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# Critique, Vision and Cosmology: Millenarian Ideas in Melanesia

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ABSTRACT

*An essential connection between critique and the millenarian has been proposed with particular reference to the study of Melanesian cargo cults. It is argued here that all critique is not necessarily millenarian. Rather, what is crucial for critique to have a millenarian form is for local cosmological ideas and practices to become transformed into the source of a new kind of future; a future that appears delimited by outside power relations (colonial, mission, capitalist) that now define what is possible. Often this involves altering local cosmological ideas of the outside (e.g. the dead) as the new source of future fecundity. The article considers two cases, among Fuyuge and Manus Islands peoples, where forms of critique and the millenarian have radically different outcomes.*

Keywords: cargo cults, millenarianism, critical practice, efficacy.

## INTRODUCTION: CRITIQUE AND THE MILLENARIAN

The mission station at Ononge in the Fuyuge-speaking area of Central Province, Papua New Guinea was, in the 1980s a sight to behold—that is, at least, to European eyes. There was the beautifully constructed church with a tall steeple at one end, a large house where the mission fathers dined and resided at the far end, and the other structures all built around a central grassed area. To my European eyes it looked like a scene from a village in France; the missionaries are a French Catholic order. All of the structures were built from timber that was sawn at a water powered sawmill some distance from the mission station. The operation of the sawmill and transport of the timber was organized by the missionaries with the assistance of the local Fuyuge people.[1]

However, when I first came to Ononge in 1983 the sawmill was no longer in operation, although it had been operating for many decades previously, beginning in the early twentieth century. It had stopped working a short time before I arrived. Fuyuge people living near the mission station said that the place where the sawmill was located could no longer be used to cut timber and the missionaries, in turn, removed their equipment (the sawmill remained closed permanently from thereon in). The closure was the outcome of actions from some Fuyuge people, directed at the mission. While the mission station was built entirely of sawn timber, its use by Fuyuge people was restricted by the missionaries. This was only one aspect of a more general assessment to do with the goods and services available to the missionaries in contrast to what Fuyuge people had available to them. There was a very

visible material inequality between the missionaries and Fuyuge people that the continued operation of the sawmill only exacerbated.

I subsequently learned that a young Swiss volunteer associated with the mission had befriended some young Fuyuge men living close to the mission station. He encouraged these men to vent their views to the mission. The result of this was that the volunteer was removed from his position. It was these actions of the missionaries, together with the restrictions placed on the use of sawn timber, that led to the closure of the sawmill (*cf.* Winkley 1992).

At the time, I was not sure how to describe or characterize these actions. Were the actions displayed that of discontent, or was it resistance, or perhaps disaffection, or did it fall under other possible terms?[2] This is of course an anthropological way of describing or characterizing this action. My Fuyuge associates did not use such terms. They were not happy with mission practice and used the means at their disposal to close down the sawmill as the sawmill was on their land. All the missionaries could do in response was remove the sawmill equipment which belonged to the mission.

Over the time I lived with Fuyuge people, I found that their perceptions of the missionaries were varied. While the major holidays of Easter and Christmas were recognized and numerous Fuyuge people attended the church services at Ononge at these times, many Fuyuge people understood that the missionaries were withholding truths from them: that they were not given the true meaning of the Bible. The version made available to Fuyuge people only revealed a part of the Bible, the other part being kept hidden. One way of understanding these perceptions was that the effect of keeping the true meaning of the Bible hidden was to maintain Fuyuge people in their subordinate position, a widespread idea in Papua New Guinea (for a recent discussion of this issue, see Schwartz and Smith 2021:200).

Beginning in the early twentieth century, the missionaries built up an imposing central mission station and constructed small churches and priests' quarters in all Fuyuge territorial and dialect groupings. This was all done with the labour and assistance of Fuyuge people. These projects went hand in hand with engineered trails the missionaries constructed to facilitate their movements throughout Fuyuge valleys and in the early years of missionisation, trails were constructed to the coast so supplies could be transported into the mountains. Again, all of this was only possible with the work supplied by Fuyuge people.

The Fuyuge people whose actions led to the closure of the sawmill were a younger generation who had experience of Port Moresby and came of age in the period leading to national independence in 1975. Many could read and write and some had been to high school and college. Most of their parents were illiterate and had limited experience of the world beyond Fuyuge lands. This is because during colonial times, movements of Fuyuge people were generally limited to their own lands. The younger generation could perceive possibilities of social life that were not necessarily apparent to an older generation.[3]

The perceptions that led to the closure of the sawmill concerned the inability of Fuyuge people to create material structures similar to those housing the missionaries. The fact that this was prevented by the missionaries led to the Fuyuge people exercising their power over the place of the sawmill, preventing access to the site. This was a challenge to the inequality that the missionaries were seen to endorse.

The view that the missionaries were withholding the true meaning of the Bible was of a different order. I was told that persons and events found in the Old Testament had actually occurred on Fuyuge lands. Figures such as Cain and Abel, or even Adam and Eve (but with different names), had existed in Fuyuge places. These perceptions were connected with a Fuyuge cosmological idea known as *tidibe* (*cf.* Dundon 2015; Macdonald 2014).[4]

The Fuyuge world as it is presently known originates from *tidibe*, a creator force, a range of mythical beings, and the source of all Fuyuge myths, that are also referred to as *tidibe*. *Tidibe* journeyed from east to west, across and beyond the Fuyuge world in the past, and in the process formed their landscape by establishing all the powers upon which Fuyuge social conventions are based. *Tidibe* journeyed beyond the Fuyuge world, where it is also understood to have originated the practices and wealth of white people (see Williamson 1912:264–265). The teachings and doctrines of mission Christianity potentially challenged the power of *tidibe*, but many Fuyuge understand that mission versions of biblical narratives originated from Fuyuge lands and are versions of *tidibe*.[5]

The view that the missionaries were withholding knowledge and truth are perceptions not restricted to Fuyuge people and have been documented in other Melanesian societies. This perception is found in what are referred to as 'cargo cults' (one of which I consider below) but it is not exclusive to cargo cults, and cargo cults, in particular, build on these understandings. Cargo cults are associated with millenarian ideas but are simultaneously formed by practices, mechanism of control, hierarchies, and so on. Although it is illegal to engage in cargo cult activity as codified in Papua New Guinea law (Leavitt 2000:322), the Western student movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s were fascinated by these activities, viewing them as a critique of capitalist society and its irrationality (Kohl 2004:89; *cf*. Worsley 1968 [1957]). The theme of critique is prevalent in studies of cargo cults, both critiques of the very notion itself (see McDowell 1988) as well as cargo cults analysed as critique of the status quo or of modernity.[6] However, Nils Bubandt (2004:105, 109; see also Dalton 2004:199) cautions against the analytical tendency to view such cults as critique. He asks whose critique 'are we really voicing?'—the local actors or the construction of the analyst (Bubandt 2004:110; *cf*. Scott 1985:338–339).

