they use a bouquet identical to that employed in the therapy of pregnancy.[76]

Leenhardt recognizes that the identity accorded the parturient woman with the fertile earth[77] is extended to the produce. The New Caledonian lifts a yam with the gentleness afforded a newly-born child. He slips his hand under the end which is called the head in order to support it: "To hold a yam badly is as serious as holding a child badly."[78] Just as a woman's refinement is assessed by the manner in which she carries a child, so is a person's by the way he holds a yam.[79]

Not only does the magical procedure pertaining to the yam accord it human status, but in Leenhardt's view the identification is explicit: "The yam is a human being, born in the earth where the ancestors have dissolved and remain in a diffused state. It is the flesh of the ancestors."[80] The tuber dug into the field as seed disappears to the benefit of the new tubers. It is the image of the dead.[81] Further, the bereaved are comforted with a yam.[82] They are hereby reminded that although part of the yam dies in the earth, new yams are born from it.[83] The mourners' yam is thus a symbol of perpetuating life and as such offers people encouragement. "The old yam gives birth to the new yam which strengthens the position of man and confirms his virility. Man returns into the earth at death, with the old yams as his ancestors. Man's cycle of existence is enclosed in that of the yam."[84] Saussol adds that the yam's biological cycle unites the living with their dead ancestors, thus acknowledging the soil as life's source.[85]

Leenhardt, writing in the 1930's, felt that the already broiling anthropological discussions on parthenogenesis were futile since mythology confirms the indigenes' viewpoint.[86] He advanced that in New Caledonia "man ignores his real being... His existence is in his eyes identical to that of the yam. And the deep feeling which he experiences of his identification with nature confirms that this cycle corresponds to reality."[87]

The ardent yam cultivators of the New Guinea Sepik and Maprik areas, the Abelam and their neighbours the Ilahita Arapesh, are more male oriented in gardening than are the Trobriand Islanders. They differ too in their total exclusion of women from tending yams of ceremonial significance. This may be due partly to the yam being a symbol of virility amongst these peoples,[88] partly to the patrilineal system,[89]

while the economic and symbolic importance of pigs in these cultures[90] and women's care of them may also be relevant factors.[91] It may even be influenced by taxonomic choice whereby Dioscorea alata[92] (the long yam) is the symbolic focus[93] and not Dioscorea esculenta as in the Trobriands. Even so, there is a fundamental similarity: the yam is personified.

Abelam men grow long yams. These are closely associated with the prestige of men and their clans.[94] Such yams are often regarded as being "like men":[95] and the yam is believed to have a spirit for which a term identical to that for the spirit of a man is used.[96] A long yam can hear and smell.[97] At harvest each is adorned with a mask, headdress and male valuables, so that it resembles a decorated man and is identified with his achievements.[98]

The Ilahita Arapesh man often refers to the yam as his child and regards it as having a spirit.[99] Yams may be decorated in the same manner as males during initiation, even with regard to genitalia.[100] Because of their phallic shape and the fact that yams have an aversion to female sexuality, Tuzin, following Kaberry,[101] equates the yam with the phallus.[102] This equivalence should, however, not be overemphasized since both ethnographers elsewhere say that there are other long yams regarded as "female";[103] when these are forked they are said to resemble a female's spreading legs.[104] Female yams are given netbags and embellishments typifying girls' puberty ceremonies.[105] Although in such New Guinea cultures women are not as closely identified with the yams as they are in the Trobriands, some yams nevertheless can have feminine attributes.

It is thus evident that amongst the Abelam, Ilahita Arapesh and Dobuans there is general identification of the yam with the human being. Amongst the Kimaam and New Caledonians the association of yam and human being reappears, but there is also specific identification with the child. A similar attitude apparently pertains on Wogeo Island in the Schouten Group. Hogbin draws attention to the islanders' devotion to their land: a man says he "watches over" rather that "works" his allotments, using a word which also means caring for children.[106] The Murray Islanders of Mer (Torres Straits) refer to the seed-yam tuber by the name "mother" and its shoots as "children". They furthermore believe that the yam mother will produce children for as long as she remains uninjured.[107]

The identification of yam and child is accentuated by parallels between human pregnancy and yam growth in the ceremonial of the Kiwai and Kimaam, for whom sexual intercourse is relevant to yam growth. There are a number of New Guinea peoples who, like the Tangu of the Madang district, believe in the efficacy of sexual congress for sound crop growth.

An association between woman and the crops is thus present in a number of Melanesian cultures and others farther afield. There is sufficient common ground in the symbolic associations of the yam in Melanesia to lend support to my interpretation that in the Trobriands: a) the garden may be viewed as female and as the belly of woman; b) human and crop generation is considered a similar process; and c) the yam is anthropomorphized as the child of woman.

Notes

1 Cf. e.g. Whitmee 1878–79 263–264, 268–273; Fox 1947 58–60; Heyerdahl 1950 14–19; Suggs 1960 212–224; Sharp 1956; Oliver 1961 14–17, 20–23, 40–43, 65–70; Shutler & Shutler 1970 39–46; Howells 1973 208–211, 252–263

2 E.g. Skinner 1924 229–230, 242; Luquiens 1931 54; Thompson 1940 18; Lanyon-Orgill 1943 31–32; Keesing 1945 43; Robinson 1960 64–65; Grace 1970 24–28; Gourou 1953 71; Coursey 1972 217, 226–227; Coursey 1967 14–15; Harris 1967 100; Brookfield & Hart 1971 82; Howells 1973 196, 223

3 E.g. Beckwith 1940 19; Linton & Wingert 1946 8, 12; Laborde et al. 1952 228; Vayda 1966 296–297; Vayda & Rappaport 1970 5–8; Ray 1919–20 51–53; Hogbin 1940 97–100; Lewis 1945 17, 20; Archey 1949 52; McCarthy [1950] 86; Oliver 1961 41; Chowning 1973 1–2

4 E.g. Seligmann 1909 253, 268–269; Haddon 1937 240, 275; Oliver 1961 44; Powell 1976; Ivens 1934 45; Golson 1972 7, 14; cf. Langness & Weschler 1971 10–11; Boutinov 1962 81–89; Vayda 1966 293–298

5 E.g. Mauss 1972 120

6 James 1959 253–254

7 Lane 1965 259; Van Baal 1966 208

8 E.g. Best 1905 148–151, 188; Best 1942 1, 339, 342; Best 1954 12–13, 15–17; Te Rangi Hiroa 1950 435, 437–438, 499; cf. Grey 1855 2,4, 9–10, 13–15

