

sions such that a given agent is formally separated from his kitoum. Conversions for mwals and veiguns are always indirect *vis-à-vis* siwayoubs, and agents remain in control of their articles. When kitoums enter the kula road for the production of names they do not circulate in the same way as mwals and veiguns. When X receives a return for a kitoum, that article is not a gulugwal, it is a kitoum, and again may be thrown as a vag.

The 'disjunction' between the circulation of kitoums and the circulation of mwals and veiguns situates the contradiction between a vag and a gulugwal. A gulugwal must be equivalent to a vag in terms of size because in the final analysis it constitutes somebody's kitoum. Kitoums are the underlying explanation for the conveyance rules of the kula. From another perspective vags and gulugwals are not equivalent, and it is tempting to say that gulugwals have less 'value' than vags. Hence Malinowski's description of the two transactions in terms of 'spontaneous' and 'obligatory'. Let us look at this more carefully.

Giving a kula valuable as a vag to somebody is tantamount to making a relationship, making two people *veiyou-* to one another. MUYUW most often describe the result of this transaction by the English word 'book'.<sup>13</sup> The use of this word is based on their experience of seeing transactions in European trade-stores. When you go into a store and get something without paying for it, the storekeeper writes the price of the article taken down in a book. Later, of course, one must pay for the article. MUYUW believe that it is not good to have a 'book' in the context of the trade-stores, that ultimately in the European sector one should be all paid off. However, when they use the term 'book' in the context of the Kula it is a good thing because it means that an ongoing relationship exists between the people so related. In this context a gulugwal has the appearance of having less 'value' than a vag because it ends the relationship. 'Value' of course is not really the issue. 'Value' relates to the quantitative dimensions of kula valuable. In this context a vag and a gulugwal must be equivalent. But from the qualitative point of view, the relationships created by the exchange of 'value', they are different. A vag makes a relationship, but a gulugwal ends a relationship.

The notions I have just tried to describe are borne out clearly in the way MUYUW classify different kinds of kula actions. Four terms describe two oppositions. In the first opposition 'trading' is opposed to *ked*, or *road*. When MUYUW use the European word 'trading' to describe kula action they have in mind trade-store activity where the purpose is buying one thing with another, some article for money, such that when completed the relationship is over. In short after a vag is given a gulugwal is returned immediately, and nothing else. Sometimes this activity is likened to

'whoring'; one gives a woman a dime, has intercourse with her, and then the relationship is over. In this context *ked* or *road* is said to be 'like a marriage' (*magina ivay*). In a 'road' the relationship should last until death, like a marriage, and more vags should be given than gulugwals.

The second opposition distinguishes 'little ways' from 'big ways' (cf. footnote 9). The point is that actors perceive themselves to be related to one another over longer periods of time, even though in a 'little way' a second vag is generally not given before a first is paid off.

We are now at the point to see why it is that the kula involves expanding tendencies. To be successful in the kula one must create relationships. To keep a relationship one must be able to counter the equivalence, conveyance, rules by which the kula articles circulate. The requirements of a road contradict those of the exchange of equivalents. The result of this contradiction is either that individual kula relationships collapse, or they expand.

There are numerous informal and formal ways by which people deal with this contradiction. The weakest involves merely declaring that one article is not equivalent to another. If it is an obvious fact that, for example, a given mwal is larger than a given veigun, then there is no problem. The articles continue to move as vags. Each then will have to find its equivalent, and in the meantime the relationship continues. If it is not obvious that the two articles are 'uneven' then the two parties to the transaction may just declare them to be so. But if this is an opening move in a relationship then the individuals involved will realize that they are 'fudging', that they are laying claims to a certain 'strength' which is not yet proved.

A more desirable response is to return two articles for one, one a gulugwal, and the other a vag. The rationale for this procedure was explained to me specifically in the context of kitoums, so let us describe it from that perspective. If one merely returns a gulugwal this article will travel back to the point of departure of the vag as a kitoum. When the owner of the kitoum receives it, he has gotten only what he owns, what he had to get. This therefore indicates that the people that handled his kitoum were not strong enough to build anything with it. Hence he will feel little commitment to pursue that road again. If, however, he gets a return on his kitoum, the gulugwal, and also another article, a new vag, then he will know that somewhere down that road somebody is 'working'. Hence he will try to build that specific relationship. Note that 'schismogenesis' does not explain the logic of this procedure. Some person began by throwing his kitoum as a vag. When he gets back a return on a kitoum and another vag, he has moved from throwing one vag to a state wherein he can now throw two (in the other direction). Since this is what a

person needs to build his 'name', this is a good tactic for developing a relationship. Exchange theory *per se* does not explain this maneuver, but 'ownership' does.