The question raised by Bubant is one that is considered in an interesting argument made by Joel Robbins (2004; see also Timmer 2004:119, 121) in the concluding chapter of a volume (Jebens 2004) that critically assesses aspects of what Robbins refers to as the 'cargo cult archive'. Robbins highlights the intrinsic connection between millenarianism and critique.

Robbins (2004:246) draws this comparison by way of the notion of apocalypse, which is etymologically 'rooted' in ideas of 'revealing, uncovering, unveiling'. He suggests that these verbs pertain as suitably to the 'activity of critique as they do to the search for the cargo secret' (*ibid*.). In each case, there is the possibility of a new world coming into view, a world of fulfilment and truth. With these ideas in mind, he argues that all critique is inherently millenarian just as 'all millenarianism is also critical' (*ibid*.:247).

Such an assessment of millenarianism and critique can also be seen as related to work on 'utopia', elaborated by thinkers such as Karl Mannheim (1936) and Paul Ricoeur (1976). Mannheim (1936:174) provides the following illustration of the intrinsic connection between millenarian and utopian thought:

> As long as the clerically and feudally organized medieval order was able to locate its paradise outside of society, in some other-worldly sphere which transcended history and dulled its revolutionary edge, the idea of paradise was still an integral part of medieval society. Not until certain social groups embodied these wish-images into their actual conduct, and tried to realize them, did these ideologies become utopian.

In the Melanesian context, for instance, Andrew Lattas (2006) interprets the Pomio Kivung millenarian movement in East New Britain Province along such lines and interprets the movement as 'the utopian promise of government'.

Millenarianism has force and potential influence because it takes a critical perspective on the everyday conventions and practices that are in operation in a given society. On the horizon is a potentially better future that requires the abandonment of mundane routines and prohibitions (*cf.* Guyer 2007): 'Every one of these moves away from daily life represents a critique of that life and its failures' (Robbins 2004:248). The extensive, past study of cargo cults, Robbins suggests, provides ample evidence that supports this argument.

This paper is a contribution to the project of a comparative study of critique as proposed by Robbins. If one considers the dispute about the sawmill discussed above it would not be difficult to describe the actions of the Fuyuge people involved as 'critical' of the mission. However, it would be difficult to characterize their 'critique' of mission practice as millenarian or apocalyptic as these terms are conventionally understood. The closure of the sawmill was the outcome of frustration with mission practice—with how the mission was governing conduct—in this area.[7] Nonetheless, the ideas articulated in the critique of the missionaries are ones that do underpin cargo cults in other contexts.

What is crucial for critique to have a millenarian form is for local ideas and practices to become transformed into the source of a new kind of future; a future that appears delimited by outside power relations (colonial, mission, capitalist) that now define what is possible. Often this involves altering local ideas of the outside (e.g. the dead) as the new source of future fecundity.

In this regard consider the Tommy Kabu Movement from the Purari Delta which was active after World War Two. When young Tommy (then known as Koivi-Aua) ran away from the mission school, he wandered in the mixed world of European-native contact. He joined the native constabulary[8] and was stationed at Samarai after which the Japanese invaded New Guinea. In 1942, with two Australian army officers, he made his way by boat to the North Queensland coast (where he picked up the name Tommy)[9] and subsequently to Cairns and the Naval Staff Office. Here he was employed as an officer orderly and over the next few years saw something of urban Australia including Brisbane and Sydney. These were not just physical travels but journeys into imagined alternative possibilities for white and black relations. In 1945, he was repatriated to Papua (Maher 1961:55).

Tommy was a man 'who had divided his life between two cultures' (*ibid.*:56). As leader of his movement, whose supporters referred to themselves as 'New Men':

> Tommy set himself apart in a number of ways. His unusual war experience [World War Two], greater understanding of white culture, and great drive and capacity for leadership were the things which essentially brought the focus to him, but he encouraged and reinforced these with other elements. He consistently emphasised his connections with the Europeans or new way of life and played down his experience with the old. He claimed to have lost all knowledge of his native I'ai language and spoke only police Motu, requiring others to do the same (*ibid.*:60).

The New Men, like Tommy, had experienced a world outside their local world, especially due to their war time experience. He created a new way of bringing the outside world of Europeans into his local world as Europeans now delineated what was possible in the future. Many mainland villagers worked on coastal plantations or towns where ideas associated with cargo cults were prevalent. And men like Tommy adopted critiques articulated by mission and colonial personnel concerning the nature of local traditions (see Lawrence 1964; Morauta 1974). The Tommy Kabu movement illustrates the notion of critique proposed by Robbins. But not all activity that is critical is millenarian.

In what follows I will consider two cases that illustrate the different ways critique and millenarian ideas and practices are formulated. The first is from the Fuyuge area and here I draw on the previous research of Garry Trompf (1977). A visionary documented by Trompf had visions that were of a millenarian character. His critique worked through adopting and transforming elements of the critique expressed by the mission. The visionary sought to be as powerful and efficacious as the missionaries in a parallel and analogous manner. However, this first case never amounted to a widespread millenarian movement and largely dissipated after the visionary was jailed by colonial officials. The second case is from the Manus area. Here, the critique and its millenarian ideas and practices has endured into the present, as its visionary was able to embed the movement within state politics, unlike the Fuyuge case. For this second case I draw on the previous research of Theodor Schwartz (1962)[10], Ton Otto (1992a, 1992b, 1998a, 1998b, 2004, 2020), Margaret Mead (1964) and Schwartz and Michael French Smith (2021).

## ONA ASI

On the 23rd of June 1942 patrol officer C.W. Round made the following brief entry in his patrol report: 'Arrived at Kailape[,] I was fortunate to apprehend ON[A] ASI the madness originator' (NAPNG A7034, Goilalla Patrol Report 1942:3; *cf.* Trompf 1977:52, n. 123). Round's 1942 patrol focused on what at the time was called the Fane and Ononge Districts (with Kailape being in the latter). The purpose of the patrol was for 'general inspection', to copy census books of Fane and Ononge missions and to apprehend Ona Asi, madness originator. The patrol set out from the patrol post at Maini in the neighbouring Tauade speaking area.