9 Best 1959 22

10 Best 1959 49

11 Emory 1940 77; cf. Luomala 1955 68–69, 177 (Polynesia)

12 Piddington 1939 289

13 Burridge 1969 474, 486
14 Burridge 1969 98
15 Burridge 1969 99
16 Burridge 1969 83 n.
17 Burridge 1969 75
18 Skeat 1900 238, 248
19 Binder 1972 74
20 Skeat 1900 218
21 Frazer 1912 183
22 Frazer 1912 183
23 Endicott 1970 23
24 Skeat 1900 225–226, 236–244
25 Skeat 1900 248–249
26 Frazer 1912 183
27 Fortune 1942 134–141, 217–219; Gerstner 1939 260–264; Keysser 1911 222–225; Dempwolff 1925–26 20–26; Zahn 1911 393–394; Róheim 1950a 236; Róheim 1950b 190
28 Best 1925 48–51; Best 1942 420; Kruyt 1938 17–18, 272–273; cf. Raats 1969 29–30, 35–36 (Java, Mindanao, Borneo, Flores, Ceram)
29 Fortune 1963 109
30 Fortune 1963 107
31 Fortune 1963 109
32 Fortune 1963 108
33 Fortune 1963 108
34 Fortune 1963 107
35 Fortune 1963 108
36 Fortune 1963 108
37 Fortune 1963 109
38 Malinowski 1922 38–39; Malinowski 1963 xviii
39 Fortune 1963 107, 109
40 Landtman 1927 81, cf. 73; Landtman 1917 41, 324
41 Landtman 1927 77, cf. 70
42 Landtman 1927 77–79
43 Landtman 1927 78
44 Landtman 1927 79
45 Landtman 1927 79
46 Landtman 1927 79–80; Riley 1925 100
47 Landtman 1927 70
48 Landtman 1927 71
49 Serpenti 1965 217–218
50 Serpenti 1965 217
51 Serpenti 1965 221
52 Serpenti 1965 221
53 Serpenti 1965 221–222
54 Serpenti 1965 292
55 Serpenti 1965 222
56 Serpenti 1965 147, cf. 179

57 Serpenti 1965 148
58 Cf. Serpenti 1965 222
59 Serpenti 1965 222
60 Serpenti 1965 223
61 Serpenti 1965 223–225
62 Serpenti 1965 225
63 Serpenti 1965 225–226
64 Serpenti 1965 225
65 Serpenti 1965 226
66 Serpenti 1965 226
67 Serpenti 1965 228 (my underlining)
68 Serpenti 1965 227
69 Serpenti 1965 229; cf. Gardi 1960 plate 46 (facing 144), 159–160 (Maprik area, New Guinea)
70 Serpenti 1965 212, cf. 201
71 Leenhardt 1930 127 (translated from French)
72 Leenhardt 1930 126–127
73 Leenhardt 1930 127
74 Leenhardt 1930 127
75 Leenhardt 1930 127
76 Leenhardt 1930 127
77 Leenhardt 1971 126
78 Leenhardt 1971 122 (translated from French)
79 Leenhardt 1971 123
80 Leenhardt 1971 123 (translated from French)
81 Leenhardt 1971 124
82 Leenhardt 1971 124
83 Leenhardt 1971 124
84 Leenhardt 1971 124 (translated from French)
85 Saussol 1971 229
86 Leenhardt 1971 127
87 Leenhardt 1971 125 (translated from French)
88 Cf. e.g. Gardi 1960 158; Kaberry 1965–66 340; Forge 1966 28; Tuzin 1972 232; Harrison 1982 154, 156–159 (Avatip, East Sepik)
89 Cf. e.g. Meggitt 1969 3 (Central Highlands, New Guinea); Oliver 1942a 35 (Bougainville, Solomon Islands)
90 Vayda et al. 1961 69–72 (Melanesia); Meggitt 1969 2, 5 (Central Highlands); cf. e.g. Kaberry 1941 351–352 (Sepik district); Bus 1951 813–824; Elkin 1953 177–200 (Wabaga/Enga, Central Highlands); Bulmer 1960 2, 4–7 (Kyaka, Western Highlands); Harrisson 1937 24–33, 41–42 (New Hebrides)
91 Cf. e.g. Kaberry 1941–42 336, 354 (Sepik district); Luzbetak 1954 65–66, cf. 112 (Nondugl area, Western Highlands); Fischer 1968 290 (Jeghuje, Morobo district); Brookfield & Brown 1963 57
92 Coursey 1967 45–46
93 Cf. e.g. Lea 1964 76 (Maprik area); Tuzin 1972 231, 233 (Sepik area); Harrison 1982 142–146, 151–155 (East Sepik); Haynes & Coursey 1969

93 (New Guinea); Young 1971 147 (Goodenough Island)

94 Kaberry 1941 355; Kaberry 1941–42 82, 334, 338, 340, 354; Kaberry 1965–66 340

95 Kaberry 1941 356; Gardi 1960 148, 155–156, 159

96 Kaberry 1941 356; cf. Jenness & Ballantyne 1920 124 (D'Entrecasteaux Archipelago)

97 Forge 1962 10; Forge 1966 28

98 Kaberry 1941 356; Kaberry 1941–42 349; cf. Forge 1966 28; Lea 1969 179

99 Tuzin 1972 234

100 Tuzin 1972 236

101 Cf. Kaberry 1965–66 339–340

102 Tuzin 1972 232 n., 237; cf. McKnight 1973 199 (Wik-Mungkan, Australia)

103 Tuzin 1972 232; cf. Kaberry 1941 357

104 Tuzin 1972 232 n.

105 Tuzin 1972 237

106 Hogbin 1939 164; cf. Hogbin 1938 301–303

107 Haddon 1912 146

6

Women and gardening in the context of Trobriand culture

This analysis of the position of Trobriand women in gardening suggests that it is particularly her symbolic relationship to the garden and the esteem accorded her by the pivotal matrilineal *urigubu* transaction which emphasize woman's unique position in the society as the giver of children and afford her fulfilment. It may be accepted that woman also receives satisfaction from her position in gardening to the extent that this is consistent with, and related to, her position in the rest of the culture. This consistency and the interrelation of different parts of Trobriand culture are the subject of this final chapter.

Opler[1] has demonstrated the significance of dominant and counter-balancing themes as vehicles for cultural integration. He suggests that a dominant theme permeates various aspects of culture but is restrained by opposing factors. The interplay of dominant and counter-theme lends a culture coherence. The foregoing analysis of Trobriand garden symbolism centres around the matrilineal system and woman's motherhood. The emergent question is whether these might be regarded as dominant themes of the culture, and what evidence there is of the presence of counter-themes.

