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## Prophet – a Symbol of Protest a Study of the Leaders of Cargo Cults in Papua New Guinea

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THE PROPHET--A SYMBOL OF PROTEST

A Study of the Leaders of Cargo Cults  
in Papua New Guinea

by

Paul Finnane OFM

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate  
School of Loyola University, Chicago, in  
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At present, our bishop confers almost every day with the District Commissioner on how an eruption of violence might be prevented.....There might be rioting...because of another outburst of cargo cult. The highest mountain of our district is considered to be a sort of god (also by our Catholics). Years ago marker-stones were placed there for mapping purposes. People who live near and on this mountain say that the mountain has to be reconciled. The markers shall be removed. Some speak of human sacrifice being offered....People expect affluence and paradise as a result of the removal of these stones and do not work any more. The central government ridicules the cargo cultists. Now these people want to discuss their problems only with the Bishop, as missionaries generally show more understanding of this situation.....Our people obviously do not fit in the 20th century.....

--Letter from a missionary, 1972

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## INTRODUCTION

In the matter of Cargo cults and the leaders of such cults, it is tempting to encapsulate the problematic complexities of the relationship between cult and leader by saying that here indeed, (pace McLuhan), the medium is the message. The statement is attractive, and very near the truth, but like most generalizations and simplifications, sufficiently wide of the mark to be unacceptable. This thesis will maintain that the prophet-leader conveys in unique fashion the Cargo message, but there is not an identity between prophet and message; indeed, it is the prophet's tragedy and personal pain that the message is larger than himself and eventually devours him.

But, for an exhilarating brief moment, the prophet luminously mediates the Cargo message. In himself, he personifies and symbolizes the protest inherent in the Cargo cults. He gives utterance to his people's muted cry, articulates what they fear to speak aloud (even to themselves), and challenges the comprehension and the conscience of the "moral European" (Burridge 1960), pleading with him to enter into a new relationship of mutuality.

Ironically, the more successful his protest, the more surely is the prophet doomed to failure, and to eventual oblivion. The structure he inveighs against is affirmed, and its continuance virtually guaranteed, while the prophetic message itself is

absorbed into the new epistemology that was created popularly to extend the indigenous cognitive horizon to take in the white man and his wealth. Within that conceptual framework, the prophet is often beatified with apotheosis--he becomes a folk-hero around whom tales of the "good time" are spun.

There is a phenomenon in chemistry which helps illustrate the action of the prophet in his society. A crystal (say, of copper sulphate) that is suspended in a supersaturated solution of the compound, will grow by accretion larger than lifesize, into a representation of the structural architecture of the crystal. Similarly with the prophet. His society, or his village, or his group are in a condition of "supersaturation"--with frustration, expectation, bewilderment, fear, dissonance-- and the prophet becomes a larger than life picture of his people, a giant portrait embodying their features, and very evident to the European or other outsider who wants to know, to see for himself, what is the self-image contained within the prophetic vision.

This thesis is written for just such an enquiring outsider. Hopefully, he will be a Christian missionary, because it is very often the missionary who is the first to stumble across the beginnings of a Cargo cult, and the first to meet its prophet-leader. This is not to imply that the Christian missionary has an exclusive claim to being the "moral European" so desperately sought by the cults. Far from it--there have been, and are yet, excellent public servants, businessmen, and students and practitioners of social sciences, who can only be described as

immensely humanistic. But humaneness is what the Christian missionary is supposedly directly concerned with, and its absence can be enormously impairing, as Barrett discovered in the African situation (Barrett 1968).

Several anthropologists (Worsley, Lanternari, Jarvie come to mind) have complained of the Western predilection for "great men" as the explanation for the origin of social movements, a heritage from Carlyle. A study of the Cargo cults substantiates their complaint, and finds the "great man" theory inadequate. The Westerner, however, does tend to look for the leader or most prominent figure in social movements, and this tendency can be played to advantage with regard to the Cult leader. He has a message to convey and this message must contain what his followers want; otherwise the prophet-leader will lose their support. Beyond the content of the message there is the further symbolism of the personage of the prophet-leader himself; he comes forward to meet the European, and the gesture is richly symbolic if only the European has eyes to see, and a feeling heart.



## I. ORIENTATIONS

Cargo cults are Melanesian millenary religions whose activities are directed (at least ostensibly) toward the acquisition of Western civilization's manufactures. They are distinguished from Cargo movements in so far as the latter are the ambience within which there are periodic outbursts of cultic activity. For the sake of clarity, "cargo" will be used to refer to manufactured goods, and Cargo to the whole "complex of meanings, symbols, and activities to be found in a Cargo cult" (Burridge 1960:26).

Attempts to satisfactorily classify millenary movements, and Cargo cults within them, have preoccupied anthropologists for several decades now. Inglis(1957) was one of the first to suggest that Melanesian Cargo cults were so unique that they formed a category of their own. La Barre (1971:11) suggests that "cult movements are sufficiently classified" but Kobben (La Barre 1971:30) disagrees and remarks " how much our insight would have been deepened if this classification had been worked out systematically." Kobben classified cargo cults as eschatological-adoptive prophetic movements:

the main intent of most cargo cults is miraculously to obtain an abundance of Western goods, for which reason I classify them as eschatological-adoptive. Secondary motives, however, are escapism and rejection of foreign domination.

La Barre himself had emphasized the advantages of a conjunctive definition, in warning against the dangers of reductionism: "In

the study of crisis cults, the word "and" serves better than the contentious word "only" (La Barre 1871:28).

I found the study of the various approaches to classification very rewarding, simply because (as Kobben points out), the dynamics of the different millenary movements, and therefore of Cargo cults, are thereby better demonstrated. La Barre uses a bold, blanket definition when he includes millenary and messianic movements, and indeed, any movement led by a charismatic leader, under the name crisis cults. These he defines thus

A "crisis cult" means any group reaction to crisis, chronic or acute, that is cultic. "Crisis" is a deeply felt frustration or basic problem with which routine methods, secular or sacred, cannot cope.....The term "crisis cult" basically includes any new "sacred" attitude toward a set of beliefs; it excludes the pragmatic, revisionist, secular response that is tentative and relativistic. It is essentially a matter of the affective-epistemological stance taken towards belief (La Barre 1971:11).

A student of Brazilian messianic movements, Maria Isaura Pereira de Quieroz, takes issue with La Barre over his definition. She is dissatisfied with La Barre on two counts; first, that his definition is an umbrella for every kind of movement, ranging from Nazism to Cargo cults, and thereby brings together movements which are quite intrinsically different. Her second objection is that the crisis is not defined. She says (1971:388):

To what kinds of crisis are cults related, and are they always so linked? The crisis should be sought after the movement has been defined and studied; in a comprehensive study, the question would not be the starting point, but the end point, arrived at only after the types of movements and their particular roles in world society had been demarcated. Since sociologists and ethnologists have not yet made a satisfactory study of crises, or even clearly defined them, the work should begin by a study of socio-political movements.

Talmon's definition of millenarism can be introduced here, so that we can compare it with the Brazilian author's approach. Talmon states that the word "millenarism" is used typologically, to characterize "religious movements that expect imminent, total, ultimate, this-worldly, collective salvation" (Talmon 1968). A student of Vietnamese millénary movements remarks that the essence of millenarism is that it fuses together the secular and the sacred, to form socio-religious movements (Hill 1971:325).

Worsley's definition adds the note of the prophesying of the radical change that is expected and since many of Worsley's opinions will be referred to later in this thesis, it is worthwhile to quote his basic definition here:

I define millenarian movements as movements in which the imminence of a radical and supernatural change in the social order is prophesied or expected, so as to lead to organization and activity, carried out in preparation for this event, on the part of the movements' adherents. There are minor variations; in some cases, the millenium is expected to occur soon, on this earth; in others, the people are expected to enter an abode of heavenly bliss in the future; in yet others, there is only an expectation of relatively minor improvements of life on earth, though these usually develop quickly into one of the more radical forms (Worsley 1968:338).

It is not my intention to reproduce here all the various definitions to be found in the authorities on millenary movemnets and germane subjects. But Kohn's definition of messianism, taken by Pereira de Quieroz as here starting point, is essential to the study of Cargo cults, since in Cargo cults a messiah figure is invariably present. Kohn (1942:356) says that messianism is

primarily the religious belief in the coming of a redeemer who will end the present order of things, whether universally or for a single group, and institute a new order of justice

and happiness.

While Pereira de Quieroz states baldly that the "savior figure" as the leader of a group is indispensable, this needs qualification, to account for the several movements or instances within movements where there does not seem to be a messiah, but rather a messiah mechanism (Shepperson 1960:47).

Pereira de Quieroz concludes that the functions of messianic movements vary according to the problems and social dynamics that each movement purports to resolve (Pereira de Quieroz 1971:389). From this she argues that Cargo cults are revolutionary messianic movements, aimed at "founding a third society, including both old and new, yet different from both" (ibid.).

Increasingly I veer toward playing down the disjunctive aspects of Cargo cults. I consider them to be continuous with traditional Melanesian religion, differentiated from it only (and I admit that it is a big "only") by the focus on cargo. The work done by Burridge and Lawrence persuades me that there are more and more similarities between the Cargo cult doctrines and the traditional native epistemology. Jarvie alludes to this and adds that the cults now seem like a typical kind of millenarianism and a typical Melanesian religion: "It seems that as parallels to the cults are found there is less and less that is peculiar about them, less and less to explain" (Jarvie 1964:240).

Jarvie quotes Belshaw and Burridge, that the cults may be a local tradition being exploited by the Cargo prophet-leader, or perhaps even a cultural disposition. This latter is also the

idea of Inglis. Oosterwal thinks that we have neglected to investigate the native mythology for just such a disposition and tradition:

I wish La Barre had given attention to the fact that quite a few cults are a revival of, or embedded in, an original genuinely native mythology in which messianic expectations play a large role. And these myths have their own rationality.  
(Oosterwal 1971:32)

Burridge, of course, is aware of this primordial mythology and his treatment of the "Primal Myth" (Burridge 1960) is brilliant and enlightening. Lawrence indicates a similar point of view in his investigation of, first, the native cosmic order, and then of the succession of cult beliefs that preceded that of the Yali movement (Lawrence 1964).

In his book "The Revolution in Anthropology," Jarvie swings freely at the structural-functional approach in anthropology, and very clearly shows its inadequacy to yield a satisfying explanation of Cargo cults. As an American reviewer observed, Jarvie was hardly original in his attack, but the book is a most valuable corrective, especially in the field of Cargo cults. I propose that there has been, and still is to some extent, an unfortunate tendency among Westerners (and this must include ethnographers), to presume that the pre-contact situation in the country of Papua New Guinea was one of stability and relative cultural statics or quiescence. Burridge has shown that this was not so for the Tangu, and that the stresses and disorientations of an earlier period contributed necessarily to the mentality the Tangu brought to the new and drastic disfunctions that the White intrusion was

to effect (Burridge 1960:123).

Another factor which an a-historical mentality and presumptuousness have caused to be underestimated, is warfare. Langness (1964:145) writes:

Warfare in New Guinea was endemic. There was constant raiding a recurrent threat of annihilation, repeated betrayal, and so on. Very little has been written on New Guinea warfare, a fact which I think is most unfortunate as it may well be one of the most critical variables in any understanding of New Guinea social structure.

We need to know more about the effects of warfare on Papua New Guinea life if we are to be able to assess the epistemological background out of which modern Cargo cults have arisen.

All of these factors--pre-existing myths, cultural dispositions, and warfare--demand intensive study, separately first, and then taken together; otherwise, our picture of Papua New Guinea pre-contact culture will be at best sketchy. We await the discovery of New Guinea's Dead Sea Scrolls, or version thereof. Until then, Cargo cults will continue to confront us as enigma wrapped in mystery.