The Fuyuge speaking area in which Ona Asi lived is a territorial and dialect grouping. I conducted my research in Visi. Visi is located on the opposite side of the Udabe River from Kailape and is a similar territorial and dialect grouping.

During his life Ona Asi was possessed by a number of spirits (*sila*) but he is best known for the spirit named Bilalaf. How he came to be possessed by this spirit is recounted in a myth (*tidibe*) and this narrative is widely known among the Fuyuge. Older people in Visi I spoke with recalled Ona Asi and the myth associated with Bilalaf. Ona Asi's influence in Kailape and neighbouring Fuyuge areas was most pronounced from 1930 to 1954[11] according to Trompf (1977). I will focus on the period leading up to his arrest in order to explore how his actions brought him into conflict with the Catholic mission and government authorities. Trompf refers to Ona Asi as a 'prophet' and examines several of the prophecies he is said to have made. He was seen as a 'madness originator' by colonial agents and, as documented by Lindstrom (1993, see below), the label of 'madness' in the Papua New Guinea context was a semantic precursor of what came to be known as cargo cult.

It is of note that Ona Asi was labelled a madness originator by patrol officer Round. The idea of 'madness' is one that had its origins in what came to be called the 'Vailala Madness', the subject of F.E. Williams (1923) study.[12] It was not until 1945 as Lindstrom (1993: xx) documents that the notion of 'cargo cult' came into being. In the early 1940s the madness term was commonly used. This can be seen by a report in the November 1941 issue of the Pacific Islands Monthly (PIM) entitled 'Mekeo Madness: Queer Religious Hysteria in Papua' (PIM 1941b:50). Mekeo speakers who reside near the coast are southern neighbours of the Fuyuge. Another report on the Mekeo several months earlier details similar actions that could fall under the madness label, but madness was not used on that occasion, although 'hysteria' and related terms were used (PIM 1941a:18). What this suggests is that

the madness description was applied to actions the administration and missionaries alike found unacceptable (*cf*. Bergendorff 1998).

Ona Asi fit into this category. To understand how this came to pass I draw on Trompf's research that was conducted with Ona Asi's family members, with residents in Kailape and neighbouring areas who knew Ona Asi directly or knew of him, and with some of the missionaries associated with the mission station at Ononge.

As noted above, Trompf speaks of Ona Asi as a prophet. In his chapter, he briefly discusses three 'prophecies' Ona Asi was meant to have uttered. One concerns his exclamation that '*Tidibe* are coming… with clay skin' (Trompf 1977:17, see below). This was uttered not long after he was married in *ca*. 1909 and at which time he revealed that he was occasionally possessed by three spirits. When Ona was a boy, the first Europeans to enter the area were two miners. This would have been some 12 years before Ona made his above exclamation. Trompf (*ibid*.:19) suggests that the appearance of these white people and the things they had posed a set of questions for the local inhabitants that Ona Asi's pronouncement was meant to address.[13] Ona Asi's summoning of *tidibe*—that is, *tidibe* are coming…—is informed by the understanding of the *tidibe* idea discussed earlier. Ona Asi appears to suggest that *tidibe* returned in the form of white men.[14]

**Bilalaf**

A year later in 1910 Ona Asi and several fellow villagers visited a mining camp inhabited by white miners in an area of Zia-speaking peoples in the Lower Waria Valley in what is now Morobe Province. A few miles from this mining operation Ona Asi and his companions travelled to a 'taboo place' in an area called Dubiti at the boundary between Zia-speaking and Fuyuge-speaking lands. 'Ona Asi gathered that a tusk lay there, a tusk which reputedly belonged to a giant snake, and which was now to be found in a string-bag hanging from an *odole* tree' (Trompf 1977:24). Zia-speaking people in this area were prevented from looking at, let alone handling the tusk.

From the oral testimony collected by Trompf, the next day Ona Asi went back to this spot and took the string-bag and tusk from the *odole* tree. After he returned to his village he became possessed by a new spirit (*sila*) called Bilalaf.

There is a myth or what the Fuyuge refer to as a *tidibe* associated with the powers acquired by Ona Asi. The myth concerns a snake that was stealing sugar cane from the gardens of villagers in the place named Dubiti. This was five generations ago according to the younger son of Ona Asi who narrated this myth to Trompf (*ibid*.:25).

According to the myth, the villagers captured the snake, placed it in a net and were going to cook and eat it. Before they did so, the adults set off to gather firewood and left the children in the village. While the adults were away the snake transformed into a man. The man wore a pig tusk in his nose and other dancing adornments and performed a dance in the village centre. When he stopped dancing, he asked the children the whereabouts of their parents. The children replied they were preparing to cook an *imbad* (a marsupial or rodent). The man then asked the children, 'From which places do you come?' The last two children to speak said they were from Iema. He said they were the lucky ones. He told the last two, 'start crying when your parents return and persuade them to take you to Balu Mountain before the cooking begins' (*ibid*.:25).

The myth recorded by Trompf ends as follows:

> The Iema children did persuade their parents to climb Balu Mountain and when the snake was cut into pieces to be placed in the oven, the pieces re-joined with a loud sizzling noise and there was a huge thunderous landslide which carried the village and surrounding land away into [two] rivers, destroying all the people with

> it. The snake itself ended up in the waters, but its tusk… from the nose of the dancing man was thrown into a string-bag and stayed there, hanging from the *odole* tree (*ibid*.:26).[15]

When Ona Asi returned to Kailape he began to be possessed by the Bilalaf spirit where he would 'writhe like a snake, and after his whole body passed through a series of contortions both rhythmic and menacing, he would make pronouncements, some intelligible and others not' (*ibid*.:27). According to one of the traditions associated with Ona Asi, when he was about to take the tusk from the string bag he was told:

> Go to your place. Go to plant yams, and there will be too many. Go feed the pigs for the feast, and there will be too many. Go to grow pandanus, and there will be too many. And give food to the visitors, there will be more than enough (*ibid*.:28).

Other stories associated with Ona Asi tell how through Bilalaf he was able to indicate when hunting would be desirable and where the game would be found. His powers from Bilalaf enabled him to plant and prepare for feasts in an effective way. Again, Ona Asi used special words to increase pandanus fruits and used special techniques to multiply pigs for a feast (*ibid*.:36).