Dominant themes

Matrilineal descent is primarily a principle of social organization. Because descent group membership is established through women, they are important as perpetuators of the matriline[2] and as members of the matrilineal group. This descent principle channels the roles of the sexes:

e.g. the father-husband is socially negligible for the perpetuation of the matrilineage.[3] The Trobriand denial of paternity also emphasizes the matriline.[4] A woman's children belong to her matrilineal sub-clan. Her brother, who usually represents the minimal matrilineal unit, will be concerned with its continuity despite a constraint on his interest in the sexual life of his female matrilineal partner.[5]

Evidence of the theme of matrilineal descent is also to be found in Trobriand economic life. Malinowski was aware that matrilineal descent reckoning exercises a profound influence on the nature of Trobriand culture and land tenure.[6] He perceived the matrilineal bias of the myth of human genesis; and that the matrilineal descendants born solely of the eponymous ancestress who emerged from the ground at a particular place, exercise rights over that territory. It is the owning sub-clan which forms the nucleus of the garden team that takes the initiative in the magic and work of gardening, and to which the model standard plots usually belong.

The matrilineal principle, coupled with sub-clan exogamy and virilocal residence, results in Trobriand woman working her husband's plots. It is visible in the institution of *urigubu* (matrimonial harvest gift) which pivots on the relation between female and male sub-clan members. The receipt of *urigubu* enables a woman to retain meaningful ties with her sub-clan and acknowledges her continued, valued membership of this group. As has been seen, woman's role as perpetuator of the matrilineal group is acknowledged in the *urigubu* transaction through the symbol of the *taytu* identified with the child of the sub-clan.

There are hints of the reappearance of the matrilineal principle in other economic activities, particularly the canoe-building and sailing associated with the *kula* (overseas expedition for ceremonial exchange). A Kuda-yuri (Kitava Island) myth narrates how a Lukuba headman's canoe originally was able to fly by means of the magic he (and his sisters) alone knew, until certain of his clansmen jealously killed him; as a result this magic died with him. His sisters, angered at the murder and loss of the magic, but who also possessed this magical power, flew away from the village.[7]

All these matrilineal heroes of the Lukuba clan emerged from underground,[8] and were "the first representatives of their totemic sub-clan on the surface of the earth".[9] Both the gardening heroes Gere'u and Tudava[10] are of this clan, and in Malinowski's myth cycle the Lukuba

are the foremost canoe-builders and sailors.[11] Gere'u is also a *kula* hero, as renowned for his magical acumen in procuring vast quantities of *kula* valuables[12] as in producing great gardens.[13]

The seagoing canoe (*masawa*) is therefore mythologically associated with the matrilineal principle and sub-clan. Further, some Trobriand origin myths, notably those from Kwaibwaga, state that the people's original ancestors arrived in a canoe.[14] The owner of a seagoing canoe is usually the head of a village or sub-division of one,[15] such headship being linked with sub-clan leadership. A core of men accompanying the owner of a seagoing canoe as crew usually belong to the same matrilineal sub-clan,[16] as is the case with the gardening team; and Powell makes explicit reference to *kula* canoes being made for sub-clans.[17] In building and sailing, certain rules of propriety concerning the seagoing canoes are observed in respect of particular sub-clans.[18] Significantly, in Kaduwaga (Kayleuna Island), a female clanswoman of the owner stands in the canoe at the end of the maiden voyage;[19] and Gilmour observes[20] that Kiriwinan sisters prepare food for their brothers before the latter depart on *kula*. It seems therefore that the seagoing canoe, along with the standard garden plot and the pregnant woman, is associated with the matrilineal sub-clan.

Recurrence of the theme appears in other aspects of the culture as well. Malinowski wrote that "one hole of emergence, one sub-clan, one territory – or a definite part of it – and one headman, runs through the whole social organization of the Trobriands".[21] That the genesis myth concerning the hole of emergence is relevant to matrilineal descent has already been emphasized. The myth links the theme of matrilineal descent with the magico-religious aspect of culture. The autochthonous founding ancestress of the sub-clan brought with her the system of garden magic which the garden magician, typically her direct matrilineal descendant, applies. The practice of garden magic thus serves as a link between the sub-clan and its ancestress. Besides garden magic there are also other systems of magic vested in specific sub-clans.[22]

In the horticultural spells matrilineal forefathers are requested to grant the soil fertility, although paternal ancestors are not excluded. These ancestors are also responsible for the persistence of the sub-clan by the addition of new-born members.[23] There is continuity of the sub-clan in the spirit world[24] and the ancestor who is reincarnated as a spirit-child through a woman belongs to her own matrilineal sub-clan.[25]

The theme is also present in Trobriand political organization. The principle of matrilineal descent is associated with the doctrine of the emergence of the matrilineal group's first female ancestress from a particular hole,[26] and this forms the basis of village residence and citizenship.[27] The leader of the highest-ranking sub-clan is the headman of the village, which is the significant political unit.[28] Heads of lower-ranking sub-clans are consulted at council meetings.[29] Matrilineal descent is the basis of succession to sub-clan leadership[30] although the typically Melanesian method of determining leadership on the basis of accumulation and distribution of wealth and services is also prevalent.[31] As a factor in succession, inheritance[32] and guardianship, matrilineal descent has legal (and economic) implications. It is apparent that matrilineal descent recurs in various aspects of Trobriand culture and as such emerges as a dominant theme which lends consistency to cultural experience.

Human female sexuality and procreation seems to be another dominant theme in Trobriand culture. As I have shown, the origins of humanity and of gardening coincide in Trobriand mythology, both deriving from the female ancestress who emerged from a sacred spot in the ground. There is an equation between the earth and mankind, especially with regard to the female, for both are able "to burgeon (with) child".[33] By metaphorical ascription of the conditions of motherhood to the soil and through the symbolic activities and attitudes associated with gardening, the significance of female sexuality and procreation is emphasized. This theme is replicated in other economic institutions such as the *kula* in which the canoe plays a dominant role.

There are certain clear pointers to identification of the canoe with woman. The prow-board of the *masawa* (seagoing canoe) is the facial symbol of the canoe-builder's wife.[34] The formulae of canoe construction and sailing invoke the canoe to bind its skirt together and fly,[35] suggesting that the canoe resembles a flying witch.[36] This metaphor seems to lend the canoe immunity from the dangers of the sea[37] and ascribes femininity to it.[38] Other parallels between canoe ceremonial and that of pregnancy and the parturient female may also be drawn.