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What was traditional Melanesian religion, as best, anyway, as can be defined with the information at hand? For a description of Melanesian societies and of religion itself, we will rely on Lawrence, Meggitt, and Burridge in the main. The following brief description by Lawrence and Meggitt gives an accurate picture of Melanesian society in general; it also suggests the context in which methodologically to consider Melanesian religion:

All Melanesian societies are of the same general type. All are stateless and lack centralized authority. Whatever their special idiosyncrasies, all stress kinship and descent in the formation of important local groupings. Their members are nearly always primarily subsistence agriculturalists or horticulturalists, secondarily pig-herders, and lastly hunters and fishermen. Their major concern is for socio-economic welfare--broadly, the fertility of people, crops and animals, and success in the manufacture and use of artefacts. The ability to promote socio-economic welfare is the essential qualification for leadership (Lawrence and Meggitt 1965:5).

With regard to religion, Burridge's definition (1969:6-7) stresses the aspect of obligation, and of release from it:

the redemptive process indicated by the activities, moral rules, and assumptions about power which, pertinent to the moral order and taken on faith, not only enable a people to perceive the truth of things, but guarantee that they are indeed perceiving the truth of things.

Looking for a distinction between religious belief and other kinds of social belief, Worsley finds it in the transcendental dimension of religion; that is, that religious belief seeks a validation "beyond the empirico-technical realm of action" (Worsley 1968:xxxv).

For Lawrence and Meggitt, religion is the putative extension of men's social relationship into the non-empirical realm of the cosmos. La Barre thinks of religion as the projection of the infant's socialization experience, and he quotes approvingly this statement from Ernest Jones:

religious life represents a dramatization on the cosmic plane of the emotions, fears, and longings which arose in the child's relations to his parents (La Barre 1970:12).

Werner Cohn has shown convincingly in an article on the meaning of the term "religion" that there is frequently confusion and a shifting about, of the three meanings the term is found to have

in some writings. First, there is an emic meaning--religion is a category to its own participants, the actual actors in a given culture. Second, the observer may categorize as religious, activities not so considered by the actors but certainly coherently institutionalized. Third, the observer may call "religious", activities which are not so to the actors, nor in any way institutionalized (Cohn 1965:7).

I suggest that, to avoid such confusion with regard to Melanesian religion, that we stay away from categorizing. As Cohn observes (1965:13):

what is 'empirical' and what is not 'empirical' usually depends not so much on any objective property of the behavior as it does on the point of view of the particular observer.

What is incontestable in Melanesian culture is that the keynotes of social and religious life were materialism and anthropocentrism, and knowledge was ascribed to divine revelation rather than to the human intellect (Lawrence 1964:9). In short, there was none of the dichotomizing of secular and sacred that is familiar to us Westerners; all life activities had their validation in the world of the spirits, a world which was not extra-terrestrial or in any sense transcendental as we understand it. Ritualized activity was a technology (as Lawrence terms it), and man more or less guaranteed the cooperation of gods and spirits provided he was a competent technologist. Human incompetence, not divine caprice, explained the failure to achieve the ends of ritual (Lawrence 1964:12).

The cultic aspects of Cargo cults should not, therefore,



present a problem to us. It is consistent with the (to us) magico-religious orientation of Melanesian culture. Says Jarvie (1964:95): "The Melanesians, I would argue, have cargo cults because they live in a tradition of magical and religious explanations of the world."

It seems then, that without minimizing the disruptive (perhaps destructive) effects of European contact with Papua New Guinea, it is better to consider Cargo cults as being in continuity with Melanesian culture. That there is almost entire absorption, on the part of the cultists, with the subject of cargo, should not distract us either from considering the cults as typical Melanesian religions, or from realizing that cargo itself is a symbol and not merely an end in itself. That this is so, namely, that cargo is not an end in itself, seems very obvious from the fact that nowhere is any of the cults is the theme of the distribution of the cargo taken up. Belshaw argues persuasively for the symbolic significance of cargo when he affirms that the cults are rational attempts on the part of Papua New Guineans to explain why it is that they are excluded from the higher standard of living that Europeans enjoy, a standard for which cargo is the symbol (Belshaw 1950).

It is within this situation of cultural continuity that Cargo cult prophet-leaders will be considered in this thesis. Their leadership had to be validated by success in "delivering the good," as is true of traditional leadership in Melanesia. Whether they were abnormal does not affect the issue, and the

dispute on their mental condition can distract us from the symbolism of the message they feel commissioned to impart.

Continuity in culture must not be confused with stasis. There is evolution within Melanesian culture and possibly Melanesia offers the best example of how accelerated the evolutionary process can become. I have no doubt that Cargo cults represent an evolution within Melanesian religion that has a great deal to teach us about the evolution of religion in general, and even of its very origins. As one less wise, I can agree with Wallace that existing religions are probably relics of revitalization movements (Wallace 1956:268; Lewis 1971:96). (Christian missionaries in Papua New Guinea might well reflect on that suggestion, and on its corollary that the Reformation was a nativistic return to "pure" Christianity. Perhaps here lies the more sure road to ecumenism). But the very original work of Burridge and Lawrence makes me favor the view that it is more sound to look for continuity than for a dramatic disjunction between traditional Melanesian religion and the spectacular Cargo cults.

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Writing about the Jamaa movement in Africa, Johannes Fabian (1969:158) insists that the understanding of cultural change must focus on the emergence, formulation, and manipulation of meaning. Fabian suggests that very many African movements "are just multiplications of a given institutional pattern, or they become institutionalized at an early stage.....symbol systems such as

doctrine or ideology of a movement are privileged approaches to the problems of change" (Fabian 1969:166). I think that Fabian's remarks have a wider application than to the African scene alone, and that the obvious place to look for meaning is indeed, within the professed beliefs of those whom we study.

Jarvie holds firmly for "belief in belief", a belief that is, "that people's theories and beliefs influence their actions and can, to a certain extent, explain their actions " (Jarvie 1964:128). He insists that cultists' thinking is not necessarily pre-logical or a-logical, but that granted their fundamental premises, they are accounting for a changed world in a rational way (1964:103). This, of course, is the discovery that Lawrence made --if one accepts the validity of the native view of the cosmos, then Cargo cults make very good sense. Worsley (1968:lxvi) refutes the irrationality alleged of Cargo cults (by Mair and Stanner, among others):

given the extent of knowledge, and the categories of magico-religious beliefs available for use as explanatory categories, it is reasonable to explain the European economy in terms of the activities of the ancestors, and a rational orientation of action to seek to encourage its coming by performing ritual acts.

Similar views are held by Belshaw, Hogbin, and Inglis.

This thesis adopts the view that Cargo cults are rational, and that there is logic in the ideology of the cults, and in its practical implementation. I favor those explanations of Cargo cults--by Lawrence, Burridge, Pereira de Quieroz, Inglis, Jarvie, Belshaw, and Hogbin--which take into account the aims and circumstances of the cult leader and his followers, and all the circum-

stances of the cults' ambiances. Situational logic, that is, "that people act according to how they see the logic of the situation" (Jarvie 1964: xvii), is then, a basic assumption in this thesis. I believe that a rational reconstruction of why people and prophets acted as they did is possible, and has indeed, already been manufactured by the authors referred to above.

Burridge has gone further and realized the symbolism inherent in the prophetic figure, and it is on Burridge's work that this thesis leans heavily.

Finally, a characteristic of the cults that Burridge treats of, in passing, that they mark a period of transition where no rules obtain, has led me to studying the richly suggestive ideas of Victor Turner about such transitional phases, and these help fill out Burridge's highly sympathetic study of the cult leaders.

## II. SOME CARGO MOVEMENTS AND LEADERS

If it is true that charisma is communication rather than innovation, and that the prophetic message is greater than the prophet who announces it, then why focus on the prophet? Perhaps Lanternari is right about the Melanesian situation (1963: 185):

Missionary evangelism, combined with the old native beliefs, has produced new prophets, who, in effect, are pagan imitations of the Christian Savior. The new theme of the Messiah is a re-elaboration of a theme found in pagan cults: the idea of a legendary hero becoming embodied in a prophet is traditional; the idea that he will disappear once his task is accomplished, promising to return bringing liberation and riches to his followers is borrowed from the life of Christ. Modern native cults do not invent new personages or new ideas; they only give new life and form to ancient pagan beliefs, and endow the old art of magic with new powers to meet new needs.

Such a viewpoint sees the prophet as no more than a catalyst and here Lanternari would ally himself with Worsley, who concentrates on the announcement of imminent and radical change in the prophet's message, rather than on the figure of the prophet himself (Worsley 1968: xiv-xviii):

....the message is the most important element: it is this that the followers or the potential followers wish to know...all leadership, whatever the empirical facts, is primarily symbolic and relational, and only secondarily personal...the charismatic leader is a catalytic personality. His catalytic function is to convert latent solidarities into active ritual and political action.

Burridge says this Marxist view of the prophet as "an ambiguous and unnecessary catalyst" results from the Marxist concentration on the role of conflict in social relations. Lacking both

deity and divine inspiration in his metaphysical kitbag, the Marxist is unable to explain the prophet in any but an accidental sense (Burridge 1969:132).

My own preference is for La Barre's suggestion (1971:27) that some individuals, suffering personal anguish and no longer able to take consolation from their old beliefs, "imagine their won symbols, which in being nearer to contemporary need, may spread like an epidemic of the mind, while the old belief-world vanishes into myth."

The prophet affords us a microcosmic view of the movement which calls him into being, and which is itself given impetus and new direction by him. Before we pass on to a consideration of what is the nature of the prophetic contribution to such a movement let us review briefly the histories of some New Guinea Cargo movements and their leaders, the prophets. The source for most of the information is Worsley's The Trumpet Shall Sound, which is widely acclaimed as the most comprehensive treatment of the Cargo cults in Melanesia.

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The leader of the Taro Cult (1914) was Boninia. According to Chinnery, this man had no previous reputation as a magician or prophet. The cult derived from a vision experienced by Boninia of the Taro Spirit, spirit of the tuber food which was the native staple. The cult seems to have been non-millenary; it was more of a religious revival. The guria or shaking that is so notice-

able a feature of all the Cargo cults was in evidence in the Taro cult. It is one of the sects of Taro however, that is more interesting. This was the Kekesi, introduced by Bia, who was a notorious sorecerer and a "most plausible rogue" (Chinnery 1918). Bia announced a vision of Kekesi, a food spirit, who gave instructions about food cultivation and also moral codes. Bia seems to have supplanted the original visionary Dagisa, a fanatical Christian who was used by Bia as the occasion warranted it. While the cult was not overtly anti-European, the equation of Kekesi with Yesu Kerisu (Jesus Christ) and with the Government showed implicit hostility and jealousy (Worsley 1968:71).

The Baigona cult, with one Maine its prophet, used typical magic for the solution of small personal problems. Certain medicines were indicated and the use of ablutions as a form of exorcism. The emphasis on native guilt is significant, and this theme of guilt is made much of by Burridge in his study of Mambu. There should seem to have been no millenarian or anti-White sentiment in the Baigona cult.

In the Milne Bay movement (1893) we have a recognisably nativistic movement, a promised revival of a golden age. The prophet was Tokerua. He had a vision under a sacred tree, and he prophesied cyclones, tidal waves and disaster, especially for unbelievers and those who clung to White innovations. The people were advised to flee from the coast, to cease their work in the gardens and to kill all the pigs. A wind would blow after the disaster had passed and there would be rich crops in all the gar-

dens. This wind would also bring a ship crowded with the spirits of the dead. Tokerua was gaoled by the British authorities for two years.