A few years after Ona Asi's return from Dubiti, in 1913, a mission station was established at Ononge. The early missionaries were initially referred to as *tidibe* by the Fuyuge, but this practice soon stopped. Over the next two decades the mission spread its influence throughout the Udabe Valley and adjacent Sauwo Valley where Kailape was located. This influence, indicated earlier (see endnote 1), went hand in hand with government interventions and the establishment of police camps, one of which was located nearby Kailape for a period of several years in the 1920s and 1930s.

Father Dubuy was the missionary who established the mission at Ononge and in 1930 he returned from a six month leave in France with 16 tons of cargo (see Trompf 1991:150–153). This included road building equipment, a clock for the church tower at Ononge, portable sawmills, and so on. All of this was part of expanding and enhancing the infrastructure of the mission to the most distant parts of the Udabe Valley, such as Kailape where Ona Asi resided (*cf. ibid*.:171–172). At this same time, mission influence in the Kailape area was increasing with more pastoral visits than in the past. Whether this was the cause is uncertain but Ona Asi built two spirit houses, one near his own house and one at a less accessible location.[16] The two houses sheltered two spirits, one being Bilalaf. The spirit houses were used to contact the ancestral spirits and the recently dead through seances; seances that were practiced in other Fuyuge areas (see Fastré n.d.). Building the spirit houses were a form of action that would be opposed by the mission and as Trompf (1977:45) observes an initial clash with the mission was inevitable and this occurred in 1933. A local tradition has it that Ona Asi called down thunder on the priest who questioned the existence of the spirit houses, causing a storm to drench him after he left.

Although Ona Asi did not formally participate in mission activity he did not 'shut himself off from the thoughts they passed on' (*ibid*.:46). In his spirit houses at night, under possession of Bilalaf, he issued his own 'commandments', some of which were influenced by mission doctrine. Ona Asi was interested in the Christian God and identified him with *tidibe*. 'Bilalaf, he concluded, was also "god" in the secondary sense that Jesus and the Holy Spirit appeared to be' (*ibid*.:47). The snake in the above myth, for example, may be seen as comparable to the resurrected Christ. There is an appropriation of biblical commandments

in order to assert alternative conventions for the future. This is how Ona Asi expressed his critique of the status quo that the mission was now establishing.

While Ona Asi constructed spirit houses that were used to contact spirits of the dead and which were influenced to some degree by mission Christian ideas, he was mostly known for his powers concerning fertility. He attracted followers and was known as a *yalo u bab*, a father of food and wealth.[17] Sometime later the idea began to spread in Kailape and their immediate neighbours that Ona Asi as Bilalaf was making the ancestors bring goods to the living (*ibid*.:49). The dead are meant to exist outside the sphere of everyday life—their spirits reside on the tops of surrounding mountains. Ona Asi was transforming this outside into a source of wealth to match the actions of the missionaries.

All this occurred in the context of the missionaries expanding their influence to Kailape through the planned construction of a small church made out of sawn timber and the expansion of their trail network on which horses could travel. The cargo of the missionaries elicited a response in the form of Ona Asi's access to analogous cargo from the ancestors.

In April 1942, the missionary now overseeing Kailape was prevented from going there by men from a neighbouring group. There were two reasons told to the missionary, both stemming from Ona Asi/Bilalaf: 'the Kailape people believed that if they so much as looked on a white man, there would be both a great landslide and flood… [and] second, it was Bilalaf who was now running Kailape, and he was making the ancestors bring… [goods]' (*ibid*.:49). Subsequently Ona Asi was arrested as a 'madness originator'.

When I mentioned Ona Asi to people I lived with in Visi, as I indicated above, older people were aware of his existence in Kailape and of the Bilalaf spirit. A man named Kol Usi was my most knowledgeable Visi interlocutor. I asked him about Ona Asi. His response to me was to provide a more detailed myth that accounted for how Ona Asi acquired the tusk in a string bag hanging from the tree. The myth he narrated commenced in a western Fuyuge river valley and then moved into the eastern Fuyuge river valley recounted in the version of the myth Trompf's recorded. Kol was adamant that Ona Asi was not a *tidibe*. Kol said Ona Asi got the tusk from the tree and wanted to use it to feed pigs. He went on to say that he brought it to Kailape and hung it on a *gabi* tree. Kol told me he was a small boy when he heard this myth and subsequent events. This would have been at a time when Ona Asi was alive and active in Kailape.

A spirit such as Bilalaf, as with all forms of spirits in the Fuyuge world, derive from *tidibe*. In the terminology used by Marshall Sahlins (2017) we can speak of *tidibe* and the diverse forms of spirits as 'metapersons'. Living humans such as the Fuyuge exist as subsidiary parts of all-encompassing cosmic polities that are ordered and ruled by *tidibe* and the other metaperson entities deriving from *tidibe*, which possess life-and-death powers over human inhabitants. Ona Asi's actions and ideas occurred within this cosmology.

When I was conducting fieldwork in Visi one of the men in the village I lived communicated with and was possessed on occasion by a named spirit. He was well known for this. Other men in other Fuyuge places also had spirits in this way. I mention this in passing to highlight the fact that Ona Asi was not unique among the Fuyuge in having a close relation with one or more named spirits. What perhaps made him well-known in more distant places is his encounter with the government personnel and the missionaries and his ensuing arrest at that historical conjuncture.

Ona Asi's visions had little influence beyond his Kailape area. One reasons for this, I want to suggest, is that Ona Asi was operating generally in conventional Fuyuge cosmology. The myth, or *tidibe* in the Fuyuge vernacular, that Trompf was told to account for Ona Asi's possession of the tusk and him being known by the spirit Bilalaf was a myth that was more widely known, as Kol revealed to me. Ona Asi did incorporate Christian teachings in some of his pronouncements. The following is an example of such a pronouncement

recorded by Trompf from local oral testimony (the last of the three being part of Fuyuge conventions):

> Do not steal. Do not kill another's pig. Do not damage other's property. Do not commit adultery. If you have intercourse, you are not to go into the garden, or to the pandanus, or to feed pigs (the following day) because you will ruin their growth. Do not have intercourse before dancing at a feast (Trompf 1977:46).

This is an aspect of Ona Asi's attempt to create a set of practices that compare with those of the mission.

Many of Ona Asi's visions and their effects were ones the Fuyuge recognized as part of the repertoire of Fuyuge conventions and conduct. However, the idea of the ancestors bringing goods was a novel, millenarian conception elicited by the plentiful goods of the missionaries and Ona Asi's transformations of the outside (the dead) as a new frame of reference. It is possible his vision was connected with the notion that Fuyuge people (blacks) and white people had a common origin but that white people tricked Fuyuge people and took the goods they once shared (*cf*. Lattas 1998:19). Fuyuge people also wondered whether their dead ended up in the places of white people and, hence, if the dead could return with these goods (see Hirsch 2021:165–166).