When the ornamental prow-boards have been inserted into the seagoing canoe, it is pushed into the water, and men wash the canoe with sea-water to remove any evil influences.[39] In like manner women assist the expectant mother and douse her with sea-water.[40] The pregnant woman is then carried to the village and placed on a platform.[41]

Similarly the canoe, once it has been rubbed and washed, is taken ashore and rested on skid logs.[42]

When a woman's confinement is pending, her husband and male matrilineal representatives stand guard beside fires to ward off attacks from sorcerers.[43] In Kaduwaga a guard which appears to be similar to the one preceding childbirth is mounted on the night before the canoe is launched.[44] Before the launching there is a series of acts initiated by the " 'ritual cooking' of the canoe"; substances whose smoke will render speed and have a cleansing effect are burnt under the bottom of the canoe.[45] Likewise an important puerperal custom requires the mother to sit on a bedstead over a fire to hasten the blood-flow, this fire also being associated with protection and cleansing.[46]

The seagoing canoe is covered with a protective plaited covering of coconut fronds to ward off the sun. This is removed prior to the ceremonial launching.[47] For the same protective reason the pregnant mother is said to be covered with a mantle, dispensed with before confinement, though hers consists of another fertility substance, banana fronds.[48]

The ceremonial launching of the seagoing canoe is called the "staining red of the mouth of the canoe".[49] The canoe magician colours its bow and stern (they are interchangeable[50]) with charmed red ochre; a cowrie shell on the prow-board is also painted red.[51] This custom resembles that in the first pregnancy ceremony in which the pregnant woman's face and mouth are painted red and red hibiscus flowers embellish her hair.[52]

In Kaduwaga a house is built around the canoe when it is to be decorated for launching. Montague states that "Kaduwagans liken the seclusion [of the canoe] to that which a woman undergoes after giving birth."[53] While the boat is being decorated men alone may see it.[54] In human procreative ceremony the new mother is secluded for a month: during this period only women may see her.[55] The mother is meticulously beautified in anticipation of her coming-out ceremony.[56] Montague likens the canoe to the new-born child[57] but this conflicts with the above interpretation of her informants namely, that the seclusion is that of a mother. She overlooks the fact that the canoe and mother are decorated and receive similar ceremonial treatment and that the prow-board is likened to the face of the builder's wife.

In Malinowski's day the newly-launched canoes were given a trial run[58]

and then embarked on a maiden voyage of display prior to their departure for *kula.*[59] The mother also displays herself and her new-born child at the coming-out ceremony following the seclusion period.[60] In Trobriand procreative ceremony the father's sisters enact the mother's expulsion.[61] At the Kaduwagan ceremonial launching of the canoe, women shy coconuts at it (trying to unseat the crew).[62] Both rituals of mock expulsion suggest that the matrilineal identity of the woman and her child on the one hand, and the canoe and crew, with its core of matrilineal kinsmen on the other, is hereby established.[63]

The theme of female sexuality and procreation seems also to manifest itself in the creation of women's wealth. Trobriand men exchange stone axe blades amongst themselves, these being a sign of wealth.[64] Women have their own type of wealth in the form of bundles and fibre skirts made from banana fronds.[65] The accumulation and distribution of bundles and skirts is of absorbing interest to women and provides them with renown.[66] Although she provides no supporting evidence for attributing symbolic significance to red skirts, Weiner proposes that they epitomize "that which is essential to *dala* [the sub-clan] and the regeneration of *dala*... symbolizing the power of being female".[67] Bundles are "the symbol of milk and nurturance. As bundles are rewoven into skirts, the skirt itself can be analyzed as an embodiment of all that is 'womanness': sexuality, reproduction, and nurture."[68]

The activities following a death have a symbolic structure apparently homologous to that of pregnancy and gardening, in which males assume prominence in the first period, women in the second. After a death has occurred, the funeral workers are males[69] (although, as in the early stages of pregnancy,[70] the father's sister plays a distinctive role[71]); four to eight months later women organize a female mortuary ceremony.[72] The hallmark of this ceremony is a massive exchange of bundles and skirts.[73] The exchange of these articles, particularly at this time, seems to symbolize the renewal of life – a process intimately associated with womanhood. Since the ceremony lifts a number of restrictive mourning observances such as that of being black and dirty,[74] an association with cleanliness and the pregnancy ceremony appears. The procreative power of women provides assurance of the regeneration of the sub-clan.

The theme of woman's sexuality and procreation thus occurs in gardening, the canoe and women's wealth, and is also found in aspects of culture other than the economic. There is an association between human female procreativity and matrilineal descent reckoning – which is

so crucial in the social organization. Because woman is sole perpetuator of the matrilineal group, it follows that such a theme may attain cultural dominance. This of course does not imply that in a patrilineal system woman's propagative capacity will not be recognized; rather, that there is greater likelihood of this being emphasized in a system which draws attention to the female principle. In gardening, the theme reinforces the conjugal tie through the symbolic expression of the procreative roles of mother and father; the garden magician's ritual also contributes to the expression of it; spells form an important part of the ritual, thus linking the theme with language; and plot terminology further reinforces it. Although there is little documentation of Trobriand artistic expression, the theme of woman also appears on the decorative prow-board which represents the canoe-builder's wife. And finally, Weiner states that the exchange of skirts symbolizing female sexuality "allows women to play a public role with political implications".[75] It thus appears that this major theme of female fertility has an important integrative effect in Trobriand culture.

Counterbalancing themes

Opler states that there are usually limiting factors circumscribing the influence of dominant themes.[76] Trobriand concern with woman in descent reckoning and symbolism appears to be counterbalanced by expressions of patrifiliation, affinal relations, individuality and the theme of male prominence.