There are, however, some problems in this maneuver. Let us say that B has received an article from A, and B knows that A is strong. Therefore B wants to develop a significant relationship with A. The problem B faces is how to get two, or more, valuables from C or a number of Cs. If B can get several valuables from one C then there is no difficulty in this situation. But if B has to get several articles from several different Cs, then problems arise. For B may have to tell two or three people, different Cs, that he is building a relationship, a significant one, with each of them, when in fact he only desires to do so with one person. In this context then, one C is clearly being used for the benefit of another C. This situation is by no means rare: people often say that the only way to get ahead in the kula is to lie.

Let us continue the case: B now has several valuables from different Cs. He gives these to A and A realizes that B is 'strong'. A will then do his best to return to B not only the gulugwal(s), but new vags. It is at this point that B will likely run into trouble with some C. For one C will only get a gulugwal while another will get a gulugwal and a vag(s). The first will then undoubtedly call B a liar, and avoid kula relationships with him again. This C may claim, for example, that only because of his article did B get a new vag, and hence he should get that vag, not the other C. In any case, situations like this are legion, and they lead to near endless frustration and ambiguity in the kula.

Let us summarize this case: The expansive tendency of the kula leads to arrangements like this:

---C  
1. A---B  
---c

This arrangement is ambiguous and alienating, and should be replaced by:

2. A---B---C

which, if the relationship does mature, will probably lead to the repetition of 1, only further down the line:

---D  
2. (1) A---B---C  
---d

In my experience this procedure is occasioned by middle-sized kula

valuables passing between people, or some people, who are usually young but ambitious. In theory at least this kind of kula action may lead into 'big ways'. But when larger kula valuables come into play in still incompletely formed roads a different tactic is used to force more vags into circulation. Rather than the more or less informal maneuver just noted, one of these is highly formalized, and named – *vakanis naman*.<sup>14</sup> It goes something like this. Some person, A, gives a number of kula valuables – whether mwals or veiguns is immaterial – to B. No specific C is in mind. Of these valuables at least one is very large, a member of the highest of the three classes of kula articles (mwalikaw and bagilikw) the others much smaller, maybe not even named. The smaller articles are to be used as 'pawns' for the largest. In this setting B will expect a number of Cs to come in pursuit of his big article. Moreover they are likely to approach him with very big articles of their own. When I have seen this procedure enacted, or when people have discussed instances of it, the valuables that C brings to B are large, but not large enough for B's armshell. For example, B's valuable may be on the upper end of the highest kula classes while C's may be on the lower end of the same class. In any case C will throw his article hoping to get B's article. Instead B throws him, quickly, a small article.

C's intention in this maneuver is to get B's large article. B's however, is to keep his article, attract as many others as possible, and not alienate any potential C. Hence he throws the small article to keep C thinking he still has a relationship, and hence a chance at getting the large article. B however does have to worry about the possibility of C taking back his large article once he realizes that he is being put off. Should this happen, then B will take back his own small article. There is a point to emphasize here. In situations like this, no C ever likes what is being done to him. He is coming to B with the best thing he has to offer and is told it is not good enough, and that for all practical purposes B is waiting for somebody else. In short this tactic is only really advantageous for A and B. If they play the relationship correctly they begin with one big vag and several small ones, but get in return several fairly large articles to throw as vags in the other direction. Moving in the direction of B to A to n . . . this procedure helps consolidate a road – the number of vags moving on the line increases. Moving in the other direction, however, the emphasis is different. It is on the quantitative aspects of the articles involved rather than the qualitative relationship created by the exchange of the articles. C comes away from such encounters having lost his big article and having gotten a little one in return.

Sometimes B may get a big article from A but no small ones. If possible B may then try to get other small articles from some other A. This in fact

happened in relation to the fifth largest *mwal* that came into *MUYUW* in 1971-2, and it will be useful to review what happened:

The *mwal* is named *Dayay*, and was given to a man in eastern *MUYUW* whom I will call *O*. *O* wanted the article to go to a man in a central *MUYUW* village, whom I call *K*. For reasons which I will not explain here, *K* could not come to get the article, but another of *O*'s partners, *D*, did get two *veiguns* of considerable size with which he thought he could get *Dayay*. *O* heard that *D* was coming for *Dayay* with two *veiguns* about a week before he arrived. He then went to two other men, *W<sub>1</sub>* and *W<sub>2</sub>* (two brothers), who had small *Kula* relations with *O*. He asked for and got two *mwal*s from these men after explaining to them why he wanted the valuables. There was in fact something of a *kula* relationship which connected *W<sub>1</sub>*, *W<sub>2</sub>*, *O*, and *D*, but the two *Ws* knew that *O* was using them to protect *Dayay* and not trying to build up their road. When *D* arrived *O* did not even let him finish his talk ('invocation') before he hauled out the two *mwal*s and defined them as returns for the *veiguns*, coming on their 'old road'. *D* was 'put off' by this maneuver, but he did return to his village with two *mwal*s at a time when few were to be found anywhere. *O* saved *Dayay* for *K*, and *W<sub>1</sub>* and *W<sub>2</sub>* had two *veiguns*, and, more importantly, an opportunity to use *O* in the same way he had used them.

This case is slightly different from the normal one where the idiom *vakanis naman* is used. The person who gave *O* *Dayay* was not well enough organized to set him up with smaller articles to protect *Dayay*. But *O* was well enough organized to get assistance from elsewhere. *Dayay* was saved for (potentially) bigger things, and *O* kept his relationship with *D* intact if a bit strained. Hence the case is like that outlined above since 'A' and 'B' succeeded in cutting the intentions of some 'C' while accumulating *vags* as opposed to paying them off with *gulugwal*s.

The practices just reviewed accumulate *vags* for one, two, or perhaps more persons to the detriment of some other person, or the outstanding relationships between any *B* and *C*. There is however another procedure which is not designed to divide people over the quantitative dimensions of specific articles, but rather unite them qualitatively by the accumulation of *vags* along a whole line of people. This procedure is in many respects rather simple conceptually, but it is difficult to manage in actual practice. Where the preceding practice may involve only a few minutes, months or years of interaction, this next one tends to get extended over very long time periods. Five years is probably a minimum – roughly one revolution of a wave of articles – but I know of one which has lasted for thirty years and may last many more. This transaction is difficult then because it involves a whole set of people agreeing on the same thing over an extended time period, a period which may extend beyond the lives of some of the people in the set-up.

As a set of activities this procedure is not named. What is named are

the individual transactions of which it is composed. The tactic involves one *vag* being exchanged for two *vags* and a *gulugwal*. For example, *A* gives an article to *B*. I will call this *V<sub>1</sub>*. *B* and *C* then agree that the first article given back to *B* is the initial *vag*'s *tavnayiel*, the indigenous term, which I will call *V<sub>2</sub>*. *C* then comes up with another article called *busebuw* (after *sebuw*, which denotes affinal prestations), *V<sub>3</sub>*. The final article from *C* to *B* is called the *anakatupw*, which means 'its cut-off', and this is the *gulugwal* for *V<sub>1</sub>*. What has happened here is that *A* and *B* begin by throwing one *vag* and get to throw two back in the other direction. When *C* throws the *gulugwal* for *V<sub>1</sub>*, *A* and *B* are still related to him *vis-à-vis* *V<sub>2</sub>* and *V<sub>3</sub>*. Of course each of these articles must be returned, but it is doubtful that the *gulugwal* for *V<sub>3</sub>* will have been returned before this whole series has been set up again *vis-à-vis* some other article. And it must be understood that this is precisely what people want: permanent debt within which new debts, *vags*, are continually being made.

I have outlined the *tavnayiel*-*busebuw*-*anakatupw* series in terms of three persons *A*, *B*, and *C*. This was for convenience only. With the larger articles, the only ones that ever really get bound up in this system, as much as half of the *kula* rings – geographically speaking – may have to come to terms about how this set will be organized before the first *vag* is thrown. This is why the larger *kula* valuables tend to move so slowly. It is not uncommon to hear of specific large valuables that have remained in the same place for five, ten, or fifteen years (articles which are often the holder's *kitoums*), the reasons for which should be clearly understood. For if one mishandles a big *kula* valuable one may only get back a *gulugwal*, but if the article is correctly handled one may get back three big ones for it. When it is realized that most really successful people in the *kula* do not get to handle really large valuables until they are maybe forty-five or fifty years of age, and that one of these series may take fifteen years to work through, how one of these schemes fits into the experience of one's life may be readily appreciated. Some people told me that in the past men were murdered over arrangements like these; other people told me they still are (by magic).

