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“Tobi (or Not) Tobi”

**Climate change, cultural heritage and community agency:
an ethnographic case-study of Tobi Island in the Republic of
Palau**

by David Tibbetts,

M.A. University of Guam 2002

Submitted

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in the discipline of Social and Cultural Anthropology

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College of Arts, Society and Education

and The Cairns Institute

at James Cook University

For

Tohwich and his epistemological gyroscope,

And the Ocean within us all...

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Statement of the Contribution of Others

Nature of Assistance	Contribution	Names, Affiliations of Co-Contributors
Intellectual Support	PhD Supervision	Dr. Ton Otto; Dr. Michael Wood
	Transcriptions	Ana Belen Almada Tracey Marcello
	Illustrations	Kirino Mario
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Abstract

This thesis is based on a long-term relationship with the Hatohobei community in the Republic of Palau and involved 12-months of ethnographic fieldwork in 2012 and 2013. The ethnographic data collection included participant-observation, audio and video recorded semi-formal interviews, attendance of public meetings, participation in state and national level climate change adaptation workshops, email and skype correspondence, and general storytelling with community members. In the text I include storytelling and autoethnography as provocative writing methods that help to evoke Hatohobei epistemology and ontology and frame a critical analysis that explores cultural heritage politics, resource management and identity through several developments and events in this relocated and diasporic minority community. The thesis privileges indigenous Pacific values, principles and approaches while highlighting historical and contemporary interpretive frameworks that inform a deeper understanding of how this relocated community continues to nurture and maintain an empowering connection to the remote island of Hatohobei through its natural resource management and a collective imaginary. The ongoing successes of the community have involved multiple colonial administrations, nation-state developments, contemporary relationships with local, regional and international NGO's, and more recently, efforts to adapt to increasing climate event impacts on the home island. How this minority community actively empowers itself through its interface with contemporary neoliberal policies, models and agendas is a testament to Hatohobei resiliency and agency. The story of this empowerment may be useful for many other small island communities facing similar challenges.

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Preface

The people of Hatohobei (Tobi) are intimately connected to their physically remote island in the western Pacific. They are a people of the ocean. Their worldview and imaginations are invoked by, and guided, through their connection with their island home and the ocean around and within. As this small community realises with concern that their island is increasingly impacted by global warming and rising sea-levels, they are proactively imagining and engaging in activities for uncertain and unpredictable futures.

I have chosen to research this particular setting and community concerns because of my long-term and intensive relationship with this community and our mutual concerns toward the maintenance of Tobian cultural heritage. The main research query therefore, is to understand how the Tobian community choose to engage these dynamics and challenges and what this means to their cultural heritage. In the broader sense, it is about how people cope with powerful challenges from abroad and from nature and how people imagine their futures. This research carefully and sensitively explores Tobian culture, history and contemporary challenges and then eventually addresses the following research questions:

- What is the relationship between cultural heritage of the Tobians and their sense of agency in relation to climate change events?
- How does global discourse on climate change, including concepts like “tragic victims” and “doomsday scenarios” impact on Tobian notions of agency?
- How do cultural heritage and global discourse on climate change impact on Tobian collective identity and their capacity to act toward the future?

- How might Tobian cultural heritage play a role in their adaptive capacity toward climate change events?

To explore and then understand and address these questions with depth, rigour and validity, I embrace this research through my (ongoing) relationships with the community and illuminate this intervention throughout the research and writing process. The credibility of the data and narrative analysis is based upon a trustworthiness that extends from my long-term (and ongoing) community relationships. The emphasis here with credibility and trustworthiness, is through *interpretive rigour*, where our, "...co-created constructions (can) be trusted to find some purchase on some important human phenomenon", and where, "our findings point to action that can be taken on the part of research participants to benefit themselves or their particular social contexts" (see Lincoln and Guba, 2011:120).

I am on a journey with the Tobian community and this research is part of that journey. This experimental ethnography then, is meant to embrace my intimacy with the community and reveal to you through a storytelling narrative analysis, how the community is imagining and anticipating its future. In return then, it is inviting you along on this journey. Please be aware that this experimental ethnography will lead you down some evocative and unconventional pathways. The storytelling engagement takes time, it requires patience, listening and reflection with the developing narrative. It is hopeful that deeper and more nuanced and meaningful knowledge transfer results from this methodological approach. This provocative effort is intentional throughout and meant to bring you into the journey towards understanding Tobian humility, humour, perspectives, approaches, realities, resilience and empowerment.

In order to appreciate the precarious physical setting and dynamics involved, the Tobian worldview and cultural nuances, historical and contemporary linkages, and best

utilise my long-term relationship and commitments within the community, I have selected a research methodology that is framed and implemented around *design anthropology* (see Gunn and Otto, 2013) and the concept of *correspondence* (see Ingold and Gatt, 2013), the practice of *storytelling* (see Lewis, 2016; Schnur Neile and Novak, 2013; Lewis, 2011; Mahoney, 2007) and ‘writing as a method of inquiry’ (Richardson, 2005). Combining fundamentals from design and planning, as well as anthropology, *design anthropology* is collaborative and future oriented, “...with both process and product aimed at the intervention of existing realities”... and where, “design anthropologists are employing methods that involve various forms of intervention, both to create contextual knowledge and to develop specific solutions (see Gunn and Otto, 2013: 3). For anthropological study, the *design anthropology* approach appreciates how a people or community imagine, anticipate and design their futures. This is based around the assumption that humans have the capacity to design and that every act we make is based upon the duality of two components, where the mind projects and the body executes (Gatt and Ingold, 2013). However, adopting from Miyazaki’s “method of hope” (2004), Gatt and Ingold (2013) shift the gaze of objective analysis away from this activity (mind projecting, body executing) and suggest an “opened-ended concept of design that makes allowances for hopes and dreams and for the improvisatory dynamic of the everyday, and for the discipline of anthropology conceived as a speculative inquiry into the conditions and possibilities of human life” (Gatt and Ingold, 2013:141). They are suggesting that in reverse of conventional ethnography, rather than examinations and analyses focusing on historical events and moments “stuck rigidly in a vacuum of the past” (my word choice), embracing a design that is “moving forward with people in tandem with their desires and aspirations” (p.141). With this approach then, anthropology becomes, “like the lives it follows, inherently

experimental and improvisatory, and its aim would be to enrich lives and render them more sustainable” (p.141). Gatt and Ingold’s (2013) key contributing development here is the concept (and practice) of *correspondence*, where we humans are continually interacting with each other in a meshwork of engagements that continually respond to each other and improvising those engagements forward. In this way, to “correspond with the world is not to describe it or represent it, but to answer to it” (p.142). This fundamental component of my research design best fits the research setting, my relationships within, and the research questions. The crux of the *correspondence* process for me is that it embraces, values and validates my relationship with the Tobian community and the research process, as well as the scholarly audience. In doing so, as I engage in correspondence with the community and its evolving actions toward cultural heritage maintenance in the face of climate change impacts and future uncertainty, the research process involves the same uncertainty. I am involved in the dialogue as a soundboard that reflects and refracts with the community and this becomes part of the transformations taking place. What I mean by this is that within my formal fieldwork engagements with community members, as well as my informal conversations and actions within the community, the “correspondence” has in part and parcel, contributed to the ongoing decisions and transformations taking place with the community climate change adaptation efforts. There was and still is a dialogical process and influence between my role as researcher, and friend of the community, and select leadership decisions with regards to ideas, thoughts, and concerns around climate change adaptation and Tobian cultural heritage. The formal and informal engagements between myself and the community also influenced my developing research queries, observations, interpretations and select methodological approach and choices. So, with regards to the methodological approach, as the community uses its own protocols and

tradition as tools in addressing and engaging this uncertainty, I adopt a similar approach through the storytelling and narrative analysis process. This storytelling practice is also in accordance with how Tobians reflect, engage and imagine their futures. Tobian storytelling embodies and carries along the transformative processes in the community. Storytelling with the community on the ground and storytelling as a vehicle of interpretive analysis encapsulates how Tobians are imagining their future. The Tobian community faces these serious challenges with humour, hope and pragmatic positivity. Paralleling this in *correspondence* then, the storytelling vehicle and narrative analysis brings this all home as an academic project. Using Laurel Richardson's "writing as a method of inquiry" (2005) approach, my storytelling (process and product) improvises in correspondence with the Tobian community as they imagine and improvise their futures.

The ensuing narrative analysis embraces select anthropological discussions on diaspora, culture and environment, cultural heritage, and indigenous Pacific studies discourse. Within the framing of Richardson's (2005) "writing as method" practice, I use autoethnography (Duncan, 2004; Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, 2011; Ellis and Bochner, 2000; Holt, 2003) and embrace an interpretive discussion (see Geertz, 1973; Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba, 2011) through the interweaving of two mythological jokester characters. I too, am these jokester characters. These two characters reflect both my reflexive role in this analysis as well as my (ongoing) correspondence with the Tobi community. While this storytelling approach is a challenge to anthropology, it is the concept and my practice of correspondence through storytelling with the community and through my narrative analysis that also provides key contributions to the discipline. Rather than placing myself above or below the community, I am embracing and utilising my role within the community and responding with them

toward every day events and challenges forward. My storytelling and narrative analysis is a correspondence with the Tobi community and with the anthropological audience. I am sharing my intervention in detail, including struggles with my insider/outsider role. The two jokester characters provide a “creative vehicle of validity” (my word choice), if you will, by revealing tensions and uncertainties in the research process. They also allow me to carefully and selectively approach and address Tobian community and family sensitivities and uncertainties.

Data has been collected through 20 years of *correspondence* with community elders, leaders and peers. However, this specific research project entailed 12-months of fieldwork in Tobi, Palau and Helen Reef in 2012 and 2013. Historically and in this formal fieldwork period, the dialogical process involved in this *correspondence* with the community has at varying times included engagements of participant-observation, attendance and documentation of public meetings and community events, video and audio recorded interviews with elders and community leaders, film making, archival research, and my ongoing engagements with community members. I maintain accountability for my role in the data collection processes and the results of this project with utmost care as my commitments and obligations with the community continue long beyond this particular research outcome. Data is presented in various story forms to embody how knowledge is shared and transferred among Tobians. In this way, the research design uses storytelling as a “way of knowing”.

Separating you momentarily from the storytelling that follows, I provide here a concrete overview of the thesis chapters. The following Chapter One introduces and explains the thesis setting and dynamics, the two mythological characters, and also positions myself as researcher. Chapter Two provides an ethnohistorical overview and contextual framing of the traditional Hatohobei landscape as it exists in contemporary

times. It includes relevant ethnographic information about Hatohobei history, tradition, culture and politics and introduces the relationship with larger Palau and the significance of Hotsarihie (also known as Helen Reef, an important and increasingly empowering traditional resource). In Chapter Three I explain the research methodology that is used in this experimental ethnography and the notion of “correspondence” in the research process (Ingold and Gatt, 2013), storytelling, autoethnography, and indigenous Pacific research approaches. I also highlight the dynamics and sensitivities involved in the data collection and writing processes, and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of this methodological approach.

The following three chapters (4, 5 and 6) discuss relevant theoretical framings and then present relevant data through story while providing interpretive analyses in the form of narrative inquiry. Chapter Four explores narratives around the human:environment relationship, diaspora and the collective imaginary. It helps us to understand the physical disconnect of the relocated Hatohobei community and their continued spiritual and imaginary connection with the island. Although there has been a growing physical disconnect from Hatohobei and the knowledge and traditions of an active living community on the island, the community continues to connect through its diasporic imaginary and contemporary efforts of resource management. Among others, Tim Ingold’s (2000, 2007, 2011) work is used extensively to provide conceptual framing of our human:environment relationship. This helps us to understand the diasporic Tobian physical disconnect and imaginary connection to their island home. I then ground the discussion with some personalised and autobiographical events with several cousin-brothers and aunties.

In Chapter Five I explore arguments around cultural heritage politics before sharing several historical events that provide an understanding of two early Tobian

experiences with outsiders; 1) a drift voyage of American whalers in 1836; and 2) the German Hamburg Südsee ethnographic expedition of 1909. The former event explains how the outsiders were considered resources and adopted and expected to fit in to Tobian family and community structures and protocol. This event did not play out very well. The latter event provides perspective on a visit that dramatically impacted the Hatohobei population size. While the German ethnographic agenda was to capture the last of a (perceived) dying culture that was soon to transform into modern society, ironically, they brought influenza to the population and this contributed to a population drop from 990 down to 300 within a short time. These events provide perspective on the contemporary relationships with outsiders as resources, which I then discuss in the following ways. I highlight the development of the very successful Helen Reef Marine Resource Management Program (HRMRMP), which through its successes, has provided training, education and awareness, and income to individuals and the community, and even more importantly an increasing reconnection with the Hatohobei island environment. Through the HRMRMP the community has developed infrastructure and consciousness around protecting its resources, cultural knowledge and identity. This foundation has provided various relationships with outsiders and outside funding and through this, the community has developed an additional two local NGO's; the Hatohobei Organization for People and Environment (HOPE); and OneReef Micronesia. Through these organisations the community is actively engaging in projects to preserve and maintain their cultural heritage. I outline through several stories and events the dynamics and decisions involved in these developments. For these stories and events I focus on two leaders, whom I also consider as cultural transformers in the Hatohobei context. These two leaders are former Governor Thomas Patris and former Delegate for Hatohobei State, Mr. Wayne Andrew. Through several

stories and public meetings with them I tease out cultural heritage politics in the Hatohobei context. This chapter highlights, within this unique remote island and minority community status, the empowerment and agency of the Hatohobei community historically and through their successful contemporary relationships with outside organisations and models. This chapter then segues into the current and increasing threat of more erratic climatic events to the physical environments of Hatohobei and Helen Reef, which once again, threatens of course, Hatohobei cultural heritage.

In Chapter Six I outline the discourses around climate change politics and then discuss how anthropology and ethnographic research is helpful to clarify how local communities are impacted by increasing climatic events and the options and choices they are making to adapt to these realities. Much climate change research focuses on policy and mitigation, while there is a paucity of research that examines local level dynamics, issues and options and practices of adaptation. We have much to learn from these local-level experiences with increasing and erratic climate and weather events. While in Chapter Five I outlined the ongoing successes and reconnections with the home island of Hatohobei (Tobi), in Chapter Six I explore further how the community, with increasing concern over climate change events, continues to proactively face this threat. Through the leadership of Wayne Andrew and Thomas Patris, and the infrastructures around HOPE and OneReef Micronesia, the community organised climate adaptation workshops and applied for funding to support research efforts toward possible mitigation efforts. They are working on local, national and global education and awareness around these concerns and I highlight this through several stories with elders and leaders, discussions through community meetings, and efforts toward research grant applications. In 2012 the community secured research funding of EUR 150,000 from the Prince Albert of Monaco foundation, and is actively working on

a trust fund agreement with philanthropists from Silicon Valley and also the environmental group, Conservation International. These relationships grew out of the Helen Reef Marine Resource Management Program and help the community to prepare itself for its uncertain futures. I argue, as well, that the duality and imaginary of the Hatohobei diaspora, the resiliency of Hatohobei people and culture that is based around the socio-political structure we are calling, the “in-charge complex” (Black, 1982), continues to empower their collective.

The concluding Chapter Seven provides a synthesis of all the linkages and themes of the thesis argument. This discussion is focused around a particular photographic image from Helen Reef. It ends with a discussion around the research questions stated above and then with the two mythological jokester characters sharing stories and addressing their concerns that were laid out in Chapter One. While we listen to the two characters provide their response to the research questions set forth, in this final chapter I also detail the various outcomes of this research endeavour and suggestions for further research.

The research reveals how this small and marginalised community has historically responded to various external challenges. While the new challenge of erratic climate threats involves considerable urgency, we find that the historically resilient Tobian cultural heritage and identity continues to productively imagine its future in relation to environmental and global neoliberal challenges. It is common for Western epistemological framings and discourse to represent Hatohobei island as remote, small and insular and this mentality involves many related negative and oppressive misconceptions. This is most unfortunate as it contributes to the continued marginalisation of small island communities and does unnecessary damage when in fact, reality is quite the contrary. The Hatohobei historical and continuing

contemporary experience is a journey that embraces multiple local, regional, national and global sites and intersections with many peoples and places, and the Tobian collective spirit and agency continues to grow that journey into the future. This provocative experimental ethnography highlights this reality through a correspondence of storytelling, autoethnography, narrative analysis, and ‘thick’ ethnographic detail.

Consider for a moment the climate change discourses of recent years, including current Tobian ideas that indicate the home island is sinking into the ocean. How then can space and place continue informing cultural heritage when the island is sinking? As a small, marginalised and relocated community, the island of Hatohobei is an integral part of Tobian cultural heritage. Understanding how the cultural heritage of this relocated community embraces and engages the potentially traumatic loss of their home island and how this space and place may continue as a resource for the community speaks to the dynamics of Tobian agency and Tobian futures. This is a unique socio-cultural and political space where we critically explore and analyse cultural heritage, the environment, climate change and human agency. Insights and foresights through such an ethnographic and anthropological narrative analysis are beneficial for other small-island communities facing climatic events and possible adaptive and mitigating actions such as population resettlement. For me, the emphasis on *correspondence* and *storytelling*, is instrumental in learning from and with the Hatohobei experience, and toward social and political awareness and transformations forward.

Chapter 1 Tobi (or Not) Tobi

*Whoever undertakes to set himself up as a judge of Truth and Knowledge is shipwrecked
by the laughter of the Gods.
--Albert Einstein*

1.1 Tohbwich, Medechiibelau and “Survivor”

Invoking the legendary Hatohobei ghostly spirit, Tohbwich, and the Palauan mythical figure, Medechiibelau, is not the conventional method of introducing either Hatohobei, or Palau, respectively, as a land, as a space with a collective cultural, social and political meaning, or as a people that collectively connects to these spaces. Until recently, in fact, these two figures, with entirely separate cultural (if not, cosmological) backgrounds, had not been known to associate in the same time and space. Later we will understand more clearly, the significance of how and why they have made acquaintance. One will not learn of these two figures from stories, or stories about them, in the historical archive of literature, the scholarly record, or even within the ubiquitous development reports and tourist propaganda put forth as the “official record” of “Palau” and “Hatohobei”¹. Rather, to learn from these two culturally meaningful characters, one must be ready to listen, at the right time and place, to their stories from and through, select Palauan and Hatohobei elders. These are stories that have been passed through the generations and with important meaning for their peoples. Apparently, these two legendary and provocative figures have recently engaged in an interesting dialogue. It seems, that they are rather concerned that in recent times, too few have been listening to the elders and their stories.

¹ Hatohobei is the indigenous name for Tobi Island. The two terms are used interchangeably in varied contexts by the Hatohobei community and I do the same throughout this text.

Indeed, these two figures are, for the most part, missing from the written record, historically ignored by the academic and otherwise, mainstream discourses. This is unfortunate, as these two unique figures have historically played an important, albeit understated, role in the moral and political guidance of Palau and Hatohobei societies. Medechiibelau, you see, in Palauan mythology, is a prominent clown character², a mischievous trickster figure that can change form and often instigates trouble. Yet, in historically doing so, his actions serve to remind Palauan people of respect for their customs and the histories behind these customs. Tohbwich, a ghostly spirit within the Hatohobei collective imagination and experience, is known to move around in space and time rather frequently and to arrive unannounced at both the worst of times and the best of times, usually laughing and joking, sometimes causing fear around certain events, and in a very circumspect manner, always pushing boundaries to remind the collective of what is acceptable (or not), and along with this, showing and providing the need for both humour or fear to manage conflict. Tohbwich is notorious for humorously taking the blame for particular events in a way to ease conflict for future relations. Although from separate histories and cosmologies, these two characters have much in common. They both have flaws, sometimes greedy for attention, sometimes naughty in their ways, but without question they engage a full appreciation of song, dance, food, love, and laughter. In their efforts, at the expense of themselves most often, pushing boundaries and managing conflict results in the maintenance of core cultural values, principles and respectful relations toward long-term adaptation, balanced continuity, and empowerment for their communities.

² Please review Vilsoni Hereniko's, *Clowning as Political Commentary: Polynesia, Then and Now* (1994) for his treatment on clowns and clowning and the impacts on maintaining social and political balance, which also include critiques of oppressive authority, including that of traditional chiefly leadership, elected local leadership, as well as colonial and/or globalized systems of oppression.

It seems that these two mythical characters came together recently for the first time ever³, lamenting an overall lull in their activities (even spirits and legendary characters must rest!) while observing and commenting on the hilarity of one of the most peculiar non-Palauan, non-Hatohobei interfaces they could collectively recall. Suffice to say, these two have witnessed, caused and engaged many peculiar events over their respective cosmological histories, and they have always been amused by the often loud and strange, yet intriguing ways of outside visitors and their values, models and approaches toward the people of Palau and Hatohobei. So this indeed was a monumental outsider interface that happened to peak their curiosities and in reflection, perhaps helped to highlight their respective growing concerns over ongoing and rapid changes and shifts within Palauan and Hatohobei societies. While they lay swinging in their hammocks in the lofty, breezy heights of the *chemechong* (*Flacourtia rukam*) trees on Ngeremdiu Point in Palau's Rock Islands, chewing betel nut and drinking fresh coconut water, they enjoyed a unique vantage point overlooking not one, but two separate and lengthy, orchestrated television 'reality show' productions on Ngeruktabl island. These two 'reality shows' were produced by the US conglomerate, CBS Television, and are known to the television worshipping masses, as *Survivor: Palau* (filmed in 2005) and *Survivor: Micronesia (Fans vs. Favorites)* (filmed in 2007).

³ This is an example (and there are many throughout this text) of a nuanced statement, that in this case subtly and sensitively alludes to the distinction between Palauan and Hatohobei cultures and communities, the marginalized minority status of Tobians in the larger Palauan context, and how this status has slowly waned (yet still remains) over the years since Palauan Independence in 1994. By bringing these two characters together in this storytelling narrative, I am symbolically signifying the growing relationship between Tobians and Palauans.



Figure 1.1 A rare glimpse of Tohbwich in younger days resting in his hammock. (K.Mario)



Plate 1.1 The Rock Islands of Palau (Palau Visitors Bureau)

Now the fundamental premise of this reality show production is for upwards of 20 Americans (selected by the *Survivor* producers), covering a broad range of personalities and backgrounds, to simultaneously live and work together “surviving” on the island in the natural elements, while also competing against each other, voting

individuals off the island until there is one person, the “Survivor”, that remains. Of course, the incentive here is a USD\$1 million award to the “winner”, or, “Survivor”. The prevalent strategy involved is for these individuals (whom are initially split into two groups by the producers) to create, maintain and break up alliances amongst each other to get from one voting round through to the next, and so forth.

The paradox here completely amused and enthralled Tohbwich and Medechibelau! They were heartily tickled that these outsider folks wanted to live and work together on the island while deceptively cheating and lying to kick each other off the island! Oh, what fun and games! Yet, it made no sense to them. Why would somebody want to force everyone off the island and be left all alone? How empty of a daily engagement, let alone a life, is that? What happened to enjoying the process of contributing together along the life journey, as opposed to dismissing and compromising the collaborative process and valuing only the end product for oneself? Why destruct the collective for the promise of an individual void? Where was the genuine love, laughter, humility, respects and togetherness in that process? Where was the appreciation for their ancestors and histories and collective values that helped guide their communities toward sustainable and healthy futures? What good could possibly come from the end result of one sole “Survivor” on the island? How could these folks pass such values and practices on to their younger generations? This would lead to NO future at all! This was quite a shocking approach and practice to witness and realise, and quite the contrary to the values and principles that were so dear to each of these two mythological characters and their communities. Although well aware of the differences in their cultural and cosmological backgrounds, in this first ever meeting of these two spirit characters, they realised just how much they had in common, as well as their increasingly salient concerns over the impacts and influences of these outsider models,

values and approaches on their home communities and what this meant for the future of their peoples and cultures. Perhaps there was more depth and meaning to their coincidental meeting in time and space and this left them pondering their separate backgrounds yet similar values and historical experiences, as well as various contemporary issues and dynamics.

Certainly, they had helped their communities throughout history and through various subtle, proactive and sometimes subversive efforts to engage with and adapt successfully to the natural elements as well as with the many outsider peoples and their governments and other outside organisations, groups and systems. They were beginning to feel something may be amiss in the larger picture over time though. Perhaps they had mistaken their successes in the past. Perhaps their efforts had not helped to establish a more meaningful and healthy balance in appropriating and resisting the outsider systems, methods, values and approaches toward sustainable balance into perpetuity. Maybe they had much more challenging work in front of them. These two continued to share, contemplate and ruminate over their respective historical and cultural events and what this all means to the cultures and futures of their peoples.

Tohwich in particular considered how the people of Hatohobei had successfully engaged with the realities of living on a small and physically remote island, as well as working together to adapt to political, economic and social changes over time. In fact, he felt that one of the more pragmatic decisions toward adaptation for the betterment of the Hatohobei peoples was the decision over time for most of the community to relocate to larger Palau society (a separate culture and language for them). This was pragmatic for political, economic and health reasons and fit well for their community as they could both contribute to and with the Palauan people and society in their collective futures while also maintaining the connection to their home

island. This connection means everything to the past, present and future of the Hatohobei people. It holds their past and their future, it holds their stories, their memories, their identity, even through the interfaces and challenges associated with so many changing political systems and events, models, coercions and influences. And the people of Palau had graciously taken them in (albeit with a tenuous status as outside minorities), thus allowing their growing community to embrace a dually fluid society in a sense, with one sphere placed in Palau and the other on the home island of Hatohobei. This duality allowed for the Hatohobei people to embrace and engage local, state, national, regional and global politics and economics more meaningfully through their Palau sphere while having the strength of their home island to maintain their balance in such important and sometimes precarious situations. Indeed, without the home island, what is the meaning of Hatohobei? Whether through living on the island at times, through visits to the island, or the imaginary of the island through every day stories and memories, that is the essence and practice of being Hatohobei. Even through a physical disconnect from their home island in time and space, the people of Hatohobei always maintain ongoing physical connections to the island and their connection through the collective imaginary. In fact, the distance away strengthens their connection to the physically remote island home. By living and engaging in larger Palauan society, as a people of Palau as well, the people of Hatohobei have realised many achievements for their community, along with ongoing efforts of maintenance and continuity with their island and cultural heritage.

Tohbwich reflected further though. He thought again of the *Survivor* group fighting each other off the island. He thought of his people. He knew of the growing concerns within some of the community over the physical disconnection from the home island over time, and how many of the elders worried over the loss of knowledge,

traditions and practices that were of and within the connection to life on the island. If the younger generations were not growing, living and learning within the home environment, would the connection become weaker over time? Had it become weaker? What does this mean for the future? With the community beginning to thrive together in Palau, increasingly since Palau began interfacing with the global sphere as an independent Republic in 1994, more opportunities were developing. In recent times some opportunities were beginning to provide more possibilities toward increased physical reconnection with Hatohobei island. Indeed, Tohbwich was certain the time was finally coming soon for many in the community to return home, live the traditional lifestyle, generate incomes, continue to engage with larger Palau society, economics and politics, grow their children and provide traditional and elementary level education, and also have health care resources while on the island. The younger generations could live, learn and grow up on Hatohobei again and continue to engage with the Palau sphere (and beyond) now that the community had strengthened itself in larger Palau. He truly felt the time was coming soon for a living and working community thriving on the island and also in Palau, a more balanced dual society that continued to grow through and with the roots of the connections to Hatohobei. Was this truly a possibility? Was this genuinely what the people wanted? Tohbwich had lost himself in deep thought there for a moment. And he now knew that he had more work to do.