Radcliffe-Brown has shown that matrilineal and patrilineal systems are rarely mutually exclusive: one line of reckoning tends to predominate.[77] Malinowski was conscious of this type of interplay in Trobriand culture, though he tended to view it as a conflict between "matrilineal" and "patriarchal" principles.[78] Although he tended to underemphasize it,[79] Malinowski perceptively recognized a counter-theme to matrilineal descent and the dogma of parthenogenesis in the cultural idea, strictly adhered to, that a child resembles its father, a social "outsider", not its mother or matrilineal kin.[80] Other examples of patrifiliation are that the male garden magician may in practice inherit his magic paternally;[81] and, both maternal and paternal ancestors are influential in granting fecundity to the soil. It is the father, not the mother's brother, who represents his daughter or son in marriage;[82] and in procreative ceremonial a woman's father and his matrilineal kinswomen ensure the success of her pregnancy.[83] And a paternal ancestor may effect the reincarnation of a spirit child in a woman.[84]

The father exercises some authority over his son until puberty;[85] and residence is virilocal. A male may inherit love magic and that pertaining to canoe-construction from his father.[86] The father also gives his son a position in the *kula*[87] and provides him with privileges and gifts.[88] Malinowski regarded such benefits as an indication of "father-love" (which he viewed as a "patriarchal" principle[89]) pitting itself against the overriding matrilineal descent system.[90] He has been criticized for confusing emotional with structural issues.[91] Uberoi argues convincingly that the cases of father-love cited refer to high-ranking males;[92] and that gifts from the father, together with patrilateral cross-cousin marriage, are structural mechanisms with implications for political alliance.[93] The importance of these points for the present purpose is to register the cultural recognition of ties through the father, whereby he as a male receives a measure of personal recognition in different aspects of the culture.

Affinal relations add an important dimension to the islanders' lives and tend to counterbalance the emphasis on matrilineal descent. Affines participate in mortuary ceremonial[94] and are operative in building the seagoing canoe, dwelling and storehouse.[95] Affines must annually render return gifts for *urigubu* (matrimonial harvest gifts) received: a man's sister provides his wife with "women's wealth", and the man presents "men's wealth" to the wife's brother. By virtue of polygyny,[96] numerous affines provide a chief with tribute in the form of *urigubu*, thus enhancing his power.[97] A chief may call on affines for purposes of peacekeeping in war.[98] Should such duties of affines as pertain to mortuary ceremonial, *urigubu* or war be evaded, the political implications are that relations between the individuals' sub-clans, and hence their respective villages, would become severely strained.[99] Affinal relations therefore have implications for several aspects of culture.

There is some evidence that a concern with individuality also offsets the emphasis on matrilineal descent as exemplified in sub-clan solidarity. Individual women and men can achieve satisfaction in their ability to garden well. There is a degree of individuality in plot ownership,[100] in growing *urigubu* for a specific recipient,[101] and in presenting it for personal as opposed to sub-clan reasons.[102] The existence of private garden magic[103] points to individuality in the magico-religious aspect. An individual may, by and large, follow her (or his) personal yearnings in selecting a marriage partner.[104] Females and males also individually own possessions.[105] Uberoi suggests that the *kula* counters a partner's sub-clan ties by emphasizing his duties to a person from an opposing

district.[106] The *kula* does provide for a measure of individual self-interest,[107] although sub-clan membership nevertheless affects the composition of the crew of a *kula*-canoe.

Montague maintains that Kaduwagan Trobriand Islanders regard themselves first as human beings, then as males and females;[108] and that they see themselves as individuals.[109] Her findings, like those of Uberoi, are an instructive caution lest we over-categorize Trobriand behaviour and imprison the individual in a cell of matrilineal solidarity.

Expression of the theme of male prominence is found in the active role men play in the various aspects of Trobriand public life. As has been seen, they take the lead in ceremonial activities pertaining to horticulture. They spend more time working in the fields than women.[110] *Urigubu* is publicly given from one man to another, and men earn renown from gardening. The most significant person in gardening, the *towosi* (garden magician), is a male.[111] Males are the "owners" of property associated with the sub-clan, like plots and canoes.[112] Men build storehouses and seagoing canoes.[113] They voyage on *kula*[114] and procure valuables.[115] They dominate the activities associated with the magic of canoe-construction and the *kula*.[116] The ethnographic information on fishing is sparse but principally portrays it as the activity of men and boys.[117] Men arrange marriages, subsidize feasts[118] and deliberate in councils (*kayaku*).[119] They act as legal representatives of minimal matrilineal units.[120] Men attain particular significance in political life by their position in the *kula*,[121] and by the fact that they alone may aspire to roles of leadership.[122]

Earlier in this chapter I indicated that the dominant themes of matrilineal descent and women's sexuality and motherhood interlink economic and other aspects of Trobriand culture. Similarly the counterbalancing themes of patrifiliation, affinal relations, individuality and male prominence are relevant to different aspects of the culture. It is not proposed, however, that recurring themes alone account for the integration of culture (although the material has not produced many instances of connections between aspects other than those related to the themes discussed). One way in which the economic and social aspects of the culture are linked is by the practical co-operation of wife and husband in gardening, which reinforces the conjugal tie. The garden magician and his rites express the cultural themes, and by directing the gardening activities of women and men, these connect the economic and magico-religious aspects.

The position of women in Trobriand culture

Malinowski periodically mentions, if somewhat vaguely, the "high position" of Trobriand women and remarks that "the freedom, influence and independence of women is clearly manifested in their surface behaviour."[123] Such generalizations are usually not helpful, but coming from so sensitive a fieldworker the statement should be noted. In Trobriand culture woman's procreative ability is acknowledged: symbols of propagation permeate the major ceremonies and aspects of culture. That Trobriand descent reckoning is traced through her appears to consolidate woman's position in society further.

Trobriand women and men appear to function on different levels in gardening as they do in the rest of the culture, but both participate whether at a symbolic or practical level. Unlike many of their New Guinea counterparts,[124] men do not vie with women in the Trobriands, they function in complementary roles. A balance between male and female is achieved via the symbolic medium in which both are incorporated: the man plays out a more active, the woman a more symbolic role.

Men predominate in the magic and practical work of gardening; there is no reason why woman should play a larger part in gardening than she already does, for it is her procreative ability that is dramatized. Similarly, in the important *kula* institution, her active participation is unnecessary when considered symbolically. The crew of the canoe consists of matrilineal kinsmen and the boat itself is female, these symbolically emphasizing the perpetuation of the matrilineal sub-clan. Male activity pertaining to the canoe is thus a cultural enactment of that which women perform physiologically.[125] The position of the male is characterized by greater public prominence: the man acts as the political, social, economic and magico-religious representative of the sub-clan. The position of woman on the other hand is less overt: she is not an organizer but a perpetuator and symbol of the matrilineal sub-clan.

It may therefore be concluded that woman is as crucial to gardening and to Trobriand culture as is the more visible male, but her medium is that of metaphor. These conclusions question the validity of Ortner's theoretical paper, based on limited ethnographic evidence, in which she states: "The secondary status of woman in society is one of the true universals, a pan-cultural fact."[126] The Trobriand Islanders reveal that the cultural relationships of women and men are infinitely more com-

plex than her assertion supposes.