We do not have the names of the three "German Wislin" leaders of Saibai Island, where a movement began in 1914. Here one finds many of the elements of cult behavior that occur again and again in the literature on Melanesian cults--visits to the cemeteries, assurances of the return of the dead, the end of all work, a ship that would come with the spirits of the dead aboard, the Whites would be killed and bounty in the form of White cargo would be distributed, blacks were the equals of whites but the whites had stolen from the blacks, and so on. Worsley speculates that the "German" part of the title signified anti-White feelings, since it was specifically said that the leaders were not King George's Men. Haddon makes explicit reference to the racial animosity evinced in the Saibai cult.

The Vailala Madness was at its height in 1919. This most famous of all Cargo cults involved belief in the return of the ancestors, who were to come back in a steamer, and some of whom would be white-skinned. There were some visions of the dead as white men, and beliefs that in the afterlife the natives would all be white. For this life, there was a promise that the jungle would be cleared and that natives would dress like missionaries. The most important duty enjoined by the cult was the mortuary feast, and the most significant aspect of this was the position assumed by the participants--they sat at table like White men.



This "arrogance" enraged a visiting Patrol Officer. Special houses were built where daily offering of food was made to the dead and flag poles were erected, to act as wireless masts in cultists' communications with the dead. The outstanding facet of personal behavior was automania, which Williams described as self-induced derangement and which manifested itself in violent, idiotic, and grotesque dancing. Finally, there was widespread destruction of native artefacts and ceremonies.

The originator of the Vailala Madness was a man called Evara. It was reported that he had been liable to some sort of ecstatic seizure from the time of his youth. The automania or hed i go raun he first experienced when his father died, and there was a repetition of it when his brother died. When Evara recounted his revelations to the village the message was immediately seized upon. Evara's talk was full of references to aeroplanes dropping messages from the sky (he carried around a book Love and the Aeroplane and its illustrated cover doubtless provided him with many of his inspirations. The white soldiers pictured on a Lifebuoy poster were identified by Evara with himself and his relatives.)

The hed i go raun could and did come upon anybody in the early part of the movement but later only some few experienced it and these became men of considerable power. According to Williams they ranged from sincere cranks to outright frauds. Their influence was great and in some of them Williams discerned "an unwholesome combination of prophet, priest, and wizard" (Williams

1923:37)). It was at the suggestion of the automaniacs that the destruction of native ceremonies was carried out. Various reasons were given for this, among them the superiority of White ways, the time wasted both in preparation and performance, the opposition of the missionaries, and a distaste for the "old" ways.

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We have to jump the years from the early 20s to the late 30s; during this period there were outbreaks of Cargo cult at various places in New Guinea, and the anti-White feeling in them becomes very prominent. With Mambu we find a movement that is anti-White, anti-mission, and anti-Government. Mambu preached that whites had stolen the goods they possessed, goods originally manufactured by the ancestors for the natives. The ancestors were going to bring the goods themselves in a ship which would dock in a miraculously formed harbor. No taxes were to be paid to the Government, he ordered, and no Government-ordered work was to be done, and nobody was to go near the Missions.

The Mambu rites included prayer for money at the ancestral graves, and baptism in Government rest houses of men and women in couples; traditional genital coverings were removed and buried with prayers and the use of a crucifix, and the genitalia were washed and sprinkled with "holy" water.

Mambu gave himself the title "King", lived unmarried and, Christ-like, provided miraculously for his followers, with rice and fish and the promise of more wonderful things still to come.

Eventually, the Government arrested Mambu and gaoled him for six months. He subsequently disappeared. I call him the "Melchisadek" of the Cargo movements--no one knew whence he came or where he went.

Yali of Madang was a sergeant-major in World War II. His Army career was a distinguished one, and his prestige with his people was enormous. The Government recruited him for its rehabilitation schemes on the Rai coast and Yali cooperated very willingly.

The Letub cult surfaced again at this time (about 1946) and the cultists began to use Yali's name to validate their claims. Yali's wartime trip to Brisbane, Australia, was (according to the Letub cultists) a visit to the King in Australia and to God in Heaven, where God had promised Yali that the cargo would come soon. (In fact, some very extravagant promises had been made to Yali by some Australian officials).

The cultists preached far and wide and there were mass baptisms of the believers. Yali was opposed to the Cargo ideas at first and cooperated with the Government in opposing them. These ideas included some Christian positions against polygyny, and Yali agreed to Catholic Mission suggestions that he too oppose polygyny. Eventually this backfired and Yali was reprimanded by a Government officer for attacking a native institution on which the Government maintained a position of neutrality. This was the beginning of Yali's disenchantment with the missions. From then on, he preached strongly against them.

In 1947 Yali went to Port Moresby, the administrative center of New Guinea, for talks with senior Government officials. He was given the paid position of Foreman or Overseer, an unprecedented honor, but he realized that the Brisbane promises were not going to be kept and this embittered him. In Port Moresby a native showed him a book on evolution and this astounded Yali, whose own people believed in descent from animals; he felt that Europeans were all liars, especially the missions, and he returned to Madang a firm believer in the old religion and a violent opponent of the missions.

The Letub cult dropped its Christian elements and incorporated traditional religious myths instead, and Yali now subscribed very willingly to the cult, which grew in numbers of adherents and defiantly anti-White. Finally the Government arrested Yali on charges of incitement to rape, and extortion of money, and he was sentenced to  $6\frac{1}{2}$  years imprisonment.

Aliwan and Hawina were the two leaders of the latest New Guinea cult, the Mt. Turu cult, which in 1971 became known worldwide. "King" Yali himself did not enjoy the newspaper headlines and notoriety that Aliwan and Hawina gained.

Matias Aliwan was a policeman for five years, three of them at Goroka and the other two at Madang. Later he worked at a power station and then in the hangars of the Catholic Mission at Wewak. He is described as a quiet man, not given to talk nor to much mixing, a thoughtful man and also a prayerful man. Regarded as a prophet by his own people, he always carries a staff, after the

fashion of the Old Testament prophets. The high point of the Mt. Turu cult activities was a march to the top of the mountain to remove a cement marker planted there some years ago by American surveyors. Aliwan said that by doing this the native food and wildlife would be replenished. Over 4000 people accompanied him to the top of Mt. Turu, but the predicted deaths of Aliwan, Hawina and Hawina's wife Monika, did not take place. Aliwan has since won election to the Papua New Guinea House of Assembly, in the elections of March, 1972.

Hawina is Aliwan's lieutenant. He is reputed to be a spell-binding orator, and an expert reader of Pidgin English, even though he himself had only very limited schooling. He claims all schools are "rubbish" and that God gave him his knowledge, and that after independence God himself will teach all men. Hawina points to the eagle on the U.S. quarter-dollar as a sign that the U.S. will send planes to New Guinea, since the eagle is Hawina's own totem.

The cults and movements that I had personal experience with in the Sepik District in the period 1962-69 were very similar in content and behavior to the foregoing, except that after 1964 (the date is somewhat arbitrary) there was a prevalent theme in the Cargo ideology that favored the missions, specifically the Catholic Mission for which I worked. This mission had begun several socio-economic projects in response to the widespread cult activity, with cattle and poultry projects, cooperative trade stores and expanded educational work, and at least in the hinterland

there was a firm belief that the Bishop was now an ally. Bisop yet i tok ol samting i laik kamap nau--the Bishop himself says that things are going to happen now. A committee man, komiti bilong bisnis, told an overflow crowd after Sunday Mass "be good, follow the Catholic way, and things will come." One particular area was so pro-Mission that the native Local Government Council could achieve little without the people first seeking the approval of the embarrassed local missionary. In this area the natives quite often described themselves as mipela man bilong paiv silin--five shillings men, five shillings being the cost of each family share in the Mission-sponsored cooperatives.

It is my belief that the Catholic Mission was so identified with Cargo beliefs that the failure of the cults to fulfill their promises severely compromised the Mission, and in one place I knew well discredited it. There has been so much ferment over the past few years, with elections to the House of Assembly (one cult leader's nomination for this was refused on the grounds that he was late-- a foolish tactic on the part of the Administration Officer), Local Government elections, large scale (and fairly successful) planting of rice crops, the improvement of the dirt road network, and so on, that it is difficult to analyse the situation and find the Cargo factor alone. The most notorious cult leader has died, and the only notable cult outbreak of recent date in the Mission area was at a large coastal village where there had been a previous cult in 1930.

### III. THE PROPHET AS CHARISMATIC LEADER

It is the intention of this thesis to contribute to the theory of Cargo cults by focusing on the prophet-leaders of the cults. In so focusing our attention we are in danger of finding an attractively easy solution to the problem of the causation of the cults by resorting to the "great man" theory, which would explain the origins of social and socio-religious movements in the "gifted" individual who is the acknowledged leader of such movements. This "gift" is what is meant by charisma.

It is essential for a proper appreciation of the role of the prophet in Cargo cults to understand the meaning of charisma and charismatic leadership, since to imply that a Cargo cult is the creation of a prophetic genius (the "great man") is to ignore the existence of pre-existing disnomy among those who embraced the cults, and the fertile autochthonous cultural soil in which the cults took ready root. The prophet was a genius but his genius was to be so sensitive to the popular distress as to become identified with it, to articulate it, and above all, to be able to lay claim to a divinely revealed solution to it.

At this point we need to clarify the meaning of "prophet" since this term is used almost universally (and somewhat indiscriminately) of the leaders of Cargo cults, of messiah figures, and of the leaders of millenary movements. Weber understands

the prophet to be "a purely individual bearer of charisma, who by virtue of his mission proclaims a religious doctrine or divine commandment" (Weber 1964:46). The prophet is distinct from the priest, by virtue of a felt personal call. This call is made by a god, and is the basis for the prophet's authority. The priestly authority, on the other hand, is the priest's service in a sacred tradition.

The message of the prophet has essentially to do with a break in the established order. This break could be restorative of an older revelation, or innovative, as in the beginning of a new religion. There is no need to radically distinguish between prophets on this basis of the orientation of their message, so long as we keep in mind the point of the prophetic call of irruption with the present order.

The prophet must also be distinguished from the shaman, the sorcerer-magician, even though the distinction is not always an easy one to make. This is not the place to go into distinctions between religion and magic (la Barre has some intriguing material on the different emotive stances underlying the magic and religious orientations), and there are cases of sorcerers in New Guinea assuming the role of prophets (cf. Biere in the Vailala Madness; also Bia in the Kekesi movement, and the "incipient Shamanism" referred to by F.E. Williams in the Orokaiva area, after the initial Vailala movements). But the prophetic call must come, there must be an appeal to a revelation, a sense of being tuba Dei--God's trumpet--before one can be spoken of as a prophet,



whatever his precedent status or function was.

Other figures are prominent in Cargo cults who are not prophetic, but are very close to the prophet and often assume administrative importance greater than the prophet's. These are the lieutenants or "grey eminences", and they feature amrk-  
edly in the literature on Cargo cults (and millenary/messianic movements in gneeral). The latest reported cult in New Guinea, the Mt. Turu cult, is a case in the classic tradition. The prophet is Matias Aliwan, and the grey eminence ( in Melanesian Pidgin, namba tu glasman--second seer) is Daniel Hawina. The description of Hawina--"he is the spokesman...the very mouth of Aliwan...a truly accomplished speaker" (Wantok Newspaper 6.2.71:9)--could be used of virtually dozens of figures in the literature on Melanesian cults. Two who come to mind immediately are Kori (called by F.E. Williams "the Paul of Papua"), and Harea, lieutenants for Evara, the prophet of Vailala. Both these men were vigorous and active proselytizers for the "new" ideas.

Even some of the lieutenants will claim the experience of revelation however, so it cannot be said that the prophet is exclusively the visionary or seer. Many New Guineans who have experienced the guria, the violent shaking that is a regular physical accompaniment of cult activities, will recount visions and revelations they say they have experienced. The prophet, however, is the bearer of the initial revelation, the later claims of others are usually corroboratory only. The safest guide to deciding who is to be given the title of prophet in Cargo cults

is the opinion of the people. Whoever they constantly refer to as the glasman is the authentic, authoritative, and (most often) original depository of the call to a new order of things. It is in this sense that from now on we will be using the term "the prophet."