Returning to their gaze over the *Survivor* productions, Tohbwich and Medechiibelau were perplexed even further, amused and tickled actually in their ongoing observations of the moment by moment manipulations of emotions and psyches between these 20 individuals. While the *Survivor* people's actions reminded them of their many engagements with historical outsider peoples, they still could not believe these people wanted to leave one person standing all alone just for the sake of

monetary value. Some of the behaviours and actions of these individuals were incredulous, of course, but for two jokesters and trickster clowns like Tohbwich and Medichiibelau, even though they were experiencing growing concerns to consider further, they took it all in amusing stride. What bothered them throughout the naughty deceptive manipulations they witnessed, though, was the increasing realisation that in the end, the individuals were actually trying to hurt each other. Their manipulations and tricks upon each other were not toward a collective happiness, but rather, these actions led in a completely opposite direction. Tohbwich and Medichiibelau felt increasingly sad for these people. They enjoyed mostly observing these visitors, but sometimes they joined in amongst them, attempting to engage in a way that might teach these outsiders about the depths of interdependence and a deeper consciousness, a deeper collective meaning of life and society and future. They noticed small successes in their efforts from time to time, and some individuals may have even left the island eventually with a seed of that spirit and consciousness growing within them, or so these two hoped. Nevertheless, in the end, the *Survivor* people continued conniving and cheating and lying, forcing each other off the island, one by one. The greed for the \$1 million reward was too strong! This continued to baffle and confuse Tohbwich and Medichiibelau. After many late night discussions and deliberations, they still could not understand the great value placed on this monetary reward.

Tohbwich felt frustrated. He thought further about the vision to re-establish a healthy community on the Hatohobei island. Was this the right choice for the future? Of course it was, for the home island, the history, the stories, the ancestors, the values and principles that had guided his people so well in the face of many challenges, were their roots, their guide, their strength. But most, if not all of the community had become well integrated into the monetary system and social and political life in Palau

and beyond. In contrast, there is no need for money and commerce in Hatohobei. Would his people reconnect with life on the island? Could there be a balance with that traditional lifestyle, the duality of Tobian society, and the demands and commitments within the monetary based system in Palau (and beyond)? Hatohobei society is based around values and principles of working together as a collective, forming alliances to support a future in perpetuity. Certainly, re-establishing a community on Hatohobei, living and working together, unlike these farcical *Survivor* people, was the way forward for his people, balancing the traditional life and resources well in support of the larger community in Palau. Tohbwich was pleased with his meditations and thoughts. He reflected long on the strength and happiness of his people, the adaptability and resilience of Hatohobei culture and the collective. The home island allowed for the duality of Hatohobei society and futures. It held all the answers. He breathed a sigh of relief. How good it is to be of and within, Hatohobei.

The *Survivor* groups continued on with their games while Tohbwich and Medichiibelau continued to relax and amuse themselves in the *chemechong* trees. Well, over time and many observations of these two unusual outsider productions, indeed, through many moon cycles, barbecues, betel nuts and various gardening and fishing activities, these two shared with each other more of their own histories in depth, comparing notes and reflecting on not only their histories, but their possible future directions. They went swimming, dancing, spearfishing and feasting together and during this time Medichiibelau took Tohbwich strolling from south to Ngeaur island (Anguar), all the way north to the villages of Airai, Aimeliik, Ngatpang, Ngchesar, Melekeok, Ngiwal, Ngeremlengui, Ngardmau and Ngaraard in the large island of Babeldaob, and even farther north to Ngcheangel island (Kayangel), covering the entire expanse of the Palau archipelago. Tohbwich kindly reciprocated and took

Medechiibelau to visit his friends in the far away “Southwest islands” of Sonsorol, Fana, Pulu Ana, Merir, and finally home to Hatohobei and Hotsarihie (Helen Reef). In fact, this was the first time Medechiibelau would visit the remote Southwest islands of Palau.

It had been quite a long time since Tohbwich had returned to the home island and he was more than proud to share this with his new friend. Upon arrival the beauty of the island was still there, the smell was still as strong as ever, but to his shock and bewilderment, Tohbwich did not believe what his eyes were showing him. The island was sinking slowly as the sea was rising and slowly eroding away the land. Coconut trees, soil and traditional canoe houses and artifacts were washing away from the land. Would this mean a more significant erosion of cultural and spiritual affects for the community? He could feel what this meant, the sinking of Hatohobei, how long to go? With respects to his new cosmological brother he did not lament this concern out loud. He wanted for Medechiibelau to enjoy all the brilliance of the island environment and resources. And so they did. In such a short time the two had enjoyed each other’s respective islands and learned that although they have different languages and cultures and even physical environments, they also hold so much in common and are blessed to join their two islands and peoples together so well. Together, they breathed in the expanse of all that their island homes have to offer. They rejoiced. They celebrated the vastness, abundance and diversity of the coral reefs, the sea, the forests, and the shifting sands of these islands and villages. They floated in the currents and danced on the waves together. They enjoyed eating all kinds of fresh fish, precious turtle, clams, crab, taro, tapioca, papaya, mango, breadfruit, and of course, coconut. They felt the warmth and the respectful calm, the vitality and interconnectedness of the peoples of these lands and seaways. Together they listened to new, meaningful, and transformational

stories from these places and felt wholly, the spiritual and emotional grounding of their island homes.

Returning to their hammocks at Ngermediu Point back in the Palau Rock Islands for a well-deserved rest, these two jokesters started thinking about the *Survivor* people again. The sadness Tohbwich and Medichiibelau felt for these *Survivor* people, however, shifted into a deeper concern. They began pondering the notion that perhaps these *Survivor* people (and others like them) ultimately wanted to form alliances with the people of Palau and Hatohobei, and perhaps these alliances too, were deceptive and strategic and that over time, one by one, their own people of Palau and Hatohobei would be “voted off”, pushed away from their very own islands! Perhaps this amusing *Survivor* game taking place on Ngeruktabl was far more seriously insidious and manipulative than they previously thought. They began to worry that too few were listening to the elders’ stories and feeling the meaning and practice behind the customs shared within these stories. Perhaps the younger generations were thinking too much about the *Survivor* millions and too little about their sacred knowledges, their core customs, values and principles. Perhaps some of the elders and leaders were thinking the same?

Tohbwich thought about this more closely, reflecting on the concept of the *Survivor* people in contrast with the history, customs and principles of Hatohobei. At first he considered that the people of Hatohobei were lucky to be so physically remote, lest the *Survivor* people would want to come and use the island for their games. In fact and with irony, Hatohobei and Hotsarihie (Helen Reef) were the perfect conceptual remote island locations for these naughty outsider games. He thought about how the people of Hatohobei, through custom and tradition, constantly negotiated alliances amongst each other, for the security and collective betterment of their island and

people, but never to hurt each other as these *Survivor* people did. These alliances were essential to their entire essence and identity as a people. Hatohobei customary values and principles grounded all of these alliances, behaviours and political decision making. He thought ever so carefully, through the events that led to the original settlement of Hatohobei island, the ancestors and *Ifiri Mosuwe*, the discovery of *Hotsarihie* and *Pieraourou* reefs, the invasion from Polowat, the lost English and American whalers, the Spanish, German, Japanese and American colonial administrations, World War Two, the development of the state and national governments, and how all of this impacted on the land and people of Hatohobei, right up to the present day. He thought of how almost the entire home population has relocated to Echang village in Koror, the urban centre of Palau. He thought about how increasingly, individuals and families were seeking opportunities and residence further abroad in places such as Guam, Hawaii, Japan and the United States. He thought of the recent developments and negotiations surrounding the increasingly popular Hotsarihie (Helen Reef) with its abundance of marine biodiversity. He thought of all the varied interests and alliances involved in these recent developments and what this means for the people of Hatohobei, their traditional resources and their future generations. He thought of the vision to revitalise a living community in the home island. He thought of how this was integral to reviving traditional knowledge and culture with younger generations into perpetuity. He thought of the varied visions and ideas to increase life opportunities for younger generations.

Tohbwich then could not allow himself to refrain from his next thoughts. What did all this mean if indeed, the home island of Hatohobei was slowly sinking into the sea? He took a deep breath, he turned to Medechiibelau and shared the reality of his concerns and sadness from their recent visit to Hatohobei. A tear drop rolled down his cheek. Another followed. The two remained quiet, and the silence is still palpable

today. Medechiibelau and Tohbwich, for the first time in their collective cosmological and spiritual journeys, felt profound fear. The future looked more uncertain and unpredictable than they could imagine.

1.2 Me and Haringesei

We will return to Tohbwich and Medechiibelau and their *Survivor* deliberations in more detail in due time. After hearing, myself, about this most unusual meeting of the two unique jokester characters, and their ensuing critical dialogue I soon realised that my own personal and scholarly concerns and interests intersected and overlapped with their own. I seek now to share how this historically and cosmologically unique meeting became salient to my own intertwined personal and academic journey for two reasons. One, in juxtaposing the framework of *Survivor*, and all that it entails (colonialism, globalisation, neoliberalism, American imperialism, commercialism, cultural appropriation), along with the recent issues and concerns surrounding climate change events in contemporary Hatohobei, it highlights the need for a deeper cultural consciousness, investigation and dialogue engaging Tobian cultural heritage and subsequently, what this means for the uncertain future of Hatohobei. Secondly, these two particular figures are (very) loosely, in my fluid and ever contextualised outsider/insider space within Hatohobei and Palau, my namesakes. I did not realise the significance of these names given to me almost twenty years earlier⁴, but like an

⁴ In my late teen years, after visiting with my adopted Hatohobei family in Palau, a family member teasingly gave me the name Tohbwich, which has been used loosely, at various times over the years. It most likely related to my sporadic and usually unannounced visits to Echang, from Guam. However, it likely also fits with my personality, as well. Around the same time, but completely separate in context and relationships, a dear Palauan friend of mine in Guam, but from Aimeliik state in Palau, started to jokingly refer to me as Medechiibelau. I humbly take nothing away from these characters in any way, but after many years, I have now come to realize how and why these names were given, in cultural context, and embrace the deeper personal and collective meaning all the more as I engage my journey forward, especially within the context of both the abstract and on the ground interactions involved in this academic query. These two characters are very much alive in Hatohobei and Palauan storytelling, although perhaps, less and less so over time, as I have learned.

epiphany, feeling the connection to, and dialogue of these two mythological figures, I found a deeper understanding within myself, and realise that I am not only a part of this cultural, spiritual and academic dialogue and ethnographic research investigation, it is necessary that I finally accept my insider/outsider role within it and engage it with academic and scholarly rigour. Because of my long term relationship with the community, however small, this is a space and role where I am obliged to create and contribute. Over my entire adult lifetime and after myriad actions and engagements with the elders of Hatohobei, my adopted family and peers in Hatohobei, my friends in larger Palau, many shared tragedies and celebrations and ceremonies, and after continually avoiding a public engagement of this ongoing dialogue, I finally realised through an epiphany I experienced during my latest visit to Hatohobei, how not only must I engage with this deeper dialogue and understanding, but that I am also guided to do so by something beyond my physical and intellectual self. This experience begins as Tohbwich and Medichiibelau included me into their ongoing discussion and concerns.

To recall my first experience of Hatohobei takes me back to one of my first conversations with my dear friend and cousin-brother, Harengesei (Justin) Andrew. As young men we first met in Guam after recently travelling far from our respective homes for tertiary study. We immediately found much in common, from a love for the ocean and fishing, to sailing, food, laughter and the sharing of stories. Upon initially meeting, though, and after explaining the remote and rural place I called, “home”, I will never forget asking Harengesei the location of his island home. His immediate answer of “Tobi, which our word for it is Hatohobei”, led to a, “Where the hell is that?” statement from me, in which he replied with typical Tobian metaphorical humour, “Where the hell is Hatohobei? It’s at the centre of the universe (of course)!” Well, many further questions, stories and dialogue soon followed. My journey to Hatohobei, all the

richness it has to offer, indeed my “informal” education, had begun. From that juncture forward, I have continued to ask, listen and learn from the many stories shared to me by the Hatohobei community, the elders, my peers, and my adopted family members.

Some of these stories, experiences, and nuanced interpretations will be shared in critical detail in the following chapter analyses.

As mentioned above, this research emanates out of both my personal and academic connection with the Hatohobei community and through that, the community’s concerns for the future of Hatohobei and what this means for future Tobian generations. As detailed further below, Hatohobei island is a uniquely small and remote island with a Carolinian⁵ sea-faring history (settling the island approximately 600 BP), colonial histories involving Spanish missionaries, German, Japanese and American occupations, and now state-level status within the nascent nation, the Republic of Palau.

Aside from surviving and adapting to their small and remote island physical setting, including through climate events such as drought and typhoons, the Tobian social and political history and experience includes such events as rapid depopulation through influenza (resulting from one weeklong visit by four German ethnographer’s on the *Hamburg Suedsee Expedition* in 1909), labour emigration opportunities mining phosphate for the German administration on Angaur island in the Palau archipelago, mass conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1931, 400 Japanese soldiers occupying the island from 1939-44, commercial copra trading, U.S. territorial administration policies and practices between 1950-93, the establishment of a Hatohobei State Constitution and government in 1984 (Fitehiri Farauri Faruheri Hatohobei, 1983), and their current status

⁵ This is a stretch of low lying atoll islands between Yap and Chuuk in the Federated States of Micronesia. The Carolinian islanders share cultural and linguistic affinities with Hatohobei. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

as one of the Republic of Palau's sixteen states since its independent status attained in 1994.

Traditional Tobian society developed varied strategies (discussed in more detail below) in adapting to the precariousness of the small and remote island itself. In 1903 the German colonial administration placed Hatohobei island within its then territory of Palau. There thus began a social and political connection with Palauan society and governance structures (including Palau's own particular engagements with the same colonial administrations). The slow migration and eventual relocation of Tobi islanders to larger Palau (a completely different culture and language) over the next one hundred years evolved into a "dual" Tobian society, with active and fluctuating populations in both Hatohobei island and Echang village in the urban centre of Koror, Palau. Since Palau's independent political status in 1994 Tobians have increasingly chosen to maintain primary residence in Echang. Such individual, family and community decisions toward primary residence here means that the Tobian physical, social, economic and political foundation is completely based in Koror, the urban and commercial centre of Palau, with only sporadic and brief visits to the remote home island. This setting highlights a growing tension between the connection and disconnection with the island, Tobian cultural heritage and identity.

In the past twenty years Tobians have simultaneously experienced a growing assimilation into Palauan (and global) society while becoming more physically disconnected from Hatohobei (and the knowledge entailed in that active engagement with the island). However, despite the growing assimilation into Palauan society, as a marginalised minority group within larger Palauan society there has always been tenuous relations and status for the Tobian community in larger Palau. In this way, Tobian identity has also been reinforced through their marginalised minority status.

More meaningfully then, the physical island, family land and genealogy and collective memories and histories have always underpinned Tobian identity, even within the context of the relocated community primarily living in distance. I consider this relocation dynamic a “pragmatic self-exile” (my word choice), which underpins the duality and continuity of Tobian contemporary society.

Having a total population of around 300 people and a state-level identity within the Republic of Palau simultaneously reinforces Tobian identity within larger Palau, as well as highlights the fact that their state budget supports their community to live in Koror State. Koror State is the most heavily populated state in Palau and with the largest population demand on its infrastructure. To lessen the burden on Koror State and larger Palau, a common (although very quiet) idea within larger Palau political discourse (especially from the urban centre of Koror State) is for the Hatohobei State Government (HSG) to be dissolved into Koror State. Another argument of course, is for the entire community to relocate back to Hatohobei, which would not be said aloud because of sensitivities around Tobians as a relocated community minority in Koror, nor is it a possible reality. Having their state-level political governance structure and operations based in Palau reinforces Tobian identity at the state-level but *also* highlights their ambiguous position between two ‘homes’ (Hatohobi island and Koror/Echang, Palau), as well as the precariousness of their economic and political status. While the Hatohobei State Government (HSG) provides most of the income to families in the relocated community through government salaries, many families (not all) would rather live back on the home island but find it difficult with its complete lack of income sources, health care, and education opportunities. The Hatohobei State Government helps to maintain a physical connection to the island by using up a percentage of their annual budget (the rest goes to salaries) to contract private charter

vessels and make round-trip supply visits. This is not seen as a viable and sustainable option for the long-term but is currently the pragmatic practice for maintaining visits. These visits are primarily to bring supplies to a few individuals choosing to live on the island regularly, as well as varied efforts toward ongoing potential development projects on the island.

Linked with this physical disconnection to the home island is the (growing) imaginary of the home island. This takes place through stories shared through the irregular visits (for those that visit and return back to Echang), the sharing of local food stuffs from these visits, as well as storytelling, family connections and customs, ongoing intra-community level discourse and politics in Echang and within the Hatohobei State public meetings, and local-level state and non-profit projects that have visions toward re-establishing to some degree a living and working community back on the island. Recently and increasingly, there has been a desire by younger generations to reconnect with Tobian traditional knowledge and practices and by some families to return to actively living on the island. Much of this comes from the feeling of disconnect from the island (and culture), the real and imagined connection associated with the lifestyle, the deep rooted feeling of connection to this space, as well as the concern over the loss of traditional knowledge and practices that are associated and realised through the reality of living on the island. These feelings have recently been exacerbated through the continued realisation (through recent stories, video footage, photo footage, and a local community awareness program) of significant climate events impacting the island.

The growing physical disconnection and the unique sensitivity around Tobian social, political, economic and cultural spheres highlights a precarious paradox where on one side of the coin it helps maintain Tobian identity and on the other side of the

coin, leaves great uncertainty and confusion. This complex paradoxical precariousness and tension informs Tobian community actions, decisions and concerns regarding uncertain futures.

Considering this, with the increased assimilation into larger Palau and also growing linkages with Palauan, regional and global politics and resources, at a time when Tobians are becoming more empowered within the state, national and regional level spheres, they are finding future visions of establishing an active community on the home island more realistic than in the past. For a brief example, the idea of establishing an ecotourism business on the island, as well as exporting local foods to the Palau market, has become more realistic in the past few years, with the main challenge being reliable, cost-efficient transportation to/from Koror. Actioning such ideas is a way of “redefining economy” for small island states in a globalised market world. Evolving leadership and acceptance within Palauan society, increased education and awareness, a long-term successful marine resource management project on Helen Reef (a vast traditional marine resource 65km east of Tobi island), as well as expanding political, social and technical networks and experiences with outside funding sources have made such visions more realistic (as opposed to impossibilities in the past), with continuing efforts by the Hatohobei State Government leaders and other leaders of the community working in such directions.

However, all of the recent efforts considered toward reviving an active community on the island are now facing the realisation of recent and increasing climate change events. These events introduce yet another challenge to this precarious setting. Sea-level rise is impacting Hatohobei island and Helen Reef through coastal erosion, sea-water inundation into the freshwater lens, changing fish migrations, impact on food security and biosecurity, and otherwise. With the home island, both physically and in

spirit, so important to Tobian identity (and social, cultural, economic and political spheres that inform this identity), there is now increased anxiety about the future when this physical space that is the root of their identity is slowly sinking and possibly becoming uninhabitable. It is interesting to consider how the Tobian community faces such challenges and uncertainty.

Regarding the epiphany I referred to earlier, there was a moment on the long voyage from Koror to Hatohobei island on a recent visit (2012) with some family and community members where I realised my role and obligation within (and without) the community with more clarity and depth. Late at night in my hammock, while half in and out of sleep on the bow deck of the vessel, Tohbwich had come to me in my dreams. He introduced me to his new shapeshifter companion Medichiibelau. While we three cracked open and chewed some fresh *buuch* (betel nut) harvested from the family home back in Echang, Tohbwich shared with me the stories of their recent travels together and reminded me of my own historical marker points of learning experiences with the community. Medichiibelau laughed hard as he learned of my many funny situations and stories in Hatohobei, Helen Reef and Palau. He learned of my respects and loyalty to the community. How fortunate was I to recall in vivid detail all the acceptance, support and guidance the community had shown me since my younger years. While Medechiibelau listened on Tohbwich shared with me his more recent and serious concerns about the home island and community. Concerns I had heard from many in the community, especially on this recent visit, of course. Well, of his many resources available in his efforts to address such community concerns, he felt that I have had ample opportunities to share through the academic platform of research and writing. He wondered why I did not pursue these opportunities further. I felt ashamed in front of him, his new friend, and really, in front of myself. While I thought

back to the days of writing up my M.A thesis (Tibbetts, 2002), I explained to him my hesitations in critically objectifying (through theoretical analysis and written documentation) the home community that provides so much to me and where I enjoy intensive long-term relationships. It was most painful at times, for reasons of my own discomfort in the academic platform and within the process (and final product more so) of speaking objectively to outsiders about family and community. I had always felt deeply that it was not my place and space to engage in that way. Tohbwich laughed at me and reminded me of the fortunate and privileged position of insider/outsider that I held. He reminded me through stories and laughter and fond memories, and that is when I felt my shame in front of him. He had certainly worked his Tobian style magic on me well. We are all working together he told me. We all have a role in this. Your position and role can be to research this from the Western academic platform. With your western background and knowledge, and by using the most useful social science framing and ethnographic approach, you can meaningfully capture and share insights from the dynamics and challenges that our small community faces. The community is on the ground every day facing and engaging these realities. We engage these realities without shame. We operate together on hope and proactive measures working forward. While you are away, how can you truly contribute? I think you know, he told me.

As our vessel rolled through the ocean on that cloudless and starry night enroute to Hatohobei, I knew I must step up within my small role. Medichiibelau explained how important this was for larger Palau and other small islands, as well, especially with the friendship he and Tohbwich had recently discovered. Tohbwich provided further insights and suggestions into the research and writing process and it all became so very clear how to approach the research problem. His insights now guide and frame this scholarly contribution. He reminded me that along with extensive archival records

from Hatohobei and Palau, there was extensive ethnographic research in the late 1970s through the 1980s on Hatohobei by Peter Black (Black, 1977, 1978a; Black, 1978b; Black, 1979, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1991). Tohbwich pointed out how long time scholar, researcher and friend of Hatohobei, Dr. Peter Black, had then engaged with a very active and practicing community on the island and how his research captured so well the traditions, customs and histories still alive and strong at that time. He explained the value of my own long-term personal experience with the community for the past twenty years. He reminded me of endless memories enjoyed between myself and others, the Hatohobei *wara uhuh* (sailing canoe) restoration project, my Tobi and Palau language papers, so many Tobi and Palauan custom events, birth, marriage and death ceremonies we engaged, festivals, an MA thesis exploring Tobian identity in larger Palau (Tibbetts, 2002), the amateur film of Hatohobei island life (*Hatohobei State of Mind*) myself and the Andrew brothers put together in 2008, and of course, the more recent and formal 12-months of ethnographic data collection in 2012 and 2013. He reminded me in fact, that in some ways, I have enjoyed very privileged access to 20+ years of first-hand ethnographic observations, experiences, files, and stories to selectively share forward in the right and respectful context. I had not thought of this privileged and invaluable perspective in such a way prior.

Tohbwich and Medichiibelau both suggested that I share as many relevant Hatohobei collective histories as possible, and talk with the elders, go to public meetings, work in collaboration with the community, listen to the stories and then tell my own story (a thesis) and write that story to share with others about the community concerns with cultural heritage, climate change, uncertain futures and what we can learn from such research. In the one and only moment I hesitated about this idea while we sat on the deck of the boat, they both assured me, “Don’t worry, we will be with you

along your research journey. We three are jokesters, but we have important roles to fulfill”. And they further excited me with more ideas. “What about film making”, they asked? “The community will enjoy the visualisation process and opportunity to share their voices for many Tobian children to hear in future generations. We need that for our community. That is much better than the film making productions of our “Survivor” friends”, they giggled. While they trusted me well in my judgement of choosing relevant theory and an overall research design for this project, being the jokesters that they are they naturally teased me about the idea of putting their names out there on the written academic and historical record. In this context indeed, our friendly spirit guides, you have shared with me a novel idea.

Well our vessel arrived at the usual time, sunrise on Hatohobei. For Tobians and even first time visitors, there is nothing quite like seeing the island emerge out of the ocean in the morning mists as the boat approaches from many miles out, with the sunrise slowly emerging from the darkness as a horizon forms and the morning sky slowly bursts into reds, pinks, oranges, greens, purples and then blues. Slowly the island emerges from the dark to lighter mists and eventually, bursts open into the sunlight. One always knows Hatohobei from a distance first by smell, then by the special shape of the silhouetted coconut trees on the south side of the island. Home is always home. We circled the island two times while the men dragging long handlines behind the vessel pulled in tuna, mackerel and barracuda one after another. We filleted pieces for sashimi with soyu sauce and lemon juice within minutes. The good life had returned. Fresh fish from home, now deep inside our bellies. Sustenance for the body, mind and spirit, on a deeply meaningful level indeed. All around us were smiling faces of aunties, brothers, cousins, elders and children alike. This all simultaneously signifies the arrival to the home island and embodies Tobian essence and identity (tied through

the local food stuffs that are shared). Straight from the bountiful Hatohobei waters; fresh fish for everyone arriving, fresh fish for family on the island, and fresh fish to smoke and salt and carry back for family in Echang. I took those early morning moments to walk around the entire island and reflect back on my first ever visit many years ago, and the many stories and good times I enjoyed with family and friends over the years. I reflected on my dreamtime engagement with my new trickster friends. What characters to enjoy time with and what a special memory along my journey. Epiphanies last a moment in one's mind, yet they encapsulate so much more, as they are the coming together of many events, experiences, knowns and unknowns, toward and inspired creation, and a *design* forward. Well, this moment for me lasted from the dream-time state on the vessel to the rising sun breaking off the ocean as I sank my feet in to the sand and walked around the island once again in this lifetime. In this moment I had found further purpose. I had found the story to share, and the approach to do so.

Chapter 2 Locating Hatohobei (Tobi), Hotsarihie (Helen Reef) and Palau: An Ethnohistorical Journey

*“Where in the hell is Hatohobei? It’s at the centre of the universe
(of course).”*

--Harengesei Andrew

2.1 Introduction

As Tohbwich and Medichiibelau kindly reminded me, to analyse and understand contemporary Hatohobei events it is first necessary to provide a more detailed ethnohistorical account of Tobian history and their connection with the environment and relations with outside peoples, models and events. For such purposes let us first return to and locate more specifically, the physical and contextual location of Hatohobei (Tobi), Palau and Hotsarihie (Helen Reef). The following discussion places these sites in general cultural, social and chronological political contexts that help to frame and ground the narrative analyses and discussion in the remaining chapters. The dominant ethnohistorical documentation largely derives from the rich ethnographic work of Black (1977, 1978a, 1978b, 1981, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1988, 1991, and 1994) in the late 1960’s and up through the early 1990’s. Peter Black continues to work with the Hatohobei community through his efforts with the FOTI (Friends of Tobi Island) website and regular visits to Palau. He and his wife Bobbi recently completed (October, 2014) a collaborative project with a local NGO, Hatohobei Organisation for People and Environment (HOPE). For this project Peter and Bobbi worked with Tobian community members on documenting *Ramari Hatohobei* (language of Hatohobei) in an effort toward repatriating Tobian cultural heritage.

2.1.1 Hatohobei Island

To begin to gain an understanding and appreciation of Hatohobei cosmology and worldview one must first appreciate the relative remoteness and smallness of Hatohobei island's geographical setting. The low-lying island, or "coral isolate", is approximately 200km north of the northern Indonesian islands of Morotai and Halmahera, 500km east of Mindanao in the Philippines, and almost 400km south of Koror, the urban centre of the Republic of Palau (ROP) (see Figure 2.1). Moving from Hatohobei north-northeast to Koror are the low-lying coral islands of Merir (130km north), Pulu Ana (160km north) and Sonsorol and Fana (200km north) (See Figure 2.1).