General conclusions

The object of this study has been to gain insight into the position of women in the Trobriand Islands with particular reference to horticulture. The paramount importance that the people attach to gardening *taytu* (the small yam) has been examined. It has also been noted that women are relatively inconspicuous in gardening activities, particularly those of a ceremonial nature. But linguistically the garden plot is associated with woman's body and the *taytu* with her child, an equation ratified in the spells and in the myth of primogeniture.

The interpretation that emerges is that Trobriand economic production of *taytu* mirrors the culture's view of the procreation of human beings, both in process and product. The similarity of process is evident in symbolic procedures which acknowledge the significance of woman as procreator. The affinity in product appears in the *urigubu* (matrimonial harvest gift) institution. The males of the matrilineal sub-clan render their creative contribution – the *taytu*, symbol of the child – to their nearest female relative. This seems to draw attention not only to the procreative ability of woman, but also to her enduring position within the sub-clan. Further, the woman assists her husband in producing the *urigubu* destined for a female member of his sub-clan, whilst he aids her in the production and rearing of children for her sub-clan. This is possible within a belief system which denies paternity, which emphasizes the matriline, and which accords a symbolic equivalence to *taytu* and children stemming from the identification of the burgeoning garden with the pregnant woman.

An association of woman and crops is neither an aberration nor an idiosyncrasy of the Trobrianders in the context of Oceania. Widespread, especially in related culture areas, though variously articulated, is the concept of the earth as female, the idea of woman as mother of humans and plants, and a metaphoric equivalence between people and produce. Two dominant themes of Trobriand gardening, viz matrilineal descent, and human female sexuality and procreation, acknowledge the importance and relevance of woman to the economic process. The percolation of these themes into other institutions ratifies their cultural significance. They are intrinsic to pregnancy, are manifested in the symbolism of the *kula*-canoe, and are also suggested in mortuary customs. The themes weave through and integrate different aspects of culture.

Woman's procreativity is acknowledged in the language of gardening and there are indications that it appears in the virtually unexplored artistic expressions of the people. In similar manner the counterbalancing themes of patrifiliation, affinal relations, individuality and male prominence also link different aspects of culture.

Trobriand men are in the forefront of numerous activities in addition to gardening: they conduct trade, travel, and establish contacts. Women are incorporated in the principal economic activity of gardening and achieve renown from *urigubu* received. But their physical participation in culturally important undertakings is restricted. Superficially considered, woman seems to have little cultural significance. However, the Trobriand woman is structurally significant on account of matrilineal descent reckoning which confers prestige on her, and she is important through symbolism in which she is ever-present. The roles of males and females in gardening symbolically mirror those in procreation.

The complementary nature of male and female horticultural roles is evident. Men and women are neither competitors nor antagonists: the work of one is different from, yet interrelates with, that of the other. There is both direct and indirect involvement in culturally important activities, with woman and man functioning on different cultural levels. The symbolism intrinsic to the activities of males and females raises woman's procreative ability to one of the culture's dominant values. Through the symbolism of gardening, woman's cultural position harmonizes with her biological nature. It is these factors which afford her satisfaction and a large measure of cultural esteem.

Notes

1 Opler 1945 198–206; cf. Taylor 1973 43
2 Weiner 1976 20; Malinowski 1966 I 345
3 Schneider 1961 14–16
4 Róheim 1950a 29–30
5 Malinowski 1932 170–173; cf. Schneider 1961 13
6 Malinowski 1966 I 341–342
7 Malinowski 1922 311–316
8 Malinowski 1922 317, 321
9 Malinowski 1922 317
10 Malinowski 1966 I 68–74
11 Malinowski 1922 321
12 Malinowski 1922 307
13 Malinowski 1966 I 69

14 Weiner 1976 38
15 Malinowski 1922 114, 118, 122–123
16 Powell 1956 183; Powell 1977a
17 Powell 1956 106
18 Malinowski 1922 230–232
19 Montague 1974 139
20 Gilmour 1905 71
21 Malinowski 1966 I 350
22 Malinowski 1966 I 348
23 Malinowski 1916 405–406; Malinowski 1932 149–150, 152
24 Malinowski 1966 I 348; Malinowski 1916 406
25 Malinowski 1932 146
26 8 above
27 Malinowski 1966 I 341, 344; Powell 1956 45
28 Powell 1960 121; Uberoi 1971 24–25; cf. Malinowski 1922 57, 62–64; Malinowski 1966 I 347; 5–6 above
29 Malinowski 1966 I 347
30 Malinowski 1966 I 345–346
31 Powell 1956 468–469; Powell 1960 126–128, cf. 135; Allen 1972 270–271
32 Malinowski 1966 I 345
33 Malinowski 1966 II 262; cf. 8 above
34 Montague 1974 200; cf. Malinowski 1922 plate XXIV (facing 97); Silas 1967 152
35 Malinowski 1922 132, 138
36 Malinowski 1922 131, 138, 200, 215, 320
37 Cf. Malinowski 1922 236–237
38 Cf. Margot-Duclot & Vernant 1946 40
39 Malinowski 1922 135
40 Malinowski 1932 185–186
41 Malinowski 1932 188
42 Malinowski 1922 135
43 Malinowski 1932 194
44 Montague 1974 135
45 Malinowski 1922 139–140
46 Malinowski 1932 194–197
47 Malinowski 1922 147
48 Malinowski 1932 180–181, 189, 191, 193; Silas 1967 17
49 Malinowski 1922 147
50 Malinowski 1922 215–216
51 Malinowski 1922 147
52 Malinowski 1932 187
53 Montague 1974 135
54 Montague 1974 135
55 Malinowski 1932 196–197
56 Malinowski 1932 197
57 Montague 1974 200