Charisma is not easily defined. Its presence is intuited, its absence quickly apparent. People will say John F. Kennedy and Pope John XXIII had it, as Richard M. Nixon and Pope Paul VI surely lack it. The term is derived from theology, where it means a divinely, gratuitously bestowed gift, usually given for the fulfillment of a special task or function. In sociology, the term has come to be associated with Weber, who made of it "the great revolutionary force in tradition bound epochs" (Fabian 1969:159).

There is some dispute about what Weber meant by charisma, and this obviously bears on the problem of charismatic leadership. Sometimes it seems that he is speaking of a personal quality, at other times the term appears to imply a relationship between persons. Fabian says it means the latter, and most authors seem to agree with this (Tucker, Burrridge, Worsley, Wilson, Lawrence, Jarvie, Lanternari). The point is belabored here, only because (popularly anyway) there is such a concentration on the extraordinary qualities of the charismatic that the other, necessary part of the equation--that people recognize and respond to the charismatic--can be obscured or even ignored.

La Barre stresses that the ability to inspire awe in one's

fellowmen because of some described spiritual genius is charisma (La Barre 1970:359). He says, in effect, that it amounts to the charismatic's prescience of the popular needs: "the phatic fascination of a Fuhrer is, then, the welcomeness of his message to his communicants, and for this they exalt and love him " (La Barre 1970:361).

Worsley too, stresses the relational aspect of charisma. Charisma legitimates the charismatic, he is given loyalty because he himself embodies values held by his followers (Worsley 1968: xii).

For La Barre, the "uncanniness" of the charismatic's authority is explained by the fact that it speaks to the assenting unconscious wish and need of many communicants (la Barre 1971:37). He (and several other authors) maintain that we must recognize that in crisis cults personal crisis reaches epidemic proportions. Erikson suggests that there are certain historical situations in which people become charisma-hungry--when there is fear, anxiety, existential dread (Tucker 1968). The charismatic then, is a successful emotional communicator, the loudest, clearest, most articulate voice of the generally felt distress.

If there is agreement on the relational nature of charisma, there is not on the subjects of the importance, exercise, uniqueness, or even existence of charismatic leadership, at least, as it is found in Cargo cults. Worsley bluntly states: "to put it provocatively, the person of the prophet is commonly quite unimportant in the so-called 'charismatic movement'" (1968:xiv-xv).

This is the extreme view, and since it is held by another Marxist, Lanternari, it will be convenient to call it the Marxist point of view about leadership. At the other end of the spectrum is Pereira de Quieroz, who considers the savior-figure in messianic movements to be "indispensable."

Not all millenary visions assume their implementation at the behest of a charismatic figure, but Cargo cults do. It seems that the answers to the questions--does the millenary movement have a charismatic leader? how does he envisage himself? how is he envisaged by his followers?--are to be sought in the expectations about such leaders within the different cultures. Wilson suggests that millenary leaders may select themselves too. He quotes Knoob as suggesting that millenary leaders adopt culturally established styles of leadership so as to legitimate their authority (Wilson 1963). I think Cargo cults and cult leaders illustrate this.

Cochrane (1970) is of the opinion that Cargo cults are "a development episode in the persisting social relationships between Melanesian 'big men' and ordinary members of society." These 'big men' were the traditional, acknowledged leaders and the Cargo cult leader had to become a new 'big man' or else he would not have succeeded in gaining recognition from his people. For Cochrane, Cargo cults were all about getting Europeans to recognize the validity of the existing indigenous concept of status. The cult leader, for Cochrane, was a new type of "big man" and that's all. For another 'big man' thesis there is this

interesting comment from Lawrence, on the prophet Yali, of Madang. Lawrence (1964:254) notes that "Yali claimed to be superior to the ordinary natives. But the masses regarded him implicitly as a more powerful version of the traditional 'big man'--essentially as primus inter pares."

Tucker says that the key to the charismatic response is the distress the followers are experiencing. This is such that the leader is felt to embody the hope of salvation, and for this reason the charismatic leader is considered a savior or messiah, a role which demands "miracles" and displays of power (Tucker 1968). These displays are signs and proofs which supplement the faith of the believing disciples (Worsley 1968:xiii).

On the other hand, some anthropologists of a psychiatric bent deny that charismatic leadership is even possible in a primitive society. Further, they assert that charismatic leadership is infantile. Devereux (1955:146) points out that the charismatic leader derives his power from outside himself, sometimes from the people, at other times from his position as a personal representative of some preternatural agency. Such leadership lacks the social justification or legitimation that comes from the occupancy of a given status and in its operation it is arbitrary and highly personal, in contrast to the workings of normal authority (and the workings of traditional New Guinea authority, we can add),

This charismatic leadership is impossible in a primitive society, Devereux claims, because in primitive societies the basis of cohesion is the "tangled network of interpersonal relat-

ions," and subordination to a leader has little meaning, whereas charismatic leadership presupposes just this subordination, especially in highly differentiated modern societies which depend for their cohesion on allegiance to an ideology or a leader.

Devereux thinks that charismatic leadership is surrogate for a parental figure. He theorizes that in a crisis people regress to a state of delegated omnipotence and demand a leader who conforms to infantile ideas of adult behavior. This is why he terms charismatic leadership "infantlizing"--the charismatic leader conforms to childish fantasies about how omnipotent adults behave (1955:150). The followers of such a leader commit 'menticide' (ibid.) It seems to me that Devereux is talking about charisma defined as an extraordinary, personal quality of a leader, and understood thus, his remarks are unexceptionable (in fact, they would seem to support the contention that charisma has to be understood relationally).

I suggest that the foregoing discussion throws sufficient light on charisma and charismatic leadership for us to agree with Worsley (1968:xii) that

charisma is a function of recognition--the prophet without honour cannot be a charismatic prophet. Charisma, therefore, sociologically viewed, is a social relationship, not an attribute of individual personality or a mystical quality.

Charisma, therefore, is as much about the followers as it is about the leader, and it is in the values of the followers that we will find the explanation for the ability of the charismatic leader to mobilize support, or even to have it thrust on him (Worsley 1968:xiv-xv).

Worsley (1968:xiv-xv) comments further:

the followers, then, in a dialectical way, create, by selecting them out, the leaders, who in turn command on the basis of this newly-accorded legitimacy...followers with possibly utopian or at least diffuse and unrealized aspirations cleave to an appropriate leader because he articulates and consolidates their aspirations...the message then is the most important element: it is this that the followers or potential followers 'wish to know'...

The charismatic qualities attach to the message rather than to the prophet (Burridge 1960:138), and it is the acceptability of the message which indicates to us the state of mind of the prophet's audience. The prophet is the creation of the populace; it is for this reason that we can say, ultimately, that the prophet embodies the people and is their image, the symbol of their discontent.

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Having established the relational nature of charismatic leadership and the nature of the role of the prophet, let us now investigate the context within which the prophet exercises his leadership. It will be maintained that the prophet is successor to the traditional kind of leadership in Melanesian society and that, as leader, he jells an already existing movement, rather than initiates a new movement.

That new movements, or new and different religions, can and do result from prophetic activity, is not to be denied. Such evolutions are obviously relevant to the investigation of charisma and some authors lament the lack of study on the post-crisis

stage of Cargo cults and crisis cults in general; they bewail the concentration on the origins of such cults (Zenner in La Barre 1971:35). The routinization of charismatic or quasi-charismatic movements is germane to any study of Cargo cults, but the subject is too vast for the scope of this thesis, which will eventually conclude that the movement absorbs the prophet anyway.

I cannot agree that Cargo prophets are political leaders; it appears to me, however, that there are side effects of Cargo cults that help in the growth of secular movements. For example, the sense of indigenous solidarity that cuts across narrow parochial boundaries at the height of a Cargo cult, often persists after the cult ostensibly fades out. As such, there is provided a wider base for the next cult, whether it be new, or a resuscitation of the old (and here once more the opinion of Wallace is to the point, that there are no new crisis cults under the epistemological sun, just revivals of old cults, with the new twist of whatever modern crisis precipitates the cult resurgence).

There is fertile ground for national movements here, because the newfound unity offers a wider audience for patriots to appeal to. It is considerations such as these that have led Worsley and Lanternari to seeing Cargo cults as proto-nationalistic and proto-political movements.

Charisma is not routinized but transformed (Worsley 1968: xlix; Tucker 1968). It is, by definition, impossible for charisma to become routinized; what happens is that it is changed into tradition, and the original charisma is revered by the successors



to the prophet as belonging peculiarly to the prophet. This explains why tradition becomes sacrosanct; also why it is that the "founding father," the original charismatic leader, is apotheosized. To our heroes we commonly ascribe immortality (the late John F. Kennedy "cult" is a good example). We need not go into the significance of this, but it is interesting that such ascription seems to be associated with specifically charismatic charismatic leaders only. It is not in virtue of the transmission of charisma however, that the prophet's successors rule; their commission at the hands of the prophet to hold office is what gives them authority, and their position validity.

Turning to the New Guinea situation, it seems entirely logical to assume that the prophets exercised their leadership according to the canons of traditional indigenous behavior. Basically, there were two requirements for men who aspired to be traditional leaders--to be enterprise coordinators for their village, and to be masters of ritual.

As coordinators, the traditional leaders "had to initiate and organize annually recurrent undertakings, especially in economic life" (Lawrence 1964:250). With regard to ritual, it was held that the leaders knew the secret spells and other arcana, which were given to them by the gods in dreams or other epiphanies (Lawrence ibid.). Sahlins writes:

Politics is in the main personal politiking in these Melanesian societies, and the size of a leader's faction as well as the extent of his renown are normally set by competition with other ambitious men. Little or no authority is given by soc-

ial ascription: leadership is a creation--a creation of followership. 'Followers', as it is written of the Kapauku of New Guinea, 'stand in various relations to the leader. Their obedience to the headman's decisions is caused by motivations which reflect their particular relations to the leader.' So a man must be prepared to demonstrate that he possesses the kinds of skills that command respect--magical powers, gardening prowess, mastery of oratorical style, perhaps bravery in war and feud. Typically decisive is the deployment of one's skills and efforts in a certain direction: towards amassing goods, most often pigs, shell monies and vegetable foods, and distributing them in ways which build a name for cavalier generosity, if not for compassion...(Sahlins 1963:166).

It was my experience that the leaders were rarely innovatory with their schemes; they hewed very much to the line marked out by the general consensus. New ideas were only welcome to the degree accorded them by popular expectation. From personal observation, I would say that in many cases, the leaders' role was to be midwife at the birth of slowly and sometimes begrudgingly reached consensus. Of course, a man with oratorical talents, and fierce purpose, and (above all) with a background of experiences different from the general run of experience, could be an innovator. But woe betide such a man, or nay other less enterprising leader, who could show successes to justify his innovation. He would be dumped quite as uncereemoniously as is any Western politician who fails to deliver as he promised. The traditional leader, then, had as much authority as popularly granted him, got the respect he earned, and was as competent as he performed. (All of this is equally true of a Western leader, of course, but in his case, the Western society sets up a complex system of buffers that protects him from the kind of raw confrontation that is the lot of the New Guinea leader at the hands of his autarchic con-

stituents. One prominent New Guinea parliamentarian I know has received mixed doses of kudos and bloody noses).

