

Acknowledgments

Among Malinowski's most astute observations of Trobriand culture are what he termed the "native canons of classification" (1932: 143): the three-fold conceptualization of practically every entity or activity as a metaphorical expression of botanical progression, beginning with an *u'ula* "origin" or "base," followed by a *tapwala* "trunk" or "middle part," culminating in a *doginala* "tip." Whether it is prototypically the shape or growth of a tree or of a canoe that is at issue—or a *kula* voyage, a *kula* shell, a yamhouse, a human body, a sexual act, a sacrificial offering, a cooking hearth, a magical spell, a garden, a human relationship, a human life—Islanders imagine the world and its manifold parts as action scenarios formally analogous to one another. Unfortunately, Malinowski did not further develop this insight into his ethnography or functionalist theorizing. And unremarked by him, every such progression typically culminates with a fourth element: the generation of *keuwela* "fruit" that serve recursively as new "bases" for further sequences of reproduction and transformation. *Taitu* yams as fruit of a year's planting, tending, and harvesting become either fertile seeds for the next crop's planting or the subsistence base of human life. One's children conceived, nurtured, and married off in turn procreate offspring with complementary potentials of their own as either daughters or sons.

This book is no less the fruit of just such processes. Many colleagues and friends have given much of themselves from the moments of its germination to its realization in the form before you. It would be incomplete if their contributions were not noted and my gratitude duly acknowledged.

The most obvious source for the greater part of what this volume contains is the four gentlemen savants of Omarakana who have devoted major portions of their lives over the past decade toward cultivating in me the knowledge instilled in them from their ancestors. The Trobriand Paramount Chief, Tabalu Pulayasi Daniel, is the ultimate *tokarewaga* (“man of authority”) for this project. It has been only because of his support and patience that any of this has been possible. My other three collaborators, Pakalaki Tokulupai, Molubabeba Daniel, and Yogaru Vincent, have been similarly unwavering in their commitment to teaching me the rudiments of their way of life to the best of their knowledge.

I have my own intellectual ancestors whose wisdom has also been foundational in preparing me for the task. Bronislaw Malinowski, of course, stands at the foot of this anthropological pedigree. It was his writings which I first encountered as an undergraduate that stirred me into becoming a professional practitioner. And it is he, after all, who generated the puzzles which have kept my Trobriand curiosity alive. It is an honor to me, and I hope to him, that this volume appears as part of a publishing venture dedicated to him.

Over the course of my training and career, I was to find that other anthropologists who had inspired me were in various ways also intellectual heirs to Malinowski’s legacy. Chief among them still is Edmund Leach, one of Malinowski’s last students, who in my mind has done as much as anyone to elicit from his mentor’s writings the true gems, albeit sometimes in their unfinished forms. Yet it was a student of Leach’s at Cambridge who guided me to him: my doctoral supervisor Stephen Gudeman. Although a Meso-Americanist, Gudeman proved exceptionally conversant with the Trobriand corpus as it was at that time. This set the stage for my appreciation of others whose influences upon me cannot be underestimated. Chiefly these are the luminaries of the British and French varieties of anthropology, tracing back to Durkheim, Mauss, and the *Année Sociologique* school, to Lévi-Strauss, Douglas, Evans-Pritchard, Dumont, Gell, Sahlins, and Viveiros de Castro, among many others. Along the way, my encounters with the writings of Marilyn Strathern and Roy Wagner proved to be world-changing. Any reader of this volume will be able to detect their influence throughout. Below the surface, however, Leach and Gudeman have provided me personal as well as intellectual support and encouragement which have propelled me all the way through.

Although his work has sometimes (but by no means always) developed in different directions from my own, Fred Damon, through his friendship, scholarly example, theoretical acumen, and command of regional Massim ethnography,

has done much to keep my interest in Trobriand ethnography and related topics alive at those times when my research interests were focused elsewhere. My recently deceased mentor and friend Eugene Ogan offered unstinting love and support despite his fundamental skepticism regarding the kind of anthropology that I have found irresistible. I have been exceptionally fortunate also in having Michael Young as a friend and colleague for nearly thirty years. On many occasions he has generously shared with me his unparalleled command of Trobriand ethnography and Malinowski's writings, which has helped to correct any number of my mistakes.