58 Malinowski 1922 147–154
59 Malinowski 1922 163–165
60 Malinowski 1932 196–197
61 Malinowski 1932 197 (for "maternal" in line 23 read "paternal"); cf. Malinowski 1932 185–186, 196, 422–423
62 Montague 1974 136–137
63 But cf. Montague 1974 200
64 Weiner 1976 179, 183, 231
65 Weiner 1976 92–93, 230–231; cf. Saville 1926 168 (Mailu, New Guinea)
66 Weiner 1976 78, 91, 100, 118–119; cf. Montague 1974 166–168, 176–177, 185
67 Weiner 1976 119, cf. 117, 120
68 Weiner 1976 119, cf. 92–93, 193
69 Weiner 1976 64–65, 69
70 Malinowski 1932 180, 185–189
71 Weiner 1976 64
72 Weiner 1976 62, 98
73 Weiner 1976 103–116
74 Weiner 1976 62, 112, 119
75 Weiner 1976 119
76 Opler 1945 201
77 Radcliffe-Brown 1952 39–42; cf. Burrows 1939 1 (Polynesia); Mead 1938 167 (New Guinea); Kaberry 1941 257–258 (Abelam, New Guinea)
78 E.g. Malinowski 1966 I 359–360, 378; Malinowski 1926a 128; Malinowski 1932 88
79 Cf. Scheffler 1973
80 Malinowski 1932 172-177
81 Malinowski 1927b 121; Malinowski 1966 I 64
82 Malinowski 1932 72–73, 76–77, 447; Weiner 1976 174–176; Robinson 1962 128–137
83 Malinowski 1966 I 203; Malinowski 1932 180, 185–190; cf. Robinson 1962 141–144
84 Robinson 1962 144–145; cf. 27 above
85 Powell 1969a 184; Malinowski 1926a 108; Malinowski 1966 I 205
86 Malinowski 1916 389
87 Malinowski 1932 81
88 Malinowski 1932 81, 177; Malinowski 1926a 109–110
89 Cf. Malinowski 1966 I 361
90 Malinowski 1926a 101, 106–111; Malinowski 1932 81, Malinowski 1966 I 204–205
91 Fortes 1957 182–183; Powell 1969a 185; Uberoi 1971 103
92 Uberoi 1971 103–106
93 Uberoi 1971 100–106; cf. Robinson 1962 125
94 Malinowski 1932 128–130, 135
95 Powell 1956 411; Powell 1977a; Malinowski 1922 134, cf. 114, 125; Malinowski 1932 108; Malinowski 1966 I 245–246

96 Malinowski 1932 110–111; Powell 1956 564; Weiner 1976 45–46
97 Malinowski 1966 I 56, 191–192; Malinowski 1932 69, 107, 111–113
98 Powell 1969b 592
99 Cf. e.g. Malinowski 1932 103, 108–109, 129, 135; Powell 1960 126–127; Powell 1969b 592
100 Malinowski 1966 I 371
101 Cf. Malinowski 1966 I 329; Montague 1974 124; Weiner 1976 197
102 65 above; Malinowski 1966 I 392–396; Powell 1969b 584; Montague 1974 103
103 Malinowski 1966 I 153
104 Malinowski 1932 66, 71; Powell 1969a 197
105 Malinowski 1932 20–21; Montague 1974 113, 191–192; Uberoi 1971 134
106 Uberoi 1971 159
107 Uberoi 1971 160
108 Montague 1974 191, 194–196
109 Cf. Montague 1974 191, 204–205, 211
110 Table I 101
111 8 above
112 7–9, 87 above
113 Powell 1956 411; Powell 1977a; Malinowski 1922 114, 125, 134, plates XXV–XXVIII (144–145); Malinowski 1932 22
114 10 above; Malinowski 1922 197, 206, 280; Gilmour 1905 72
115 Malinowski 1922 81, 351
116 Malinowski 1922 126–142, 206, 335–349, 360–361; Gilmour 1905 71
117 Malinowski 1918 87–92; Malinowski 1966 I plate 5 (facing 16)
118 E.g. Malinowski 1932 69, 111–112; Powell 1960 135
119 Powell 1960 132
120 Malinowski 1932 110
121 Cf. Uberoi 1971 159
122 Powell 1956 267–268, 270
123 Malinowski 1966 I 35; cf. Weiner 1976 229
124 Nilles 1950 37, 48–49; Read 1951 157, 162; Read 1952 5–16; Langness 1967 161–177; Langness 1974 189–210; Hogbin 1970 86–91, 95–99; Meggitt 1970 125–143; Strathern 1972 163–164, 169, 182; Weiner 1976 118
125 Cf. Mead 1940 350 (Arapesh, New Guinea)

Appendix: the organization of labour

It seems to me that an analysis of the position of women in gardening should also take cognizance of the practical organization of labour, and in so doing address the question of whether certain symbolic associations linked with men and women influence the sexual divisions that occur. I believe that such an approach might prevent an oversimplified view of woman's role and significance based solely on the amount of time or energy women, as compared with men, spend in this pursuit and the amount of explicit recognition woman receives.

Female-male work ratio

The Trobriand ethnographic data have a number of inconsistencies and omissions with regard to time apportioned to different tasks. Cleaning the plot is more particularly women's work (though it may be performed by joint labour); placing boundary sticks and fencing is men's work; together they cover a period of 30 days during which women and men work concurrently, the actual time spent by the sexes on their respective activities being unknown.[1] Weeding (female), garden protection and related activities (male) occur concurrently, though the time devoted to weeding appears to be longer than that spent on garden protection.[2] Harvesting of *taytu* is a joint wife-husband activity although each sex concentrates on its own share of work. There is no clear indication as to the importance of the harvest of large yams.[3] The total time registered for male and female activities discussed possibly exceeds the overall period spent in gardening. The reckoning presented in Table I is therefore unfortunately approximate through a lack of

Table 1

TIME IN DAYS SPENT BY MEN AND WOMEN IN GARDENING *TAYTU*[4]

TYPE OF WORK[5]	MALES	FEMALES	JOINT
(First Phase)			
Cutting boundary belt & path into plot	1	–	–
Cutting scrub	30	–	–
Cleaning plot	–	30 ?	–
Placing boundary sticks, fencing	30 ?	–	–
Planting	60	–	–
(Second Phase)			
Weeding	–	75	–
Garden protection, erecting supports, thinning tubers	45	–	–
Harvesting large yams & taro	–	–	30±
Major harvest, construction of arbour, display of *taytu*	–	–	60
TOTAL DAYS:	166 ?	105 ?	90±

accurate day-to-day information, but some indication of the relative proportions is possible.

Trobriand males appear to spend most time at work in the gardens[6] and predominate in the first phase of the season, females being actively employed in the second phase. A considerable amount of work is accomplished jointly by husband and wife, especially at harvest.

The breakdown of figures is as follows:

Males work alone	3 months
Females work alone	1 month
Males and females work concurrently but at separate tasks	2½ months
Joint work (males and females)	3 months
Total work time in the fields per annum	9½ months

Austen with a four-day working week postulates a 17 week gardening period for the Trobrianders.[7] His figures however omit weeding and thinning as well as *taytu* harvesting, which account for approximately another 23 weeks. If these are added to his work schedule a total approximating to the above estimate of 9½ months is reached. It is worth noting that with this type of work-year the Trobriand Islanders have sufficient food and time available for rest and leisure activities.