Whereas the missionaries, in particular, were trying to order and rationalize the Fuyuge world (Wagner 1975:87–88), Ona Asi can be seen to have tried to conjure up an analogous world and appear powerful in relation to the mission. His introduction of commandments based on mission doctrine was part of a critique of present courses of action. But Ona Asi was unable to secure his ideas and practices—his distinctive form of critique—into a stable form which contrasts with the second case I consider, that of Paliau Maloat.

## PALIAU MALOAT

Paliau Maloat explicitly saw himself as a prophet (this idea never passed Ona Asi's lips as far as we can see). Like Tommy Kabu briefly described above, Paliau Maloat's movement came into being following World War Two not long after Ona Asi was arrested as a 'madness originator'. Paliau Maloat drew on new ideas that became available to him through his diverse encounters with white men. It is these ideas that enabled him to perceive possible new forms of action for people in the Admiralty Islands often just known as Manus Islands after its largest island.[18] He founded a movement in Manus which was initially known as the Paliau Movement. The ideas that influenced Paliau derived from the processes of missionisation, colonialism and especially the effects that World War Two campaigns had on Manus Islanders.

Manus Islanders had a cosmology populated by free-ranging spirts of the dead that were feared as they caused harm and illness. There were as well spirits of the bush that caused illness and people needed support from their ancestral ghosts against these beings. When someone became ill it was vital to determine the cause of the illness (Otto 1998a:85). In some cases, diviners were used. Or it sometimes occurred that the ancestors would speak directly to the living through a person that had gone into a trance or state of possession (*ibid*.). Treatment could be established once the cause of the illness was determined.

Support from ancestral ghosts was not only sought for a person's health but also in the performance of feasts or when one travelled into a neighbouring territory on a potentially dangerous voyage. Otto (*ibid*.:87) notes how these beings were implicated in earthly concerns and people had to deal with them according to local conventions. What people were

concerned with in their everyday dealings was that of efficacy: 'Every form of knowledge and every action is ultimately measured against whether it effectively contributes to the valued aims of life: health, longevity, power and wealth' (*ibid*.:87). The efficacy, however, had to work within the constraints of the local cosmology. Thus, the way Manus Islanders eventually adopted mission Christianity was informed by their pre-Christian religion (*ibid*.) as well as the inequalities and colonial power that now influenced their world.

The indigenous concern with efficacy was crucial in how the mission and Christianity came to be adopted by Manus Islanders. The first missionaries had little success in conversion. They were met with suspicion and were not perceived as efficacious. It was only when the missionaries began to deal with serious diseases and showed the boys who had been left with them how to pray to God for their recovery that the people could understand these actions in term of their own established cosmology. Manus Islanders 'understood that the missionaries wanted them to replace their own ancestral ghosts with others who were claimed to be more powerful, and they were willing to give it a try when the mission began showing signs of success' (*ibid*.:88).[19]

However, over time Manus Islanders became disappointed with the mission. They felt that the mission was concealing valuable knowledge (as in the case of contemporary Fuyuge people) and they hoped this would be obtained from Paliau Maloat. Manus Islanders had their own forms of effective knowledge and practice, such as magic (see Fortune 1965 [1935]; Schwartz and Smith 2021). Paliau offered an assessment and an effective set of practices with which Manus people could act successfully in their world. His vision of the future was based on an explicit critique of the present.

## The Long Story of God

After the end of World War Two Paliau presented what he called the 'Long Story of God'. This was the basis of his critique of the present social order and his vision of a future different from that now experienced. In order to understand the form and content of his narrative it is important to understand his experience of both the war and that of the mission/colonial context and how this shaped his outlook. As Otto (1998b) documents, the war greatly affected Manus people. Not only were the Australians as 'colonial masters' driven out by the Japanese, but the Americans subsequently defeated the latter. The Americans constructed a large naval base in Manus from which they launched further attacks. All of these events and the way they were then narrated by Manus Islanders suggested new possibilities for action, especially given the dissatisfaction that had been present with their situation before the war. This was especially the case with young men who had been employed as contract workers outside the village in plantations and other sites in the colonial economy.

Paliau had been a contract labourer as well as a native policeman working in different regions, and through this experience and some of the innovations he established,[20] he sought to reorder Manus society. What he experienced during the war was also significant. He witnessed black American soldiers and a different kind of 'race relations' (*cf*. Lawrence 1964). Men like Paliau were paid better wages and treated more as equals by the American army than by the Australians or Japanese. However, Paliau also had a complex war experience outside Manus as detailed by Otto (1998b:74). While he was detained in Rabaul town he wrote a letter to the village leaders on the island where he usually resided (Baluan). He requested that a meeting house be built for him. In this context, a house is both a physical building but simultaneously 'a group of people descending patrilineally from a common ancestor' (*ibid*.:74); it would be described as the house of Paliau.

The Long Story of God is both his message and critique, and it takes the form of an elaborated myth of origin. It is the foundation of a New Way. The opening lines remind one of Genesis: 'A very long time ago God existed in the mists. We know of no mother or

father for Him. Heaven and earth did not yet exist' (*ibid*.:75, quotation from Tjamilo cited in Schwartz 1962:252). Otto (1998b:75) notes that it is God's thoughts not God's words by which all is created.[21]

There follow further creations by God such as earth, stones, trees, various kinds of animals, again all by the power of thought. Adam and Eve are then created and instructed to live in a house but to keep separate and not engage in intercourse (the traditional houses Paliau knew had separate areas for men and women). Thought is all they need to do in order to have what they want. This is what Paliau refers to as the First order of God—a form of paradise.

This situation of paradise comes to an end through the envy of angels and the transgression of God's command by Adam and Eve. People subsequently quarrel and scatter throughout the earth, ruling over their own territories. Otto's (*ibid*.:75) reading of Paliau's narrative suggests that '[t]he world has become completely wrong. This situation is understood as the condition of the natives before the coming of white men which was characterised by constant warfare and great hardship. There is no knowledge of God any longer'.