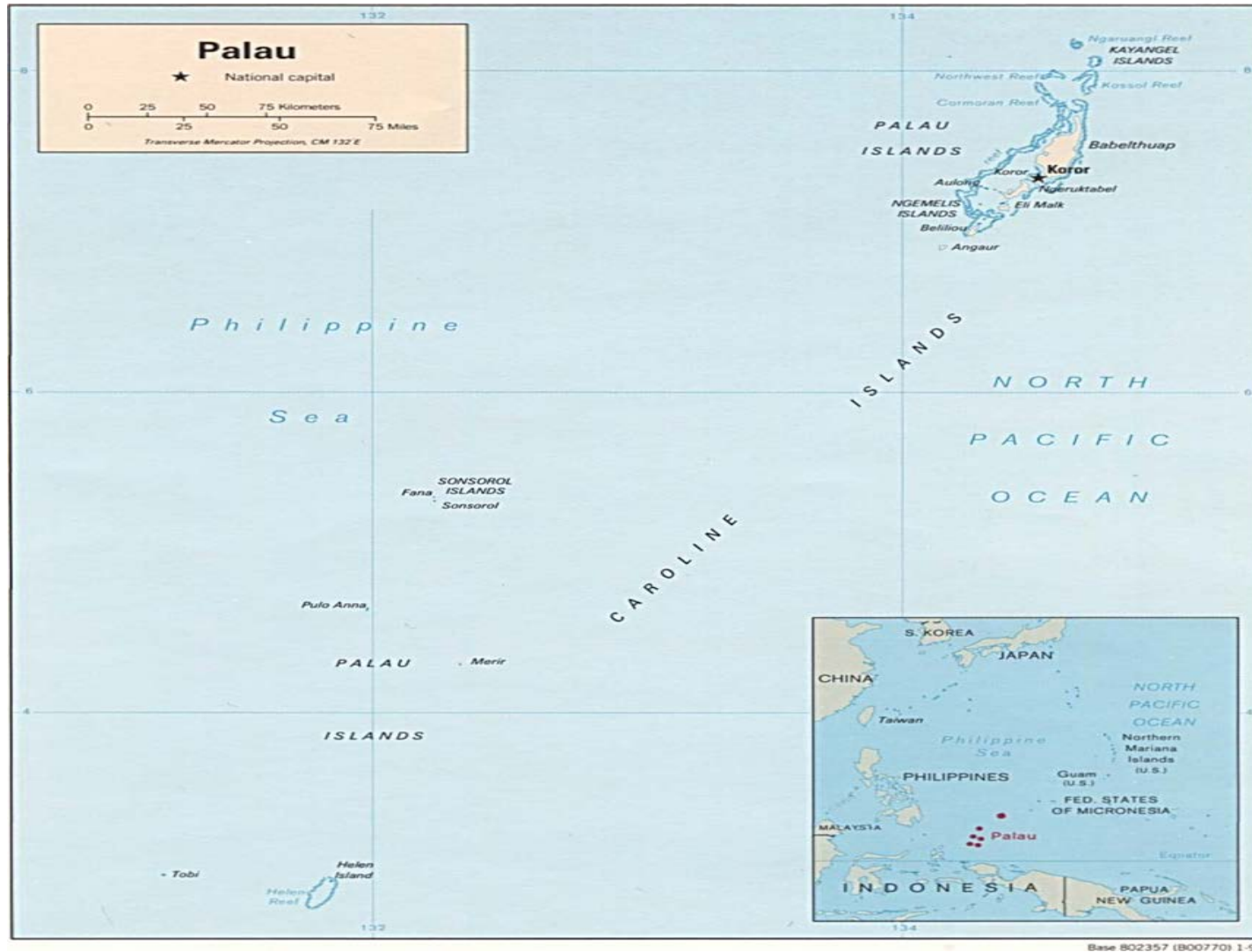


Figure 2.1 Map of Palau Islands

Hatohobei island has limited land area (.5km²) and limited resources. The island's interior lies 4m above sea-level providing a freshwater lens that is necessary for human settlement. There is a short and shallow lagoon with a steep fringing reef extending into deep ocean very near the island. See Plate 2.1 for an aerial view of Hatohobei. The island is fortunate in general that its location provides moderate to high rainfall, infrequent storms and fish rich waters. However, living on Hatohobei involves the constant recognition of potential physical disasters such as typhoons, droughts, fish migrations, and the destruction of the freshwater lens (Black, 1982).



Plate 2.1 Aerial view, Hatohobei island. (S.Marino, 1999)

2.1.1.1 *Hatohobei origin story*

The people of Hatohobei refer to their early history, or pre-contact period, as *Ifiri Mosuwe* (literally, “time of long ago). The origins of Hatohobei culture and identity are explained through a legend attributing that the first ruler and discoverer of the island was Romoparuhe, a woman who arrived with her husband, Yongoihari, and

her father, Tohbwich (not to be confused with the ghostly figure although it is possible there is a connection between these two), from the island of Fais⁶. This origin story accounts for the matrilineal emphasis of Hatohobei customs. It is understood that these first Tobians worshipped a god called Mobuwat. Central to the story is a conflict between Romoparuhe and her brother Souhopit, who also laid claim to the land. Romoparuhe proved to Souhopit that she had claims to this land before he arrived by showing him a giant clam shell that she had buried deep in the ground on her earlier and very first visit. The dispute resulted in Romoparuhe chasing Souhopit off the island. Several years later Romoparuhe, Yongoihari and Tohbwich sailed to the island of Merir (see Fig. 2.1), where Souhopit had settled. When Tohbwich asked Souhopit to take the seasick Romoparuhe ashore for a period of time he refused, stating that if she came ashore she would be burned like a turtle. The three returned to Hatohobei, where Tohbwich then left to Fais, never to return.

Back on Hatohobei island, Romoparuhe's first child, Eango became the first male chief of Hatohobei. The chiefly clan⁷ became known as Hapeimohor, while Romoparuhe's next five children (all female) formed five more clans, Haworobouh,

⁶ Fais is a small limestone (coral) island located east of the high island of Yap, near the Wolei archipelago. It is part of the stretch of islands running east to west between the high islands of Yap (western Micronesia) and Chuuk (eastern Micronesia) (both of these high islands are two of the four states comprising the Federated States of Micronesia). Alkire classified these low-lying types of coral islands as "coral isolates" (Alkire, 1978: 66). These numerous "coral isolates" are known as the Caroline Islands, named after the Spanish King Charles II (Carlos II) in 1686. There are cultural and linguistic similarities throughout the Carolinian islands (including Tobi, Merir, Pulu Ana and Sonsorol islands located much further south and west) (please see Fig 2.1) as well as kinship and exchange networks that continue today.

⁷ "Chiefly" clan, only in the sense of the Ramoparuhe title, which descended in the female line. Since the Tamor title went from male to male it changed clans every generation (pers. comm. Dr. Peter Black, 1 March, 2007).

Hafaramau, Hamaihaut, Haringafeng, and Hamaihang. Rabeh, a female outsider from Wolei came later, and her children formed the seventh clan, Hawereye⁸.

2.2 Origins of Hatohobei Socio-Cultural-Religio-Political System

The legend of Hatohobei origin history emphasizes the significance of matrilineality, sacredness of the seven unranked exogamous matri-clans (*haireng*), the brother-sister relationship and the centrality of conflict and its management in Tobian society (Black, 1983). The latter theme here is important for understanding Tobian daily social interactions and relationship values for purposes of safety and security on their small island. This can be appreciated through a description of the associated core Hatohobei beliefs and values of conflict management (outlined below).

When considering the remote and vulnerable physical environment of Hatohobei island, the initial challenge of the early inhabitants was cultural adaptation to the environment⁹. Hatohobei men produced food stuffs from the sea while women produced food stuffs from the garden, and a system of generalised reciprocity formed the basis of economic distribution (Black, 1981; 1988:265). This generalised reciprocity also formed the cultural framework for managing conflict. As Black suggests:

⁸ This legend of Hatohobei origins is commonly told within the community. A (translated) detailed account by Dr. Peter Black (told first-hand by Patricio Mohitsho in 1968) can be found at <http://cas.gmu.edu/~tobi/tobithenandnow/ifirmosuwe/ramoparuhe.htm>. I first learned this story from Harengesei Andrew and have since heard this consistent account on numerous occasions by several elders. When corroborating this oral history with the archaeological evidence (Hunter-Anderson, 2000:37) and ethnographic work carried out by Dr. Donald Rubinstein on Fais in 1973, it appears that Fais and Hatohobei islands do have an historical connection, suggesting that the settling population of Hatohobei arrived at least a minimum of 300 years ago, and probably quite a bit earlier. The archaeological study (Hunter-Anderson, 2000) suggests the human settlement period on Tobi 600 BP.

⁹ Outside of Black's work on Tobi (1977, 1981), see (Alkire, 1965, 1977, 1978), Lessa (1966) and Knudson (1970) for further discussion and analyses of Micronesian coral islanders and socio-cultural adaptation to the physical environment.

There exists on Tobi a large corpus of conflicts and disputes which divides and subdivides the population so finely that ultimately almost every person is opposed to almost everyone else. At the same time, cutting across all these divisions is an equally dense network of alliances which serves ultimately to tie almost every person to almost everyone else. Thus, each person is either directly or indirectly involved in so many crosscutting disputes that almost everyone on the island is simultaneously ally and opponent. These disputes, many of which have already spanned several generations and show no signs of dissipating, are generally organised around disputed resources, typically land, political offices, and marriages (Black, 1985: 272).

Considering this, we can appreciate how social control (by the individual and the community) was important for maintaining social balance. Because every individual knew everyone's entire personal, family and clan histories, conflict and dispute had to be carefully managed. The possibility of aggressive hostility (*song*), held by all individuals was constantly kept in check by fear (*metah*) (of ghosts and one's self), shame (*mah*), the "in-charge complex" (discussed in a section below), and ultimately, the chief of the island. The chiefly female and male titles, *Ramoparhue* and *Tamor*, respectively, had an important role in muffling the direct expression of hostility and de-escalating any confrontations, as well. Clearly, based on Hatohobei cosmology and beliefs and values discussed above, religio-political efforts to maintain social and ecological balance on the small island were difficult in the face of numerous outside forces (unknown outside visitors and dangers, storms, droughts) and as I discuss further in the Chapter Five analysis, several significant socio-cultural and political transformations took place over time and with regards to outside visitors, models and influences.

The people of Hatohobei developed a knowledge base in close relationship with their environment, including remarkable methods and skills for food cultivation (on land) and marine harvesting (Black, 1981; Johannes and Black, 1992; Anell, 1955). For example, the early generations constructed a massive taro patch swamp in the interior of the island (see Plate 2.1) that continues to produce *wot* (taro) and *buroh* (giant taro). They also developed myriad unique fishing techniques¹⁰, including kite fishing (Anell, 1955; Baldwin, 1977; Johannes, 1992) (see Plates 2.3 and 2.4), fishing for triggerfish (*bub*) (*Balistidae* family) (see Black, 1981:29) and deep sea tuna fishing (Black, 1981: 30; Johannes and Black, 1992) (see Plate 2.5). A significant symbol of Hatohobei male-female relationships and sexuality is the green sea turtle (*wor*) and the techniques in capturing it reflect the collective respects toward *wor*, as well as male-female relations in Hatohobei society (Black, 1981:32). Both *buroh* and *wor* (see Plates 2.6, 2.7, and 2.8) remain highly valued food sources in contemporary Hatohobei society.

¹⁰ Johannes' (1992) book provides exceptional insights into Palauan and Hatohobei knowledge of their respective marine environments and associated fishing methods. Chapters 7, 8 & 9 (written by Peter Black) are devoted to the unique Hatohobei fishing methods (including deep-sea trolling, torch fishing, kite fishing, noosing sharks, log fishing, fly fishing); island currents and area-specific marine knowledge; and elaborate knowledge of fish species and related fish hook designs. I have seen many of these material fishing tools and discussed many of these techniques with Hatohobei elders, although these methods are no longer used today. The original fishing techniques of Hatohobei are posted on the FOTI website.



Plate 2.2 Tobi Taro Swamp, 1909 (note adult and children at right centre for relative size). (A. Krämer) (Eilers, 1936: Table 6)

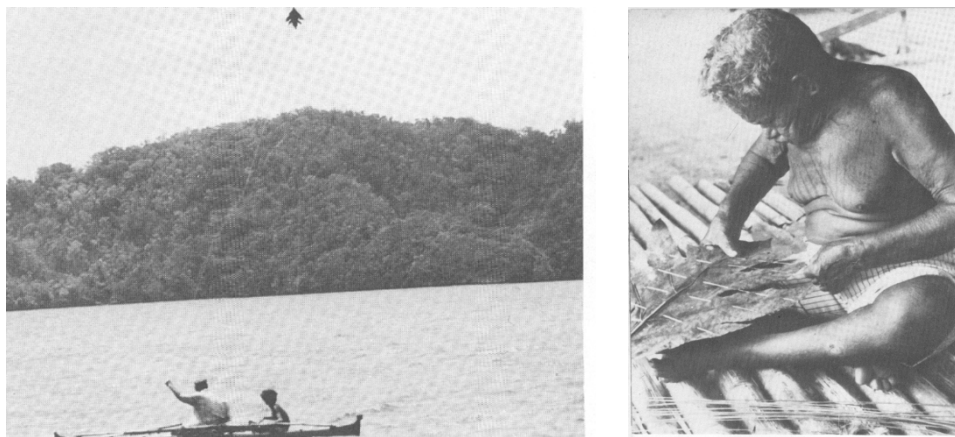


Plate 2.3 Patris Tachemaremacho kite-fishing, preparing pandanus leaf kite (R. Johannes) (Johannes, 1992)

Plate 2.4 Patris Tachemaremacho kite-fishing, preparing pandanus leaf kite (R. Johannes) (Johannes, 1992)



Plate 2.5 Tobian men completing a morning of deep sea tuna fishing, 1972 (P. Black)



Plate 2.6 Wor waiting transport to Palau, 2000 (D. Sapio)



**Plate 2.7 Enjoying wor en route to Palau on the Atoll Way, HSG transport ship, 2000
(D. Sapiro)**

The knowledge and traditions informed by this relationship between the people of Hatohobei and their environment are known as *moumou* (custom). In the contemporary setting this word in usage mostly refers to traditional rules and rule sets, especially governing food, sex and family relations. For these and successive generations to survive against physical or social disaster in this small, fragile physical setting, mutual cooperation and their knowledge of and relationship with the environment was critical in the ongoing management against any negative conflict.

A complex system for managing conflict implies its design was intended and pre-planned. This egalitarian community was based around the seven exogamous matri-clans (*haireng*), a chief that held moral public authority, a sexual division of labour (Black, 1981), the individual and communal belief (and fear) in the supernatural (Black, 1985;1988), and a socio-political system based around what Peter Black calls the “in-charge complex” (see Black, 1982).

Commenting on Hatohobei society in the late 1960’s, Black (1991) determines a number of factors that explain the features of this conflict management:

1. The displacement of interpersonal anxiety and hostility onto evil ghosts (see Spiro, 1952);
2. The continuous use of the all-encompassing gossip network for indirect confrontation and reconciliation;
3. The constant ritual reaffirmation of the sacred character of the community's collective life through twice daily (Roman Catholic) religious services attended by the entire populace;
4. The political system in which the major, indeed almost the sole, responsibility of the chief was to monitor the flow of daily life and to recall everyone's attention to the collective values of non-aggression and cheerful cooperation when they seemed threatened by the imminent surfacing of conflict;
5. The use of recreational and ritual contexts (dance especially) to symbolise enduring structural tensions and the drastic consequences that would flow from their "real world" expression;
6. The complex "conflict vocabulary" that mapped the local typology of disputes and the escalation and management of overt conflict; and
7. The large body of customary rules for the minimisation of direct competition, the prevention of face-to-face confrontation, and when all else failed, the rapid defusing and de-escalation of overt conflict. (Black, 1991:150-1)

This describes well the general features of conflict management on Hatohobei.

In subsequent chapters we trace how these features, in particular the "in-charge complex", play out in the contemporary Hatohobei setting where such conflict management principles are applied across different community settings outside of Tobi and with outside interest groups. Understanding (pre-Christian) Tobian beliefs in ritual and the supernatural, their use of speaking in nuanced silences, ambiguity, humorous metaphor and respect language provides the basis for which to note these post-Christian transformations.

Black's discussion of Hatohobei folk psychology (from a Hatohobei worldview) finds the significance of emotions such as *metah* (fear), *mah* (shame) and *song* (anger) and notes how these emotions¹¹ form a set of constructs that interpret and guide Hatohobei behaviour and social control (Black, 1985:270). It is thought that fear and shame are socially necessary, although fear can be overwhelmed by intense shame, which can lead to forbidden rage (p. 270). Rage on behalf of one individual can possibly lead to social disaster and irreversible damage to the socio-political networks comprising Hatohobei society and its survival.

Black further explains that people of Hatohobei perceive in themselves and others a powerful hostility, and with this hostility comes fear, which keeps them from acting on their hostile impulses. Fear is the basis for self-control, which is an important value for the Hatohobei individual. The community, through *hamangungu* (gossip), or if necessary through action, attempts to re-impose fear (and social control) into the individual as a form of behavioural governance or conflict management (Black, 1985:273).

2.2.1 Religion

Hatohobei communal connections with the supernatural world took place via rituals performed by the high chief (*Tamor*). There was a belief that communal religious behaviour held consequences for society as a whole. Black (1988:52-55) speaks to the pragmatic nature of ritual life in Hatohobei, where the overall function of religion was to protect the island and its inhabitants from disaster, both physical and supernatural.

¹¹ Please see Lutz (1988) for a socio-linguistic analysis of emotions on the Caroline atoll island of Ifaluk. This is another coral island of the Wolei complex of islands in Yap, near Fais island (culturally and linguistically similar to Hatohobei).

The belief in the supernatural included the belief, and constant fear, of *yarus*¹² (malevolent ghosts). In a small and intimate society that emphasised values of non-aggression and cooperation for survival, the fear of *yarus* provided people with an acceptable focus for anxieties and hostile emotions (Black, 1988: 55). Black speculates (and notes the irony) that the cooperation, good humour and overall social harmony of Hatohobei society is balanced by the constant and underlying fear of “the very real possibility of evil, calamity and disaster”, symbolised by “ghosts” and “ghostly behaviour” (Black, 1983:276).

2.2.2 *Usuar, the In-Charge Complex*

Tobian notions of self and emotions such as fear, shame and anger, along with assumptions about the relations between maturity, sexuality and intelligence combine to form what Black calls, “the in-charge” complex, which in turn, structures and informs Tobian daily relations and political behaviour (Black, 1982). In such a small and intimate community, Tobians fear the possibility of public shaming, which may lead to “ghostliness” and from there to open hostility and violence.

This “in-charge” complex psychologises and functionalises inequalities then, and this explains how all community members have a senior person “in-charge” of them. Parents are of course, “in-charge” of their children, while elder siblings have seniority over younger siblings, and after puberty brothers have seniority over sisters. Husbands then have seniority over wives. Culturally speaking, a fully adult Hatohobei male (between middle-age and senility) is thought to be the only one worthy of full

¹² *Yarus*, or ghosts, are the most feared supernatural manifestations. They are the essence of malicious evil, hated and feared as a constant threat. Hatohobei island (particularly the northern end near the cemetery) and its surrounding seas are thought to be infested with them. However, the correct performance of ritual (performed by the religious specialists) can render the ghosts powerless (see Black, 1988:55; 1985).

autonomy and is considered to exemplify the Hatohobei virtues of independence, practical intelligence, and most importantly, self-control. While it is understood that children and women will lose self-control at times, an adult male is believed to never do so, until old-age, at which time a son or brother would take seniority over him. Traditionally speaking, there is only one person with seniority over an adult male, and that is the chief (*Tamor*). He holds moral authority and a connection to the gods, the ancestors and the supernatural.

With regards to the chiefly system in Hatohobei, Black explains that historically, “the office of the chief, the status of which combined ultimate political and religious legitimacy, was the key social mechanism for guaranteeing compliance with custom, and thus, the maintenance of social and ecological balance” (Black, 1982:57). In essence, then, similar to other Pacific chiefly systems, the chief was “in-charge” of Hatohobei island, (*Tamori ri faruh*), maintaining daily flow and cultural continuity, and managing any conflict disputes that escalated to the point of endangering Hatohobei society. The “in-charge complex” is a fundamental feature of Hatohobei culture and society that continues to guide and inform contemporary relationships and events. This relationship hierarchy and structure is revealed further in the narrative analyses in Chapters Four, Five and Six.

Speaking about what he then called, *neo*-traditional Tobian society and its beliefs and value-system in the 1970’s, Black remarks that some fundamental ancient cultural orientations remain untouched, the most important of these elements are the use of fear in achieving self and social control, the high value placed on practical intelligence, long-range planning, self-reliance, cheerful interactions and co-operative social relations (Black, 1983:9).

2.3 Contemporary Hatohobei Politics

Understanding the historical political development of Hatohobei and the associated religio-political transformations is necessary to gain insights into the contemporary socio-political setting. Since the *Ifiri Doitch* period, (“time of the German colonial administration”), virtually the entire Tobian population has relocated and resettled semi-permanently in the village of Echang, in Koror. As mentioned earlier this relocation was pragmatic, with the community members gaining access to health care and education systems, modern amenities and the wage-economy, as well as regional and global opportunities. The aerial photograph (Plate 2.9 below) shows the relocated village of Echang, located on Ngerakebesang island near the Republic of Palau’s urban centre of Koror, 400km north, north-east of Hatohobei island (refer again, to Figure 2.1).

In order to understand the historical political development of Hatohobei and the associated religio-political transformations, it is necessary to gain insights into the contemporary socio-political setting. Since the *Ifiri Doitch* period, (“time of the German colonial administration”), virtually the entire Tobian population has relocated and resettled semi-permanently in the village of Echang, in Koror. As mentioned earlier, this relocation was pragmatic, with the community members gaining access to health care and education systems, modern amenities and the wage-economy, as well as regional and global opportunities. The aerial photograph (Plate 2.8) shows the relocated village of Echang, located on Ngerakebesang island near the Republic of Palau’s urban centre of Koror, 400km north, north-east of Hatohobei island (refer again, Fig 2.1, Map of Palau Islands).



Plate 2.8 Aerial photograph of Echang village, Ngerakebesang Island, Koror. (S.Marino, 1999)

2.3.1 *Ifiri Doitch and Ifiri Sapan*

In 1901 the German colonial administration placed Hatohobei island (and other Southwest islanders) within its Palau territory that fell within its protectorate then known as German New Guinea (Foreign Office, 1901; Senfft, 1901). For Tobians the *Ifiri Doitch* (German) period brought the loss of political autonomy to the people and the beginning of rapid changes resulting from the impact of outside forces. Between the *Ifiri Doitch* (1901-14) and *Ifiri Sapan* (Japanese) (1914-45) periods on Hatohobei, a series of events and disasters occurred that significantly marked changes in the Hatohobei religio-political system. These included; depopulation due to disease¹³, out-migration for labour on the phosphate mines in Ngeaur¹⁴, the death of the Hatohobei

¹³ The German *Hamburg Südsee Expedition* to Hatohobei in 1909 counted 968 people living on the island (Eilers, 1936). An influenza epidemic broke out after this visit and six months later it was reported that 200 people had died. Another 50 men were “rescued” by the German supply ship and taken to Ngeaur (southern island of Palau) to work in the phosphate mines. Some years later during the *Ifiri Sapan* period an epidemic of venereal disease (gonorrhoea) led to barrenness in Tobian women, and from 1925 onward the birth rate plummeted until only one woman was bearing children when the Jesuit priest Father Elias (Marino [sic]) arrived in the early 1930’s (Black, 1988).

¹⁴ Ngeaur (or Anguar) is the southern-most island in the Palauan archipelago (see Figure 2.1). The Palauan legend of *Uab* describes Ngeaur as the birthplace of all the Palauan islands, lending to its historic and symbolic significance as the foundation of Palauan cosmology (pers. comm. with the traditional leader of Ngeaur, Ucherbelau Masao Gulibert, July 1994; and with his grandson, Nicholas

chief in Ngeaur (which led to a dispute over his successor) (see Black, 1985, 1988), an imbalance in the male:female birth ratio (with a boom in male births) (see Black, 1988), and the establishment of the relocated Hatohobei community in Echang (see McKnight, 1977; Black, 1977, 1982).

While the *Ifiri Doitch* period took away Hatohobei political autonomy, brought disease (influenza) and introduced the trade of copra, there were also significant changes on the island during the *Ifiri Sapan* period. During *Ifiri Sapan* a Japanese commercial company sent an agent, Yoshino, to live in Hatohobei. This was the first outsider to live in Hatohobei for an extended time¹⁵. During the 1920's the Japanese Mandate government divided Hatohobei land into individual plots and in 1931 the entire island converted to Roman Catholic religion (see Black, 1988 for a full analysis of this event), a phosphate mine was opened in 1937 (See Aso, 1940; Decker, 1940; Owen, 1974; and Purcell Jr, 1976) for environmental and economic assessments of this mining, and World War Two brought Japanese soldiers to the island¹⁶. For perspective on the extent of the Japanese Empire, during the 1920s and 1930s there was a population of 30,000 Japanese civilian business operators, military soldiers, Korean and other Micronesian island labourers, as well as local Palauans in the urban centre of

Swords, October 2006). Ngeaur endured intensive phosphate mining during the German and Japanese periods (see Denoon, 1997; Hanlon, 1998; Peattie, 1988), and was additionally impacted by intensive warfare between the U.S. Marines and Japanese Imperial Army in 1944 (see Peattie, 1988, Nero, 1989).

¹⁵ This excludes the shipwrecked crew of American whalers that lived in Hatohobei for up to two years in the 1830's (see Holden, 1836). (This event is also discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.) It also excludes people from other islands to the south (Mapia island in Indonesia, possibly others) who appear in the genealogies of several Hatohobei families. Yoshino's extended visit clearly was supported by the commercial company and the Japanese Mandate government, based out of Koror, in larger Palau. He played a large role in influencing Hatohobei politics with the Mandate government, having developed a friendship with the new Hatohobei chief (*Tamor*), following the death of the original chief whom had left to work in the phosphate mine in Ngeaur. It is likely that his influence extended into the chiefly decision to allow the sacred spirit house, the women's menstrual house, and the sorcerer's canoe house to be burned down in the 1920's (see Black, 1988). This is a significant symbolic event in Hatohobei history.

¹⁶ On October 6, 1945, 439 Japanese troops on Hatohobei island surrendered to American military forces (see Richard, 1957).

Koror. In the two decades prior to World War Two this was a very successful commercial and economic period in Palauan history.

2.3.2 *Mass conversion to Roman Catholicism*

The most significant event during the pre-World War Two period was the conversion to Roman Catholicism. This mass conversion reveals the beginning of a shift away from the Hatohobei collective belief in the supernatural and chiefly ritual to sustain ecological and social balance, and toward western Christian ethics and politics. The transformation of the Hatohobei religio-political system involved the timing and circumstances following the death of the chief that left the island (in 1909) to work in the phosphate mines of Ngeaur (Black, 1988:51). The contested legitimacy of his successor resulted in two factional parties of descendants (those of the original chief, and those of the successor). This ensuing factionalism and chiefly instability played a key role in the rapid conversion to Roman Catholicism in the early 1930's (Black, 1988). The significance of this conversion is that it marks the beginning of Hatohobei appropriation of, and integration into, outside systems of governance.

Although the belief in ritualistic efficacy of traditional religious practices may have been lost with the introduction of Roman Catholicism, the belief in the supernatural remained an integral feature of Hatohobei cosmology. The arrival of a Jesuit priest from Koror, Father Elias Fernandez¹⁷ was timely in the 1930's, as the island was experiencing heightened anxieties over general depopulation and the loss of its communal religion (Fernandez, 1931). Black notes that Father Fernandez "offered them an alternative" (Black, 1988:56). Based on their pre-Christian beliefs about

¹⁷ Father Elias is called "Father Marino" in Black's (1988) analysis of the 1931 Tobian mass conversion to Roman Catholicism. Incidentally, although a Jesuit mission was accepted in Koror during the Japanese Mandate years, a later incident led to the Japanese beheading of Father Elias in Koror in 1941 (See Black, 1994)).

religion, this new religion functioned for the same reason, to keep *yarus* (and the individual hostility associated with them) and disasters away.