Malinowski's description of horticultural ritual leads to an estimated total of 10½ days spent by men in the activities concerned,[8] compared with 2½ in which women actively participate.[9] Most of the magic is performed by the garden magician alone or with his acolytes.[10]

To a certain extent the division of labour in gardening is dependent on the "heaviness" of tasks – i.e. the amount of energy and strength required in a short period. Patterns of labour in Oceania are frequently explained on the basis of this criterion.[11] Trobriand men fell trees, clear the heavy growth and build the fences, whereas women are involved in the steady, more tedious but less physically exacting work of weeding.[12] Such an apportionment could be attributed to bodily strength.[13]

It would be incorrect, however, to approach the question of the division of labour in terms of a purely western pattern, i.e. the number of days or hours men as opposed to women spend in the gardens, or the amount of physical energy required for a task. A symbolic interpretation would seem more appropriate.

Allocation of different facets of garden work on the basis of sex are not accidental in the Trobriands, for the practical division of labour concurs with the cultural procreative metaphor of gardening already observed in the horticultural ceremonial. Cutting of the path into the plot as well as planting, performed by the men, have been associated in the symbolic analysis with preparing the way for conception[14] and the insertion of the foetus.[15] Weeding is women's work, performed communally, which in the interpretation of horticultural symbolism was linked with female purity, gestation and maternal care of the foetus.

There is a time when a wife assists her husband during the predominantly male period of scrub-cutting and preparing the garden, but her activity is confined to clearing ground-refuse, which may symbolically

represent the cleansing of her body. Similarly the man assists the wife by erecting *taytu* supports and thinning tubers in the female period of weeding. Erecting *taytu* supports is "heavy" work and thus suited to the man, but the fact that the woman does not handle the growing tubers, even during thinning, is consistent with her symbolic position if the *taytu* represents the foetus within her.

Harvesting of the tubers is significantly accompanied by joint labour, it being the concern of both man and woman. As was previously proposed, their mutual involvement is akin to the solicitous care of mother and father at childbirth.[16] The woman, for instance, does not dig the tuber out of the soil,[17] which symbolizes her womb, but is mainly involved in caring for and cleaning it, as with her child.[18]

Interrelation of symbolism and the Trobriand year

Malinowski indicates that the Trobriand system of time-reckoning reflects the essential interests and events that are meaningful to the people, cognizance being taken of meteorological, astronomical and cultural factors such as expeditions and feasts.[19] The gardening cycle shapes the Trobriand year and lends it the name *taytu.*[20] Botanical and environmental characteristics influence the Islanders' conception of time. Yams (Dioscorea) grow in regions where dry and wet seasons are clearly differentiated.[21] The Trobriander recognizes ten lunar months which are divided into two parts: the unripe and ripe moons.[22] Such a distinction acknowledges the two contrasting periods of *taytu* growth.

Cultural features are interwoven with natural phenomena: the bipartite division of the year coincides with periods of predominantly male, as opposed to female, work. As in the magic, so in the symbolism of work, males are for the most part assigned the initial unripe, dry five months, characterized by foetal dormancy.[23] Females are apportioned the later ripening wet time[24] of hyperactive vegetative growth.[25] Both male and female are involved in harvesting. As has been shown, the division of the year and gardening cycle thus appear to replicate the two phases of the pregnancy ceremonial separated by a break during the fifth month.[26]

The work schedule therefore harmonizes with the two phases of horticultural ceremonial and human pregnancy and indicates the contrasting, yet complementary, roles of the sexes. The first stage concedes some assistance from the male, the second concerns the attentive female, and the birth involves both sexes. It is therefore not primarily the actual

amount of time spent in gardening that is significant in establishing the position of woman in gardening, but metaphorically meaningful time, and the fact that both sexes are included.

Trobriand organization of labour reinforces the themes expressed in the horticultural ceremonial: the woman as worker is active in spheres related to the care of the garden, clearing refuse and weeding, for this represents her body. She is identified with the garden, nurturing the growing embryo, and so is active in the second phase of fieldwork. Finally, woman is revealed as a new mother in according the newly-harvested *taytu* the same solicitude as her newly-born child.

Notes

1 9–10 above; Malinowski 1966 I figure 14 (438)
2 Malinowski 1966 I 61 n.3, 138–139; Malinowski 1927a 210
3 Cf. Malinowski 1966 I figure 3 (50–51), 61 n.4
4 Estimates are drawn from the following sources: Malinowski 1966 I figure 3 (50–51), 61 n.1–4, 92–93, 136, 149, 421–422, figure 14 (436–442), 460, 462–463 n.1; Malinowski 1921 5; Malinowski 1927a 211; Austen 1945–46 36–40, 47
5 Time women spend preparing and cooking food is not considered relevant here. Cf. Hyndman 1973 83; Conklin 1957 151 (Yagaw Hanunóo, Philippines)
6 Cf. Pospisil 1963 163–164 (Kapauku Papuans, New Guinea)
7 Austen 1945–46 47
8 Malinowski 1966 I 63, 94–95, 99–102, 126–127, 152, 166, 168, 170–171, 285–288 figure 14 (436–443)
9 9–13 above
10 Malinowski 1966 I figure 14 (436–443)
11 E.g. Hogbin 1946 17; McCarthy 1943 76 (New Guinea); Wedgwood 1934 396 (Manam Island, Schouten Group); Hadfield 1920 68 (Loyalty Islands); Kroeber 1919 144 (Philippines)
12 9–10 above; Malinowski 1932 21–22; Malinowski 1966 I 102, 126
13 Cf. Firth 1959 209–211 (Maori, New Zealand)
14 18–19 above
15 38–40 above
16 50 above
17 11, 56 above
18 56–57 above
19 Malinowski 1927a 204, 210–212, 215
20 Malinowski 1927a 209–211, cf. 213–214; Malinowski 1966 I 52–53; cf. Codrington 1891 349 (Melanesians)
21 Coursey 1967 42; Coursey 1972 217

22 Malinowski 1927a 213–215; Austen 1939 239, cf. 244, 246; Leach 1950 249–250, cf. 247, 254–255; Malinowski 1966 I 52
23 47 above
24 47 above
25 Coursey 1972 217
26 52, cf. 47, 49 above

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