Granted the indigenous magico-religious epistemology in terms of which the leaders operated, and the prestige attaching to these 'big men', it is hardly conceivable that the prophets should have chosen any other path than this tried and proven position of influence. Especially as the whole point of Cargo was that the New Guinea society could not cope with the situation generated by the restructuring of events and ideas demanded by the intrusion of the Whites. (Here, for the moment, we leave out of consideration the pre- and non-contact cults). As Cochrane (1970:22) says, "society contained 'big men' and 'big men' contained society. They encapsulated all that was valuable and without them nothing had value." When the old epistemology could not cope with the new situation, what was needed was a new 'big man' whose entrepreneurial and ritual activities would restore the homeostasis that the disintegrating old society so desperately sought, both for survival and for self-respect. Says Cochrane (1970:170):

...it seems that in traditional society ordinary men relied, for the determination of their individual status, on the existence of two polar status concepts, the 'big man' and the 'rubbish man'.....when the Europeans had control of the multi-purpose organizational framework the system no longer worked, though its structural integrity was preserved. Ordinary men could no longer calibrate their own individual status against that of the 'big man.' The only standard they could evaluate their performance against was the standard of the 'rubbish men.' Indigenous society then became disintegrated, unsocial, unstressed, and inarticulate.

It was the prophet who provided a new standard. In this

regard, it is interesting to contrast the prophet with another figure, the village official. The official was appointed by the local Administration representative, after some consultation with the villagers. (Since the advent and spread of Local Government Councils, villagers have elected their own representatives). It was my own experience that few of these officials were effective; their job was unenviable in the extreme, since they received abuse from both their fellow villagers and the visiting Administration officers. As far as the indigenous system was concerned, village officials were anomalous. There was no native basis for their authority or mode of operation, only fear of a wrathful Administration which demanded strict accounts of its imposed and bewildered stewards, and included the hapless villagers in the accounting. Burrige comments (1960:261): "unless an official is also a manager he cannot command the respect of his fellow villagers. He is truly a puppet." In the same context, he notes that the prophet succeeds where the village official fails:

....if it can be said that there must be some way of marrying political offices to a structure that traditionally precludes them, and some way of carrying on an economic activity which, on the merits of production, will yield political influence, then, substantially if only temporarily, this is precisely what the charismatic figure does. He organizes a political body, and presents a programme which, through himself and the combined efforts of the participants, will realize their political and economic aims.

For the New Guinean, every constructive activity is accompanied by ritual practices. The garden will not produce, the wife will be infertile, the hunt for wild pig will fail, unless the proper ritual is carried out. Against such a background, how

could the official, that White-conceived anomaly, possibly succeed? For the same reason, it is entirely understandable that the prophet was welcome, not only for his message (which was what the people wanted to hear anyway), but for his cult ritual too, which was validated by the ancestors or the gods in dreams or apparitions and geared to producing a new kind of desirable material good, White cargo.

The 'big men' surrendered to the prophets their position at the center of things very reluctantly. Schwartz' Manus study instances opposition on the part of 'big men' to the cultists and cult leaders, and whatever Paliu felt about the Second Cult, pragmatism dictated that he dampen that cult and he did (Schwartz 1962). To be a 'big man' was, by definition, to be an achiever, and 'big men' would desist from their efforts at that achievement while Cult enthusiasms raged, but it took a mighty prophet indeed to command the allegiance of all of the 'big men' over a long period of time. Because the cargo never did arrive, the prophet always failed to keep that promise (ostensibly, acquiring cargo was his aim; we will show later that cargo was a symbol, not a consumer itch), and 'big men' were essentially practical men who could understand failure, but not condone it.

After observing that "cargo cults need to be seen as an integral part of a group's social life, rather than as intrusive elements temporarily disruptive" (Ryan 1969), Dawn Ryan suggests that politics should be the measure of the cults. She thinks that the political consequences of cargo cults will help explain

their recurrence and their repeated failure. I think we must ask--"failure to do what?"--but Ryan's ideas are interesting, especially her contention that the excitement and conflict which arise after the announcement of the prophetic message, result from the threat the prophet poses to the political organization in the village.

There can be no argument about the barely repressed resentment felt by some 'big men' toward the prophet and his lieutenant but it was relatively rare for this to surface in open opposition. The most affluent 'big man' in the village where I lived was one of those who refused to destroy his pigs during the 1958 cult, as most of his village and many of the nearby village joined in doing. By 1969, this individual was an envied man bilong bisnis (entrepreneur).

The Highlands of New Guinea have been freer of Cargo cults than most of the coastal areas. Finney, Read, and Salisbury have all shown that dramatic change within many of the Highlands societies (Finney wrote about Goroka specifically), has taken place not by way of transformation of the traditional leadership, but by a transferral of its patterns of individual achievement to the modern context of cash cropping and commercial enterprise (Finney 1968). Lawrence had appealed for radical changes in the economic field as the prerequisite for eventually changing the native epistemology (Lawrence 1964:273), and he noted that when there were significant and reasonably quick returns from the 'new economy', the Cargo cults declined and the Cargo movement itself

greatly subsided. It must be noted, however, that the Highlands story is rather different from seaboard history. It was only after World War II that intensive development of the area was undertaken by both Missions and Administration. The crops tried, the climatic conditions, the availability of markets, and above all, the encouragement given by the Whites--all these contributed to growth and patterns that were quite different from what occurred earlier on the seaboard.

Finney's article offers the possibility that, contra Weber, charisma is not always the major revolutionary force in tradition bound epochs. Given the right circumstances, and above all the support of the Europeans, the Goroka 'big men' adapted successfully and moved smoothly into new activities that fulfilled their traditional roles, without costing them and their society a sense of cultural continuity.

There is the intriguing implication in the Highlands "success" story that Cargo cults may never have arisen in other parts of the country had the race relations been of the kind that generally prevailed in the Highlands. There is the factor of religious background too. It is difficult to escape being vaguely generalistic on the matter of religion, but the Highlands religions seem to have been more pragmatically inclined than those of the seaboard peoples, and the difference could be crucial in explaining the difference in reaction to the White contact situation. (Berndt found evidence in the Eastern Highlands of a cargo-like movement that had antedated the contact situation. It was

apparently triggered by the sight of an aeroplane).

The 'big man' institution was then, vital and capable of dealing with a drastically changed situation if given both opportunity and help. But where neither at the organizational or the structural level could be 'big men' be effective, then the social mechanism called for a man who knew how to gear the society to the acquisition, and absorption of cargo and the white man. This was the prophet, whose claim to being a new 'big man' rested not on new methods, but on a new revelation. The village official had neither method nor secret message. And today's parliamentarian had better have something to show for his speeches and promises, or he too will fail the test which is ultimate for the man who aspires to 'big man' status--success in the socio-economic sphere.

Lawrence emphasizes that Yali did not question the traditional epistemology. (His later activity was largely concerned with the nativistic revival of one of the old ceremonies, the Kabu). Lawrence comments about the Cargo leaders in general:

This endorsement of the traditional values and intellectual assumptions was vital for the position of the leaders of the cults....yet it must not be taken to mean that these leaders were idolized as a completely different type of human being... they were 'new men' only in that, as ordinary natives, they would achieve the success their followers desired (1964:254).

The prophets were catalysts of the Cargo movements. Their assumption of leadership was an exercise of individual initiative that was at the same time the forwarding of a group purpose (Lanternari 1965:304). The Marxist view of a dialectic between the individual personality of the prophet and the group personal-



ity (or culture) of his society is an apt description of the prophetic activity.

#### IV. THE PROPHET AS PSYCHOTIC

Early in this century, the anthropologist F.E. Williams was suggesting that the origins of the Vailala Movements he had been studying lay in the minds of individuals, in the visions or in the delusions they experienced. For Haddon and Chinnery, much of the ideology of the cults they studied was "bizarre" (Chinnery and Haddon 1917).

Among more recent students of millennial movements, Sierksma is quoted as agreeing with Williams that the Papuan "basic personality" indicated mental instability, that is, proneness to ecstasy and the loss of self-control (Werblowsky 1965:166).

The majority of authors have looked for explanations of millennialism (and specifically, of Cargo cults), elsewhere than in the psyche of the prophets or of their followers. Among the psychologistic theorists however, Cohn suggests that paranoia lay behind the medieval "pursuit of the millenium"; Linton thinks that nativistic movements are a form of escapism; Barber holds that acute feelings of deprivation created the unrest found in nativism; Kobben judges nearly all the prophets to have been exceptional men and nearly all of them emotionally unstable.

There are more recent theories and explanations of Cargo cults and crisis cult phenomena that are entirely psychologistic, and they should be mentioned here, in the interest of complete-

ness, for what they may tell us of the state of the prophet, and for what they may suggest about the effects of acculturation.

Dr. Burton-Bradley suggests another, practical reason. Cargo cult prophets have arisen to positions of leadership in Papua New Guinea (cf. Aliwan, leader of the Mt. Turu cult), and the likelihood of these "sick leaders" running the affairs of an emerging country is fraught with serious consequences, if it really is true that they are "sick."

There is a further reason for considering these psychological theories, and that is that we must not let the suggestion of the abnormality of the prophet distract us from the symbolism of this figure. The prophetic presentation of his message, and his near identity with it, are crucial to the articulation of the pain felt by the society, whose angst the prophet typifies. But discrediting the prophet as a crank, a longlong or hed i go raun man (lunatics), has not contributed effectively to stopping the cults, in my experience. Instead, it has helped delay white understanding of what the cults are about and deferred for yet another day that self-confrontation White people need undergo if we are to move toward healing the wounded Papuan.

Of course, if it is true that acculturation is neuroticising, and that alcoholism, for example, is an inevitable accompaniment of acculturation, then the colonial public servant and the missionary have reason to pause and to weigh carefully, even fearfully, the consequences of the well-intended but often ill thought out programs of cultural change each so readily introduces

in both established and newly opened areas of Papua New Guinea.

In his review of Muhlmann's book, Wilson (1963) notes Muhlmann's suggestion that it would repay us to examine the relationship between shaman and prophet, to discover points of convergence in shamanistic practice and millenarian movements that arise in the same society. Such an examination, it is suggested, may reveal the shaman and the prophet to be marginal men. At the risk of clouding the distinction made on pages 27 and 28, between prophet, shaman, and lieutenants, we will consider shaman and prophet as being roughly synonymous for the rest of this section, since parallels in their behavior and modes of operation have already been discerned by investigators.

Are prophet and shaman psychotic, as some authorities allege? Or, just slightly odd? F.E. Williams speaks of the frenzied behavior of the Vailala cultists as "automania" and he found that a "small clique or cabal" continued the kind of behavior for several years after the high point of the cult was passed. He discerned "a somewhat unwholesome combination of prophet, priest, and wizard; and indeed, the whole system is not unlike a mild and incipient shamanism" (Williams 1923:37).

Fulop-Miller thinks that the source of millenarian movements is to be found in dreams. The great and primal dream is the anxiety dream; the ideas of a millenium he categorizes as "all too plainly the outcome of a defensive reaction against dread" (Fulop-Miller 1935:58).

It is with Wallace, Sierksma, Devereux, and La Barre that

one finds the most explicit formulation of the "prophet as psychotic" thesis.

If one accepts Sprio's arguments (1951:7) that the development of personality and the acquisition of culture are one and the same thing (that is, that the individual's symbolic behavior consists of symbolic systems he learns from others) and that the shaman's society is in a state of crisis bordering on neurosis, then it is difficult not to accept the contention that what the shaman suffers is a socialized neurosis. As Devereux expresses it (1955:17), the beliefs of the shaman "express the conflicts inherent in the unconscious segment of the group."

La Barre cites Spiro's essay on culture and personality in his explanation of the "epidemiology of crisis" (1971:37):

a culture hero's charisma has an 'uncanny' authority because it speaks to the assenting unconscious wish and need of many communicants;

and again (1961):

the shaman-prophet does the 'dream-work' for his whole society ...the culture hero is the man who, largely for individual reasons, most acutely feels the crisis of his times.

Wallace's opinion of the psychic disorganization that troubles the prophet is expressed in an organismic analogy, "the mazeway." The details need not concern us; what Wallace maintains is that the prophet's experience is a resynthesis of reality demanded by the psychic disorientation he endures. This process underlies the birth of all new religions, such religions being the cognitive remapping the prophet has had to undertake to regain his bio-psychic equilibrium (Wallace 1956).