Replacing the old religio-political system, this new system had two major tenets; that religion is necessary and Hatohobei religion, specifically, must be Father Marino's [sic] (actually, Father Fernandez) (Black, 1988:67). According to Tobian interpretations, Father Marino (Fernandez) held power over *yarus*, which provided the balance needed (and filled the void of chiefly ritual) for ecological and social continuity (and survival). In this role he managed to replace Hatohobei collective anxieties during a period of immense changes with stability and security again. Further, the community believed he would judge whether they went to heaven or hell, and thus held ultimate authority over the entire island in the afterlife. This fear of authority fits with the Hatohobei concept and practice of *usaur*, or the "in-charge" complex.



Plate 2.9 Chief Marino, 1972 (P.Black)

This mass conversion event does not fully explain yet the continued role of the (successor) chief but does help to highlight for us the history behind the complexities of contemporary Hatohobei forms of authority. Such forms of authority inevitably present themselves explicitly and implicitly and this is further **considered** in the narrative analyses in Chapters Five and Six.

2.3.3 *Ifiri Merik*

Beginning in 1945, the *Ifiri Merik* (American) period involved the United States Naval Administration of the Trust Territory Government administering over the Micronesian¹⁸ islands. This included the broader geopolitical militaristic strategies on behalf of the United States government, along with various aid and development policies¹⁹, beginning with both the “Solomon Report” (see United States, 1963) and “Nathan Report” (Nathan, 1968). Regarding chiefly traditions, it is important to point out that during the U.S. era in Micronesia (this includes Palau and Hatohobei), the American administration was ideologically opposed to chiefs. While in the past, the Japanese and German colonial administrations were more embracing and inclusive of chiefly roles and influences, the American presence began to influence a transfer of authority away from chiefly titles and toward elected government positions within both the Hatohobei state government, as well as the larger Palau government.

These development policies supported overall administrative efforts toward electoral democracy, health and education, a large centralised government infrastructure and a revival of commercial activity in Palau. Another developing

¹⁸ This term is useful here, but actually misrepresents the diverse peoples and cultures found throughout the northern Pacific region. Please see Rainbird, P. (2003); Tcherkezoff, S. (2003); and Hanlon, D. (2009) for critiques of this term.

¹⁹ Hanlon (1998) provides an extensive historical analysis of Post-World War Two United States administrative and development policies in Micronesia.

political theme during the 1960s and 1970s involved the concerted regional and island-group efforts toward political sovereignty in the Micronesian region²⁰. The people of Palau voted for a Constitution that was adopted in 1979²¹ and formally recognised in 1981. In 1983 the Hatohobei State Government (HSG) was established within the Palauan state political structure, making it one of sixteen states in the Republic of Palau. The Hatohobei State Constitution (see *Fitehiri Farauri Faruheri Hatohobei*, 1983) was passed into law a year later.



Plate 2.10 HSG 1st Legislature, 1983. (Archival Photographs, FOTI)

Hatohobei island obviously fell within the political boundaries of Palau in the U.S. Trust Territory and records reveal the establishment of an island representative, or magistrate, in 1959 (see McKnight, 1977:24; Black, 1983:59; 1982). Numerous field

²⁰ See Congress of Micronesia (COM) files from 1964-1978 for records of these efforts (Congress of Micronesia, 1965-1978a, 1965-1978b).

²¹ Palauans take pride in their Constitution, noting that it provides for a nuclear-free and arms-free Palau, and that only Palauans can own title to their land. This latter point is relevant in considering tenuous land relations that Tobians and other Southwest islanders have in the relocated setting of Palau.

trip visits from Koror to Hatohobei by the U.S. Naval administration²² reveal the increasing activities between Hatohobei island and the government infrastructure in Palau.

Black (1983) notes that a particular conflict event on the island determined that although the island magistrate served to liaise with the administering Naval Government administration based out of Koror, it was clearly still the chief that held moral authority and overall guidance for Hatohobei island community affairs at that time. This highlights not only that the people of Hatohobei were beginning to have more formal negotiations with outside authorities but also that these negotiations continued to be shaped by prevailing beliefs in customary principles of authority.

2.4 Echang and Tobian Duality

Tohbwich has been patient as I progress through this ethnohistorical timeline and now asks for me to share a song composed by Isaac Theodore, often sung when the transport ship leaves the home island. Tohbwich feels that this song (especially when sung in a group) helps us to understand the shift away from the primary traditional or neo-traditional lifestyle on the island and the increasing embrace of urban living in larger Palau. The Tobian community developed a dual society between these two places and that continues today, albeit with the primary lifestyle in the urban setting. Nonetheless, the ties within each duality have created a space that is one long extension of home (a constant fluidity encapsulating both spaces and places).

²² See U.S. Trust Territory archives (1952-1986), U.S. Trust Territory, Palau Southwest Island field trip reports (1950-1978).

Yatore

*Irau buou ba dibe habongil,
Mara hawe weri bidis ba uweri yashakamo
Dibera habongi fanganihis ma reni pata
Habauhatahe wamu fatahaseri waroh,
Ira yaungoungaraho wamu ma reni yai hapauh,
Hale todu dewa ba horo rihitihamami,
Uni me hobera mire nitao nga hobe mamangiyasahu,
Hakamora ma mireri woni haparifayura.*
(Translated to English by Elsie Nestor)

Time

It is time for us to say goodbye,
To our brothers and friends
Watching your sail disappearing
Through the sunset,
And I feel sorry for you.
Is it really true that you are leaving us?
If ever you live far away, just remember the fun,
And our stay on the small island.

This song was composed on the beach in Sonsorol while watching family members depart on the supply ship to Koror. It is a popular song in Hatohobei, as well, as it reflects the sadness one feels when watching a loved one departing the home island, and also, when one is away and thinking about life back on the island. It is often sung in the evening hours, during social events, when people are reminiscing about life on the island, or a loved one that is back on the island, and vice versa.

Since the first Hatohobei family established itself in Echang in the early 1900's, there has been a gradual shift in population from Hatohobei island to Echang village, in Koror, yet the population shifts with regular travel to and from the home island. As mentioned, a duality emerged between the two (Hatohobei and Echang) social spheres. Black discusses this dual context in Hatohobei society, noting that, "...ever since the early years of the 20th century, when Southwest islanders first pioneered the Echang settlement, Tobian society has been dual in nature, with an urban, cash-based, pole based in Palau proper, contrasting with a rural, subsistence pole, located on Tobi Island" (Black, 2000: 2)

Increasingly, over later years the Hatohobei population developed into a more permanent relocated community in Echang, with fewer and fewer families choosing to reside primarily on Hatohobei island²³. With the growing population in Echang, an increasing emphasis on the wage-economy and education, priorities and obligations required of the urban setting, and myriad external influences, there have been rapid changes within the relocated Hatohobei community in general. Despite these rapid changes, the fluidity and duality of Hatohobei society remains with continual, yet sporadic travel between Echang and Hatohobei. Although these dual social poles complement each other well in the historical context of Tobian notions of mobility (see Tibbetts, 2000) (i.e. seafaring history, migration from Fais, Mogmog, or Ulithi islands, according to various oral histories), Hatohobei settlement in Echang was not without tensions. After World War Two, resettlement created increasing problems for the collective Hatohobei leadership.

²³ The population generally fluctuates around the three to four HSG supply ship trips to Hatohobei and the other Southwest islands, with an increase in population on Hatohobei during the summer period when children are not obligated to the school system in Koror.

In considering the operation of the “in-charge complex” in Echang, I suggest that within this Hatohobei social duality, especially in the Palauan socio-political setting, there developed a void (or uncertainty, if even temporarily) in Hatohobei leadership. These resettlement and leadership difficulties are reflected, and the void exacerbated, by differences in Palauan hierarchical and Hatohobei egalitarian socio-political structures and cosmologies (McKnight, 1977).²⁴ It is worth noting how the boundaries between Hatohobei and Palauan political structures were perpetuated by the U.S. colonial administration and the Catholic Church and this impacted chiefly politics and elected government authority within the Hatohobei political structure. Additionally, the shift to Echang and larger Palau brought an increased importance in elected leadership positions. For these reasons, as the community in Echang grew and less people over time lived more permanently on Hatohobei, there became less value placed on moral guidance from the chiefly position and more so from the Catholic Church. Further, the people began looking more toward the state-level leadership as having the authority with decision-making for the betterment of the community. With the Hatohobei traditional leader residing more permanently in Echang since the early 1980’s, this too, helped diminish the efficacy of the title, with less attention obviously around an authority that was not living on the home island.

2.5 Republic of Palau (ROP)

From 1981-1993 Palau negotiated with the U.S. government for political independence. These negotiations played out in Washington D.C., the United Nations Headquarters in New York City, Saipan, Guam and Palau. During this politically volatile time the Palauan people voted in eight separate plebiscites. Political violence

²⁴ Please see Deverne Reed Smith’s *Palauan Social Structure* (1983) for an in-depth ethnographic analysis of Palauan culture and society.

during this period included house-bombings, government work strikes, riots on the OEK (House of Senate) building (resulting in a death), the assassination of Palau's first president Haruo Remeliik in 1985, and the alleged suicide of Palau's second president, Carlos Salii in 1988.

In 1993 the Palauan people (including the Southwest islander communities) voted to approve a Compact of Free Association²⁵ with the United States government, giving Palau independent nation-state status on 1 October, 1994, and official recognition as the Republic of Palau (ROP). Please see Aldridge and Myers, 1990; Black and Avruch, 1993; Firth and von Strokirch, 1997; Hanlon, 1998; Leibowitz, 1998; Lutz, 1986; and Wilson, 1995 for further analyses of these negotiations and events.

Living as a marginalised minority group in the nascent nation of the ROP, the cultural identity of Hatohobei has been compromised in the sense that there has been to varying degrees, rapid transformation into Palauan society, with simultaneous disconnect from the living practices and traditions on the home island. However, despite the rapid social and political changes involved with the population relocation, the growing nationalistic ideology in the ROP, and increasing regional and global interests over Tobian resources, Tobians continue to collectively define themselves, whether living in Hatohobei or Palau or beyond, through and within the imagined (and real) home island of Hatohobei. This is further reinforced in recent years through increased outsider interests in Helen Reef (see Tibbetts, 2002). Through these interests over Helen Reef's abundant fish, turtle and bird resources, Tobian leadership is

²⁵ This political agreement gave the U.S. defense rights in Palau for fifty years, and provided the government of Palau with annual funding over fifteen years for the development of government and civil infrastructure. Additionally, the ROP attained membership to the United Nations on 15 December, 1994. This political relationship was renewed and extended in October, 2009.

successfully engaging in relationships with efforts toward sustainable resource management and preservation of their island and resources into perpetuity. These dynamics of outside interests toward Helen Reef and the leadership dynamics shared above are discussed further through the cultural heritage narrative in Chapters Five and Six.

Tohbwich wants us to understand it has never been easy for Tobians living in larger Palau and that only since notions of nationalism have arisen from political independence in 1994 have Tobians slowly become more embraced by the host community and assimilated into it over time. In the recent past there has been great and subtle tension for this relocated minority community residing on a tenuous land agreement and without the Palauan family and clan relationships that are important for living in Koror (and larger Palau). As guests in larger Palau, Tobians do not have the deep-rooted cultural family and clan support in the hierarchical socio-political structure that embodies all things Palauan. With Tohbwich's encouragement, at this juncture it is important to provide further perspective on the marginalised minority status of this small community through a poem written by (the late) Mariano Yalap, a Palauan friend of the Southwest island community. Mariano wrote this during the height of tensions and violence that erupted over contested land in the relocated community in Echang in 1998. I was living in the village of Echang at the time. Certain high-chiefs from Ngerakebesang village near Echang were circulating a petition to remove Southwest islanders from their resettled homes. For several weeks, at the only entrance into Echang village, we all had to walk and/or drive past protesters with signs and sometimes verbal messages, telling the Southwest islanders to leave and go home. Two house fires were set in Echang village by persons unknown and most fortunately, nobody was hurt. Mariano submitted his poem to be published in the local *Tia Belau*

Newspaper, in a rare showing of public support for the Southwest islanders, but it did not get published. In fact, it was only circulated amongst a few people within Echang village. Sadly, Mariano Yalap died unexpectedly, of unrelated causes, less than a year later. His poem, titled, “i remember”, with a personal note at the end, is shared here, just as I received it back in July, 1998. It is a powerful piece that provides meaningful feeling and context to the minority and marginalised status of the Southwest islanders in larger Palauan society.

i remember

by Mariano Yalap

i remember the day i was born/ i remember because it was a/ moment of joy
and happiness/ for my parents, relatives, neighbors/ and all island residents.

i remember the day i was born/ i remember because the government/wrote
down everything about me/

in a piece of paper called/ “Birth Certificate.”/ a copy is kept at the
hospital/where my life began/another copy is kept at the/ court where my
destiny will be determined.

i remember the day i was born/ i remember because the
government/declared me a citizen of this island/and not just a statistic/ my
rights are assured in the constitution/ so the document promised.

i remember asking my father/to define the word “citizen” for me/ “ a person
owing loyalty to and/entitled by birth or naturalization/ to the protection of
a given state.”/my father’s dictionary claimed/i remember because the
definition/of the word evoked in me/a sense of importance.

i remember the feeling/of blood coursing through my veins.../pulsating my
inner parts,/my brain throbbing of euphemism/when i mouthed/ “i am a
citizen of belau.”/i remember because the words gave me a sense of
belonging.

i remember feeling so proud/when fellow citizens reap rewards
for/accomplishing this, that.../doctors, lawyers, accountants,
engineers,/teachers, athletes.../i remember the words I whispered to
myself,/ “i’m going to make belau proud/just like the ones before me”

i remember feeling melancholy/when i hear of my fellow citizens/killing
each other, stealing from one another,/selling souls, hearts, deserting
families,/abandoning cultures, and traditions./i remember because I saw my
dreams/ of belau disintegrating into oblivion.

i remember the day i first set foot on oreor ²⁶/i remember because i was
looked down/and snickered at, demeaned, stereotyped, /labeled, and oh,
how i hate to say this,/rejected by the people i thought to be/my own.

i remember learning in school/the terms “assimilation” and “segregation.”/i
remember sitting alone under a mango tree/trying my best to understand the
meaning/of these terms./i remember comparing “segregation” to “disease,”
/ and “assimilation” being the “cure.” / then i remember feeling confused.

i remember the dread of going to school, / stores, or knocking on
government doors./ i was afraid even to use the word “alii.”²⁷/ i remember
crying for my father/to send me back to his far away land.

i remember asking myself:/what is wrong with me?/is it the food i eat? is it
my language?/is it my culture?/it could not be the island i came from,/could
it?/why do you hate me so much?

i guard your boundaries against illegal activities/taking place on your
waters./i respect your decisions, ideas, customs, and traditions/i trust you
enough to place my vote/on the candidate of your choice./i remember
because there are too many questions/with not enough answers.

²⁶ *Oreor* is the indigenous Palauan name for Koror, the ROP’s urban national center.

²⁷ *Alii* translates into the English word and meaning, “Hello”. In Palauan it is used to announce one’s arrival.

i see you first as a human being, fellow belauan, / and citizen of this beautiful island./i want to believe that/my contributions to society/however small they may be,/will in some ways/serve for the better and not otherwise.

the storm of 1903 was,/i believe,/a blessing in disguise./my forefathers were swept away/to a far distant place/learned later on/as belau./the beauty of this island/convincing my forefathers/they have found paradise.

five years less of a century later/their children's children found/themselves in yet another storm./only this time, the storm is more/abrasive than the previous one./the eye of the storm/is concentrating on dehumanizing,/degrading/and shredding/our lives/beyond repair.

mind you/if i may call you/a fellow belauan/i must be protected by you;/i wish to be loved/and cared for/just like your forefathers/count on me/in your hour of needs/include me in good and bad times,/search in your heart for an empty space/for me before/ sending me to my grave.

i want to leave this earth/knowing that i was no longer/segregated from you/and that/my children of now and forever/will remain/assimilated with yours./that,/i want to remember.

note: the poem was written to show my support for the people of eang hamlet in their effort to gain their rightful place in our society, our government, and in our hearts. the people of eang and the southwest, are human beings just like you and me. they should be accepted as our own people, for they are! let us practice not to discriminate our own people --- outside they may appear different, but in their heart, they are very belauan like those from babeldaob and eouldaob. meantime, let's practice solidarity, not subjectivity. [sic]

This is an emotionally forceful poem that recalls an unstable period in the Hatohobei and Palau relationship. Increasingly in the nationalised context Tobians have assimilated in to Palauan society (and beyond) and these tensions are felt less. I want to note that through this process of assimilation the Tobians (individually and

collectively) have continued to nurture and maintain their connection and identity with with/through Hatohobei. This has largely come through several areas; 1) the relationship with outside interests over Helen Reef and the subsequent development of the Helen Reef Marine Resource Management Program (HRMRMP) and from there, new developments of local empowerment with two local NGO's; 2) an increasing imaginary of the home island through stories and brief visits; and 3) through brief visits and several individuals living on Hatohobei, and the sharing of local food stuffs (turtle, smoked fish, taro, coconut crab) with family and community in Echang and Palau. This brief background provides a foundation for more critical analysis of this marginalised status, physically disconnected community, yet with a growing spiritual and imaginary connection. Tohbwich suggests now that we explain a few details about Hotsarihie (“reef of giant clams”), a very special place in the Hatohobei world.

2.6 *Hotsarihie*, Helen Reef

The indigenous name for Helen Reef is *Hotsarihie*, meaning “reef of giant clams” (*Tridacnidae* family). *Hotsarihie*, or Helen Reef, is located 65km east of Hatohobei (see lower left-hand corner, Figure 2.1). The islet itself is less than .25 km² (see Plate 2.12) but the surrounding lagoon has an area of 165 km². Helen Reef is considered to be the collective territorial resource of the Hatohobei community. This is recognised in the Hatohobei State constitution, under Article 1, Sections 1, 2 and 3. Helen Reef is also recognised as a part of the territory of the Republic of Palau in the Palauan constitution, Article 1, Section 1. Because of the remote physical setting of Hatohobei and Helen Reef, the ROP Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is quite large. Section 2 of the Palauan constitution notes the exclusive ownership of resources by each state, within 12 nautical miles of its traditional baseline. The Compact of Free

Association (Title 1, Article 2, Section 124) provides the ROP with jurisdiction over these resources.



Plate 2.11 Helen Reef Reef (Hotsarihie), 2012 (HRMRMP)

Helen Reef is historically significant to Hatohobei tradition and identity. As Black states, it is “abundant in marine resources that are traditionally an important source of sustenance for the livelihood of the Hatohobei people” (Black, 2000; Hosei, 2001; Helen Reef Action Committee, Helen Reef Pilot Surveillance/Deterrence Program, 2001). In a report for the environmental NGO, Community Conservation Network (CCN), Black (2000) points to Helen Reef’s significant position within the maintenance of Hatohobei cultural identity and values, noting that, “Another striking continuity is in the commitment Tobians continue to show as they exert their claims to responsible ownership of Helen Reef. That commitment is a constant theme in Hatohobei oral traditions, both in ancient and more contemporary times” (Black, 2000:5). The fact that this very remote Helen Reef is growing in importance to Palauan

national and wider regional and global interest groups, helps us to understand the empowerment of the community in this contemporary setting.

In this chapter we located Hatohobei island, Helen Reef, the Republic of Palau and Echang village in Koror, the urban centre of Palau. This chapter provides a useful overview of the cultural, historical, political and social context of the Hatohobei community. This now allows us to begin an engagement with the concerns our friends Tohbwich and Medechiibelau shared together in their hammocks above Ngeruktabl in the Rock Islands. Recall, that they are perplexed by the short-sighted individualistic values and principles of the *Survivor* people and how this conflicts with the collective values and principles and long term planning of relationship networks that comprise both Palau and Hatohobei.

Tohbwich and Medichieibelau now query me about literature and discourse around the research methodology I have carefully selected. They are curious to hear my rationale and justification for this chosen research design. The following Chapter Three explains this all in more detail.

Chapter 3 Seeking My Inner *Pwo* and Making Like a *Marusetih*²⁸

We know the truth, not only by the reason, but also by the heart.

--Blaise Pascal

Never apologize for showing feeling. When you do so, you apologize for the truth.

--Benjamin Disraeli

3.1 Outsider/Insider Context

As canvassed in Chapter One through my first meeting with Harengesei (Justin) Andrew in Guam, I am privileged and fortunate to suggest that my position within the Hatohobei community is one of an ‘adopted son’. I have been visiting, living and working in Palau and Hatohobei at various times²⁹ since the early 1990’s. Through and with my adopted family I have long-term commitments and obligations and am in regular communication with them when away. We keep in touch on family and community events and maintain our reciprocal responsibilities as needed. From a

²⁸ *Pwo* (Carolinian term for Master Navigator) and *Marusetih* (Hatohobei term for Master Fishermen) are discussed in the second section below.

²⁹ I have spent an immense amount of time with Hatohobei family and community. Since the early 1990’s this relationship has been a daily experience within me, whether physically or also emotionally, spiritually, and always connected to my personal and intellectual development. My visits and time spent with family and community involve a dense fluidity and mobility between Hatohobei family and community in Guam and those in Echang and Hatohobei. This speaks entirely to the diasporic and fluid Hatohobei Landscape that I discuss in Chapter Four and this entire thesis. While in Guam we regularly enjoyed visits from family and community in Palau. This always involved food stuffs from Hatohobei and Echang, storytelling, and family and community events and contestations. As for visits to Palau, although I had already met and spent much time with Harengesei (Justin) Andrew and family in Guam in the early-1990’s, my first visit to Palau and Echang was in 1994 with Harengesei. From this time forward I made regular informal visits between Guam, Palau (Echang village specifically) and Hatohobei and Helen Reef whenever I could join on the HSG supply ship when it made (sporadically) scheduled visits to Hatohobei and Helen Reef and the outer Southwest islands. My informal visits would last for days, weeks or months at a time and also included a formal language study project with Hatohobei elders, a canoe restoration project (see chapter four), and 6-months of formal ethnographic fieldwork (1999/2000) for my MA thesis (Tibbetts, 2002), and informal (ongoing all these years) and formal consultative efforts with the Hatohobei State Government and local-NGO HOPE in 2010. From 1994 through 2003 while engaging and sometimes living with Hatohobei family and community in Guam, I have probably visited Echang/Hatohobei/Helen Reef for several months total each year and have only missed one Christmas and New year (an important family/community event period) visit to Echang in that time. From 2003 I have visited yearly for a minimum of 2 weeks/year or sometimes much longer (12-months in 2008; 4-months in 2007; 3-months in 2006; 2-months in 2005 and also for the PhD fieldwork as mentioned earlier, 12-months in 2012/13.

young age I became familiar with basic conversational Tobian language, customs, histories and cultural protocols³⁰. As a curious outsider in fact, through storytelling with my peers and Tobian elders, I made an early (and ongoing) effort to learn all that I could about Hatohobei history, culture and political events. This research and knowledge also included reviews of the ethnographic record on Hatohobei (see P. Black; 1977, 1978, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1985, 1988, 1991, 2000; Eilers, 1936; Bushmann, 1996; Osborne, 1966; and Hunter-Anderson, 2000, for example).

Through this long-term relationship with adopted (and extended) family and the larger Hatohobei community, as well as my own ethnographic research and projects (M.A. thesis, 2002; the restoration and relocation of a traditional Tobian sailing canoe; a Tobi language workshop, to name a few), my personal and academic interests with and around the Tobi community have paralleled and intertwined in a most fulfilling way that continues today.

While this particular research project was initiated both from my M.A. thesis (Tibbetts, 2002) and out of ongoing relationships, obligations, commitments and expectations of Tobian family and community members, the further impetus for this research derives from many discussions, or ‘storytelling’ (*tinitip*), with Tobian family and community members. In particular, it was during my visit and these storytelling sessions in 2008 that the concern over climate change impacts and potential loss of Hatohobei and Helen Reef islands emerged as a concern of the community that required further scholarly consideration.

³⁰ This language and cross-cultural learning experience resulted from living with my adopted Hatohobei family in Guam in the early 1990’s (which of course, involved regular visits from family/community in Palau) and frequent visits to Palau, as well as an independent language study program supported by a U.S. Department of Education Title IX funded, Foreign Language and Area Studies scholarship. Under this scholarship I initiated a 3-month intensive language learning project (in 1999) where I engaged in daily language learning sessions with select Hatohobei elders in Echang and Hatohobei.

3.2 Research Framing and Design: Using Etak, Navigating the Hasetiho, Arm, and Hapitsetse, Enjoying the Suriyout ³¹

Developing a research design within a cross-cultural context and interface, as well as overlapping levels of political spheres between local, state, national and global interests, requires a careful, sensitive and methodical navigation through various select research paradigms, approaches and methods. Our spirit friends Tohbwich and Medichibelau reminded me of the significance of traditional Micronesian models and practices of navigation when considering the design for this research endeavour. So, in framing this design let us first briefly discuss several examples of such abstract navigation concepts, oral histories and local strategies to draw attention to the vastness and interconnectedness of the region known as Micronesia³², the various knowledge sets used to empower the peoples of this region over time and space, and the more specific knowledge and skills developed to thrive on specific islands such as Hatohobei. From this abstract, conceptual, and metaphorically³³ “Micronesian” overview, a more detailed discussion of the specific research design then follows.

Considering the historical, cultural and linguistic relationship of Hatohobei with the Carolinian islands (referred to in Chapter Two), it is appropriate and useful to reference that traditional sailing navigation is still practiced today in such Carolinian islands as; Polowat, Polap, Satawal, Satawan, Eurapick, Ifaluk and the Woleai group (to name a few). Please see Fig. 2.1 (p.28) and Fig. 3.1 (below).

³¹ These four Hatohobei Master Fisherman terms are discussed in this section.

³² The term “Micronesia” and “Micronesian” reflect colonial forces more than the realities of a culturally diverse region of western Oceania. The term derives from Dumont D’Urville’s usage in 1832. Please see Hanlon (2009); Jolly, (2001) (2007); Rainbird (2003); Tcherkezoff (2003); and Thomas (1989) for their treatments on this colonial terminology.

³³ The use of metaphor here is intentional and has purpose in two ways; a) it is a common method of storytelling in the Hatohobei (and Pacific, for that matter) context; and b) it is a useful and evocative literary and knowledge transfer tool in this ethnographic project. I discuss the use of metaphor and other writing methods in the storytelling section below.