Biblical themes are reflected in the story but the 'central plot is in correspondence with the structure of older Manus myths' (*ibid*.:75). In the Manus myths a primordial time of abundance and lack of death was ended due to moral failures. Illness and death then became the fate of humans. Paliau's narrative introduces an element of change not present in the older myths. In the Long Story, God intervenes and sends Jesus so that the people can be taught his knowledge.[22] According to the Long Story, Jesus says that people should leave the ways of their ancestors, such as fighting and quarrelling, as well as the sins of Adam and Eve. What is key here in Paliau's critique is the negative value attributed to tradition: 'All the ways of your ancestors from the past now, at this time, you must be rid of them' (*ibid*.:76, quoting Tjamilo's version in Schwartz 1962:255; *cf*. Sahlins 1992). Paliau is describing a world in which new possibilities of action are foretold.

According to Paliau's story, Jesus spreads God's knowledge to many places but by his life's end parts of the world are not 'all right'. He intends to 'pay' for these places with his death. His apostles are instructed to take his word across the world. Following his death and resurrection the apostles attempt to carry out Jesus' instructions but are prevented from doing this by 'the Judah'. The Judah here means the government. What then occurs in Paliau's narrative is that the meaning of the Bible is altered and the true meanings of Jesus' words are concealed. 'The missionaries take the altered bible to the natives and provide them with knowledge they cannot possibly understand' (Otto 1998b:76).

Paliau's narrative accounts for the inequality between the black natives and white colonizers. Jesus' knowledge was received by Western peoples and so they have improved since the original sin of Adam and Eve. The governments of Western countries prevented this knowledge from being brought to other countries. 'Government and missionaries collaborate to keep the natives in ignorance' (*ibid*.:76). The Bible's true meaning is concealed from the natives and they are given an altered book. Because of this they have been unable to improve and become equal to white people. As documented in comparative studies such as Worsley (1968 [1957]) and Lindstrom (1993) these ideas are part of widespread, everyday perceptions that are systematized through organizational structures such as in the case of Paliau or that of Yali (see Lawrence 1964; Morauta 1974).

Although God sends the Germans to New Guinea to introduce law and government, the natives are not taught.[23] Rather, they are used to work on plantations. God's unhappiness with the Germans means he replaces them with the Australians. Again, they do not teach the natives but work them hard. The Japanese remove the Australians but they are no better. Finally, God tries America (*cf*. Lattas 1998).

Paliau narrates that Jesus found him, the only man whose mind was straight, and America came after Jesus. It was America, he argues, that wanted to show Manus people the road that would make them 'all right', but they were blocked by Australia. 'Now the Americans did not speak to us. They returned to their own country. Everything they left, the Australians took. America did not forget the talk of Jesus, but the Australians kept them from us' (Otto 1998b:77, quoting Tjamilo's version in Schwartz 1962:257).

The final part of the Long Story highlights how God's final attempt to bring his knowledge to Manus people via Jesus is through Paliau Maloat, 'the only person who is able to lead his fellow natives on the proper way of true knowledge' (Otto 1998b:78). By revealing God's knowledge in this way, the white people will no longer have a monopoly of that knowledge. Paliau is describing in his Long Story an explicit connection between God, Jesus, and him as the basis of true knowledge.[24] The natives, according to Paliau, have the choice to act under the narrative he provides and thus be able to become equal to and as powerful as white people.

As pointed out above, Paliau's experience of the colonial, mission and wartime situation and the discourses and actions associated with each were crucial in shaping his visions as articulated in the Long Story of God. He did not like the colonial work situation but understood the power of western money. As reported in Schwartz (1962:242) he travelled widely throughout Manus and observed the practice where things of value are dispersed widely to everyone. He thought this ancestral form of action did not benefit people. Tradition was a problem (see Otto 1992a:444). He found the same problem in other areas of Papua and New Guinea and was critical, more generally, of ancestral conventions.[25]

His narrative of the Long Story of God and his critique of Manus Islander reality resonated widely, providing the basis for the Movement he created. As both Otto and Schwartz observed, Paliau described himself through two complementary narrative forms. One was the Long Story of God discussed above that took elements from his life history and colonial experience and transformed this into a mythical narrative, combining themes from the Bible and Manus myths—a pointed critique of the present social order. 'The end result is a combined cosmology, history, and biography which endowed Paliau with unsurpassed authority because his knowledge was both divine and crucial for the contemporary predicament of the Manus people' (Otto 1998b:79).

The second narrative form was a biographical narrative that focused on his early village life, his time as a contract labourer and later as a native policeman. His varied experiences in diverse places led him to see that the ways of the ancestors were a problem—the conventions passed from one generation to the next led to actions that were a hindrance and needed to be criticized and surpassed.

There are two narratives, two forms of critique and two temporalities that are intertwined in Paliau's person and the movement he led. The first is divinely inspired while the second was connected with advocating for native self-government. One narrative would be explicitly addressed to his followers while the second would be directed to colonial-state officials.[26]

Paliau was preoccupied by dates and an awareness of dates figures centrally in the Paliau Movement (see Mead 1964:201; Otto 1992b:52–53, 61; Schwartz 1962:218). Otto (1998b:80) notes how dates are even integrated into prayers: 'The use of dates may be understood as symbolising modernity and the beginning of a new era'. The dates act as mythological markers, signifying transformations of the world.

## The noise and its aftermath

Paliau was a skilled orator and had the organizational capability to transform his rhetoric into a movement. As Schwartz and Smith (2021:35) indicate, 'underpinning his talents was

the fact that he shared with his listeners cultural orientations that enabled him to convey a compelling vision in an idiom they understood'. However, Paliau's ideas for creating a new social order with a new cosmological connection to God awakened an expectation of a quick and total transformation:

> While Paliau was still gathering followers and creating an organisation, rumours spread from [his home island] that he was revealing a new truth—a truth that whites had hidden from natives. Word spread that Jesus had revealed this knowledge to Paliau and now the people of New Guinea could rise above the condition of humanity after the Fall and expulsion from the First Order. When the native was made all right, the last work of Jesus would be finished. This was the beginning of [what the natives called] the Noise [*nois* in Tok Pisin] (*ibid*.:175).

The Noise only lasted a matter of months, but it was a period of 'intense activity and high emotion' (*ibid*.:176).

As Schwartz and Smith (*ibid*.) document in detail, during the Noise many people thought their next meal would consist of American food. They discarded things that were necessary for their everyday existence. Food and firewood were cast off and children were not given food. Many people in different villages experienced ecstatic shaking, known as *guria*. The Noise spread to 33 villages in the Manus Islands.