A Dutch author, Sierksma, conceives of messianic movements as special cases of the wider problem of acculturation. For him, acculturation is always neuroticizing, "acculturation produces socially disintegrating and individually neuroticizing effects" (Sierksma in La Barre 1971). On the other hand, the Czech Junkova, while agreeing that there is always an acculturation-relaiton in crisis cults, denies that there is always stress. She disdains the psychological approach, on the grounds of its a-historicality, and prefers to "consider all nativisitc beliefs as the products of normal judgement in a given hsitorical epoch" (Junkova in La Barre 1971).

In defence of the "normalcy" of shamanism, Lewis (1971:11) maintains that shamanism is a form of psychotherapy, and that to speak of abnormalities is to betray ethnocentrism in one's viewpoint. The possession of the shaman by the spirits is, according to Lewis, a culturally normative experience (1971:185):

we must recall that in the societies with which we are dealing belief in spirits and in possession by them is normal and accepted....simply because we do not share their fantasies.. gives us no warrant to write off as mad those cultures whose beliefs in spirits and shamanism we have examined...

This sentiment is answered by La Barre (1970:325):

respect for aboriginals is one matter; but some persons have the air of defending shamans against gross charges in being called mentally unstable or neurotic, an excess of cross-cultural courtesy that recognizes neither what neurosis is nor its prevalence. But to the degree he is a 'culture innovator' the shaman must have an atypical personality.

Whatever about the resolution of this argument, as far as New Guinea prophets are concerned Burton-Bradley (1970:126) has

shown that "a wide range of illness exists" in the nine cases he has examined. Burton-Bradley does not commit himself to saying that the prophet is always an abnormal person. He defines mental illness in terms of "inability to conform appropriately to the behavior expectations of one's cultural-linguistic group" (1970: 128), and he notes that in the first case he dealt with, that of prophet A, the prophet's belief in the correctness of a ritual slaying he perpetrated was not shared by the rest of his village. The victim, B, was apparently a grandiose paranoid like A. Case C was a paranoid schizophrenic; D suffered from delusions. Burton-Bradley warns that the psychiatric norm must be distinguished from the cultural norm; also, he insists that the abnormal prophet does exist and must be treated medically. His remarks indicate he connects Cargo cult phenomena with the "gross discrepancy between aspiration and achievement" that exists in New Guinea, with all the effects that has on status disparities (Burton-Bradley 1970:128).

It is significant that he specifically mentions that the behavior of several of his clients was not normal by their fellow villagers' standards, nor considered acceptable. My own experience with "bizarre" behavior was during several minor flare-ups of Cargo activity, and the comment of some of the young Turks in the village was interesting. They said: ol i giamanim mipela tasol--"they're conning us, that's all." But the reaction to claims of revelation during dreams was much more respectful, ranging from total faith to "wait and see." On the part of one

or two individuals only was there incredulity and this was not loudly voiced. On the other hand, European disclaimers of the validity of the Cargo revelations were rarely listened to. Many are the missionaries and patrol officers who have seen native trust disappear overnight when cult and cult rumor began, and it may well be that it is more profitable to ponder the white credibility gap than the admittedly serious evidence of psychopathic behavior in some cult prophets.



## V. CARGO AND COMMUNITAS

We have seen already that the Cargo leaders did not create the movements but gave voice to the message underlying pre-existing movements. And we have said that for all the "bizarre" aspects of their unfolding the movements were rational, "rational attempts to comprehend and organize the world; given a cosmic view which does not separate the natural from the super-natural" (Worsley 1968:lxv).

There are three indications however, within the Cargo movements which should make us realize that we are dealing with the symbolic within the ambience of these rational attempts. First, nowhere is the theme of the distribution of cargo taken up (Burridge 1960:42). For all the emphasis on material objects such as roofing iron, tables, money, tractors etc., one does not find that the possession of these and then the sharing of them is determined or even discussed. And New Guineans are hardheaded realists in such matters (as any one who has watched the division of food after a singsing (dance) can testify). Cargo is thus more a state of mind than a desirable material possession--it is the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, Heaven, the Golden Fleece, the Golden Age (as in the Mansren cult).

Burridge points out the second indicator that we are dealing with symbols, and this is the theme of free access to cargo, an

access that "represents a precisely opposite condition to that presently being experienced" (Burridge 1969:49). Wanting to have material goods without expending any sweat is so universal a human phenomenon that its formal statement as a cultic theme is quite meaningless unless more is desired than those goods in themselves. In this regard, the self deprecation the New Guineans express along with the wish for free access to cargo is of more than the passing significance that some whites give it. Mipela i rabis, ol fasin bilong mipela i rabis tasol, and ol bigpela man bilong bifer i mor fulap tru long bullshit (Schwartz 1962:319)-- "we are rubbish, all our ways are rubbish, the big men of old were brimfull of bullshit"--how many times has one heard these expressions and others like them from New Guineans. And yet, one knows that New Guineans have a very great self-esteem and a high self-evaluation, and feel a deep shame and anger at being considered "rubbish." The theme of access to cargo then, is a protest against loss of esteem, a symbolic acknowledgement that the locus for the definition of a man has shifted to an inaccessible and foreign center.

The third indicator of the symbolic nature of cargo is found by Burridge in the atypically mystical techniques used solely by the cultists to gain possession of cargo. He says (1960:30):

though the focus of a Cargo cult is on cargo, material wealth, what is distinctive in the logic of Cargo cults is that though the participants have never gained any form of material wealth without pragmatic as well as mystical techniques, in the cult situation mystical means may be relied on to gain pragmatic ends. It is this that forces us to ask whether the explicit ends and means are not symbolic representations of other ends

and means.....

Both Mary Douglas (1969:77) and Pereira de Quieroz (1971) deplore the search for the causal factors behind religious movements (of which Cargo cults are a part), and suggest instead that we look for the symbolic forms. This is surely a valuable insight to apply to the study of Cargo cults, since the search for causal factors of these Melanesian phenomena has led inquiry away from the message contained in the movements and from focusing on the content of cargo beliefs.

At the same time, to seek for causes of Cargo cults can help us to understand the symbolism of Cargo, since these causes shaped the response of the New Guineans to some degree, and thereby contributed to the formation of the symbol and to its evolution. In looking at such causes, we must look for the native perception of them as expressed verbally and also symbolically in cultic activity. And this native perception--to return to our "logic of the situation" premise--could only be founded on traditional standards, especially those two which governed all behavior among themselves, reciprocity and equivalence. In the relationships of New Guineans with Europeans, neither value obtained. And, granted the native epistemology, "they could not learn or develop on their own new, rational, and secular ideas to explain the vicissitudes of the contact situation" (Lawrence 1968: 231). Hence the Cargo movement--an inchoate swell of dissatisfaction, a mood of despondency, an incipient anger at an unidentifiable perplexity, and a restless intellectual effort to formu-

late a comprehensive new vision of a changing world. Above all, it was a mood, a mood of disenchantment. The Old Man would not measure up to the radically different standards of the new situation, so a New Man, a creation of the urgently felt need for a viable image, had to be discovered. Cargo became an obsession, both as economic necessity and as index of self-respect (Lawrence 1964:232). It had to be possessed first or the image of the New and viable Man would be unattainable--but it was the image that was the object of deepest desire, not the steel axe or the gas lamp.

Much of the imagery which was the vehicle for communicating the visions of the prophets--the change of skin color, the shedding of the old skin, the righting of inequities through punishment by tidal waves and earthquakes--is clearly symbolic of the remaking of the image of the Old into the New Man. It is, of course, typically millenary language in its expression and as such not peculiar to New Guinea. What is peculiar to New Guinea is the imagery of the return of the ancestors bearing gifts of cargo, and this for me is an assertion of the rightness of things in New Guinean terms--the cargo should be theirs, it should be brought by their ancestors. The New Man is defined in that framework because such is demanded by the New Guine worldview.

There are terms of self-disparagement and of ambition used by New Guineans in ordinary conversation and in village speeches that also point to an end beyond mere material possession of cargo. Several have been referred to already; others commonly heard

are mipela i no inap, mipela i laik kamap olsem waitskin, wait-skin i winim mipela--"we are not enough, we want to be like the whites, the whites are superior to us." All such expressions are open to several interpretations of course, but in the context of their use, especially in speeches exhorting people to change over from the old ways to the new, and in the light of overall personal experiences which confirmed the aggressive competitiveness and pride of New Guineans, it is my conviction that equality with whites is the latent meaning in such "confessions" of inferiority. In the Cargo cult situation, they express protest; in the secular situation--the Local Government address, the speech before the Patrol Officer--they can be, and often are a form of "shucking" (Kochman 1969:67); in both cases there is evidence of a realization that more is at stake than White prosperity and its symbols.

Finally, I suggest that the symbolism of the "book"-- the printed word and the illustration both are included here-- should not be overlooked in the reported statements of Cargo ideology, cargo dream, and cargo ritual. The instances where a book or a picture have played a prominent part in some Cargo cult are too many to recount. The latest reported is that of the Mt. Turu cult, where Hawina possesses an Agatha Christie thriller and says that this lady is going to be the future boss of New Guinea. One of my own first experiences with cargo leaders involved a protracted conversation over a copy of the National Geographic Magazine--it was the key to the cargo. In this case, the leader's lieutenant had a tattered New Guinea Reader in English.

Not for nothing are such books or parts of books prized by cargo cultists. I think there is a significance to the "book" far beyond its use as a magic key to cargo or as a prestige symbol for the cult leader. The printed word possesses awesome power in New Guinean eyes. Westerners have lost the sense of the word, verbal or printed, but not so the primitive or the pre-literate. For him the word is an extension of the speaker, a part of him, and it is pregnant with power. And the printed word is quite uniquely a White possession in New Guinea, possessing the amazing power to pay for cargo without any labor being needed, or to inform strange visiting Patrol Officers of past offences they find in the Government Village Book record, or to tell all kinds of technological secrets to white mechanics and doctors and builders. Here in the printed word is the critical differentiation between Black and White, between the disenfranchised and those who have inherited the earth. If such a theory sounds fanciful we might well ponder the fact that illiteracy was (and still is among some) considered by many New Guineans an evil, a sin. Witness a Pidgin English catechism (1961)--man i no save rid-rait, i gat pekato o nogat? "a man doesn't know how to read or write, is that a sin?" Invariably the answer will be an immediate i gat "it's a sin."

Appearing quite as frequently in cargo cults as the theme of the "book" is the missing page theme. The missionaries (it is said) have given to the natives a Bible from which the first page is missing, and on this first page it is stated that God made the

black man first and set him over creation. There are several points here worth considering but suffice it to point out that the truth of the Bible is not disputed at all; what is under dispute is White fidelity in conveying the Bible. The Bible itself enjoys an enormous prestige with New Guineans on two counts-- it is the printed word par excellence, and it contains a divine message. In view of its prominence as a feature in most cargo cults I find it highly suggestive that the first edition of the New Testament in Pidgin English, called Nupela Testamen, should have been sold out relatively quickly--40,000 copies sold to a largely illiterate population of two million odd is quite remarkable.

Perhaps too much is made here of the "book" and "missing page" themes in cargo cults; we should not allow ourselves to be distracted from the point at issue, which is that cargo is a symbol of what could be and what is keenly desired, a New Man who is demonstrably a man to those especially who, either explicitly or implicitly, denigrate the Old Man--the Europeans.