In the context of this formal series, *V<sub>1</sub>*-*V<sub>2</sub>*-*V<sub>3</sub>*-*gulugwal*, other informal exchanges occur, most of which are implicitly tied to the movement of this series. Thus to keep *V<sub>2</sub>*, *V<sub>3</sub>* and the *gulugwal* moving back to *B* and then *A*, these two agents may have to keep giving other valuables to *C*, and the rest of the people down the line. These articles are not part of the formal series, but they do condition to some extent its existence. In any case the net effect is again that more *vags* are being piled up on one another: the road expands. This is not 'simple circulation'.

*The effect*

'Opening' and 'return' gifts have to be equivalent in terms of rank or value, but the former makes a relationship while the latter ends it. And ending a relationship is decidedly not what MUYUW want. To counter the rules of the kula from one perspective MUYUW operate it from another, or try to. They try to increase the number of vags, as opposed to gulugwals, flowing on a given road. But to counter the contradiction between vags and gulugwals means that the entire set of supporting relationships tying a particular 'community' to the kula must also expand, become more intense. There is a direct relationship between the size of one's name, the goal of the kula, the numbers and sizes of the kula valuables an individual handles, and the amount of work generated within a particular community. The kula leads to exceptional performances.

Exceptional in several ways: first, I mean merely the amount of work certain individuals do. In the sailing villages along MUYUW's southern side (Waviay, Nasikwabw, Boagis, and Yemga), the more successful or ambitious people sail more than others (and raise or acquire more pigs than others). In the gardening villages on the mainland successful men and women have larger gardens than the others. A unit of the MUYUW garden may be used to outline the order of differences in this respect. These units are about eighty feet (plus or minus twenty feet) in length and about 160 feet in width. Given good conditions (climatic among others), important or ambitious people will plant about four of these units whereas the average is about one. Important people of course are also more careful about what they do with their resources than others, and this is seen most clearly with those people who participate in 'European' work. Those people who get money for some of their work and who are more successful in the kula are careful to turn a substantial portion of their money into the kula, either directly, or indirectly through European goods. Not surprisingly those people who only do some kind of piece work, making copra, carving ebony, etc., rather than wage labor in the lumber-mill, seem to be more successful at this than others. The first person the Neates got into ebony carving, for example, has achieved considerable success for himself in the kula, but he has also been careful to avoid becoming dependent upon carving. As the Neates have said, this man 'has put every last penny he ever earned into the kula'. Meskolos, the elder in the two-house community of Kuduweta in western MUYUW is another interesting example. Meskolos is generally regarded as the best gardener east of Kitava, and he clearly produces more food than any other individual on the island. He also, with the assistance of his son, produces a fair bit of copra. Unlike some others, however, he has avoided

getting trapped in petty commodity-production. He only produces copra when the prices are high and when the nuts are falling fast. Even in these conditions he is careful to alternate his copra production with gardening. Consequently Meskolos treats his partners sumptuously. But if he does not get what he wants in the kula, his partners feel it. In early 1974 Takumboub, one of Meskolos' main partners in Boagis, refused to give him a large mwal, 'Mantasop', so Meskolos cut off his food supply. Takumboub and his wife fled Boagis for Suloug, his wife's father's residence, where they ate coconuts and sago.

First, then, the contradiction between vags and gulugwals results in individuals, specific 'persons', working far harder than most others. But second, and probably more important, this contradiction results in significantly different 'forms of cooperation'.<sup>15</sup> I outline this facet of the kula in terms of a dichotomy between developing extra kula relationships as opposed to developing extra support for lower-level roads.

People who have big kula relationships tend to develop numerous other roads, some potentially significant in terms of the numbers and sizes of kula valuables flowing on them, others not significant from this point of view at all. In fact MUYUW say that there are only three big roads in the whole kula, although they know that there are several others which approach these three in size and numerous ones even smaller.<sup>16</sup> Some of these 'little roads' are not really for the purpose of the kula, rather for accumulating other things. But most of these little roads descend from important persons. More importantly, the more relationships a person has, however small, the more people he or she may have to draw on if a number of kula valuables are all of a sudden needed on some big road. The actual example I gave with regard to the practice called vakanis naman illustrates this point. O needed a couple of mwals to protect another, and he got these by means of an older and less significant relationship. Many situations like this seem to arise for important people in the kula, and they are in good condition if they do not need to get out of them by making some transaction basically zero-sum. In short, important people tend to work numerous small kula roads most of which in the long run will lead nowhere by themselves, but they afford important sources of kula valuables in crisis or quasi-crisis situations. To form these relationships agents must have command of resources for lower-level roads.