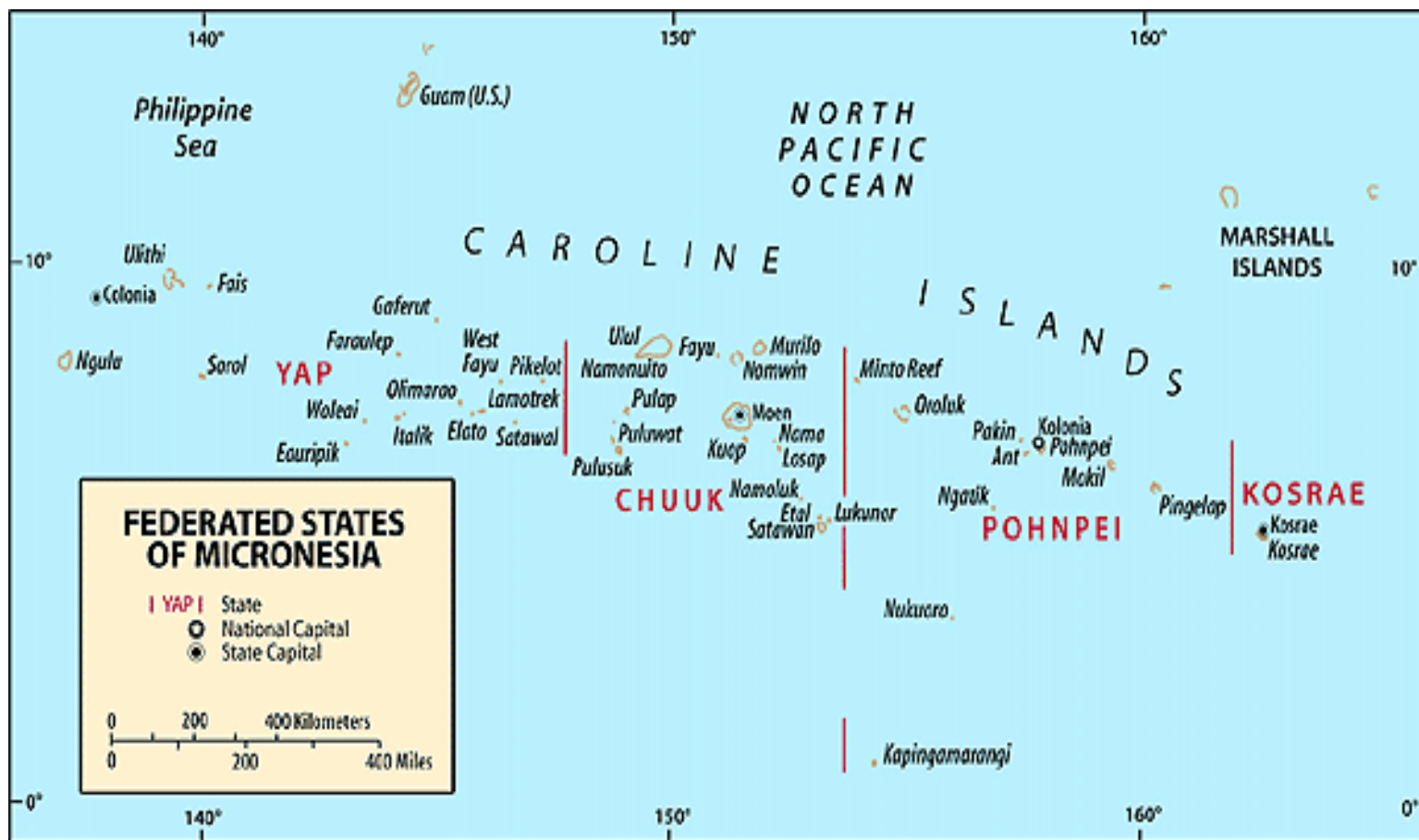


Figure 3.1 Caroline Islands, of the Federated States of Micronesia (Source: CIA World Factbook)

This ancient practice is informed by complex knowledge and skill sets held and transferred by master navigators, *pwo*, allowing them to explore and continue to traverse the seaways of this vast and interconnected region. The long-term history and practice of this sacred knowledge is shared by indigenous Pacific scholar Dr. Vince Diaz, when framing his 1997 film, *Sacred Vessels*. Diaz explains, “Polowat (*pwo*, and) canoe builders claim that they alone, in the entire Pacific, learned how to build canoes that could actually fly (*i.e. in the sky, my personal clarification here*). But there is nobody alive today, nor has there been anybody in the past century, that knows or knew how to build such aeronautic vessels: sadly, the last of skilled builders had passed on before the end of the 19th century” (Diaz, screening and lecture for *Sacred Vessels*, 2001).

Diaz and Kauanui’s (2001) discussion of Carolinian navigation concepts help us to understand the wider consciousness of the seaways of Micronesia (and interconnection of peoples and cultures) and how to navigate them. They explain how master navigators hold sacred knowledge and skills of magic that allow them to forecast weather patterns, the concept of *etak*, which involves triangulating between select star constellations, the sailing canoe, and “imagined” moving islands. *Etak* is the navigator’s method that allows for navigating long ocean distances (and the physical elements), from one island to another. This concept of imagined “moving islands” is integrated and processed with the knowledge and skills of star compasses and star paths between islands, reading or feeling swell sets and currents, marine creatures and birds, as well as cloud formations and the smells of the ocean and land.

For further metaphorical framing, let us consider how fishing on Hatohobei is an essential activity that required, historically, a wide range of sacred knowledge that was transferred through select clan and family members. This Tobian fishing

knowledge is vast and intricate, intimately connected with the environment and diverse fish species in the region. For one example, because of the unique geographical and geophysical dynamics of Hatohobei island and surrounding seaways, one set of knowledge required all adult men (fishing over the reef was strictly a male activity) to learn the seasonal cycles as they related to the *hasetiho*. *Hasetiho* refers to the current and wave system unique to Hatohobei. In brief, the prevailing currents from the south diverge around the island moving north, creating rough currents on each side (running south to north, parallel to each other) of the island, called, *arm*. These two parallel currents, *arm*, converge upstream several kilometres north of the island, forming *hapitsetse*, a very rough area, with some of this energy returning inside the *arm* back to the island. A fisherman had to be adeptly skilled to navigate through and around the *hasetiho* (which has multiple features that change with seasonal and daily weather patterns) to safely depart and return to the island. Obviously, without the traditional knowledge of navigating the *hasetiho*, as well as experience and great care, tragic consequences could result (i.e. loss of life, drifting to the Philippine or Indonesian islands archipelagos, depending on the ocean currents and time of year). Working within this knowledge framework, a *marusetih*, or master fisherman, would engage a further knowledge and skill set that allowed him to fish these currents at certain times and to also seek a feature of the *hasetiho* called, *suriyout*. *Suriyout* are areas within the currents around the island that are calm and produce good fishing. Weather permitting, some of these areas are consistently found (but one must still navigate through the *arm* and *hapitsetse* near the island, although they may change with the seasonal and daily weather patterns).

Well, navigating through 12-months (and over twenty years, for that matter!) of ethnographic research data with a diasporic minority community that engages local,

regional, national and global level institutions and politics, as well as analysing such data, requires a select, culturally and politically nuanced, and rigorous scholarly research design. One must be sensitive to cultural protocols and contexts, political issues and dynamics at multiple levels and ongoing changes as life unfolds. One must nurture all relationships carefully and maintain respects both locally, and also to the scholarly framework and process. Continuing with the metaphorical framing above then, the following research design reflects my efforts to use *etak* (the Carolinian navigation triangulation method based around abstract ‘moving islands’) to best navigate through the *arm* and *hasetiho* (waves and currents: dynamics, challenges) and the *hapitsetse* (rough areas: events) and reach the resulting calm (and good fishing) of the *suriyout* (the scholarly analysis and outcomes). Tohbwich and Medichiibelau continue to giggle while reminding me they are here to guide me along the way. They also take great teasing fun to remind me further that despite my planned rigorous scholarly analysis, most certainly, I “will still never reach the status of *marusetih* (master fisherman)!” Leave it to the jokesters to guide me well and keep me in my place.

While I agreed well with their mischievous and provocative point, I reminded these two jokesters of our discussion in Chapter One, where they assured me that they trusted in my ability to organise and implement a research endeavour that encapsulated both the spirit and essence of Hatohobei experiences while also respecting and engaging a rigorous scholarly analysis based around the Western academic, anthropological, and ethnographic process (and product). They both agreed but Tohbwich shared a salient frustration that I had often experienced with many friends and scholars across Micronesia as we discussed “outsiders” researching their communities. In a rather apoplectic state, Tohbwich started a long winded (no pun

intended) discussion on the foul smells (*hei boutama*) emanating across the westerly breezes (*iyafang*). He lamented further on the “theorising” and “objectifying” of Pacific peoples, emphasising that,

“We are tired of academic researchers and “development experts” visiting and putting us in their own framings and boxes while nurturing their own careers and agendas. Please stop “theorising” us! We are insulted by your efforts that place us under a microscope!”

I calmly reminded him of his belief in my unique insider/outsider and long-term relationship with the Hatohobei community and that my methodological efforts for this project were twofold; 1) to embrace the collaborative efforts involved in an ongoing dialogic between myself and the community; and 2) select a nuanced research design that embraces a framework and various methods that can best pay respects to both the community spirit and contributions, as well as the scholarly analysis required. This balancing act, I suggest, is captured in the fine line between art and science through an experimental ethnography based around a storytelling narrative, an interpretive analysis, as well as the fine line between my personal relationships with the community and my unfolding academic and intellectual journey. Tohbwich breathed in deeply, spit out another betel chew, and gazed forward again, silently and simultaneously reminding me of his feelings on this topic and his trust in my efforts. I must confess, however, his contempt in this area I have lived and felt many times over and that tension continues within my analysis and this “writing-story” (see Richardson, 2002) as it unfolds. Quietly, though, I remained confident that not only could I respect this balancing act, but also reveal to Tohbwich and Medichibelau, that this Western, scholarly based design could indeed reveal and inform us all through the dialogical process involved in such a relationship between community and researcher/academia,

and in a way that all involved continue to benefit. As we journey forward from this juncture let us keep in mind the tensions mentioned above.

In the milieu of the Hatohobei Landscape then, from historical colonial and neo-colonial events to contemporary local dynamics intertwined and unfolding within the neoliberal world reality, I have selected a nuanced research design. Firstly, the philosophical, ideological and methodological framing nexus of this research is grounded within the larger post-colonial and post-modern critiques and transformations that come out of cultural studies, design anthropology, and Pacific studies discourse and research methodologies. Several key and related scholarly contributions highlight well the paradigmatic intersection and influence of the implicit, underlying research framing for this research project.

These are Iain Chamber's, *Culture After Humanism* (2001), Timothy Ingold's long-term theorising of the human perception and connection with the environment (including such works as, *From Description to Correspondence: Anthropology in Real Time* (Gatt and Ingold, 2013); *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description* (2011); *Lines: A Brief History* (2007a); *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (2000a), and more specific to researching the Pacific and this research design, I briefly acknowledge Linda Tuhiwai-Smith's, *Decolonising Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (1999) and Denzin and Lincoln's, *Critical Methodologies and Indigenous Inquiry* (2005), which lend toward what I refer to as, emerging Pacific Studies discourse.

In various ways, these particular works offer critical analyses of the long-term imbalances, inequalities and injustices surrounding Western-based science and research and indigenous (non-Western) communities. Further, and among others (some works

of which I discuss in this chapter), they are representative of an important and ongoing transformative turning point within the social sciences, the practice and approach of researching peoples and cultures, ongoing theoretical development, knowledge production and all the political entanglements therein. These contributions articulate the paradigmatic framing and juncture that grounds and informs this research design, which is developed with an appreciation of the always contested and subjective partial truths that inform history, culture and society, and that we are guided not by an unattainable search for universal truth (knowledge), but rather, guided by our moral and spiritual selves.

Chambers (2001) provides a critique of rationalisation and deconstructs the basis of a (Western) universal humanism, where truth is a product of reason. He focuses on the limits of language and the irrational concept of objectivity, through enlightening discussions around the narratives and notions of memory, home, exiles and migrants, and “tradition” and “modernity”. Rather than “objective reasoning” to seek out impossible universal truths, Chambers emphasises the subjectivity in all language, and that what is important is the manner of how we narrate our language, our stories and events, that influences our way forward into an always uncertain future . The reflexivity and subjectivity within my use of autoethnography, interpretive analysis, and overall storytelling (discussed further below) in this thesis are grounded in this broader framing and allow for the analysis to meaningfully convey the layered inequalities, uncertainties and hopes of the Tobian community.

Timothy Ingold’s (2007; 2011) theorising on the human relationship with the environment and time/space perspectives emphasises Indigenous, or Native, perspectives that provide new insights into how we engage the environment in the contemporary setting and what this means for the future. This becomes interestingly

relevant when considering the complex dynamics of human diaspora and what this means with regards to the “home” environment and identity, cultural heritage, and human agency³⁴.

Further, Ingold is phenomenological in his orientation and provides us with a theoretical and research approach that values the perspective of the human experience *within* the environment through a *relational* approach that focuses on the development of our embodied skills of perceptions and actions *within* social and environmental contexts and what this means in our human development that continually unfolds. I point here specifically to the recent contribution within anthropological design theory and the notion and practice of “correspondence”, which is the operating methodological concept and practice that grounds and propels this thesis.

In, *From Description to Correspondence: Anthropology in Real Time*, Gatt and Ingold (2013) argue against the perspective and approach of mind – body dualism, where humans control nature and where anthropology searches for the “universals of human cognition”. This approach of researching human activities as objects of analysis leads toward knowledge production of universal truths that are challenged in accounting for power imbalances, biases, inequalities, and injustices. Rather, Gatt and Ingold (2013) argue for an “anthropology-by-means-of-design” approach that values and emphasises the researcher’s *correspondence* with the people they are engaging in fieldwork. In this way, the researcher becomes a participant among, “rather than above or beyond, the ongoing life situation with which they deal, where they and their designs play out on the same level field as everyone else” (p.154). With this approach we value the mutual interplay and influence of our correspondence, where we humans are

³⁴ I discuss Ingold’s conceptual developments on our relationship with each other and the environment in Chapter Four.

continually interacting with each other in a meshwork of engagements that continually respond to each other and are perpetually improvising those engagements forward. In this way, to “correspond with the world is not to describe it or represent it, but to answer to it” (p.142). *Correspondence* as my operating research concept and method embraces, values and validates my relationship with the Tobian community and the research process, as well as the scholarly audience. While I engage in correspondence with the community and its evolving actions toward cultural heritage maintenance in the face of climate change impacts and future uncertainty, the research process involves the same uncertainty. With my use of autoethnography and storytelling toward a narrative analysis, my *correspondence* with the Tobian community also becomes a *correspondence* with the scholarly audience.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s *Decolonising Methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples* (1999), addresses the post-colonial dynamics and issues involved in the experiences of indigenous peoples and their efforts in decolonising, or “de-hegemonising”, themselves. Her efforts here are toward the empowerment of Pacific peoples through the development of indigenous research policies and practices in primarily, the academy, if not as well, toward informing governance structures. Although this process was/is obviously not new to many Pacific island scholars and students, this perhaps, was the first significant scholarly contribution that began to influence and transform the ongoing critique of marginalised indigenous voices in the mainstream social science research discussions. This is evident in subsequent indigenous Pacific research publications, as well as scholarly contributions outside the Pacific. What is significant here is that Tuhiwai-Smith began to move the discussion beyond deconstruction and the post-colonial critique, and toward the political and scholarly transformation of a social research paradigm (and practice) that is based upon,

and privileges, the experiences, voices, epistemologies, and values and principles of indigenous peoples³⁵. She further asserts a research agenda that is not just about challenging Western epistemology, science and research methods, but that also founds a purposeful agenda for transforming the institution of research, the deep underlying structures and taken-for-granted ways of organising, conducting, and disseminating research and knowledge (Smith, 2005:88).

As part of a decolonising or “de-hegemonising” qualitative research process, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) discuss a current and developing “eighth moment” in qualitative research, which involves a critical methodology that is focused toward a, “moral discourse...and the development of sacred textualities...”, with the intent of connecting the research with, “the hopes, needs, goals, and promises of a free and democratic society”(2005: 4). They suggest the emergence of critical methodologists and indigenous researchers that are in this eighth moment engaging in interpretive research practices, “performing culture as they write it” (p. 5). The concept of ‘sacred textualities’ then, derives from this “performance and research” (my words), and transfers into the writing process and outcomes through various narrative (and counter-narrative!) forms (i.e. autoethnography, writing stories, photograph stories, short stories, poetry, memoirs, fiction, testimonies, personal histories, to name a few). *Sacred textualities* then, are performances that both implicitly and explicitly value the essence, spirituality, and intellectual property embodied within a participating person or group. As performances, they are also critical of (historical and contemporary) power imbalances involved in the research setting (and process). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) suggest that these performances, “create the space for critical, collaborative, dialogical

³⁵ Also, refer to her later work, “On Tricky Ground” (2005), in *The Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd edition), as well as Bishops, “Freeing Ourselves From Neocolonial Domination in Research” (2005), from the same publication.

work. They bring researchers and their research participants into a shared, critical space, a space where the work of resistance, critique, and empowerment can occur” (p.5). This thesis, through a *correspondence* with the community and a storytelling interpretive analysis, is grounded and engaged with that same intent, motivation and transformational research contribution in mind. I suggest that this research design based around correspondence and storytelling, and my intervention that engages in the challenges and hopes of the Tobian community around the topic of climate change and cultural heritage, also contributes toward new ideas and approaches toward researching with Pacific communities and a vibrant and dynamic knowledge transfer that benefits us all. I also suggest that it has (and will have) an impact toward Tobian community social and political action through ongoing correspondence emanating out of the fieldwork period, as well as the final thesis outcome.

Recent discussion has taken place with regards to designing research strategies that are grounded in indigenous epistemologies (Smith, 1999, 2005; Fixico, 2003; Smith, 2004; Baba, 2004; Nabobo-Baba, 2004a; Sanga, 2004; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, 2005; Russell, 2005; Wood, 2003, 2006). The emphasis here is on engagement, understanding indigenous notions of time/space (the present is connected to the past and the future at all times), listening, hearing, respecting, and understanding and interpreting silences (Nabobo-Baba, 2004a). This relates to larger indigenous Pacific values of relating, connecting, networking, and sharing. Smith argues for the privileging of indigenous voices, as embedded in them are ways of knowing, deep metaphors, and motivational drivers that inspire the transformative process that many indigenous researchers identify as a powerful agent for resistance and change (Smith, 2005:89).

My initial effort with this research design is to optimise the meaning-making of the Hatohobei landscape and experience through a storytelling process within the framework I have discussed above. These interpretive approaches emphasize the interpretation of meaning-making activities that shape action (or non-action). They also emphasize and engage participatory experience within a collective setting, engaging and listening to multiple voices and appreciating historical situatedness. This places emphasis on the empowerment of community actions in the context of historical and contemporary events.

This critical theory approach encourages action and advocacy research processes, seeking to challenge hegemonic paradigms and systems. Considering a communitarian feminist theory approach further asserts that we are born into a sociocultural universe where values, moral commitments, and existential meanings are negotiated dialogically. Therefore, fulfilment is never achieved in isolation, but only through human bonding at the epicenter of social formation (Christians, 2005:151). This approach complements indigenous Pacific research in that it demands that participants have a coequal say in how research should be conducted, what should be studied, methods used, which findings are valid and how are they to be used, and the honouring of moral commitments (Denzin, 2003:257). Gatt and Ingold's (2013) correspondence theory applies here very well in the sense that my intervention and engagement with the Tobi community consistently involved a mutual recognition and valuing of our mutual commitments toward understanding, respecting each other and sensitively addressing the research questions and process as it unfolded.

The paradigms of constructivism, critical theory, and feminist communitarian theory can be in tension with, but also begin to embody, the Pacific epistemological and ontological perspectives that embrace family and community relations as superceding

individualistic ideologies and practices. This is an important and integral aspect of this project, which focuses on Hatohobei cultural heritage in the face of climate change impacts. It is indeed the community that defines and perpetuates their notions of cultural heritage through interconnected and varied historical and contemporary contexts, and through a dialogical process with the community I am able to reveal aspects of this meaning-making and that continues through and beyond this product (i.e. the product will continue to inform the community through the engagements of fieldwork that continue to unfold, as well as through the engagement of present and future generations and this piece of the Hatohobei story).

However, there is an abstract contradiction in these varying approaches in the sense that constructivism is looking for “truth” from a culturally specific perspective and critical theory is looking for the “truth” in political relationships. Saukko addresses this conflict with an integrative methodological framework that draws a balance between contextual validity, dialogic validity and self-reflexive validity (see Saukko, 2005:344). I address this in this research design through correspondence and reflexive storytelling that includes a social-historical analysis considering Hatohobei cultural heritage, privileging Hatohobei voices in the data collection process, and a continual reflexive awareness of my researcher position throughout the research process.

I have more specifically addressed and furthered this balance by choosing an interpretive approach (see Lincoln and Guba, 2011; Geertz, 1973) based on performance ethnography (see Denzin, 2003) and storytelling (see Lewis, 2011) that is creatively supported through reflexive autoethnography (see Duncan, 2004; Ellis et al., 2011; Ellis and Bochner, 2000; Ellis and Bochner, 2006; Holt, 2003). All of this is based on Hatohobei storytelling practices (*tinitip*), as well as narrative analysis (see

Chase, 2005; Riessman, 1993) and the practice of “writing as method” (Richardson, 2002).

Underlying all of this, the key component and contribution here is the concept of *correspondence* as it relates to the emergent theory of *design anthropology*. Combining fundamentals from design and planning, as well as anthropology, design anthropology is collaborative and future oriented, “...with both process and product aimed at the intervention of existing realities”... and where, “design anthropologists are employing methods that involve various forms of intervention, both to create contextual knowledge and to develop specific solutions (see Gunn and Otto, 2013: 3). For anthropological study, the design anthropology approach appreciates how a people or community imagine, anticipate and design their futures. This is based around the assumption that humans have the capacity to design and that every act we make is based upon the duality of two components, where the mind projects and the body executes (Gatt and Ingold, 2013). However, adopting from Miyazaki’s “method of hope” (2004), Gatt and Ingold (2013) shift the gaze of objective analysis away from this activity (mind projecting, body executing) and suggest an “opened-ended concept of design that makes allowances for hopes and dreams and for the improvisatory dynamic of the everyday, and for the discipline of anthropology conceived as a speculative inquiry into the conditions and possibilities of human life” (Gatt and Ingold, 2013:141). They are suggesting that in reverse of conventional ethnography, rather than examinations and analyses focusing on historical events and moments “stuck rigidly in a vacuum of the past” (my word choice), embracing a design that is “moving forward with people in tandem with their desires and aspirations” (p.141). With this approach then, anthropology becomes, “like the lives it follows, inherently

experimental and improvisatory, and its aim would be to enrich lives and render them more sustainable” (p.141).

Through this dialogical approach and process, through a dialogue between paradigms and perspectives, through a dialogue between researcher and community members, we come to a mutual approach and understanding that progresses toward a balanced appreciation and analysis (and final product) filtered through these multiple lenses and perspectives. We thereby better balance potential inequalities between methodological paradigms, as well as avoid the reductive binary, oppositional analyses and generalisations that may do an injustice to a people and/or community or event.

I make the disclaimer that this research project works with the assumption that studying the Pacific through Pacific lenses can be done by people of non-Pacific ethnicity or ancestry. It assumes also that such people, often labelled ‘outsiders’, can in research partnership with indigenous peoples, contribute meaningfully to the development of critical knowledge building in the Pacific (Cram, 1997). In my case, as stated, I have a long-term relationship with the Tobi community and this research design has been selected to highlight, value and utilise that relationship.

A key critique of positivist and post-positivist scientific research (in regards to researching history and culture) in its pursuit of a defining ‘truth’ is its tendency to over-simplify or generalise (see Teiawa, 2006). When observing “changes” or transformations this approach unnecessarily reduces local complexities and their human dimensions to abstract aggregations of one kind of phenomenon or another. Teiawa discusses the problematic of making analogies and homologies comparing change in the Pacific with other global regions. She concludes that where once “both the threat and promise of the Pacific was in becoming less Pacific and more Western, now it

seems the promise of westernization has been forfeited and the Pacific is becoming more and more ‘Third World’” (2006:77). Teiawa is cautioning us not to essentialise based on large scale theories and models, and rather to appreciate local particularities that are engaging in what otherwise may be seen as similar global and regional phenomena (i.e. including climate change and associated events). This research design and correspondence with the community, and the storytelling process responds well to this critique in the sense that it is engaged with a localised perspective around local issues that are also experienced by communities globally. One can draw measured comparisons with other areas and regions experiencing climate change events but the emphasis here is uniquely focused on the Hatohobei experience.

While invaluable benefits have been gained by rational enlightenment, some losses have also been incurred, not least of which have been the loss of many Indigenous, or Native, frameworks of meaning. Through *correspondence* and *storytelling* then, this research project is philosophically situated in a space that recognises the value in engaging research in partnership and collaboration with the Hatohobei community. By working collaboratively with the Hatohobei community, engaging in customary events and daily activities, participating in community and individual storytelling sessions over contemporary events such as climate change and sea-level rise on Hatohobei island, this research focuses on selective Hatohobei perspectives into these issues. The interpretation and analysis to follow emphasises Hatohobei epistemology, voices, knowledge of the environment, and notions and practices of cultural heritage and the politics therein. The validity of the following interpretations, insights and analyses comes from the credibility of my long-term relationship with the Hatohobei community, including the foundation of long-term and intensive queries and discussions about Hatohobei cultural heritage with active

community leaders and community members over a 20+ year period. This includes the associated cross-checking of and between decisions, stories, notes, audio and video recorded interviews associated with relevant meetings and events during the fieldwork period. Also, due to my long-term relationship with the community and through this, my in-depth understanding of Hatohobei clan politics, cultural protocol, selective nuances, humour and silences involved in relevant events, queries and discussions, my interpretations and analyses are backed up with sensitivity to clan and family relationships in this small community, and therefore, the ability to carefully select from a broad array of relevant stories, perspectives and observations to provide valid insights, approaches and perspectives into the research outcomes. For example, I understand well when I engage a query around leadership actions with regards to the Helen Reef Marine Resource Management Program and associated internal and external developments, that there are several filters of community-level and government-level engagements to carefully and sensitively scrutinise. Ideas are first discussed and considered with select (and knowledgeable) family elders where contestations and approaches are carefully measured with clan factions and agendas. In the case of the HRMRMP, these ideas and approaches are then engaged informally through committee meetings, and then formally as a committee when appropriate, or with state, national, regional-level representatives. In the case of HRMRMP goals and developments, these more formal engagements often require entirely different approaches, protocol and scrutiny, yet are directed through the wishes (and agendas) of the elders and implicitly associated clan factions. In many cases for the HRMRMP, everyone agrees with plans and decisions that provide sustainable income that provides the community with security and autonomy over the Helen Reef resources. Where there are disagreements and contestations, it is often a matter of whom is considered to

be “in-charge” of, or initiating, a wider idea (and actions) and getting credit for it, and the underlying notion that they may have a secret agenda that is of benefit for their interests, as opposed to the wider community interests. Teasing out such strategic clan contestations and approaches and how decisions ultimately benefit the betterment of the entire community (or not) requires attention to historical family and clan histories, the sensitivities therein, and carefully sharing an analysis through select methods.

Considering the small community size and intense daily community interactions through informal family gossip and through state government (HSG) and community action groups (HOPE, HRMRMP, the HWA and HYA), there is a constant community scrutiny involved in leadership decisions and actions. My long-term relationship with the community has allowed me to scrutinize these dynamics and be mindful to share interpretations and analyses that maintain respect for select clan contestations and tensions where necessary. Choosing storytelling as a narrative analysis approach (discussed below) allows me to carefully share analyses through such sensitivities. As one brief example, the two mythological characters, Tohbwich and Medichiibelau, are used not only to articulate the tensions I have as an outsider/researcher and insider/community member, but are also useful when subtly emphasizing (or carefully avoiding) select individual, family, or political sensitivities. This is done in the best interest of providing the appropriate conveyance of data and analysis in a way that does not negatively impact community relationships for the longer term. Further to this, integrating and distilling the interpretations and analyses with other relevant scholarly research on Hatohobei, on cultural heritage and climate change in the Pacific, as well as theory and debate around the politics of cultural heritage, further informs the overall analysis.

3.3 Storytelling

I find that we engage meaning and actions in the life journey through stories and storytelling. By sharing to, listening to, and engaging in stories. Those stories come in various forms, albeit the media, politicians, business marketers, poets, writers, dancers, artists, musicians, academics, elders and children. Stories can be very powerful. They can be useful for the betterment of a person, community or society, or dangerously otherwise. Lewis (2011) suggests that, “Story and storytelling are simultaneously cognitive processes and products of cognition. Story is both art and quotidian, centripetal and centrifugal, running deep and wide through the human psyche (p.505). He suggests further how storytelling is central to our human understanding, and that it is through “genuine repetition...that humans narrate ways of knowing and being” (p.505). Considering that stories are shared between us Lewis expounds, they “come to life through the telling, however the story has a life of its own and that life is given through the spirit of the story and the storyteller” (p.507).