In village after village the Noise ended when it was recognized that the arrival of cargo and the First Order of God had been postponed or at worst was not going to occur.[27] Once the Noise ceased Paliau appreciated that its wide reach gave him the opportunity to 'broaden the influence of the Movement' (*ibid*.:224). Together with his most loyal followers he was able to institute a more fully developed and centralized New Way organization (*ibid*.:225). A high value was placed on literacy in the New Way.[28] Illiterate villagers were thus at a handicap in how the New Way developed. Paliau's lieutenants taught or preached from written copies of the Long Story of God. In fact, Paliau had each movement village send one man to his home village for training in delivery of his narrative.

Schwartz and Smith (*ibid*.:361–425) document the transformation of the Movement over the decades, its various changes of name and the political fortunes of Paliau (*cf*. Otto 2020). In 1984, Paliau claimed that he was the last prophet of the world and that his message about possible redemption from earthly suffering applied to all people, 'black, brown, or white' (Otto 1992b:63). The movement again changed its name in 1989 to fit this more universal mission, being called Win Neisen (the nation of wind, breath, or spirit). 'Their wish is to return to the original paradisical state in which death, illness, old age, and hard work are absent. Their concept of freedom … is a freedom from these conditions of the material world' (Ton Otto, personal communication 13/12/23). Paliau died in 1991 but just before his death he was knighted.

Paliau's critique sought to create a New Way, a new historical cosmology that would re-order Manus Islanders' economic and political relations and actions (Otto 2004:223). His ideas and concepts derived in part from the discourses and conventions of missionaries, colonial officials, and capitalist entrepreneurs that he encountered. Paliau's visions were innovative while the form of his ideas was largely familiar in terms of the local cosmology.

In many respects, this was also true in the case of Ona Asi, but the latter resulted in a radically different outcome. It is to the nature of this contrast that I turn to in the following, concluding section.

## CONCLUSION: VISIONS AND COSMOLOGIES

Both Fuyuge people and Manus people seek to act in efficacious ways and do so with reference to their local cosmology—that which provides the structure and content to their ideas, conventions and forms of conduct. Both Ona Asi and Paliau were drawing on ideas and visions that were widespread, often with clandestine understandings. While both men were operating within their local cosmologies, they did so to different effect. Paliau used his experiences outside and inside of Manus in the mixed world of European-native contact to add new content and new claims to the effectiveness of Manus cosmology and forms of action. Aside from anything else, Manus at the time Paliau began his movement was far more intensely connected to other places than the Fuyuge area.

Paliau's critique of white people and of Manus traditions is initially elaborated in a widely circulated text, while Ona Asi's critique is articulated in a more diverse set of visions and actions. Both men set themselves up as an alternative to the mission, but Paliau seeks to create a new form of government as well. Ona Asi appears to be able to summon goods comparable to what the mission has attained—his millenarian vision—while at the same time being a master of food productivity. Paliau does not accept the forms of locally instituted Christianity and government: he sees himself perfecting these institutions from the imperfect forms deliberately given to the natives. This also entails a critique of Manus traditional conventions.

Ona Asi's stance and vision lacked widespread influence, which meant he was not able to appropriate the power of the mission in the way Paliau was able to include aspects of mission and government within his movement and embed his movement with state politics. Ona Asi sought to create a kind of ritual form analogous to the mission; Paliau also created his own version of mission and government as analogous ritual forms but with the intention of surpassing what currently existed.

Both men had visions and these visions were connected to millenarian ideas. Their visions were simultaneously a critique of the status quo. Here it is interesting to recall Foucault's question, 'what is critique?'[29] How to govern, Foucault suggests, was one of the fundamental questions in early modern Europe. 'Now this governmentalization, which seems to me characteristic enough of these societies of the European West… cannot be dissociated from the question "How not to be governed?"' (Foucault 1996:384). By this Foucault does not mean an opposition to being governed but an anxiety about the way to be governed and thus the question, 'How not to be governed *like that*' (*ibid*., original emphasis). In this Melanesian context, and in their different ways, both men responded to mission and colonial forms of governance—to 'not being governed in that way'. It was the different forms of their critiques that empowered the practices they put in place that were perceived as corrective of the contemporary state of affairs.

There is something else at work in the case of Ona Asi and to some extent Paliau, which has to do with an observation made by Marilyn Strathern (2022 [1999]:222): the extent to which people become the measures of one another. In the case of Fuyuge people, the performance of their *gab* ritual entails a competitive relation between a collective of hosts and collective of dancers challenged to perform in exchange for pork provided by the hosts (see Hirsch 2021). Each collective measures its power and effectiveness in relation to the other.

The coming of the mission to Fuyuge lands presented an image of power and effectiveness that was, it appeared, simultaneously a challenge to Ona Asi and the collective of followers he formed. Ona Asi, in turn, was compelled to create a form that measured up to this image.

Paliau did something similar through the movement and 'new way' he created. The movement was formed through critiques of Manus traditions and the mission/government. But the movement was simultaneously formed so that Manus people could measure themselves in relation to mission/government in an equally powerful and effective manner.[30]

While Robbins is clearly correct to see a link between critique and the millenarian in the cargo cult archive, not all critique is millenarian. All millenarian ideas are critical, but such critiques have limits especially when they contend with the power of the state. Ona Asi's vision was unable to embed his critique within the state machinery, while Paliau was effective in ensuring his utopian vision was able to navigate the contingencies of colonial (and post-colonial) state politics.

The visions of both men resonated locally, but that of Ona Asi was of a limited extent compared to that of Paliau. One factor here appears to be the extent to which Paliau was able to forge a radically different cosmology compared to Ona Asi, the latter of whose visions drew on the narratives of *tidibe*. Although the Long Story of God has a structure that echoes older Manus myths, it is a narrative advocating a break with local conventions. Its critique of the here and now appears to foretell a future that transcends that of both mission and government, while at the same time transforming the very ideas and practices of mission and government into a utopian form. Ona Asi was not able to achieve a utopian vision that could mobilize a wide following.

The effectiveness of critique, then, and its comparative study, is linked, I suggest, to the extent to which critique operates both within a recognized cosmology but simultaneously acts to transcend the status quo by presenting a new vision of the future and the practical means to attain that vision. That is when critique is both millenarian and utopian. Paliau's critique and the new cosmology he fashioned from his visions has endured while the cosmology and practices he established has transformed over time. The visionary Ona Asi and the critique he enacted failed, it seems, to appear to transcend the local cosmology and establish practices that mobilized significant numbers of Fuyuge people to follow his millenarian vision. Unlike Paliau, Ona Asi today only exists as a very local and distant memory from the past.