Let us now note lower-level support relationships, and first of all those having to do with affinity. First, most people who do well in the kula do not really become successful until they are forty or fifty years of age. Often this is because most of the articles they will have received before this time will have been taken over by some proximate generation affine. If, for example, X gets an article by virtue of some lower-level conver-

sion, but X's wife's father wants it, there is little that X can do to prevent this person from taking it. In contexts like this the normal asymmetry between a giver and receiver of a kula valuable is dominated by the asymmetry deriving from affinity. X, in this case, will still be owed a gulugwal, but he will have lost the opportunity to make his own road. (Because of this penetration of the kula by MUYUW 'kinship' some men refrain from getting married until certain aspects of their kula are more or less well developed.) In short, affinal relationships often constitute kula resources for elders, and not a few people do not get seriously into the kula until these affines are dead.

Affinity of course can often be turned into an advantage. Meskolos' son is married to the daughter of the biggest man in Moniveyova village. Kampeyn, a big man in Boagis, recently married a woman from Budibud, his reason being that now he has an instant tie into the Budibud pig 'bank' which he can draw on for his kula. Sometime between the late 1930s and the mid-1940s Lobess, one of the biggest men in MUYUW, dropped one woman to marry the daughter of his main partner. While I was in MUYUW Lobess' chief competitor, Molotaw, from Yemga, tried, but failed, to marry his son to a woman of a specific village to cement a kula relationship there for decades to come.

For the contemporary MUYUW scene, however, more important than constructing affinal relationships to serve the direct needs of the Kula is the construction of 'groups' (*bod*). These 'groups' are rather loose associations of 'persons' (*gamags*). With whom people actually work and live is determined by these associations, but, as I say, they are rather loose. A given person may be a member of more than one group, and he or she may shift from one group to another over time.

These 'groups' are made by some individual feeding or otherwise supporting some other and usually junior person. Relationships of affinity or consanguinity are, by and large, irrelevant to these formations. What is relevant is that some person has publicly supported another, and because of this the latter works for the former. Not surprisingly successful people in the kula tend to have larger such groups than other people. And although it involves a lot of work to get one of these groups going, and to maintain it, once these formations are in operation they afford individuals a great deal of support.

MUYUW 'kinship' and MUYUW 'groups' are different *forms* of association. In the context of the kula there is a tendency to develop the latter to a considerable degree, and sometimes in such a manner that the former is significantly altered. For example, MUYUW do not practice cross-cousin marriage: they say: 'We marry without reason.' However there is one village, Wabunun, which has instituted something akin to a cross-cousin

marriage rule. Between 1920 and 1930 the elders of this village decided that the best way to preserve the community's position in the kula was to effectively make cross-cousins marry. It is important, however, to note precisely what this meant and means to the members of Wabunun. For although the village takes a good bit of criticism from other MUYUW for marrying like Trobrianders, what they in fact have done is not set up a cross-cousin marriage rule but rather forced 'persons' of the same place to marry one another. By marrying their 'persons' together, by keeping the 'group' to a significant extent endogamous, persons who have the same standards of work are kept in the group and do not leave it by marriages to outsiders.

And Wabunun's standards of work are far higher than those of other places. Earlier I noted that big men across the island produce larger gardens than other people. Generally speaking, four units of the size specified represent what a big man will be working under optimum conditions. Lesser folks will produce significantly less food. But in Wabunun four units are about what average persons do, and the big men may have two or three times that number.

The kula is the reason for Wabunun's working standards, and its apparent shift in MUYUW kinship norms. By about 1920 the village had become the strongest in eastern MUYUW in the kula, and by the means of one big road. Since then its ethic has formed about this particular road, and under the guidance of a set of brothers who, based on comparative MUYUW 'political' action, performed brilliantly. What is distinctive about their performance is the way they concentrated all their efforts on just this one road, while they encouraged other Wabunun people to create their own roads. In other words they created a group of people aimed at building and sustaining primarily one large relationship, but rather than also controlling smaller roads themselves they encouraged their supporters to develop and expand their own kula. This is why, as I noted when I introduced the kula, about five rather than one, two or three names are 'seen' in Wabunun.