The immediate cause of this book, however, is Giovanni da Col, Editor in Chief of HAU journal and this series. Our relationship traces back to our discovery of a mutual scholarly interest in Central Asian and Melanesian notions of "luck" (Humphrey and da Col 2012). To his credit (or blame), after later reading a short preliminary essay I had written on Trobriand magic, he virtually forced me into drafting the precursor article, "Malinowski's magical puzzles" (Mosko 2014b), for publication and then to expand it into the current volume. Like so many others and the profession itself, I am immensely indebted to his scholarly insights and perseverance.

Trobrianders have a fairly specific term, *kepwakari*, for the main body of activity (*tapwala*) of any endeavor upon which its completion depends. The *kepwakari* involved in producing this volume have been expended by many friends, colleagues, and associates laboring in numerous and diverse spheres. Fellow Massim ethnographers have generously shared their ideas with me, whether in agreement or disagreement, over specific issues: Debbora Battaglia, Harry Beran, Shirley Campbell, Andrew Connelly, Melissa Demian, Linus Digim'Rina, Jordan Haug, Edwin Hutchins, Sergio Jarillo, Ralph and Margaret Lawton, Kathy Lepani, Michelle MacCarthy, Susan Montague, and Gunter Senft. Others who have similarly provided valued stimulation and criticisms of different kinds include Serge Dunis, Robert Foster, Jim Fox, Margaret Jolly, Alan Jones, HE Charles Lepani, Xandra Miguel-Lorenzo, Ton Otto, Kathy Robinson, Alan Rumsey, Dominik Schieder, Michael Scott, Serge Tcherkézoff, and Borut Telban. I owe a very special debt to Allan Darrah and Jay Crain for allowing me access to their laboriously compiled database of Trobriand ethnography (Digital Ethnographic Project, DEP), which has proven to be an instrumental resource both in the field and back home. It should be noted that there are few commentators on the Trobriand corpus who have thought it through with as much devotion and ingenuity as Allan. I must express my gratitude as

well to the staff of the London School of Economics Archives and the Royal Anthropological Institute for their support during the months I was poring over Malinowski's and Seligman's fieldnotes, and to the Tuzin Archive for Melanesian Anthropology at the University of California, San Diego, for access to their holdings.

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As this effort has neared its *doginala* "tip," there are many who have taken extraordinary steps to bring it to completion. Marilyn Strathern, Roy Wagner, Adam Kuper, Michael Young, Chris Gregory, Maurice Godelier, Allan Darrah, Elizabeth Brouwer, and Sarah Franklin kindly read through previous drafts and offered valuable comments and criticisms. My academic supervisors in the School of Culture, History, and Language at the Australian National University,

Directors Brij Lal and Ken George, freed me up from most teaching and administrative duties so that I could devote myself fully to the book's research and completion. Karina Pelling expertly drafted the book's figures, and Diana Tung competently compiled the indexes. The four photographs taken originally by Malinowski are reproduced here by kind permission of LSE Library and the Malinowski Estate. The HAU Books production staff led by Giovanni da Col and Katharine Herman have made the final efforts considerably less overwhelming than they might have been otherwise. Justin Dyer's meticulous copy-editing has greatly enhanced the readability and coherence of the text. I am particularly grateful to Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, who generously agreed under considerable pressure to wade through the following unfamiliar pages and compose the book's Foreword.

The underlying theme and overt aim of this book—optimistically, the fruit it might someday become for anthropology—is that *baloma* are Trobrianders' constant companions in life, by which I mean it is difficult to discern whether the spirits' contributions to the living qualify as base, body, tip, fruit, or all of them. They are vital conferrers at every stage. I have benefited from the blessings of such a near-spiritual sort in the person of my wife, Cassandra. Molubabeba explained to me one day that through their shared efforts and intimacies, a husband and wife become like one person (*tomota mokwita*). And so it has been with Cassandra and me through the course of this book's generation and well before, not to deny or underestimate the importance of the differences which sometimes separately animate us. Without her unstinting love and counsel, this book would never have been realized. It is thus most fitting that it be dedicated to her.