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## ENDNOTES

1. The Fuyuge people live in the Wharton Ranges of Central Province, Papua New Guinea in an area approximately 100 km north of Port Moresby, the national capital. At present, there is no road from Fuyuge lands to the coast. Mission and colonial incursions into the Fuyuge area began sporadically in the late nineteenth century and then systematically in the early twentieth century. By 1905 French Catholic missionaries established a base in one river valley and over the next several decades expanded their proselytizing activities into the other four Fuyuge river valleys. Government stations were initially established at or near the coast, and over the decades, as patrolling in the mountains increased, police camps and patrol posts were created in various Fuyuge locations associated with the 'pacification' of the natives. By the early 1960s a permanent government station was built in the Fuyuge area at Woitape.
2. Analysis of local discontent in Purari Delta can be found in Bell (2009); Ortner (1995) provides a critical analysis of studies focused on resistance and Keesing (1992) applies the idea of resistance in his ethnography of Kwaio people, Solomon Isalnds; Kaplan and Kelly (1994) examine the relevance of the notion of disaffection in colonial Fiji.
3. Such intergenerational differences are examined in Schwartz and Smith (2021:21, 368, 389, 465).
4. By 'cosmology', I refer to the genre or form of thinking as well as the content of that thinking in local contexts. For comparable uses of the notion of cosmology, see Gow (2001).
5. Fuyuge people do not know what became of *tidibe*; *tidibe* at once disappeared but is ever-present in the powers and conventions that it established. *Tidibe* is both a force and narratives of this power. Figures in the narratives are human-like incarnations of *tidibe*. In this way, *tidibe* is both one form and many forms.
6. Lattas (1998) uses the idea of critique in his analysis of Bush Kaliai cargo cults. It is phrased as a 'moral critique' of Kaliai ancestors as well as whites, while also inventing a new kind of whiteness.
7. It is of note that Foucault (1996) is his essay 'What is critique' describes a connection between the arts of governing, which became very prominent beginning in fifteenth century Western Europe, and that of critique. How to govern, Foucault suggests, was one of the fundamental questions of this period. 'Now this governmentalization, which seems to me characteristic enough of these societies of the European West… cannot be dissociated from the question "How not to be governed?"' (*ibid*.:384). By this he does not mean an opposition to being governed but an anxiety about the way to be governed and thus the question, 'How not to be governed *like that*' (*ibid*.:384, original emphasis). It is this critical attitude that appears important for the emergence of critique that had several 'historical anchoring points', a critique of Scripture (from Wycliffe to Pierre Bayle) being one (*ibid*.:384–385).
8. Numerous cults were started by men who joined the native constabulary and came to embody the presence of the colonial state (see Lawrence 1964:57, 87, 118).
9. 'Kabu', according to Purari convention, is his father's name which he adopted later. Kabu means 'the man who owns things' (Maher 1961:55, n.18).
10. Schwartz was Margaret Mead's research assistant on Manus assisting Mead's study of the movement, which she wrote up in her book *New Lives for Old* (1956).
11. Ona Asi died in 1963.
12. Although Williams did not coin the term (Lindstrom 1993:26).
13. Another prophecy occurred in the late 1920s when he announced that 'two great birds' would fly above the area (Trompf 1977:40). The prediction was followed by the noise of two aircraft some weeks later.
14. Although mining and whitemen's pursuit of underground wealth help fuel millenarian ideas there is no account of that happening in this context.
15. *Tidibe* placed a number of prototype (*vasa*) snakes across the Fuyuge landscape. Fuyuge people perceive snakes as immortal because they shed their skin, becoming young again.
16. The two houses did not have a traditional form but were round with a central post. 'The houses had well-built ceilings separating the main room from the roof space, and in each ceiling there was a round hole about one square metre in size' (Trompf 1977:43).
17. Trompf (1994:182) argues that Ona Asi's activities should be understood as a 'prosperity cult'.
18. The Admiralty Islands are an archipelago group of 18 islands located off the northern coast of Papua New Guinea with Manus Island being the largest.
19. The way Manus people narrate the coming of the mission takes an established descriptive form. None of what Otto has documented, as detailed in the previous paragraph, is explicit in their stories. Rather, their main concern 'is to describe the road along which a mission reached a particular place' (Otto 1998a:78). The agency of the local people is stressed. What the descriptions capture is how the Church (*lotu*, Tok Pisin) diffused through individuals that acquired the new concepts and new descriptive conventions at one place and then took it elsewhere. In effect, these stories convey how the Church was brought to Manus by local people. The stories highlight how their actions occurred under particular descriptions. At the same time, the Church was diffused by following roads along which other cultural innovations spread throughout Manus, including new rituals, decorations and dance styles. These innovations were an integral part of the transactional relations between 'mutually indebted' exchange partners (Otto 1998a:83). The innovations were also a source of prestige for the individual introducing them if they became accepted as part of the descriptive conventions under which potent actions transpired.
20. Such as a communal fund from which the colonial head tax could be paid.
21. Otto suggests that this may be connected to local ideas about efficacious knowledge which is understood to be achieved immediately.

22. 'A key theme of this knowledge is the dual nature of human beings. They are not only "meat" like animals, they consist also of "thinkthink" which links them directly to God and his power' (Otto 1998b:76).
23. The northern part of what is now Papua New Guinea was colonized by Germany from 1884 until the end of World War One.
24. Otto (1998b:78) observes how the narrative 'places great emphasis on *harim tok*, listening to the word and obeying it'.
25. Paliau had a diverse wartime experience. Prior to the war he tried to influence village leaders through introducing innovations such a common fund for paying head taxes, noted above. However, after the war, as Otto (1998b:83) says, '[h]e was ready to take the lead himself'.
26. 'Alarmed by the large following of the movement, the colonial government introduced a form of native local government in Manus much earlier than was originally planned' (Otto 1998b:85).
27. Paliau was certain the administration would detain him because of the Noise (as we saw in the different context of Ona Asi). In anticipation of this he sent notes to several Noise leaders instructing them on how to respond to government questioning about the Noise (Schwartz and Smith 2021:222).
28. 'Although Paliau very much promoted the use of writing in his Movement, he apparently never learned to do this properly himself (but he could produce a signature)' (Ton Otto, personal communication, 13/12/23).
29. Repeating some of the text in note 7.
30. Trompf argues that Paliau and other similar leaders of cargo cults went beyond these organizations to found independent churches (see Trompf 1983, 1994:223–224; Swain and Trompf 1995:185–186).

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