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We come now to the heart of Cargo, the myth-dream. As a symbol, cargo permeates the whole socio-religious Cargo movement. It is as persistent and ever present as the thud of the garamut (log drum) throughout a native singsing. Cargo is foundation and ambience of the myth-dream which is the basic epistemology of the new prophetic revelation whose announcement by the prophet gives

birth to a cult and brings to a head unarticulated yet deeply felt frustration. The myth-dream is the depositum fidei of Cargo movements. Burridge(1960:27) defines it:

....a body of notions derived from a variety of sources such as rumours, personal experiences, desires, conflicts, and ideas about the total environment which find expression in myths, dreams, popular stories, and anecdotes.

It is the myth-dream which restores order to a situation experienced as chaotic, and injects meaning into a metaphysical vacuum; it inspires, vivifies, and orients the entire Cargo movement.

Burridge is credited with coining the term "myth-dream." For him it is almost synonymous with "aspiration," except that this latter term implies a comprehension and intellectualization of the myth-dream he says is lacking in the dreamers (1960:26).

Myth-dream is what Cargo cultists believe in, and what they believe is so kaleidoscopic a vision of truth that the Cargo movement is characterized by a rich diversity. Worsley (1968: lxv) comments:

....there is not a unitary cult, with a single, internally consistent and unequivocal body of beliefs, but whole sets and series of diverse and often competing attempts to institutionalize particular ways of acting out what different interpreters of the beliefs read as the implication of these beliefs for action.

All the evidence we have for Cargo cults points to the accuracy of Worsley's remarks. The one feature common to all the cults is the myth-dream; indeed, it is probably the one generalization that can be safely predicated of Cargo cults. There is no single myth-dream common to all cults although there are many similarities in comparative myth-dreams. There is, moreover, no



internal consistency and unequivocality in the myth-dream. The profusion of diverse sources which contribute to its formation preclude such consistency.

But it is just this crazy quilt of rumors, half-truths, wishes and wild imaginings which so well explains the variegated response exhibited within individual cargo movements and in cult behavior. Myth-dream lies at the dawn of creation of Cargo, it is a creature of the epistemological half-light, emerging from a darkness not yet completely dispelled into an illumination not yet fully enlightening. Dawn is a liminal moment, the betwixt and between of darkness and light, and to it belongs most naturally the figure of the prophet, that betwixt and between man who announces the revelation contained within the myth-dream. His own troubled countenance is most truly representative of those who dwell in the dream time, and his words, behavior, and person reflect the most salient features of the myth-dream.

It is in such liminal moments that myths originate, according to Victor Turner (1968). The Cargo myth-dream responds closely to Turner's analysis of myths and conversely, his analysis directs us to discovering certain features in myth-dream which are pointers to the deeper significance of cargo cults, above all to the communitas which emerges in liminal movements.

Turner (1968:576) follows Thompson in defining myths as "sacred narratives telling of sacred beings and of semi-divine heroes and of the origins of all things, usually through the agency of these sacred beings." They "are liminal phenomena:

they are frequently told at a time or in a site that is 'betwixt and between'" (ibid.) That is, myths originate during a cultural and social limbo, in an interstitial space and time of statuslessness, ambiguity, and antinomianism. Whether bound to rites de passage or not, there is in myths a reversal of roles within social situations, and of meanings within the cultural situation, and an explosion of freedoms, social and cultural and epistemological. There is protest against not only the limitations of the life phase now being left behind (Van Gennep's "separation"), but against the inhibitions all social and cultural boundaries, and this shows itself most starkly in an almost gross somatic symbolism, an assertion of the biophysical against its socio-culturally conditioned bondages. Thus, in cargo cults we find the miraculous--resurrection of the dead, promise of perpetual well-being, abundance of food, cessation of labor; status reversal-- poor becomes rich, slave becomes free, mortal puts on immortality, black becomes white; and value inversion--sex is either wildly free or complete continence is enjoined, woman equals man and there is an end to female ritual uncleanness, human sacrifice becomes laudable and nonrepugnant, incest is no longer forbidden.

In liminality therefore, and in the myths generated in liminality there is found a dialectic between structure and anti-structure. For our purposes here it is not necessary to examine the binary contrasts afforded by the liminal dialectic between, say, property and communism, marriage and free love. What is outstanding in the period of liminality and in the liminally gener-

ated myths is communitas. This is more than an existential levelling, statuslessness, or disappearance of distinctions and discriminations. It is fraternity, and comradeship. Turner (1969: 127) quotes Buber:

Community is the being no longer side by side (and, one might add, above and below) but with one another of a multitude of persons. And this multitude, though it moves towards one goal, yet experiences everywhere a turning to, a dynamic facing of, the others, a flowing from I to Thou. Community is where community happens.

As Turner notes elsewhere (1969:111), millenary movements in general are striking for their communitas, and this is most evident in cargo cults, where there is constant repetition of the themes of anonymity, homogeneity, togetherness, peace, the widening of kinship definition to include even former enemies, but above all, unity. This is surely the reason for Worsley and Lanternari discerning in cargo cults incipient nationalis. Peter Lawrence comments (1964:7):

The Movement eventually gave the natives of the southern Madang District a sense of unity they had never known before European contact and, especially in its last stage, developed into a form of 'embryonic nationalism' or 'protonationalism.'

I would not deny the protonationalism deduction of Lawrence but I suggest that in going so far it misses the point. Communitas is not so much a realization of the unity among New Guineans nor an anti-White phenomenon, but a protest against the lack of unity and equality between Black and White. Communitas is what the Cargo cults ultimately bring about in the cult followers as a microcosm of the desired larger communitas with the European, a communitas embodied in the figure of the prophet who stands on

that threshold between native and white where barriers are down and distinctions disappear (Turner 1969:94). This we may fairly deduce from examples such as the Primal Myth (Burridge 1960) and in the progressive Cargo Beliefs uncovered by Lawrence (1964).

Here it will be enough to look briefly at the Primal Myth. Burridge gives four versions of it but the final explanation of the prevailing Black-White situation is the most relevant, he says (1960:172).

The chief protagonists are two brothers who, in everyday life, ought to be in a moral relationship with each other. One of them, representing black men, Kanakas, commits a "sin," and appears to be doomed to a life of servitude in consequence. He is not endowed with nous, or understanding; he can copy but he cannot invent; he is unable to write and he cultivates yams. The other brother, innocent, has the ideal attributes of a European. Gifted, he follows through the ideal sibling relationship by caring for his more unfortunate brother, and by bringing to him the fruits of his fortune. That is, the myth not only accounts for a present in terms of the past but leaps forward to suggest how the moral relationship of brotherhood can be worked out in terms of the existing circumstances. Primarily, the benefits of nous--cargo--should be shared.

Communitas then, is conceived of as more than a possibility--there is the suggestion that while the black man admittedly has guilt to expiate, this guilt could just as easily have fallen on the whites and the whites "are morally responsible, as brothers, for lightening the load" (Burridge 1960:175). This is the deeper significance of cargo cults--that a share of the cargo will mean that white has recognized the need of black, and this compassion is the beginning of communitas. The old guilt is expiated and a new dispensation prevails, a New Man is born.

The prophetic contribution to the Primal Myth was to suggest

the means whereby expiation could be gained and fraternity achieved. In the myth that was created around Mambu (Burridge 1960:188-90), there is an incident involving compassionate intervention by Mambu's former employer with the captain of the Australia-bound steamer on which Mambu stowed away. This intervention is a symbol of the moral reciprocity that blacks feel is lacking in their relationships with Europeans (Burridge 1960:194). It is an example of communitas, and it is the prophet in the story who "compels" the compassion of the moral European and thus bridges the deplorable gap between European and Black. More, the prophet now symbolizes the New Man, this new creation born of the new relationship between the now-reconciled brothers. The Mambu of myth was a fusion of the black claim to equality and manhood, and the best virtues of the ideal moral European. The Mambu of history was a protest that such should be the normal state of affairs; in the myth he became a symbol of it, the concretization of the Cargo aspirations.

## VI. THE PROPHET AS PROTEST

As the communism of medieval farnciscanism was a protest against the sumptuousness of property yet was itself intelligible only in terms of what it decried, so with Cargo--it was a protest against the unfairness of things but at the same time an affirmation that White was right, he after all had not sinned and thus could claim the inheritance. In this dialectic of structure and anti-structure the tension point is where the prophet stands, in the moment between disconfirmation and affirmation, disavowal and recognition. Or, in other and more dynamic terms, he is the still point of a turning world, "the point at which the past and the future converge" (Lanternari 1963:305).

The soul of Cargo, we have said, is the myth-dream, that complex of unarticulated or semi-articulate aspirations whose goal is the New Man, final product of a longed-for righting of a situation full of wrongs. This New Man is not an individual, but the image of what the individual and the society ideally should be. Here we encounter an epistemological difficulty peculiar to the Western mentality. For whatever reason, the Westerner seems to have an over-developed sense of the individual (to the impairment of his sense of community), and this preoccupation with the individual account (in my opinion) for the Western tendency to seek individual and unique identification for

such symbolic figures as the New Man. (It would take us too far afield to see this tendency exemplified in Biblical studies, but we find there a similar inability to appreciate the communitarian and corporate dimensions of such faith-symbols as "Son of Man", "Son of God", and "Body of Christ." A desire for precision with identification of the various components of myths reveals a misunderstanding of the inchoate character of all myths, that groping for the truth which must fall short of complete comprehension precisely because the existential situation whose origins myth would describe is beyond total comprehension.

The New Man of the Cargo myth-dream is also beyond comprehension, transcending the total grasp of yearning minds. He represents the incorporation of the whole myth-making group through a kind of vicariousness and synechdeche that is (in my opinion) unfamiliar to Western thinking. The New Man is, then, pesman or representative of the New Society, larger than life and larger than any one individual, indeed, transcending so far any concrete individual or individual actualization that the myth is literally an impossible dream. But the yearning is real and the dismay at the present situation acutely felt, while the assumptions of truth underlying the myth-dream are unquestioned. In the progression of Cargo cults and Cargo beliefs there are shifts within the myth-dream, shifts of interpretation and meaning which flow over into shifts in rites and techniques, but the myth-dream as the vehicle of truth is itself never doubted, its own truth is asserted as axiomatic (Burridge 1960: chap.VIII).

The thrust of the myth-dream is basically that of protest, protest against disnomy (Burridge 1960:274; Worsley 1968:lxiii). This disnomy is the consequence of the situation of moral and epistemological disenfranchisement--the Black measure of what is a man is felt to be no longer adequate, and guilt that it is so is experienced, together with bewilderment that the native epistemology cannot cope with all the factors presented by the intrusion of White values (Administration, commercial, and Mission), that amount to disparagement of the Black worldview. Originally, the Cargo sentiment was to protest against the ancestors, to blame them for the inferior condition for the Black brother (cf. Schwartz 1962: ol bigfellow man bilong bifer i mor fulap tru long ol bullshit). But this sentiment gave way before the "mother's milk" conviction that the ancestors did indeed care for their descendants and were in fact the very authors of this new prosperity represented by cargo. How did the Whites come to possess it? Either they stole it, and thus deprived the Black of what was his, or it was theirs by right of their innocence. The first of these interpretations would not hold up against the inescapable evidence of the moral European, that man who did in fact exhibit some of the desired compassion the myth-dream demanded of the White brother.

Mambu's attitude was based on the first of the above alternatives, that is, the whites were bad, Missions and Administration both, and he preached a fiercely anti-White nativism which wanted to ignore the White. (The first cargo movement in the area



of my own missionary experience exhibited this same kind of hostility. It lasted for nearly three years, and the resident missionary had to be withdrawn by the Bishop, but village sentiment eventually overcame the cultists, and a deputation requested the reinstatement of a missionary--much to the relief of the local Administration representative, incidentally).

But for most New Guineans (either by conviction or necessity) the second alternative was the one that made sense. The White brother had the skills, the knowledge, and the power to redeem and help his black brother--the Cargo cults protested that he must do so. It was a moral protest, for only a moral European would fulfill the role of the compassionate white brother and grant a share of and access to the cargo. In doing so, he would be absolving the black brother of his guilt and recognizing him as an equal, and therefore as a man. This was the amity that New Guineans felt should characterize all relationships-- economic, political, and kin--and it should lead to true equivalence (Burridge 1960:81,85).