As suggested earlier, emerging Pacific studies discourse and research methodologies have taken on an interpretive approach that moves away from Western-based models and theorising. Rather, these methodologies are emphasizing Pacific island epistemologies, stories, legends, myths and traditions. Storytelling is a core tradition within Pacific island cultures, and in this case Hatohobei.

Through storytelling as a research tool, by treating the research project and process as a story within the Hatohobei context that I am familiar, as both a fragment of, yet informed by, the larger Hatohobei community experience unfolding, I am engaging a research journey collaboratively with the community. Based upon a *correspondence* with the community then, this resulting textual analysis and product

becomes yet another story within the Hatohobei historical framing and will contribute and influence the ongoing flow and unfolding of Hatohobei cultural heritage maintenance. Because of my long term relationship with the community and our mutual efforts with this research project, the storytelling engagement in this research process requires great care toward respecting this relationship and the community's challenges, hopes and dreams. This in turn, speaks to the trustworthiness of the research analysis, as my relationship and commitments with the community continue to unfold. This thesis story then, contributes toward Tobian history and future. I take this very seriously and am fully accountable here, just as I am with my ongoing relationship/s with the community. Full respects and trust are the key components involved here.



Plate 3.1 Storytelling over work. Nixon Andrew and David Tibbetts, Hatohobei, 2008.

Sharing stories (*tinitip*) together in the Hatohobei context is very important and a regular activity. Sharing stories is a way of learning new knowledge and reframing oneself or others situationally and contextually. Sharing stories involves a knowledge of whom is your audience and what is their relationship to you and each other. This is a

skilled art form that carries accountability, if you will. One must listen to and be mindful of the history and future of a storyteller and vice versa. In essence and practice here, the storyteller (or messenger) is just as important as the story. A storyteller must take care with the meaning of a story and how it impacts others. This is a serious responsibility. With this research design, at one level I am engaging and listening to stories, and at another level, I am distillating, interpreting and sharing these stories and also creating my own storytelling analysis.

The interpretive aspect draws insights and meaning-making through the historical and collaborative storytelling moments and processes that I have engaged within the community for over 20 years, as well as those engaged in this particular fieldwork period. I am sharing with you through storytelling, which is supplemented through reflexive and evocative writing, including autoethnography and multi-voicing, and the imaginative use of two mythological characters (discussed below). It is poignant in my mind to note that both the practice of autoethnography (interpreting data through my experiences) and multi-voicing (sharing voices of Hatohobei community members and others) involves mutual and collaborative efforts of disclosure toward the data collection and analysis process. This is an integral complementary aspect of this project that again provides both validity and reliability.



Plate 3.2 Sharing stories with Wayne Andrew, Hatohobei, 2008



Plate 3.3 Lorenzo Simeon, Wayne Andrew, sharing stories, Hatohobei, 2008 (D.Tibbetts)



Plate 3.4 Isauro Andrew, Wayne Andrew, Storytelling, Hatohobei, 2008 (D.Tibbetts)

Storytelling is an integral feature of knowledge transfer and meaning-making in the Pacific and is created in the form of chants, whispers, silences, public oration, dance performance, and increasingly as well, through artistic art displays and literary pieces and public commentary. From my experience in Hatohobei and Micronesia, storytelling is fluid and contextual and allows the author/owner of knowledge to share in culturally and politically select ways, the knowledge that reveals the necessary meaning for each intended audience in different ways. Stone-Mediatore (2003) suggests that storytelling allows us to re-imagine, or re-think the realities between story and truth, narrative and knowledge. Michael Jackson (2002) emphasises the political power of storytelling and how it can be used to recontextualise a politically charged event. In these ways I suggest that my storytelling process and resulting narrative analysis, attempts to provide a deeper understanding of the unfolding, the linkages and tensions between time and space (see Otto, 2013), the linkages and tensions between concepts and realities, between historical and contemporary Hatohobei events, the

linkages and tensions within my outsider/insider researcher role in the community, the linkages and tensions between Hatohobei and Palau communities, linkages and tensions between the local and the global, and the linkages and gaps between the research academy and the Hatohobei Landscape. It attempts to address various cultural nuances, protocols and sensitivities involved within the community, within the data collection process, and future relationships. As one example that highlights this approach, I have used a select poem (“I Remember”, by Mariano Yalap, 1998) in Chapter Two that provides nuanced perspective into the sensitivities of Tobians as minorities in larger Palau. Such sensitivities are discussed in many conversations and stories around historical events and could have been analysed further here for insights into contemporary events. That would have been highly sensitive and really not necessary. However, providing this poem, written by a Palauan, provides the required context for the reader and therefore an additional layer of insight toward the overall analyses that follows. In choosing this poem as a tool here, I have avoided over highlighting political sensitivities that potentially negatively impact future relationship within the Tobian and Palauan communities. Further to this storytelling process of the thesis, the attempt here is to bring the reader closer to the Hatohobei Landscape and the unfolding of these linkages/tensions, and ultimately, toward a more meaningful knowledge transfer experience that continues to unfold into future. This may unfold not only in the local Hatohobei sphere of cultural heritage maintenance, but also the scholarly ethnographic record. As well, storytelling is a dialogue and it involves a dialogical process between the storyteller and audience. It also involves the audience to *listen* and *feel* and *meaningfully engage*. In this way the audience can additionally read between the lines, understand the nuances, subtleties, silences, pauses and underlying and overlying meanings. Storytelling through this evocative ethnography then, is a powerful tool

for/with the community, as well as an experimental scholarly contribution toward the academy, and therefore, toward political and social action. It involves selected techniques to respect the Hatohobei experience and attempts to transform or push the boundaries and forms of social science research, analysis and textual product.

3.3.1 Our Two Shapeshifting, Troublemaking, Trickster Characters

In the shaping of this text and through the spirit of storytelling in the Hatohobei context, I have selectively and creatively used two mythological characters, Tohbwich and Medichiibelau, respectively, from Hatohobei and Palau cosmologies. These shapeshifting jokester characters are at once, interlocutors possessing many attributes, effects and influences on multiple levels. At times they push the textual narrative and analysis and at other times they pull it back. They are a painful prod in my gut when necessary and a buffer of relief when I am in need of support. They are my spirit guides above, below, within and beyond this text. They are my writing tools that I do not hold complete control over (see Writing as Method section below) but I have learned well to work with them.

The two characters are operating as real-time characters in Hatohobei and Palau of course, but also as literary tools for my storytelling method and analysis. At the same time, they are also part and parcel of myself and the Other, as well as metaphors for tradition and respects to the ancestors and genealogical relationships. They allow the imagination of the reader/audience to connect with the text and analysis (and Hatohobei Landscape) in imaginative ways that allow for more meaningful knowledge transfer. These two characters allow for the linkage and exploration of that nexus between Art and Science toward a more dynamic and meaningful understanding of the world around us, and in this case, the Hatohobei reality. This reality, as these characters allow us, transcends time and space. As writing (and cognitive) tools, the

characters help us to segue between time and space and ride the linkage of historical events into contemporary ethnographic moments. As well, the characters embody several dualities; they are simultaneously representing my insider/outsider status in the Hatohobei and Palau settings; they are my voice and they are not my voice; they are outside their communities and they are also the representations of their collective communities; they are perspectives and voices that tug on that fine line between dualistic concepts of “tradition” and “modernity”, past and future (always in the present moment); they also speak to the differences and sensitivities between Hatohobei and Palau cultures and world views; they help link the gap between Western and Pacific (and Hatohobei) epistemologies and ontologies; they are voices for Hatohobei and Pacific ancestors; they help us as an audience to ride the diasporic kite; they are holders of history and fighters for the future. They are both full of shit and full of wisdom. They are quiet and subversive at times, loud and boisterous and explicit at others. They are stubborn in the head and open minded through their hearts. Please listen carefully, as they dance on the beach, amused by their unique observations from the spirit world perspective. They are helping you step into the Hatohobei world, allowing you to understand better, the nuances of knowledge transfer through silences, ambiguity, metaphor, humour, and the inter-connections with inter-Pacific relations and worldviews. As cosmological and literary characters they are transformative agents of change. They tug on the fine lines of life tensions, opening up new ideas and helping us to understand previously misunderstood nuances and meanings. These empowering characters are both real (in their respective cosmological worlds) and imaginative (in their respective cosmological worlds unfolding and in the construction of this text). I have used them throughout the text to help segue into and through social, political and contextual events, moments and ideas. I have used them to help avoid or write around

sensitive political contexts. I have used them to transcend language and cross-cultural differences and perspectives. I have even used them to speak (in whispering tones) to audiences other than the scholarly audience. These characters lived long before this text and will continue on long after. However, their voices here continue to share with scholarly (and otherwise) minds, and it is likely that they have enjoyed this literary and scholarly experience well enough that we shall hear from them in this same sphere again. They shall continue to correspond with us. In this thesis, they are our correspondence.

I leave the rest to your imagination, within this text unfolding, and beyond this text (unfolding).



Figure 3.2 Tohwich and Medichiibelau engaging outsider friends in more recent times. (K.Mario)

3.4 Writing as Method

Laurel Richardson suggests in *Writing as Method of Inquiry* (2002) that “writing is a process of discovery” (p.936), and that “qualitative research has to be read, not scanned; its meaning is in the reading” (Richardson, 2002:924). Her meaning here is that qualitative research must reach a wider audience through a text that engages the

audience. A reader must take time to pour over words, their meanings, and understand how and why they came together in the way they did in that articulation at that time. She introduces “creative analytic ethnography” (CAP) as her version of an evocative or experimental ethnography rising out of the post-modern critique. She argues that the practices for CAP are “*both creative and analytic*” (p.930). In the sense that this work is an evocative ethnography, I have chosen a mixture of writing techniques to engage the reader. Richardson suggests that this be considered a “mixed genre” approach, where a “scholar draws freely in his or her productions of literary, artistic, and scientific genres, often breaking the boundaries of each of those as well” (p. 934). Clearly, engaging a storytelling narrative and using our two mythological spirit characters has provided well for this. She points further toward the process of triangulation, where a researcher “deploys ‘different methods’ – such as interviews, census data, and documents – to ‘validate’ findings” (p.934), but that such findings are not related well as this perspective assumes that an object or event is in the same time/space experience, which is limiting to the fluidity of how we engage each other and make decisions. There is then three perspectives and points to view the world around us. Richardson suggests that finding and establishing validity will not happen in the two dimensional world of a triangle. Rather, she suggests the concept of crystallisation, where:

...the central imaginary for “validity” ...is not the triangle – a rigid, fixed, two-dimensional object. Rather, the central imaginary is the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, alter, but are not amorphous. Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities *and* refract within themselves, creating different colours, patterns and arrays, casting off in different directions. What we see depends on our angle of repose. Not

triangulation. Crystallisation. In postmodernist mixed-genre texts, we have moved from plane geometry to light theory, where light can be *both* waves *and* particles...and crystallisation provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic. (Richardson, 2002: 934).

Rather than separate and oppositional though, I suggest here that the approaches of triangulation and crystallisation can be seen as complementary ways to visualise the process validation. We can find corroboration through the two-dimensional world of the triangle, and enhance our objective understanding further through the the multifaceted form of a crystal reflecting the multidimensional world (and approaches, shapes, angles) that Richardson speaks of above, yet also contribute to the crystallisation process and resulting validation.

In this written text the storytelling process and product is laid out for the reader as the reader engages with the text. It involves a narrative analysis (see Chase, 2005; Clandenin and Connelly, 2000; Reissman, 1993) with a “mixed genre” (Richardson, 2002) ethnographic approach that includes; autoethnography (Ellis, 2000), multivoicing, historical interpretation, metaphor, poetry, participant-observation, reflexivity, archival research, and photographic imagery. As discussed above, the main storytelling vehicle to help link these various data sets, as well as provide support around cultural and political sensitivities and my insider/outsider role and status, is the use of two mythological figures. “Writing as method of inquiry” (Richardson, 2002) is a strong component of this ethnographic storytelling product. Returning to Richardson’s CAP, I look toward her five criteria for reviewing such ethnographic contributions: 1) Substantive contribution; 2) Aesthetic merit; 3) Reflexivity; 4) Impact; and 5) Expression of reality. Richardson views science as one lens and creative arts as another. She suggests that, “we see more deeply using two lenses, and wants to look

through both lenses to see a ‘social science art form’” (p. 937). My storytelling journey through the textual narrative analysis and product is an attempt to share that form.

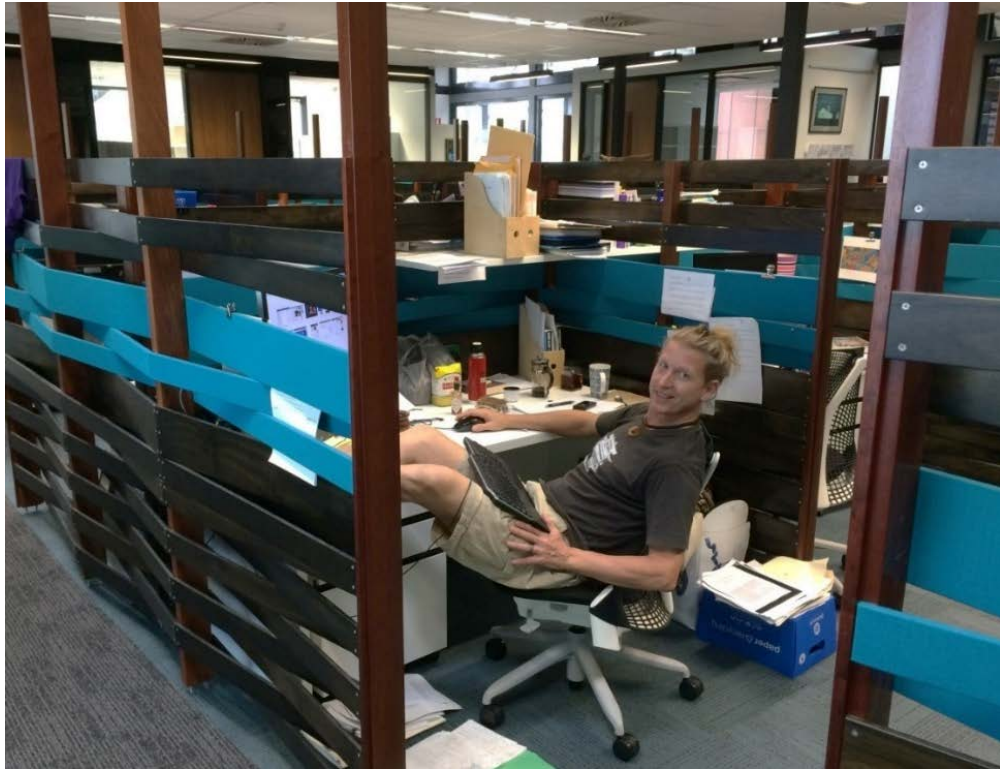


Plate 3.5 Writing Stories with Tohwich and Medichiibelau bothering me as usual. Far from Hatohobei, but then again, not at all. The Cairns Institute, July, 2016 (L.Harris)

3.5 Data Collection

Ethnographic data was collected in Echang and Koror, as well as Helen Reef and Hatohhobei Island from 15 December 2011 to 15 September 2013. This involved participant-observation, public meetings, informal meetings, audio recorded interviews with select community members, and select video documentation and interviews.

Informal meetings were held with the Hatohobei State Governor, Thomas Patris, and then Hatohobei State Delegate, Wayne Andrew, as well as male and female elders of the community. I sat in on formal meetings held by the board of the local-NGO, Hatohobei Organisation for People and Environment (HOPE), members of the

Hatohobei Women's Association (HWA) and members of the Hatohobei Youth Association (HYA). I also engaged in a one-week Climate Change Adaptation workshop (February, 2012) with the Hatohobei community and follow up related community meetings. An inaugural celebration of Hatohobei Constitution day took place in July of 2012. This included dance performances, cultural displays, Hatohobei food stuffs and multiple speakers, a first ever Hatohobei-specific public event of to celebrate Hatohobei cultural heritage.

Understanding Hatohobei culture and dynamics, sensitivity to inter-community politics and issues, as well as gender roles, generational and family dynamics were valued and considered throughout the data collection and writing periods. At times, because of conflicting schedules or the above sensitivities, some data collection was negated or I chose to disregard. Any private family or individual knowledge has and will remain private and excluded from this research analysis and product. It is impossible to spend equal time with all community members, although there was an attempt to collect as many stories and perspectives as possible with regards to the topic and events that took place during the research period. However, for the purposes of this project there was a necessary emphasis to collect stories, interviews and perspectives from community leaders, organisations and select and available elders. Unfortunately, of course, it is inevitable that I am not able to capture everyone's perspective toward this research query. All potential biases and subjective interpretations are made clear to the best of my ability in the data analysis chapters (Chapters 4, 5 and 6) and I take full responsibility for any potential confusion or unexpected cultural or political sensitivity therein. The strengths of this research design lay in the trustworthiness outlined in the discussion above and the thick description that is a result of my close relationship with my adopted family and the community. By this I emphasize my long-term relationship

with the community that involves a mutual understanding that my research effort here is for and with the community and has the community's best interests in mind. By treating my relationship with the community and the research process (and product) with the utmost respects and scholarly rigour, I am ensuring the integrity of our long-term relationship (beyond the academic project) and the research data and outcomes. Weaknesses of this research design and outcomes lay in the limitations around access to select community members that may have provided additional insights but were not available during this research period. As well, there are limitations in my ability to cover all varied perspectives and stories around select events. Traditional anthropologists may find it difficult to embrace this storytelling narrative analysis approach and question its validity. Based on a long-term relationship and ongoing life-long obligations and commitments with the Hatohobei community, I point to the research design based on a *correspondence* with community, my knowledge of cultural protocol, nuances, relationships and sensitivities, and the embracing of storytelling as a feature of how Tobians engage their hopes and uncertain futures, as points of validity and trustworthiness of my interpretive analysis. These points are grounded in my relationships that allowed a mutual comfort level between myself and community members, where they were able to share their perspectives on my queries around relevant historical events that helped to understand the community engagements with climate change dynamics and cultural heritage. I was also privileged to have access to community leaders and elders that have known me for many years. The stories that I have selected and the narratives that I have linked together have combined into a narrative analysis grounded in my relationships with the community and our correspondence throughout this research project. This research design (and outcomes)

then, aims to push us toward appreciating storytelling and narrative analysis as a reliable research method and valid “way of knowing”.

My role as researcher was made clear with regards to all meetings and interviews. Video documentation was requested and approved for all filming events and interviews. Actual filming³⁶ was taken by Nixon Andrew, the HSG climate change adaptation (CCA) team members, as well as myself. Incidentally, it was often the filming engagements with the community that provided deeper discussions that became engaged much further than expected. Filming in this way allowed for stories in real-time to generate discussions with younger generations engaging around the filming experience and this initiated further dialogue around concepts, issues and events taking place (historical and contemporary). The filming process and the community review of film segments provided many reflexive moments for both community members and myself. This intervention too, engaged a correspondence where the audience (myself included) viewed recorded events and stories outside of themselves or family members on film and this provoked new insights and furthered discussion on topics. The audience could also view my role in a different and more detached light, and this engaged a reflexivity with and between myself and the audience.

³⁶ We have extensive film footage taken in Hatohobei, Helen Reef, and Palau and this will be made available to the community for future projects and the FOTI archive.



Plate 3.6 Nixon Andrew and Louis, filming in Hatohobei, 2008. (D.Tibbetts)

From 20 September to 20 November 2013 I returned to Palau for follow up fieldwork queries. This period also involved participant-observation and informal meetings with select community members, further audio recorded interviews, and filming at Helen Reef and Hatohobi island, as well as Merir island and in Echang, Koror. Meetings were held with members of the newly formed NGO, One Reef

Micronesia, as well as the Hatohobei State Governor, members of HOPE, and informal meetings with Dr. Peter Black, whom was visiting the community for his Hatohobei language and cultural heritage repatriation project.

This chapter has provided a review of the literature and discourse that grounds and frames the research design, the storytelling method and approach (in the field and with the textual development), as well as a description of the concrete methods used. The research design was carefully selected as an approach that will best provide a qualitative, rigorous, collaborative research project that addresses the research questions and new themes and events that arose in the course of the fieldwork and overall research process. It is hopeful that this collaborative research project, wrapped in a vehicle *correspondence* and layered through nuanced *storytelling*, will provide further insights into climate change research, cultural heritage, resilience, adaptive capacity, and human agency.

The following three chapters comprise the data analyses based around three separate yet interconnected narratives. Chapter Four provides a critical analysis of the Hatohobei historical and contemporary relationship with the environment. Chapter Five provides a narrative around cultural heritage. Chapter Six discusses a narrative around climate change and cultural heritage. Tohbwich and Medichiibelau have come whispering into me once again. The following chapters are framed and progressed through their thoughtful advice and support.

Chapter 4 Tobi Historical and Contemporary Relationship with the Environment

Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.

--Albert Einstein

Tohbwich and Medichiibelau's whispers were actually more assertive on this occasion. Understanding our relationship with the environment, our interconnections with the environment and each other, they said, was imperative to understanding not only any historical or contemporary issues in both Hatohobei and Palau, but also for humanity and the planet earth and our future. After their observations of the *Survivor* groups (see Chapter One) they suggested strongly to me that we are living in an age of increased disconnect between humans and the natural environment. In their agitated whispers they expressed concerns that they related anecdotally back to their experiences observing the *Survivor* group productions and engagements. They reminded me of the superficial silliness of these engagements and how they learned of a deeper seriousness underlying the approaches, values and principles of the participants (including the overall production machinations). They reminded me to reflect upon the different epistemologies and ontologies of Pacific peoples and non-Pacific peoples. They reminded me to be ever mindful of the power dynamics that are heavily leveraged in favour of the dominant system of Western academic research and framing, as well as the same for the ubiquitous non-academic institutions that privilege primarily capitalistic-derived business and economic principles and approaches toward the environment. Tohbwich in particular, reminded me of the unique 'landscape' of Hatohobei and what the Hatohobei experience has to offer other peoples. Tohbwich emphasised the need for a detailed discussion on what I will call for our purposes here, the Hatohobei Landscape, which involves a sensitive yet well maintained paradoxical

relationship between a “physical disconnect” and a “spiritual connect” to the home island of Hatohobei. This is far too simple a paradox though and requires some conceptual discussion and related stories to make sense out of the Hatohobei historical and contemporary relationship with the environment. For example, if we consider the voice of Haringesei Andrew in Chapter One (p.15) and at the beginning of Chapter Two (p.26) we will realise the meaning of Hatohobei for someone that has lived away from the home island since the early 1980’s (and has not physically returned since). Haringesei still speaks of and lives through a deep and meaningful connection of his island and the relationships therein. This relationship guides and informs his daily life, decision-making, and how he transfers meaning to his children and all those he engages. This relationship and all its meaning to Haringesei guide and inform his future. Later we will foray further into his departure (and others) from Hatohobei and highlight what their journeys mean in the context of the tension between living away (physical disconnect, and all that entails) and feeling and maintaining the ongoing connection with the home island (spiritual connection, and all that entails). Obviously, this applies not only from the individual and family levels, but also within the entire Hatohobei community.

Detailing the dynamics and issues surrounding the Tobian relationship with the environment requires indeed some background discussion on epistemological paradigms and also the broader historical framings and processes involved in the interface between local, national, regional and global levels. This chapter begins then with a discussion on the continued Western hegemonic discourse deriving from dominant neo-liberal models and practices around notions of ‘globalization’ and ‘development’. Both as individual nations, individual islands and as a collective island group, my long term experiences reveal that the Micronesian landscape (or

'oceanscape') continues to be marginalized in global neo-colonial discourses. Hanlon's, "*The 'Sea of Little Lands': Examining Micronesia's Place in 'Our Sea of Islands'*" (2009), discusses this marginalisation in further detail. I ponder whether this is any different than past colonial situations of marginalizing and categorizing, and consequently, attempting to control and dominate. From this hegemonic perspective, although Micronesia is a 'place' that is filled with complex histories and peoples (i.e. the small island of Tobi, among many others), it is a 'space' of empty blue ocean to non-Micronesian politicians and policymakers from the 'global' arena³⁷. Where the western Pacific Ocean has historically provided routes of interconnectedness among the peoples of 'Micronesia', the predominant historical Western political ideology and discourse continues to perceive and categorize the diverse and complex Micronesian islands as a 'space' of homogenous isolates, perpetually confined to insularity by location. Epli Hau'ofa comments on this:

Nineteenth-century imperialism erected boundaries that led to the contraction of Oceania, transforming a once boundless world into the Pacific Island states and territories that we know today. People were confined to their tiny spaces, isolated from each other. No longer could they travel freely to do what they had done for centuries. They were cut off from their relatives abroad, from their far-flung sources of wealth and cultural enrichment. This is the historical basis of the view that our countries are small, poor and isolated... This assumption, however, is no longer tenable as far as the countries of central and western Polynesia are concerned, and may be untenable also of Micronesia. The rapid expansion of the world economy since World War II... had a liberating

³⁷ One classic and extremely explicit example of this attitude is seen through the U.S. policy and imposition of nuclear testing in the Marshall islands. From 1946 to 1958, 67 nuclear tests were conducted. The first ever hydrogen bomb was tested in 1952 and entirely destroyed two atoll islands (the populations had been forcefully relocated to relatively larger Kwajelein island), Elugelab and Enewetak. The Marshallese people continue to suffer from the impacts of this nuclear testing. When queried in a policy meeting about the proposed nuclear testing in the Marshall islands, then U.S. National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger replied, "There are only 90,000 people out there. Who gives a damn?"

effect on the lives of ordinary people... The new economic reality made nonsense of artificial boundaries, enabling the people to shake off their confinement and they have since moved, by the tens of thousands, doing what their ancestors had done before them... They strike roots in new resource areas, securing employment and overseas family property, expanding kinship networks through which they circulate themselves, their relatives, their material goods, and their stories all across the ocean, and the ocean is theirs because it has always been their home (Hau'ofa, 1993:10).

Although I do not agree with Hau'ofa when he claims that Oceania was a 'once boundless world'³⁸, this excerpt poignantly addresses the consciousness and tradition of mobility (and largesse!) among Pacific Islanders and contrasts it within colonial hegemonic ideology, discourse, boundaries, and categories. Historical imperial and colonial forces perceived Oceanic islands, cultures and peoples as too isolated and resource poor to attain "any meaningful degree of autonomy" (Hau'ofa, 1993:6), which is far from reality. As Hau'ofa further explains, this is:

³⁸ I do not agree necessarily, if only that it is useful to appreciate and value that prior to western colonial administrations and associated boundaries, there were of course numerous and varied territorial boundaries and networks across the Pacific. These were negotiated through warfare, trade and marriage. In my opinion though, these boundaries were far more fluid than the later western colonial boundaries that brought completely different epistemologies, ontologies, and associated values, principles, models, coercions and influences. Hence, Hau'ofa's larger point here. Of course, he is speaking to the colonial powers, capitalism, and globalization as we experience it today.

...an economistic and geographic deterministic view of a very narrow kind, that overlooks culture history, and the contemporary process of what may be called ‘world enlargement’ carried out by tens of thousands of ordinary Pacific Islanders right across the ocean from east to west and north to south, under the very noses of academic and consultancy experts, regional and international development agencies, bureaucratic planners and their advisers, and customs and immigration officials, making nonsense of all national and economic boundaries, borders that have been defined only recently...(Hau’ofa, 1993:6)

Hau’ofa asserts that post-colonial boundaries are fading as the diaspora of Pacific Islanders continues in the contemporary setting. Certainly, old boundaries and hegemonic discourses are increasingly in question due to the increased global migration and interactions of and between Pacific Islanders, and the works of indigenous Pacific leaders, elders, scholars, activists and artists. Despite this ongoing and positive social, cultural and political transformation, in my opinion³⁹ post/neo-colonial contemporary global politics and discourse continue to marginalize Micronesia (and Palau, and of course, Hatohobei) politically and economically, despite an increasingly ‘interconnected’ and globalized world.