There is a direct logical relationship between the focus of this paper, the contradiction between a vag and a gulugwal, and Wabunun's particular position in the kula. Because of the stated contradiction a kula relationship must expand. For these relationships to expand more labor must be mobilized. Comparatively speaking, Wabunun has been more successful in mobilizing labor than other villages and, consequently, it does better in the kula than most other areas. But Wabunun's particular solution to the requirements of the kula is only one of a number of possible solutions, and whatever they are they must work themselves out through time. In this regard while what I have called a 'group' is now

more important that other ways of organizing lots of labor, this is true only because of Wabunun's recent and specific achievement. Between roughly 1900 and 1960 Dikwayas, under Vawous and his eldest son, Mikdulan, probably controlled more of the kula going in and out of MUYUW than Wabunun ever did and will. But this was obtained at considerable expense. Vawous did not spread his success throughout the Dikwayas population. Rather he seems to have corralled as much as he could under his own direct control not giving anything to anyone else until his eldest son came of age. One way he accomplished this was by allowing the colonial administration to believe he was a 'paramount chief' on the supposed Trobriand model (there is no formal notion of hierarchy in MUYUW like that in the Trobriands), and he died insisting that he owned all of the land upon which Dikwayas is built, all of the land its members garden on, and all of the sago and betel swamps its members traditionally exploit. His two youngest sons still believe this. But other Dikwayas people do not. And this contradiction periodically leads to bitter disputes. Twenty-five or more years ago, for example, Dikwayas was a big village. Now, while upwards of 150 people claim that they are Dikwayas people, some of these people live in Moniveyova, in western MUYUW; others live in shacks on the outskirts of the Neate's work-area at Kulumadau; still others live at Dikwayas' landing a mile below the village; and finally several more just live in their gardens. What was a big village twenty-five years ago now looks like a ghost town. But it is not just the timbers of Dikwayas houses that are rotting. I was told that if somebody in Dikwayas catches fish or wild pig these things are usually eaten in the bush or at night in the village. And if in the village, the rubbish from the meal is thrown behind someone else's house so that those people are assumed to have eaten without sharing (and therefore subject to sorcery).

We end this section then with the kula firmly couched in the pragmatics of MUYUW social life, specifically Wabunun and Dikwayas. These two communities represent to some extent polar positions on a continuum of possibilities for organizing or re-organizing MUYUW existence to meet the expanding dynamics of the kula. Both however must be understood in historical terms, the logic of that history ultimately defined by the requirements of the kula. But on one end of that continuum Vawous' success in alienating most of Dikwayas has resulted in a literal scattering of people and the rotting timbers of forgotten houses. In Wabunun the tactic was different. Similar kinds of resources were mobilized but this was accomplished in such a way that although much of Wabunun's labor went and goes into one big road, numerous other people also have the possibility of drawing on that labor pool. In Wabunun the notion of

'community' has been transformed from that of 'scene' to that of 'agent', the twisting of MUYUW kinship norms an aspect of that transformation. Although one man, Aisi, formally controls the three major kitoums in the village, the people consider those kitoums to be the 'community' kitoums, and not Aisi's, or even his subclan's.

### Conclusion

My major concern has been to describe the logic, and the implications of the logic, behind the distinction *vag/gulugwal*, 'opening gift' and 'return gift'. Rather than reviewing the main lines of the argument I conclude instead by raising some broader comparative issues.

MUYUW believe that the kula, and in particular those aspects of the kula discussed in this paper, transcends the particularities of the individuated island cultures that exist in the kula ring. In so far as the kula is concerned everybody who participates in it is, so to speak, a member of the same group. However right or wrong they are about this, it is certainly correct that 'exchange' in the kula does not exist only at the boundaries of the 'tribal group'. It would be therefore incorrect to say of kula valuables, as Godelier says of Baruya salt (1977: 151), that they circulate as 'commodities' outside of MUYUW but as 'gifts' inside. Moreover, to the extent that one uses Marx's *Capital* for purposes of ethnographic comparison, what is analogous to Marx's 'commodity' is not a kitoum, mwals, or veiguns, or even pigs, boats, clay pots or food, but rather one's name. Using Marx's categories the kula is much more like a system designed to produce 'exchange value' than 'use value'. Its goal is not the reproduction of the individual's place in the group, but his transformation. And as is evident in Wabunun's case, much more eventually is at stake than an individual's name.

Given this point one may wish to ask about the utility of the notion of 'capital' for describing what happens in the kula. This term, of course, involves one in considerable, if standard, problems of comparison and translation, problems which begin with the varying uses of the term in our own society. Douglas (1967), for example, understands by 'capital' primarily a 'thing', and writes that the major difference between modern societies and those in which there is some kind of 'primitive commerce' is that in the latter 'the productive energies are not directed in any very notable sense to the long-term accumulation of real capital goods' (1967: 126). Godelier, paraphrasing Marx, offers a more sociological, even anthropological, definition: 'In its essence, capital is not a thing but a relation between men realized by means of the exchange of things. It is a social fact . . . Capital presupposes the existence of certain social rela-

tions, and it is within this social structure that material things become capital' (1972:286).