Who voices this protest, and who most approximates the New Man? The prophet. Mambu, Yali, Aliwan, and a host of others-- they were the men who for a moment not only articulated the myth-dream and gave it coherence (Burridge 1960:149), but personified the dream and the Man.

....the charismatic figure..personifies the myth-dream, and is the channel through whom the contents of the myth-dream may be realized. He it is who articulates the myth-dream, whose activities nourish and refine the content of the myth-dream; who stands for the new man; through whom guilt and organizational

dilemmas will be over-leaped; and through whom access to cargo will be gained. In a certain sense, if only temporarily, the charismatic figure--a single individual--is the myth-dream. But he himself is transitory. When he can no longer personify the myth-dream he fades out of the picture. And his name, evoking the man of flesh and blood, is a channel both to his meanings--his own peculiar synthesis of the self in society--and to the apprehension of the myth-dream as a whole (Burridge 1960:277).

It was the myth-dream itself that adduced this personification. Mambu and Yali were not their own men (nor Paliau of Manus it would seem). They were creatures of the dream and captives of it, in virtue of that strange metaphysic of myth whereby it transforms as it is generated. Thus, Yali was made over into King Yali by the followers of the Letub cult, and the Mambu of myth is not the Mambu of history who spurned the European, but a Mambu who cooperates with the white man in a moral relationship--"at the same time, both Mambus assume the roles and attributes of Europeans, on both levels the new man emerges as an amalgam of Kanaka and European ideal" (Burridge 1960:204).

The prophet could claim to personify the protest inherent in Cargo because he appealed to the revelation given him. This revelation showed him as both source of, and access to the cargo whose inaccessibility was precisely the point of popular protest. It was in this revelation which called the prophet to his specific vocation that the mute protest of the society found its voice, its articulation and its coherence. Without the revelation as his validation, the prophet was nothing, and the revelation was welcome to his followers because it was what they wanted to hear (Worsley), it was attuned to their discontent and dissatis-

faction, and consonant with the native epistemological values. What was longed for, distant, and beyond reasonable hope of attainment, was now suddenly announced as having arrived in the person of the prophet.

One of the Pidgin terms for the prophet is illuminating in this regard. He is known as glasman, which means visionary or seer, but I believe the term literally means one who uses binoculars or a telescope to look into the distance and pulim ol samtin i stap longwe i kam klostu nau--"to bring close what is distant." The prophet is the one who sees into the future and focuses sharply in his vision what is only vaguely apprehended by other eyes. (This same idea of the prophetic vision and the prophetic discernment lies behind the use by several cultists of my acquaintance, of blessed water, to cleanse the eyes--wasim ai--of their followers. Reportedly this was done en masse in several villages and was followed by mass swooning as the vision overwhelmed those whose eyes were opened). This prophetic vision is of the New Man, the one who has access to cargo, by a variety of techniques revealed simultaneously with the picture of the New Man, and these techniques, carried out in cult ritual, are the playing out in a ritualized way of the visionary reality of the New Man.

The rites of cargo cults are directed to the procuring of cargo because the New Man is partly defined in white terms, and so must have access to cargo and to white techniques in obtaining it. Thus, in the Mambu myth, the prophet miraculously produces

money, recognized by New Guineans as the key to cargo. How Mambu is able to do this remains hidden in the myth, but the implication is clear--he knew the rod (road), previously jealously guarded by Europeans. More than that, his return to New Guinea was made in virtue of a pas (letter), that is, Mambu apparently knew the secret locked away in White education and its connection with cargo (Burridge 1960:192-3).

To concentrate on the rites only therefore, especially on their "bizarre" aspects, is to miss the point of what they signify, the truth contained in the myth-dream. It is not the possession of the cargo goods or even the goods themselves that matters, but the possession of them in the context of a new, moral relationship of fraternity and equality with the European. For only this would mean the expiation of the dreaded guilt and the achievement of redemption (Burridge 1960:280)--the new time, nupela taim, the new fashion, nupela fasin, and the new law, nupela lo, would have arrived and this desired relationship become established. And this revelation has been made in the person of the prophet, scapegoat for Kanaka guilt, and release from it at the same time.

The scapegoat theme, the assuming of the sins of others and of their guilt, is recurrent in cargo mythology. Mi karim ol rong bilong yupela; i orait, mi ken indai, mi inap--"I bear your guilt, it's okay, I can die, I'm enough for it"--was how I heard it expressed by one prophet. The Christian missionary is tempted to see in such soteriological statements an imitation of the

Christian salvation-message, but I would disagree. Certainly, there is much cargo plagiarism of the Gospels. (One example: entire sermons are "stolen", repeated almost verbatim (no mean feat), and given a Cargo interpretation.)

I suggest that the origins of the scapegoat theme and of the notion of expiation by death lie in the psychic reaction to the stress being experienced. That is, the crisis is felt to be so overwhelming, the guilt so overpowering, that the traditional means for remedying guilt brought on by infraction of some tabu are recognized as inadequate. Only some extravagant gesture can indemnify for the societal guilt to which the prophet is so sensitive. And if the most extreme gesture of all--death--is felt necessary, then there is the assurance of resurrection as compensation and also as guarantee of release. So, Aliwan, Hawina, and Hawina's wife proclaim their willingness to die; Mambu, Yali, and a dozen others undergo the symbolic "death" of imprisonment and disgrace, and other prophets tell of being transported to Heaven in dreams, or of the return of the ancestors and the beginning of a New Age. From death to life, from guilt to absolution-- once again we find that inversion so characteristic of liminal processes, focused in that liminal figure the prophet, whose attempt to redeem the situation is at the same time a protest that it is intolerable.

Within the cargo ritual, and accompanying the announcement of his mission, are to be found also the "blasphemies" of the prophet so horrendous to the missionaries--the prophet claims to

be like Jesus, or even to be Jesus; to have talked with God; to have ascended into Heaven (in Yali's case, the elevator ride to the fourth floor of a Department store in Australia, where the doors opened on a furniture display); to have died and risen, or to be going to die and rise again; the imitation of Christian rites--baptisms, annointings, hearing Confessions; Cargo sermons; the claims to speak with the identity of various saints (Sts. Paul and John the Baptist were favorites in my experience); the speaking in tongues; ecstatic seizures, and more. These were paralleled on the secular level by such things as the prophet acting like a patrol officer or trader; holding court sessions like a Government magistrate; solemnly scribbling across Village Patrol books; gravely marking out ludicrously short airstrips. All of these--religious and secular phenomena together--are the marks of the New Man, that amalgam who has bridged the gap between less-than-man (Kanaka) and more-than-man (European), and destroyed all the barriers that had been erected between black and white, indigent and rich, native and foreign, familiar and strange, secular and sacred. Such marks conjure for the excited cult followers the whole of the myth-dream that the prophet personifies. His very name is a reminder that truth is otherwise than the present situation portrays it. And at the height of a cult the name of the prophet may be flung at the "oppressors" as grievance, and as summation of all that this people would be, if only the whites would react according to the example of that moral paradigm, the New Kan--prophet of the myth-dream, transfigured and transcendent.

## VII. CONCLUSION

In the face of certain disaster for Israel, with the Chaldeans beating on the gates of Jerusalem, the prophet Jeremiah bought a pice of land (Jer.32:11-15). It was a crazy gesture but it was a sign, a portent of hope and a protest against adversity. This most unlikely candidate for immortality, who had begged off his selection as a prophet of the Lord because he stuttered, embodied, in an hour of crisis, the defiant conviction that the future would vindicate the oppressed. Specifically, the land would bloom again.

The prophets in New Guinea (those mentioned in this thesis and the many more not mentioned), most of them unlikely heroes, were a protest against disnomy. They were the voice of a society that cried "what we want is right" (Firth in Worsley 1968: 247). Aliwan with his cement marker, Hawina with his Agatha Christie thriller, Evar with his Lifebuoy poster--all protested that there had to be some way out of the meaninglessness, some forgiveness for the guilt, some path to achieving togetherness with the superior White brother.

This "togetherness" we have termed *communitas*. While it is foolishly simplistic to look for a single nomothetic aspect of the multi-faceted phenomena we call Cargo, whether it be cause or effect, substantial or incidental, and so fall into that reduct-

ionism rightly condemned by La Barre (1971:26), it is none the less valid to linger over this one very striking characteristic of Cargo and dare to call it essential. Because communitas is certainly what prevails during a cargocult, and some degree of it remains when the peak moments are over. Its prevalence in this betwixt and between period is a protest against its absence in the past, a protest and plea for its continuance into the future. What they want is indeed right, not just the restoration of wild-life in the bush but fraternity in the polis (Aliwan), not the old which bespoke disenfranchisement but the new which promised equality (Mambu), not axes, tobacco, and gas lamps but to be able to sit down at table like White men (Vailala). "The issue is not a pole, or a flag, a load of canned meat or whether a ritual will make bullets turn into water but a satisfactory measure of the nature of man" (Burridge 1969:112).

This "measure of man" is what gives significance to the Cargo prophet. In himself the prophet symbolizes a synthesis of Kanaka and moral European which resolves the Kanaka dilemma of disenfranchisement and inability to bring the European into a relationship of mutuality. To be truly equivalent to another and therefore to be unobligated to him--this truly was redemption and salvation. And here in the prophet of the myth-dream was one who had so transcended the barriers between Kanaka and moral European as to stand, not in a relation of equivalence only, but as an amalgam of both men, a New Man, the fulfillment of Kanaka aspirations and the total validation of the myth-dream.



Strangely, perhaps sadly, the prophet is doomed to failure. On the one hand, if Administration officer or missionary respond to the Cargo protest as moral Europeans, then they will assume the place of the prophet or at least, make him unnecessary:

The European, and chiefly administrative problem, is to work out how to enter the cooperative role and so short-circuit the need for charismatic articulation. That is, if administrative officers could keep abreast of the myth-dream, themselves reducing the moral principles contained therein into political activities, it would be reasonable to expect Cargo cults to die out (Burridge 1960:245).

On the other hand, the prophet could not possibly succeed because the New Man the prophet symbolized in the myth-dream was larger than life and an unrealizable amalgam. The prophetic role was not to be that of a Moses leading his people to the Promised Melanesian Land but to feed the myth-dream, to sustain it, to contribute his personal significance to it so that, thus augmented, it would endure into the future until the next crisis and the next new set of imponderables caused a demand for a shift within the mythic content. For the prophet the myth-dream was his chrysalis--he emerged much more resplendent than history had ever viewed him but true with the axiomatic truth of the myth-dream. The myth-dream made him:

....the charismatic figure, it would seem, the center of a Cargo movement, may or may not have abilities of his own. But because of some qualities he may have, of because of what he is doing, or through a mere accident of time and place, he takes the center of the stage and through the myth-dream other merits are heaped on him. He himself has something. He must have. But on the whole circumstances, the men about him, rumors, and the community which gives the rumors validity, actually create him (Burridge 1960:256).

The prophet is a half-light phenomenon, the one figure

clearly delineated and discernible in the uncertainty of that moment preceding the birth of a Cargo cult. It is his personal tragedy that the moment of full light reveals his failure, for as the cult moves toward its denouement there comes the complete enlightenment of popular realization that the goal is not yet attained, the New Man still eludes them. And there begins anew the process of shaping another myth-dream, one of whose whispered rumors will be the failed prophet's name, and men will reminisce wistfully of the "good time" when the prophet was the focus of their hopes and the promise of their emancipation. The failed leader now becomes the immortal hero.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Paul Finnane has been read and approved by members of the Department of Anthropology.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

May 15, 1972

Date

Margaret Hardin Friedrick

Signature of Advisor