This accentuates another level. Surely, if ‘Micronesia’, as a Western-derived category, is marginalized, then certainly Tobi is also marginalised, *both* from the broader global perspective *and* within the Palauan local and state-level perspectives.

³⁹ I point here toward the U.S. policies of “development”, which in reality are more about “underdevelopment” in Micronesia since WWII. The resulting independence movements that began in the late 1970’s (i.e. political processes that resulted in the Commonwealth of The Mariana Islands, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau were successful. However, the dependence upon outside funding networks and support across Micronesia is unfortunately exacerbated by development models that continue to marginalize local communities. This applies to current policies and attitudes toward development grants by donors and U.S. government agencies. David Hanlon’s, *Remaking Micronesia: Discourses over Development in a Pacific Territory, 1944-82*, speaks critically of the development policies during this period and I discuss a few ethnographic examples in the contemporary Hatohobei context around development funding applications in Chapters Five and Six.

Nevertheless, the Tobians have engaged very well in the regional and broader global spheres, as well as with state-level politics, which implicitly involves a sometimes tenuous and imbalanced power relationship as minorities within the larger Palauan society. Additionally, their relocated community (physical) disconnect from the remote home island of Hatohobei (including Helen Reef) exacerbates the challenges of maintaining their connection with their home island. To understand this more clearly, then allows us to more fully appreciate the ongoing successes of the community, the role of customary values and principles guiding these successes, and further to that, the long term vision for the collective Hatohobei community.

For now, a more conceptual discussion is necessary. I ask for us to reflect and consider in-depth our connection with the environment by first understanding different knowledge systems. These knowledge systems differ in perception, values and approaches to the environment. I ask us to then consider that Indigenous Native Pacific knowledge systems hold and maintain an intimate connection with the environment. There is much to learn from these knowledge systems and although there is a diversity of local knowledge systems across the Pacific, I choose below to share several metaphorical and conceptual examples from across the Pacific to highlight the similarities in Pacific knowledge systems, and their values and approaches that are linked with a connection to land and genealogy. After a thorough discussion around these concepts I then apply this to several stories around Hatohobei. We will see that in the diasporic context of the Hatohobei landscape, the connection to land on the home island provides empowerment to the community. The empowerment through the land (and interconnected genealogy) comes through the family and community ethos and practice of the “in-charge complex” (Black, 1982). This practice takes place through the cultivation and harvesting of local food stuffs, which are then shared with the

(diasporic) family through respect relationships guided through the “in-charge complex”. It is the storytelling and respects through the sharing of these local food stuffs, “food from home, in your belly” (my word choice) that then guides and informs family and therefore community actions and decision making into the future.

So firstly, here is what will conceptually follow. Salient to the human:environment narrative in this discussion is Indigenous epistemology and ontology, as well as Indigenous knowledge, which relates to Pacific notions of identity through their connections to the environment⁴⁰. From there we can have a discussion about Pacific notions of groundedness and mobility, a new argument on the concept of diaspora (Brubaker, 2013), and anthropological thoughts on place and space (Ward, 2003). This then links us with the concepts Ingold describes as “landscape and taskscape”, “relational model”, “sphere of nurture” (see *The Perception of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*, 2002), as well as his theoretical approach through the concept of “correspondence” (Ingold and Gatt, 2013), discussed in Chapter Three. Autoethnographic stories that help link to and understand the Hatohobei context then follow.

Indigenous Pacific notions of identity and meaning through the environment are flexible and adaptive, relating to respect for ancestors, spirituality, kinship and future generations. With variation between groups, the guiding principles of connections (and identity) to and through the environment are informed by Indigenous knowledge. To better tease out the discussion that follows, as Tohbwich and Medichiibelau have strongly asserted, I first want to briefly draw out the distinction between Indigenous and Western knowledge. With the latter half of that discussion I then introduce several

⁴⁰ We can recall this was teased out further in Chapter Three.

Western scientific research derived theories and paradigmatic approaches that I feel are useful because they best embrace both the values, priorities and processes involved in Indigenous knowledge production (and meaning making) and the human:environment relationship, while also embracing the process of Western epistemological logic and knowledge production. In fact, I find these theories and framings possibly contributing toward transformations within the social science research process and perspective (or at least, within the discipline of anthropology and the practice of ethnography). More importantly, in sharing these in this way I may make Tohbwich and Mecihibelau most proud! As I alluded in Chapter Three with the research design and methodological approach, perhaps these two spirit guides and jokesters will see that the Western oriented epistemological research practice can appreciate non-Western approaches, values and perspectives, and that the separate worldviews can constructively work together within the Western scholarly system and practice (and product). This dynamic and challenges provide a transformative moment and process that grounds and guides this research project. We shall see if our two friends agree with me in due time. At present, they are busy dancing along the beach right now and nodding their heads affirming that they anticipate my best effort here and will withhold constructive judgements for later.

The term “knowledge” is ambiguous of course, and holds myriad meanings across time and space. Emerging from the Enlightenment period and the Age of Reason, Western science was determined to objectively observe and understand (and therefore, control), the natural world and the basis of this was the epistemological separation of knower and the known. Operating objectively through abstract reasoning, the knowers could reduce complex phenomena into constituent parts and piece them back together again according to laws of cause and effect (Mahoney and Laddon, 1988;

in, Semali and Kincheloe, 1999). This led to linear and binary categorisations of the natural (and social) world. Furthering from the discussion laid out in Chapter Three, this Cartesian reductionism promotes a hierarchical and linear form of knowledge production, dismissing situation and context that provide deeper meanings (Semali and Kincheloe, 1999:29). Western science implicitly takes its “truths” as universal knowledge and this creates oppositional categories, leading to superior valuation and judgement of the *Other*, seeing other epistemologies as invalid and “untrue”. Semali and Kincheloe discuss this process as imperialistic, operating to characterise Indigenous knowledge as inadequate and inferior, a subjugated knowledge (p. 29).

Based on Cartesian-dualism, Western positivists and modernists viewed truth/knowledge as separate, neutral and observable⁴¹. This perspective and approach lends toward paradigmatic hegemony and a question of legitimacy (Guba and Lincoln, 2005; see also, Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). This dual view separates observable lived reality from an unseen “truth”. It consequently creates a binary oppositional framing and logic that lends to essentialising and reductive reasoning toward generalisations that are then perpetuated within the Western-oriented academic research institution machinery. For one, this perspective, or in whatever particular case or event, “observation”, is missing a valuable, more holistically meaningful perspective and is

⁴¹ I am speaking here to the fundamental disconnect between western epistemology and otherwise. Ethnography has played a large role in unpacking this disconnect and transforming anthropological and social science research. In some part, the reflexive turn of anthropology was arguably led by ethnographic theory that developed and valued an appreciation for alternative knowledge systems and practices. Clifford’s seminal work that signifies this post-modern turning point is, *Writing Culture: The Politics and Poetics of Ethnography* (1986). Marcus’s (1995) development of multi-sited ethnography took this turn further out of the “static” and “insular”, local space, and into the realities of the myriad relationships and influences/impacts reciprocally between local, regional, national, and global spheres. Contemporary anthropological and ethnographic theory, in the forms of *design anthropology* (see Gunn, Otto and Smith, 2013), and Ingold and Gatt’s (2013, “correspondence” (same publication) discussed in Chapter Three, continue to provide new perspectives on researching and theorizing the world around us. These works are all based upon knowledges and perspectives gained from ethnographic data and analyses. Hence, my emphasis on these works in this research endeavour.

therefore not only one-sided, but rather, limited in whole experience and deeper interconnections that have (and can reveal) profound meaning. Secondly, with regards to representation and power then, in observing, interpreting and analysing such phenomena or events in a particular case, whom does this actually benefit?

The transformation of post-positivistic constructivist theory, which views knowledge as culturally situated, and critical theory, which views knowledge as hegemonically situated through politics between groups, class, gender, institutions, systems and nation-states began to tease out at least abstractly, the highly subjective spheres of power dynamics and multiple knowledge perspectives and approaches involved across the interconnections of research, knowledge production, culture, history and politics. As well, the development of a phenomenological approach to valuing and understanding the ever in-flux complexities of histories, peoples and cultures more meaningfully helped the social science research agenda to recognise, appreciate and value alternative (non-Western) epistemologies and ontologies. Although these are useful theoretical approaches if used carefully and with framings that explain the varied subjectivities involved in the institution and research process and product, these also all fail to recognise at a fundamental level that they are still used within a select dominant system, where the researcher is embedded in subjectivities and power inequalities that privilege Western epistemology and ontology (in the research process and product).

Let us argue for this discussion that Indigenous knowledge views the human condition without such polarisation (see Mahina's Ta/Va theory, discussed below, (pg. 106), but where "being" and "knowing" (ontology and epistemology) are synonymous. This is the fundamental difference in content and approach between Western and (at least for our purposes here) Pacific island epistemologies and ontologies. The latter

approach (discussed below) better helps us to understand the human:environment relationship, which in this case then allows us to engage a better understanding of the Hatohobei Landscape, if not also, our own, your own, “their” own, “Landscapes”.

Semali and Kincheloe remind us to be cautious of essentialism in understanding Indigenous knowledge (p.22). We are remiss to categorise indigenous knowledge or peoples into concrete and static divisions. We are ignorant and insulting to romanticise Indigenous peoples and cultures based on the Western continuum of “ancient”, “traditional”, or “prehistoric” versus “modern” and “civilised”. We cannot dismiss that peoples and cultures have been interacting for thousands of years, transforming and evolving while integrating, learning and adapting from each other. A Western epistemological dichotomous binary would mistakenly suggest that “indigeneity” implies “freedom/nature” and Euro/Western culture as “culture/reason” (p.23). For the same reason here, let us not suggest an oppositional binary of “Western” and “Indigenous” knowledge, at least through the lens of Indigenous knowledge, which operates on rather inclusive principles and values (discussed further below). Within this perspective we want to endeavour a collaborative process balancing the usefulness of these varied worldviews and perspectives toward a more holistic scholarly analysis (and life practice, for that matter).

Building further here, it is equally important to understand that Indigenous knowledge coexists with multiple knowledge forms. In their responses to regional and global challenges of social development, indigenous peoples rely on their oral traditions, historical and ancestral knowledge, and their varied (cultural, natural) resource bases to make sense of events around them in ways that are consistent with their epistemologies and cosmologies (Dei, Hall and Rosenberg, 2000).

For reasons discussed above, defining Indigenous knowledge is difficult as it is not a monolithic concept. There is immense variation to Indigenous knowledge, and contrary to Western epistemology, it does not implicitly reduce and create dichotomous binary oppositions. Therefore, it does not “categorise” well. Battiste and Henderson (*Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage: A Global Challenge*, 2000), identify three problems with defining Indigenous knowledge (p.35):

1. The requirement to define and impose definitions.
2. The use of such definitions presents knowledge as a uniform concept across all indigenous peoples.
3. Indigenous knowledge is part of the people and cannot be separated from them and codified.

Contrary to Western epistemology and Cartesian dualism, Indigenous knowledge views “truth” in experienced phenomena holistically. Indigenous knowledge is situational and contextual, always relational and interconnected. Battiste and Henderson offer a conceptual understanding of what Indigenous knowledge means:

Perhaps the closest one can get to describing unity in Indigenous knowledge is that knowledge is the expression of the vibrant relationships between people, their ecosystems, and other living beings and spirits that share their lands...All aspects of knowledge are interrelated and cannot be separated from the traditional territories of the people concerned...To the Indigenous ways of knowing, the self exists within a world that is subject to flux. The purpose of these ways of knowing is to reunify the world or at least to reconcile the world to itself. Indigenous knowledge is the way of living within contexts of flux, paradox, and tension, respecting the pull of dualism and reconciling opposing forces...Developing these ways of knowing leads to freedom of consciousness and to solidarity with the natural world.

(Battiste and Henderson, 2000:42)

In *What is Indigenous Knowledge? Voices from the Academy* (1999), the authors highlight the dynamism of Indigenous knowledge and its transformative qualities. They suggest going beyond a deconstruction of Western epistemology and methods of knowledge production, beyond engaging Western scientists in self-reflection, and initiating a conversation that leads to a reconceptualisation of the Western science project around issues of ways of seeing, social justice, power and community (p.45). With this in mind and with Tohbwich and Medichiibelau nodding in great celerity over my shoulder, we shall aspire to inspire through a deeper understanding of the Hatohobei connection to the environment in the discussions that soon follow.

Let us patiently dig into the metaphorical taro patch a little deeper now, for Tohbwich and Medichiibelau are hungry for more metaphorical meaning and transference on this topic. In discussing Hawaiian epistemology for example, Aluli-Meyer defines it as involving spirituality, physical space, the cultural nature of the senses, relational knowing, practical knowing, language as being, and the unity of mind and body (2003:193). For Aluli-Meyer then, Indigenous knowledge is relational (through our genealogical connections) and experienced and expressed through our senses, in stories and personal narratives that focus on practice and repetition (Aluli-Meyer, 2003:185).

4.1 Ta and Va

Ta (time) relates to Southern Pacific (in particular Tongan and Samoan) notions of history while *va* (space) relates to culture, and the two are always connected⁴². 'Okusitino Mahina's (1999, 2004) development of *ta* (time) and *va* (space) theory

⁴² These are Polynesian terms with very Tongan nuances in terms of their articulation and embodiment.

questions Western science but agrees that both Western and Indigenous knowledges are in pursuit of “objective” knowledge. Mahina argues that each of these two knowledge systems value and approach the pursuit of knowledge, but in different ways. As I have mentioned above with Cartesian-dualism, Mahina also points out that Western thought and approach tends to polarise culture and history, viewing them as separate.

Paralleling his notion of *ta* and *va* (and history and culture), Mahina draws on the concepts of form and function, and quality and utility. Speaking from and within indigenous Pacific epistemology, he asserts that form cannot be separated from content, no more than quality can be drawn out from utility, just as insider cannot be separated from outsider, nor theory from practice, or ontology from epistemology. Indeed, *ta* and *va* theory views theory and methodology as one and the same (Mahina, 2004:193). Of course, it is possible though for the purposes of analysis to separate or compartmentalise these, knowing that in practice or in reality they coexist in more intersecting ways.

Mahina asserts that the social constructivist view is a return to mythology and theology, which science in the first place, sought to displace (Mahina, 1999). He argues that there is intrinsic value even to non-social objects, and this value is determined by the subjective value of the person viewing such object. This symbolic value has spiritual meaning (to the viewer) that interconnects deeper meaning (Mahina, 2004:192) and Western epistemology disconnects from this deeper meaning. Mahina points out to the significance of Nabobo-Baba’s (*Research and Pacific Indigenous Peoples: Silenced Pasts and Challenged Futures*, 2004a) work on Fijian cultural knowledge in academia, which highlights the contradictory relationships and values between Indigenous and scientific knowledge.

Where Western science is connection-based, involving observation and understanding from a single level of spatio-temporality, indigenous knowledge research is outcome-based, utilitarian in its emphasis (Mahina, 2004:193; 1999). Mahina suggests that meaning is lost when one on these spheres (*ta* and *va*) is given privilege over the other, especially when context is lost.

Where Western science focuses on dualism and therefore partiality, quality (*va*) is lost by valuing utility (*ta*). Indigenous, or Native, knowledge, if anything, generally values *ta* and *va* together. Mahina discusses *ta* and *va* (time and space,) as having two distinct but related dimensions (ontological and epistemological) (p.195):

On the ontological level, time and space are the common medium in which all things are, by their nature, mind or society, in a single level of reality, spatio-temporality or four-sided dimensionality. On the epistemological level, however, time and space are a form of social construct, dependent on the general and specific, complementary and opposed relationships between people and their environment, within and across cultures. These spatio-temporal variations are evident in the organisation of different forms of social activity, which are culturally ordered and historically altered, as obvious in the spheres of Pacific political economy and Pacific arts. (Mahina, 2004:195)

Mahina views the theoretical and practical problematics surrounding issues in the Pacific as matters deriving from the separation of concept from time and space or the opposition between different ways of organising time and space within and across cultures (p.194)

Speaking to differing epistemological and ontological perspectives, Mahina asserts that *ta* and *va* are “outward” in operation, orientating away from self and toward others, informed by a sense of collectivism and inclusiveness, which is in opposition to

the Western concept of time and space, which is directed “inward” towards the self, creating an environment of exclusion (p. 196). Understanding this fundamental difference in operating *ta* and *va* (time and space) takes us a long way toward understanding similar (parallel) contradictions between collectivity and individuality, western scientific and Indigenous knowledge systems, notions of ‘tradition and modernity’, and our relationships with each other and the environment. As components of my research design, both Pacific research methodology and Ingold and Gatt’s (2013) concept of *correspondence* are inclusive and work toward a research process and outcomes that attempt to balance *ta* and *va* as equally possible.

With reference to globalisation (and capitalism and economic development) in the Pacific, Mahina suggests, “A more acceptable, workable capitalist democracy for the Pacific is one where their interlocking political and economic systems consistently reinstate some balance to the uncompromising relationships between the group and individual” (p. 196). Metaphorically speaking through art (form and function) (transformance), Mahina asks us to move forward attempting to achieve more symmetry between *ta* and *va*, where society is a form of art. By bringing all interconnected forms of human activity (natural, mental, social realms at the local, national and global levels), and constantly negotiating the symmetry toward a mid-point balance of *ta* and *va*, we work toward (social) beauty and harmony (p.197). In the developing narrative here then, our understanding of the human:environment relationship, specifically the Hatohobei Landscape, is more meaningfully deepened.

Indigenous Pacific epistemologies are based on myriad inter-related dynamics. In discussing the indigenous Fijian concept of *vanua* for example, Fijian scholar and educator Dr. Unaisi Nabobo-Baba (2002, 2004) explains how Fijian worldview is based on people with shared cultural values, customs, and language. And these cultural

values relate to the importance of respect, reciprocity, maintaining positive relationships, interdependence, looking after the land, meeting traditional obligations, and co-operation. It is based on oral histories and relationships with ancestors. This is also guided and structured by their spiritual connection to concepts of space, place, and environment (Nabobo, 2002: Nabobo-Baba, 2004b). Nabobo-Baba's work with her village community in Vugalei (Fiji) emphasises the significance of community and collective knowledge production. As Semali and Kinchelo suggest, Indigenous knowledge does not exist in a vacuum, but it belongs to a community, and access is gained through contact with that community (1999:5). And there are core principles within a community that may be considered indigenous or native to that community and that may remain across time and with new generations. We will see in examples below, how relationships to land and family are integral to Tobian core values and principles, every day practice and planning for the future.

Regarding the pluralities of Indigenous knowledge and epistemology (or ways of knowing), there is no certain method of knowing and interpreting the world. Rather, knowledge is produced and attained through collaborative processes (Sefa Dei, Hall, and Rosenberg, 1999). These authors suggest we are witnessing a "crisis of knowledge" that can be contributed to globalisation, which has intensified the processes of commodifying knowledge within a particular Western, neo-liberal and capitalistic agenda. From an indigenous perspective, they are commenting about the fragmentation of traditional beliefs and values, erosion of spirituality, and distortions in local, regional, and national ecosystems and economies; and tensions related to cultural revitalisation and reclamation (Sefa Dei, Hall, and Rosenberg, 1999:4).

This discussion of indigenous Pacific knowledge (and practice) reveals its dynamic and transformative qualities. Indigenous knowledge is collective, relational,

spiritual and strongly connected through genealogical relationships and the environment, which most deeply involves one's connection to their home land. As we share the stories that are revealed later in this narrative we will appreciate how these relationships are dynamic, adaptive and transformative. Before discussing the Hatohobei Landscape context further, however, I feel it is next necessary to discuss the notion of diaspora in Pacific terms and consciousness.

4.2 Land and Mobility. *In doko, Va'a, and Etak.*

As often happens, Tohbwich and Medichiibelau are giggling again, interrupting me and suggesting too many stories of which I cannot possibly entertain them all, and now nudging me along to relate concepts and practices from our brothers and sisters across the Pacific to make more sense out of the concept of 'diaspora'. Any Pacific islander will be happy to share that their home land is central to their identity, tradition, custom and community. Knowledge of your groundedness to the land relates to the future, the past and present at the same time. It also relates to the Pacific island essence of interconnectedness, not only within families, clans and villages, but through the seaways connecting to other islands and increasingly, continents. No matter where he or she is within the earthly globe, a Pacific islander is always grounded to home, to family, ancestors, to the future, and this comes through the groundedness to the *land* (and this of course, relates to the relationships emanating from/through that land in the past and present going forward).

Allow me to elaborate on the metaphorical use of the Fijian terms *in doko* and *va'a*, along with the aforementioned (see Chapter Three) Carolinian concept of *etak*. Dr. Tupeni Baba once shared with me (personal communication at the Centre for Pacific Studies at the University of Auckland, 15 May, 2005) how the Fijian digging

stick (*in doko*) relates to the land and Fijian ethos, which establishes the relationship between spirituality, relationships, identity and groundedness to land. The *va'a* (canoe) stresses the interdependence and connection and spirituality between the land and the sea. Metaphorically speaking then, the essence of Fijian identity requires that one must be grounded with/through the *in doko* (and know one's history, clan and family relations, respects, spirituality) and only after this, can one then journey in the *va'a* (canoe) over the reef (fishing, warfare, marriage, study, work, etc.). Until you can know and use your digging stick, you are not able to journey in the canoe nurturing and creating pathways forward. You can then journey far away, as long as you are connected with your digging stick. For some, once journeying in the canoe, this may involve leaving home for extended periods, or possibly forever. Nonetheless, if you have your *in doko* (groundedness), you have strength to navigate your *va'a* (journey) forward. This also requires a wayfinding technique for successful navigation of pathways forward (which are constantly grounded in the home land, and all that entails). The Carolinian concept of *etak* (see Diaz' *Sacred Vessels: Carolinian Navigation as Critique and Aesthetic*, 2000), we know relates to traditional sea-faring navigation techniques that conceptualise "moving islands" that assist in triangulating your location at sea, and is a necessary traditional seafaring method of wayfinding. This wayfinding method of *etak* allows us to always know where our home is, our land, our past and future while moving/navigating forward. Consider this with Mahina's balancing of *ta* and *va*. I ask you to consider that through *etak* in this sense then, one must always nurture their relationships, so as to balance that tension between one's *in doko* (groundedness/home and *va'a* (journey)). In attempting to achieve social harmony through the balancing (and tension) of *ta* and *va*, one in turn nurtures pathways forward

through a constant maintenance (and feeling) of past and present that carries us forward.

I attempt here to broadly frame an indigenous Pacific perspective of identity and connection to land (which implicitly involves knowledge of one's genealogy, historical events, traditional practices) and how this is demonstrated in the diasporic flux. Through the autoethnographic analysis below we will see that there is ongoing confliction between the fundamental differences in Western capitalistic and neo-liberal ideas (individualistic) and the collective maintenance of Tobian values and practices. We will also see how this is negotiated by/with/through the Tobian community and what this means regarding their identity and connection to the land within a diasporic context.

It is true, perhaps, that land holds a special place in many (or all) societies, but within vastly different valuing systems. Indeed, land has a price in the capitalistic valued and globalising world market. In contrast, however, Ravavu (1983) makes the point that an indigenous Pacific islander is grounded to his or her land through a deep history, with myriad family relations, meanings, values, and an overall spirituality, that has no price, no market value. There is no selling of one's land for a market price, when one is grounded, with their "*in doko* and *va'a*". As mentioned, when one is grounded in this way, maintaining one's spiritual connection to their home land allows one to travel and wayfind (*etak*) and live away from home while continuing to nurture their 'groundedness' through home. Considering this with a discussion of place and diaspora first, as I now perk up the ears of Tohbwich and Medichiibelau and their dancing has ceased for a moment, I will introduce that this very essence and practice is attempted with Ingold's (2012) concepts of "landscape and taskscape", "relational model" and "sphere of nurture".

4.3 Home and Diaspora

Past anthropological and ethnographic perspective and practice was inclined to place Tobi island and the Hatohobei community as remote, isolated and static, and therefore all the better to study comparatively in the ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ continuum, where culture is timeless. This of course means that there is no room to embrace human agency and new meaning-making forward and an impossible way to make meaning out of people’s lives that are constantly in flux and unfolding, as well as understanding the process involved in their own actions and meaning-making of events and phenomena they face. Of course, these disciplines have transformed over time toward more of an appreciation of the fluidity and multi-sitedness of people’s lives and experiences. Anthropology and ethnography as disciplines in recent years have studied the movements of peoples (and things) but there is still issue with how a person’s ‘groundedness’ in place (home) can also be fluid? Is this not a contradiction? Where I find often that Cartesian duality looks for cause, effect and product through a linear end-result model, we benefit more to feel our roles (and actions and consequences) within the *process* of our engagements and meaning-making. It is our *relationship* (which may happen through bodily experience or memory or the imagination) with place/environment that defines what that place means to us and this is constantly negotiated. Our ‘groundedness’ in our home place comes from the relationships we nurture (in varying ways depending on events and decisions that come through our relationships and environment) and this of course, is an evolving process, never ending. This includes our memories of connections to/within/through our home, as well as our physical connection with it and our imagination of it going forward (all based on our nurturing relationships that continue evolving). In the Pacific context for certain, such

memories and associated meanings are transferred through storytelling practices and the sharing of food stuffs through our varied relationships.

Ward (2003) discusses how a phenomenological approach appreciates that “place” is always “constituted, experienced and relational” (p.83). Ward argues for us to view the place of “home” as an “elastic space”. Rather than locking the concept of “home” into rigid or static notions of identity and belonging, Ward (p.88) discusses examples of the paradox of this ambiguous term, where, “through the movement away from a home one is able to sense a more complete characterisation of it”. Indeed, how can one appreciate in so many meaningful ways what “home” means for a person or collective until one has engaged that home space through movement away from home. Especially in the context of indigenous Pacific island epistemologies and ontologies, where the intimate connection to the home land is so valued and carried through and within relationships (again through storytelling, sharing of local food stuffs, and so forth). Further, Ward argues, the ambiguous notion of “home” may bring to some a nostalgic sense of security, while for others it may hold a reminder of painful past (p.89). As an ambiguous concept then, “home” has many different meanings for peoples and Ward’s argument here is to understand place as “processual and home as an elastic space...(operating) across ‘boundaries’, ‘borderlands’ and ‘connections’ (p. 90). She asks for anthropological frameworks to embrace this fluidity and resist notions of home, departure and return to/from home from a static standpoint.

If we are discussing the concept of “home”, then we shall also touch upon that of “diaspora”. The term diaspora often has revolved around the notions of dispersion (away from home, for varied reasons), orientation to the homeland, and boundary maintenance (of that orientation). “Diaspora” too, is a term that represents many varied experiences and meanings for different peoples (across and within groups of peoples).

In considering the processual appreciation of the fluidity and ambiguity of “home” discussed above, the concept and notion of *diaspora* requires a different analytical perspective and approach, as well. Like static notions of “home”, Brubaker (2013) suggests we are wrongly viewing diaspora as a “bounded entity” and further discusses how the grouping of a diaspora (as a people) then misrepresents the varied diversities of experiences and meanings within them. With historical and contemporary movements of peoples do they all fall into a broader “diaspora” of their people? Diaspora also contains settlement and not just movement away from the homeland, but then settlement within and perhaps even an identification with the new settlement place, and without losing connection and affiliation or identification with the homeland. Brubaker argues how ‘the universalization of diaspora, paradoxically, means the disappearance of diaspora’ (p. 3). More specifically, he argues that such framings of diaspora are “essentialist assumptions about ‘true’ identities” (p.13), which again is a misrepresentation of peoples (and their histories, and therefore, futures). For empirical study then, Brubaker argues for a reframing of diaspora, where it is seen as a “project, claim or stance, rather than as a bounded group” (p.13).