Taking Godelier's comments as a point of departure consider briefly kitoums. First, kitoums are made by some person or persons, they do not come swimming out of the water by themselves. Second, if not originally produced by the owner a kitoum is acquired by a direct transfer of labor, embodied in a pig or canoe. Third, keeping a kitoum presupposes that the owner relates to other agents such that, relatively speaking, he is not in debt to them. Fourth, although on one level the circulation of kitoums does not lead to the possession of more kitoums, on another level having a kitoum to circulate often does lead to the giving and receiving of more mwals and veiguns, those things one uses directly to produce names. Finally note how kitoums are 'inherited'. If owners of kitoums are asked from whom they received these articles they first respond by listing some father, mother's brother, etc. However, on further inquiry one discovers that such relationships as these are not the crucial component of the transference. What is crucial is that the recipient was a 'person' (gamag) of the giver. He had worked with the owner, and the article was given as the ultimate return for that work.<sup>17</sup> Two points should be noted here. First, before the elder dies the youth is essentially the elder's productive resource. Second, by that relationship the youth eventually receives a thing, a kitoum, which is thought to represent the labor he had earlier given the elder. By virtue of the youth's capacity to generate value for the elder he has acquired his own value in the kitoum. In short, people are capital.

#### Notes

- 1 Research on Woodlark Island was conducted between early July 1973 and early August 1975, supported in part by a National Science Foundation Grant (GS-39631), and a National Institute of Mental Health Fellowship (F 01 MH57337-01). The core of this chapter is a revision of Chapter 5 of my Ph.D. dissertation (Damon, 1978). Many things are owed Professor Martin G. Silverman for initiating me into the theoretical framework which pervades this work; to Mr Chris Gregory who, since July, 1978, has been a valuable critic; and to many MUYUW people who carefully explained to me why they were not just 'exchanging'. If my debt to Sahlins' penetrating rereading of *The Gift* (1972: Chapter 4) is not obvious in the text I proclaim them here.
- 2 My understanding of MUYUW's history is largely dependent upon the works of Affleck (1971); Laracy (1970); and Nelson (1976). Nelson visited Woodlark in 1974 and I learned much from him at the time. Affleck is currently doing graduate work in History concerning Woodlark's early missionary experience, and much about the island in the nineteenth century will be learned from his work.

#### *What moves the kula: opening and closing gifts on Woodlark Island*

- 3 Vag, as 'opening gift', is probably related to the verb, vag, which means 'make' or 'produce', but I did not investigate this correspondence in the field. These words may both have a possessive prefix. Possession in MUYUW is important, and resembles that in Dobu (Fortune, 1963:65-8). I reserve for another publication extended treatment of MUYUW possession classes and concepts.
- 4 Mauss (1954:93, footnote 25) implicitly criticizes Malinowski's use of the word 'spontaneous', and he is right to do so. 'Opening gifts' are forced by other prestations (cf. Mauss (1950:178, footnote 1)).
- 5 In this volume Munn and Campbell discuss how kula valuables are ranked on Gaw and Vakuta respectively. Although Vakutans seem to introduce more formal distinctions than do MUYUW, in most respects the principles for ranking seem to be quite similar. The major difference is my assertion that, in MUYUW, rank does not result from the process of circulation. I may note that two veiguns that MUYUW consistently ranked in the top twelve in the whole kula had not, as of August, 1973, completed one circuit around the kula ring. The issue involved here is important and remains unresolved.  
That large-diameter mwals are higher than small-diameter mwals, and that, conversely, small diameter veiguns, with evenly colored pieces, are higher than large-diameter veiguns, is to be explained, I think, by the simple fact that more labor goes into producing each of the higher kind than the smaller kind. The opposition between the two is apparent, not real.
- 6 The concepts 'mwal' and 'veigun' are in one possession class while the concept 'kitoum' is in another. See footnote 3.
- 7 To explore the utility of Marx's labor-time theory of 'value' in the kula I believe that one should begin with this association between time and the thing that is being produced. Not dealing with indigenous notions of time and what is produced seems to me to be the major problem in Godelier's otherwise admirable article on Baruya salt money (1977).
- 8 Most of these conveyances are of course doubly or triply motivated. For example, one exchanges pigs to exchange kula valuables, but most of those pigs are used in MUYUW mortuary ceremonies.
- 9 These are called *palaysio*, based on the word *pal* (see Trobriand *pari*). The purpose of these relationships is generally the acquisition of something other than the kula from some other place. Thus these relationships are ways of conveying 'down'. The smaller kula valuables that tend to travel on these relationships also tend to be passed through numerous people in any given village - so as to collect more work. Large kula valuables moving on 'big roads' (*ked avakein*) tend to pass from one village to another, or one kula community to another (e.g. MUYUW/Wamwan) with few people directly participating in the exchange.
- 10 See the Trobriand, *pokala*. In MUYUW the concept pok is used only in the context of the kula.
- 11 In describing the functional differences between kitoums, and mwals and veiguns, I have also described, in part, how kitoums are obtained. Also, however, kitoums are obtained by finding *Conus* shells and turning them into mwals. Kula valuables generally, in MUYUW, get named as they are held by their first owner and maker. The names refer to this person, although exactly

how this is so is usually forgotten or not known for most valuables. During my two years in MUYUW eight *Conus* shells were found in Wabunun, six large enough to be turned into mwals. All were middle-sized valuables, and named. I doubt that many more mwals were found in MUYUW during this period, but I know of two others. Five new veiguns were introduced into the kula ring from MUYUW, all having come there directly from Rossel Island. Two were considered to be of the highest class (bagilikw), and one ('Damun'), was though to be exceptionally high.

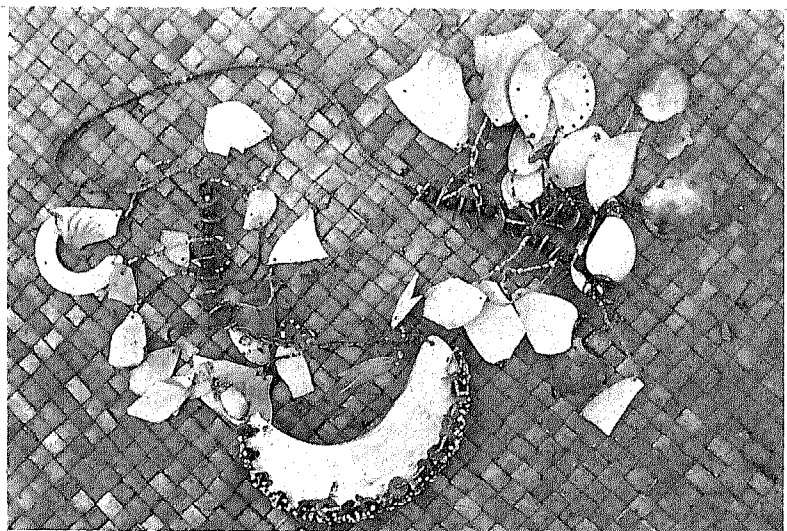
- 12 The question of 'rank', 'size', or 'value' should not be confused with how well a valuable is known. It of course takes some time before a new article is well known. But an article does not become valuable because it is well known, it becomes well known because it is 'big'.
- 13 The indigenous term for 'book' is *kwalavag*, which, however, I never heard in use, and learned only by asking early in my fieldwork. Consequently I neglected to investigate the relationship between this probable agglutination, *kwa-la-vag* and the various meanings of the word 'vag'.
- 14 On vakanis naman: *Va-* and *ka-* are causitive constructions, the first meaning 'to make a hole in' something, the second meaning more generally 'to cause'; *-nis* is a verb meaning 'to shred or tear'. *Nama-n* means 'his hand', and in the example given refers to 'C'.
- 15 This term is from Terray (1972), but note that I do not equate a 'form of cooperation' with a 'mode of production'.
- 16 The three 'big roads' according to MUYUW run, in part, from (1) Gaboyin (Dawson Island)-Yemba-Yalab-Iw . . .; (2) from the south to Boagis-Kuduweta-Gaw . . .; (3) from the south to Waviay-Wabunun-Dikwayas-Gaw. From events described in this paper it should be clear that at least two of these, (2) and (3) are unstable. The same is true of (1); until approximately 1925 this road went from Yemga to Guasopa in eastern MUYUW rather than into Yalaba, and during my research period there was a concerted effort to get it back along this earlier route. In any case most of the high names noted earlier in this article (p. 318) were produced on one of these three roads.
- 17 In a not so curious way the concept 'kitoum' enjoins the contradictions between MUYUW and the colonial system. When Neate's employees quit his lumber-mill they often feel cheated because they did not receive something tantamount to a kitoum. Here they are not discounting their wages, only indicating that their wages are only designed, in their view, to sustain them, not pay them for what they have given the Neates.

PART IV

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Southern kula area





Necklace



Armshell

# The Kula

## New Perspectives on Massim Exchange

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edited by

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and

EDMUND LEACH

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