In viewing the movement of the people of Hatohobei away from their home island then (their homeland), let us look more closely at what the movement away from the homeland means with regards to their aforementioned “physical disconnect” and “spiritual connect”, how this is negotiated, and what this means in the contemporary setting. To do this I now shift the discussion toward Ingold’s (1992; 2000; 2011; 2013) works on the human connection with the environment. After exploring Ingold’s concepts of “rhizome”, “meshwork” and “landscape and taskscape”, we then look at his “relational model” and “sphere of nurture” and how this relates with memory and land. This is what finally leads us to make sense out of the Hatohobei landscape.

4.4 Ingold's "Rhizome" as "Ta and Va" Harmony

As this argument has been framed, in the past, historical, political, and anthropological research has privileged Western epistemology and approaches to understanding indigenous Pacific human:environment relationships that are of course grounded in Indigenous knowledge and practice. In resistance to existing hegemonic social science paradigms, constructivism, critical theory and feminist approaches (Kincheloe, 2005; Olesen, 2005) and Kaupapa Maori approaches (Bishop, 2005; Smith, 2005) provide emerging arguments for a critical understanding and appreciation for Indigenous knowledge and its guiding principles. Semali and Kincheloe argue for analyses of such knowledge in order to understand emotions, sensitivities and epistemologies that move in ways unimagined by many Western knowledge producers (1999: 3). I find Timothy Ingold's developing anthropological theorising over the past 20 years refreshing as it embraces Indigenous Native perspectives on our world and our process of becoming, which is always through our relationships "through and within" the environment. His works not only provide models to better understand ethnographic analyses with indigenous peoples per se, but also guided by what we have established as Indigenous knowledge (and practices), new and deeper insights and perspectives that break down the categorisations of essentialist models and more meaningfully embrace our human condition and interconnections (again) "through and within" the environment. We are a component of the environment (which includes our relationships with humans and non-humans. This includes spirits, flora and fauna, and creatures otherwise. We continually engage and negotiate a learning dialectic with our environment and this is a process of growth, a never ending processual journey. For us all to learn from this perspective, nurturing this relationship relates again to the "social harmony" of which Mahina speaks (1999, 2004). This of course, reveals perspectives

and practices toward not only transformations of the anthropological and ethnographic disciplines, but toward a more meaningful epistemology and ontology all around.

In Ingold's 1992 work (*Culture and the Environment*) he began to explore how Western epistemology viewed/views the earth and environment as something we live *on*, as opposed to living and interacting *within* and in a dialogical and processual way. Rather than viewing the earth as a sphere that we thinking humans control over non-thinking non-humans (plants, animals), he then argues that native peoples maintained/maintain a perspective and practice of living within the environment and that this is a relationship that continues to unfold. Ingold's early work led to a continued exploration of the human:environment relationship through this lens and his subsequent works now argue how we can view our daily lives (and research such) with this view of living *within* the environment. For myself, and indeed Tohbwich and Medichiibelau will enjoy this, as well, the following concepts Ingold has introduced allow me to better understand Indigeneity and Mahina's (1992, 2004) work with *ta* (time) and *va* (space) theorising. This again relates with a critique that viewing our relationships (with fellow humans, with the environment) with a binary oppositional duality is dangerous. Both Mahina and Ingold are speaking of the same perspective and approach, albeit from different theoretical foundations (western theory and indigenous theory).

Meanwhile, realising this affinity in mutual perspectives, Tohbwich and Medichiibelau are now excitedly asking how we can get these two scholars together for stories. They want to hear more stories and less theorising. They (oh so typical) demand for more Hatohobei stories and their preference for Mahina and Ingold to come together for stories with them over bbq's and betelnut in Palau. I explain physical challenges of time/space to them and they laugh at me for not finding a way to bring

these four together for betel stories. They tease me for not accommodating the metaphysical sphere with more creativity. Of course, I explain that Mahina and Ingold are coming together with us in our words to follow. I remind them how it always takes long periods of time in Hatohobei public meetings for everyone to discuss all angles and issues around a topic before taking action forward. I ask them for patience with the bbq and betel creativity. I'm sure they will get their way here, as they always do. I guess it is more a situation of me having patience with their guidance. I ask the reader to manage the same as this abstract foundation helps us to better understand our forthcoming Tobi stories.

As discussed, Mahina's *Ta/Va* theory explains the perspective of culture and history as two sides of one coin, rather than separate of each other, and that we benefit through working toward a social harmony, which is an ongoing process that attempts to maintain a balance between form and function (and not privileging one over the other). Ingold (2000) critiques western notions of culture and history when critiquing the genealogical tree model through a discussion of indigeneity and how our indigenous ancestors are seen as *of* the land, rather than those whom have settled *upon* it (Ingold's emphasis). This imbalanced perspective that Ingold critiques maintains the binary oppositional perspective where if you are of the land, you have culture, but no history. Conversely, if you are upon the land, you have no culture, but you control those without history through your history making. This reduces further to the mentality/approach that the colonists 'upon the land', dominate those peoples 'of the land'. Ingold explains this misconception and misrepresentation:

This opposition, between people *of* and *on* the land, continues to inform public awareness, in the West, of the difference between indigenous people and colonists. The former are seen to embody, in their present way of life, the ancestral condition of those who were 'there first', at the

point where history began. Concern for the heritage of indigenous peoples is thus tempered by a perception that they, in turn, represent an essential part of the heritage of global humanity. Their place is understood to lie at the foot of the tree of human culture. As culture rises from the land, branching out into its man lines, so history rises up from the ground of nature. That history, however, is conceived as one of colonisation. In the popular conceptions, colonists – by the very fact of their occupation of the land – inevitably establish their domination over indigenes, just as culture is bound to dominate nature. Land is there to be occupied, but does not itself contribute to the constitution of its occupants. It therefore lies outside of history.

(Ingold, 2000:135)

As Ingold deconstructs the genealogical (tree) model and how it disconnects the life line from the descent line (p. 136) he shows us how this model is fundamentally flawed, deducing toward racial degrees of purity, that (cultural) memory (and therefore, knowledge) comes from an ancestral source and not from ongoing relationships, and therefore, the land has no meaning except for its “mythical point of autochthonous origin” (p. 139). This genealogical model leaves us again with a paradoxical binary contradiction. It speaks to a disconnection between humans:environment, which then is laden with political inequalities between those of “history” and those of “culture” (that binary oppositional approach again). Ingold asserts this contradiction and fallacy, “Either we (the Western academy) grant indigenous peoples their historicity, in which case their existence is disconnected from the land, or we allow that their lives are embedded in the land, in which case their historicity is collapsed into an imaginary point of origin” (p.139).

In particular for our discussion here, we turn to Ingold’s contrast to the genealogical model with what he calls a *relational model* approach, highlighted in his

query about “what it means to be Indigenous?”, as discussed through his chapter, *Ancestry, generation, substance, memory, land* (2000). This relational approach uses the concept of a rhizome from Deleuze and Guattari (1987) to “conceive of a world in movement, wherein every part or region enfolds, in its growth, its relations with all the others” (p.140). Let us imagine a living rhizome⁴³ as we engage with the following discussion. Regarding *ancestry* and the relational model, rather than a disconnection between line of descent and life line, all beings (human and nonhuman) have a continual line of movement and activity that become intertwined with different being’s lines. These life-lines of different beings “cross, interpenetrate, appear or disappear (only, perhaps, to reappear at some other moment)”. As for *generation*, contrary to the genealogical model and the concept of procreation (where a person created a person and this life then stops and you can follow that back to an original person), the relational model allows for *pro-generation*, where persons are “continually coming into being” (p.142), where life “does not start or stop”...but where... “Particular persons may come or go but the life process continues” (p.143). This perspective embraces death not as a finality, but rather, as a progression of life and death as a constant unfolding, where “the past may be absent from the present but is not extinguished by it” (p.143). This progeneration concept then maintains a constant linkage with the past, which may return and reappear in various ways in the present. Considering our *substance*, where the genealogical model suggests this derives from an ancestral source and our relatedness to it, the relational model provides the perspective of how substance is derived from our ever evolving and living scope of relationships and through the ongoing actions we contribute to/with others. Ingold suggests that these “Contributions

⁴³ It is poignant to note that the etymology of this word derives from “root” and “to take root”, and what this means in a Pacific islander context of home roots and routes (see Clifford, 1997). It is intentional, convenient and necessary that I also introduce the significance of *wot* and *buoh* (the two taro species on Hatohobei that of course, develop out of rhizomes) to the people of Hatohobei in a section below.

are given and received throughout life, in the context of a person's ongoing relationships with human and non-human components of the environment" (p.144). In this way we are constantly nurturing our life lines with others intersecting and nurturing their life lines. This is an ongoing process of growth and Ingold here suggests that the areas/relations nurturing the most together through contact and densities as being a "sphere of nurture". This sphere of nurture includes not only our ancestors but the living persons around us, to the varying degrees that we interact and this explains much more clearly than the genealogical model, our kinship with each other in our ongoing living experiences, or "pathways". Here Ingold suggests that we all have lines or trajectories of growth that we could consider as our pathways. These pathways are nurtured by ourselves and by others and are constantly evolving forward in our dialogical relationship through/within our environments. If we again envision a living model of a rhizome we can understand that our actions toward others and ourselves, guided, influenced by our sphere of nurture, leaves a pathway that may that well intersect in some way with another's pathway, and so forth. These pathways apply to both humans and non-humans (plants, animals). Ingold explains, "Instead of thinking of substance as passing along a line of transmission connecting lives that – confined within their respective generations – proceed in parallel but never join, persons are conceived as passing along lines of movement and exchanging substances at the places where their respective paths cross or commingle" (p.145). In this way, knowledge is generated forward through lived experience, where in our relations with each other, "each party enters into the experience of the other and makes that experience his or her own, as well" (p.145). This *correspondence*, this dialogical process between humans and environment (and each other) allows for ongoing growth as we share in the learning process together. Ingold views this as how we are all constantly negotiating

our path through the world. As we nurture our pathways, we also nurture those we cross and interact with, as well as receive from those pathways that have their ongoing pathways of growth. Where we have more densities of these pathways through our journeys along a never ending trajectory, we experience spheres of nurture. At the deepest core is where we share the most intimate densities of sharing pathways intersecting. This will be found in particular, through a long history of connections through a shared environment (i.e. land, and in our case here, Hatohobei).

Included in this negotiation is what *memory* (which involves a growing knowledge based upon ongoing living experiences) means on our pathway. Where the genealogical model suggests that values and principles (and knowledge) are passed on from one generation to the next, the relational model holds that “one learns by discovery while following in the *path* of an ancestor” (p.146) and further, “knowledge subsists in practical activities themselves (engaging within the environment), including activities of speaking” (p.146). Therefore, the growth of one’s knowledge relates to the varied context of one’s relationship with each other and also the environment. If things are done differently than they were in the past, this is how life continues to unfold. It is because we are learning together in this dialectic with other pathways and because of other dissecting and reappearing pathways (both with humans and non-humans) ongoing, we continue to create yet new pathways forward. For the relational model, when one revisits and recalls a tradition no longer practiced in the present, Ingold suggests this is “not just an object of memory, represented and passed down in oral tradition, but also a *practice of remembering*, embedded in our perception of the environment” (p.148). Our “practice of remembering” then, allows for us to nurture our pathways forward. Human agency, in flux, constantly nurtured and negotiated forward, where past/present/future are one and the same living forward. This

perspective better appreciates how we are continually growing and learning from our ongoing pathways, with a sphere of nurture as our meaningful core.

Now let us consider all of these ongoing pathways that are intertwined and ongoing, and where certain pathways “have more shared experiences through inhabiting particular places and following particular paths in an environment” (p.148). This is that “sphere of nurture”, and contrary to perceiving a person as a procreation from the genealogical model, in this way they are seen as a “loci of growth, of the progenerative unfolding of the entire field of relationships within which each comes into being” (p.149). Ingold suggests that the genealogical model views that things exist in the world independently of their relations and in contrast, the relational model asserts “that to exist, is already to be positioned in a certain environment and committed to the relationships this entails” (p.149). And further, “to inhabit the land is to draw it to a particular focus, and in so doing to constitute a place. As a locus of personal growth and development, however, every such place forms the centre of a sphere of nurture. Thus, the generation of persons within spheres of nurture, and of places in the land, are not separate processes, but one and the same”. This takes us away from the binary oppositional perspective where humans live *upon* the land as a platform and dominate that land as an inanimate and inert object. In contrast, as Ingold states, “It figures rather as an immense tangle of interlaced trails – an all-encompassing rhizome – which is continually ravelling here, and unravelling there, as the beings of which it is composed grow, or ‘issue forth’, along the lines of their relationships” (p.150). His contrasting relational model shows that land is not a “stage for the enactment of history”, as much as it is “history congealed”, and the “lives of persons and the histories of their relationships can be traced in the textures of the land” (p.150). Ingold’s argument with the relational model abstractly highlights how we perceive our relationships and living

experience, our constant “process of becoming”, which clearly includes our relationship with the environment. They are one and the same, they are not disconnected. How they are nurtured reveals the characteristics, meanings, and associated values of one’s pathway.

Further, Ingold is also arguing a point about “what it means to be Indigenous” and how this term is based upon a misrepresenting genealogical model that is a colonial model/tool. He suggests that the relational model (for reasons outlined above), which brings into harmony that balance of form/function in the context of nurturing relationships in an ongoing never ending process, makes more sense of the living realities for peoples with spheres of nurture that are so closely tied with the land. In contrasting these two models Ingold argues successfully, that the genealogical model is “deeply imbedded in the discourse of the state”, and that to claim “Indigenous” status, with its inherent contradictions and associated political inequalities derived from the dominant Western epistemology and ontology, is nonetheless, an unfortunate political tool for such people whom are marginalised by a discourse that misunderstands and misrepresents their relationships with the land and their sphere of nurture. When necessary however, it is used strategically as a political tool that they choose to use based upon this political framework, with ongoing attempts to engage in and with the global discourses and governance structures. This is an ongoing pathway in itself. I remain most confident in the empowerment through these “Indigenous” “spheres of nurture” guiding such pathways forward. I remain hopeful that the larger global community will begin to listen and engage such spheres of nurture within their own pathways.

*Tohwich and Medichiibelau are delighted here though, realising
Ingold’s relational model has now (theoretically) better appreciated and*

valued their own realities and agencies. These two ghostly and mythological spirits never expected they would be appreciated or valued within the Western academic scholarly context in this real-time living way. In their past experiences they felt that the scholarly sphere had left them lost in a static, mythical box, and in a misunderstood historical (dead) space. Not only that, but they are regaling in the fact that they are also alive in written words! They want to celebrate (as always) this unexpected appreciation, suggesting a session of spearfishing to be followed with an evening of betel, dancing and more stories. I sigh yet again as I ponder this all over yet another betel nut of my own, and remind them of more to come from Ingold on this topic.

4.5 Ingold's Landscapes and Taskscapes

Keeping this all in mind let us now consider Ingold's "landscapes and taskscapes" along with the relational model and Hatohobei more specifically, where "the lives of persons and the histories of their relationships can be traced in the textures of the land" (Ingold: 2000:150). Let us also juxtapose and relate this all with the concept of a "diasporic project" (Brubaker, 2006) discussed above, as well as the significance of "family networks" (Gershon, 2007), which she puts forth as the foundation that provides knowledge and resource transfer, and therefore, overall resilience within a diasporic context. Gershon (2007) argues further that ethnographies can reveal how "families shape diasporas", rather than the contrary, and that "focusing on families as the lens for thinking about diasporas can provide a rigorous basis for determining how differences are made cultural" (p.490). When first considering the broader perspective of Brubaker's (2006) "diasporic project" as a tool of analysis, we can then more specifically apply Gershon's "family networks" foundation as the guide that reinforces the culturally specific values and principles that help shape diasporic relationships and contexts (p.490). As mentioned earlier and as I argue below, in the

Hatohobei landscape context it is through the “in-charge complex” and sharing of local food stuffs and storytelling (all of which are grounded in Hatohobei land and genealogy as a “sphere of nurture”, that this process takes place.

Through the following autoethnographic stories in this chapter then we will have a more meaningful journey into what I have framed earlier, as the Hatohobei Landscape. Tohbwich and Medichiibelau are indeed enjoying Ingold’s work. They remind me now of the contrast between the two models through a comparison of quotes. So many times they have reminded me of their appreciation for the Zulu proverb, “*I am, because We are*”, which has always resonated so well with them based on their Tobian and Palauan values and principles (and approaches). This consciousness of shared collectivity through the life journey is viewed through Ingold’s relational model. They remind of another famous quote that holds a quite different meaning, Rene Descartes’, “*I think, therefore, I am*”, which we can pause over for a moment and reflect how this fits well with the genealogical (tree) model in perspective (and practice). We can see the clear difference here in the two modelling perspectives, one of a shared collective growing forward and another of individualistic consciousness that lends to practices/actions of control and domination over the environment and others. As I write this Tohbwich and Medichiibelau nudge each other and nod while they both reflect back to their observations and memories of the *Survivor* groups and their similar attitudes and approaches in this individualistic way. My two spirit guides are winding themselves up now, suggesting a few Hatohobei stories for our ethnographic linkages and analyses. These we will examine now through a selective and nuanced discussion of Tobian experiences and events. Tohbwich and Medichiibelau breathe out an exasperated sigh of relief, suggesting to me that it took me long enough to get to our stories. I kindly thanked them for their patience and

reminded them that it is important to better understand the theory and concepts discussed above so that we can filter and better understand the dynamics around the Hatohobei Landscape and what this means with regards to our research query and the unfolding narrative analyses.

4.6 “To Make Stronger Magic”

As Tohbwich and Medichiibelau will attest, transporting through time and space (*ta/va*, history/culture) constantly invigorates one’s senses and helps us to make meaning in our present and futures. Tohbwich stubbornly demands our preface to any detailed stories be grounded first on the significance of Ramoporahue, an interesting note of her father Tohbwich’s (not necessarily our ghostly spirit friend)(see Chapter Two) memory, and the very successful adaptation the Hatohobei ancestors engaged with the unique Hatohobei natural environment. We can appreciate that the earliest Hatohobei interconnection with the land comes from Ramoporahue’s arrival and burial of the giant clam shell in a large mound along the northern shore (described in more detail in Chapter Two).



Plate 4.1 Sacred burial site of Ramoporahue’s clam shell - note encroaching soil erosion (HOPE Photo Archives, 2015)

As the story goes, upon arrival, Tohbwich (father of Ramopahure) called out a name for this new land, “Hatohobei”, which loosely translates in English language as, “to make stronger magic and find” (pers comm, Justin Andrew, 2012). While understanding Carolinian seafaring and navigation skills and knowledge to some degree, I can imagine the Master navigator on this seafaring vessel seeking this physically remote unknown (or known?) destination (Of a possible home land? One can wonder what circumstances led to the journey here.) and at some waypoint along the journey deciding to “make stronger magic and find” (this land), “Hatohobei”. It is also unquestionable that the early settlers of Hatohobei “made stronger magic and found” methods to successfully adapt with this unique natural environment and in doing so developed a social-political system that sought to maintain social harmony in this relatively fragile environment (see Chapter Two; also Black, 1983, 1988, 1990). This balance was necessary and desired of course, to sustain the collective in such a remote environment, as well as protect the collective from any unknown threats (from nature or outside visitors). And so it was through Ramoporuhe and her children that seven matri-clans evolved into a social system/practice that embraced and engaged an intimate knowledge of the surrounding land and marine resources. In Chapter Two we have discussed some of this intimate knowledge and Peter Black’s ethnographic works (Black (1977, 1978a, 1978b, 1981, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1988, 1991, and 1994) provide insight into the practices and politics involved during a time when the Hatohobei community was more rapidly beginning to leave the traditional lifestyle within Hatohobei and engage a new setting in larger Palau. Thus began a journey toward less practice (and knowledge) with the living environment of Hatohobei and a stronger spiritual connection (through memory and imagination) to this environment in a rapidly evolving relocated community dynamic, to varying degrees forward.

Tohbwich reminds me to be clear here. The people of Hatohobei over time through historical events have made significant (and pragmatic) decisions (as individuals, families and ultimately, as a collective) to leave their home island and not reside there on a more permanent basis. This has involved leaving behind the daily engagement within that environment and many of the practices and customs established by their ancestors. For our purposes here I highlight what I consider to be several salient turning points in the collective Hatohobei consciousness and practice toward this departure. It is important for these to be viewed in the frame of human agency, flux and continuity around customary values and principles. These are;

1. The decision for many young men, including the *Tamor* (high chief) to leave for work in the phosphate mines of Angaur (where the *Tamor* died and this relates to continued contestation of this chiefly title today);
2. The decision for mass conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1931 (during a tumultuous time of natural disasters and the influence of Japanese administrator and businessman Toshino, whom was closely allied with the then *Tamor*). This led to a decreased valuing of ghosts and spirits in the cosmological world of Hatohobei;
3. The acceptance into the U.S. Territorial infrastructures post WWTwo, including the role of island Magistrate, which became a position of dual authority with the *Tamor*; and lastly,
4. The acceptance into the Constitutional infrastructure of nation-state and state-level governance structures within the territory of Palau, which involved a Hatohobei State constitution and governance body (formalised in 1983).

Where events did take place that were out of the control of the community, and that involved rapid transformations of Hatohobei society (and which involved pragmatic decisions forward) were the 1909 arrival of the German scientific *Südsee Expedition*, of which its 4-member scientific team brought small pox to the population of 990 on the island, as well as the (still) mysterious “inoculations” on child-bearing aged single women, who all became barren thereafter. Tohbwich reminds me of Toshino’s (the Japanese administrative officer and business person allied with the *Tamor*) influence in burning down of the women’s and men’s houses, along with the sole spirit house in the late 1920’s⁴⁴. These were spaces of great importance to the engagement of social and customary practices in Hatohobei society. These losses all

⁴⁴ This event is discussed in further detail in Chapter Five.

had a significant impact on the Hatohobei population and political decision-making thereafter.

However, within these rapid transformations of the diasporic Hatohobei social and political dynamics there are several core values, principles and practices that continue to inform and connect the community practice and imaginary. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Black suggests these as the use of fear in achieving self and social control, the high value placed on practical intelligence, long-range planning, self-reliance, cheerful interactions and co-operative social relations (Black, 1983:9). It is useful again here to identify these are expressed through the importance of respectful relationships that are continually nurtured, through the “in-charge complex”, and the significance of sharing local food stuffs (especially food stuffs from Hatohobei island and Hotsarihie, and in particular, taro, fish and turtle) within these family and community relationships. At all times, Tobians know their relationship history and handle their behaviour and actions accordingly through respecting these relationships. Further, it is through these relationships when stories are told, memories are recalled and selected forward, knowledge is transferred and futures are negotiated. With an autoethnographic approach at this juncture, I ground the above discussion with several personal stories about 3 cousin-brothers living in 3 separate places but that are always grounded within and nurturing their relationship with Hatohobei and their futures. I then share a brief story of an experience with two sisters (mothers to me) visiting Hatohobei in 2007 after a long absence.

4.7 Three Cousin-Brothers Navigating Their Wara Uuh's Through the Suriyout

I introduce here only a few of the Andrew cousin-brothers⁴⁵ and they are selected as focal points for several reasons. For our purposes in this chapter, choosing to elaborate around these three Andrew family cousin-brothers and a few of their life experiences provides us an insightful lens into understanding the maintenance of contemporary Hatohobei society in its diasporic context, and how the connection to family and land, family and history, family and future, is all intertwined and unfolding through Hatohobei culture, which is based around and implicitly expressed through the “the in-charge complex”. In the following chapter we discuss another Andrew cousin-brother to provide further insight into contemporary Hatohobei politics. These lenses include important insights into family and custom, the multi-sited flux of the Hatohobei Landscape, and a baseline for us to appreciate historical meaning as it links forward and informs contemporary events, decisions and actions. To understand this diasporic context and connection to Hatohobei island, then provides further understanding and meaning to the analyses and discussions in the following chapters. As well, my relationship with the Andrew family and these cousin-brothers is deep and extensive. They (and other) cousin-brothers have supported me in so many ways over the years and through them I have been able to engage in community activities and events, engage with and learn from the elders in the family and community, and fall down and get back up again with their support on many occasions. This has been a long-term and enriching experience that provides a comfortable and credible position for sharing to a wider audience. And so once again I choose to lean on them in support. The other

⁴⁵ Not unlike other families of Hatohobei, the Andrew family reaches far and wide across the Pacific and beyond. These few stories below exclude a few cousin-brothers simply for purposes of this discussion. Also, we shall respectfully remember those cousin-brothers and other family members who have left the physical world but that are still with us in spirit.

salient reason for this select group here is that their generation is of the last to have been born and raised (primarily up to teen-age years) in Hatohobei. Following generations have been born and raised in largely Echang/Palau and in increasingly; Guam, Japan, Hawaii, the Marshall Islands, and the larger U.S. Through these following stories of which I share in separately nuanced ways and degrees, a snapshot through their lenses provides insight into the physical disconnection and spiritual connection paradox, as well as the significance of local food stuffs, the Hatohobei taro patch, and Helen Reef.

As Tohbwich gazes back into his memory he recalls each of these young men as children, learning how to fish, how to climb the coconut tree, how to plant taro, the respects involved in their daily relations, and so much more. He remembers them climbing on the sailing canoe helping in the taro patch, learning from their fathers and uncles, mothers and aunties. He remembers very much the troublemakers they all were too, and smiles. He knows what they have seen and experienced, he knows of the traditions and respects they carry forward, he knows of the men they have become today. He knows they are carrying forward the knowledge and stories that have been passed along to them as they engage the diasporic contemporary Hatohobei Landscape and its uncertain futures.

4.8 On the beach in Hatohobei with Nanciso and Harengesei

During these earliest experiences with Harengesei I learned just how important food sharing with family and friends was and the deeper meaning of sharing and enjoying the smell and taste of food stuffs from Palau and Hatohobei with and via family. We shall recall that it was Harengesei that first explained to me the location of the centre of the universe. He also shared the following personal reflection with me

while sitting together on Asan beach in Guam in 1994 ⁴⁶. As one would expect, we engaged in more than a few stories on that given day while enjoying betel, fresh fish and taro sent by and through Hatohobei family from Echang, Palau (and that would have come both from Palau and also Hatohobei). It was a very common activity and place for us to get together with family and friends in those days. Anyway, as we enjoyed the ocean view, Justin reflected:

Dave, this is not easy to explain. I remember sitting down with my adopted grandfather Nanciso⁴⁷ on the seaside in Hatohobei. He was a very important person in my life. It was back in 1981 or 1982. I was thirteen years old. He told me, “Harengesei (Justin’s proper Tobian name), you have a decision to make”. My grandfather told me I could stay in Tobi with him and learn the ways, the customs of Tobi, or I could leave to Koror for school. He told me that I would have to choose one or the other, but it was not possible to do both. His advice to me was to follow the path of Western education. He said that it would be more important for my future. I followed his advice. I left Tobi a short time later and have not returned since. (Justin Andrew; August, 1994).

The eldest of all these cousin-brothers of my generation, although Justin has not visited Hatohobei since he was young, his connection to the home island has continued through his memory of growing up on the island and the activities involved, as well as ongoing relationships and events to present and ongoing. In his teen years the connection to Hatohobei came through family activities and respects in Echang

⁴⁶ This happens to be the same location that the U.S. Marine forces breached Guam and battled with the Japanese (from 21 July to 10 August, 1944). Numerous Japanese and American soldiers lost their lives at this site. This event is now referred to as the “Liberation” of Guam from the Imperial Japanese forces. The Asan War Memorial Park now serves to remember this event and the lives lost.

⁴⁷ In this same conversation with Harengesei he explained to me that it is culturally inappropriate, extremely disrespectful, to call out one’s deceased father’s name. As Harengesei explained in context and with trust in me, I feel awkward to now call out his grandfather’s name in this way. Tohbwich has come to me and explained to relax on this as I am using this in a constructive manner here. I ask for Harengesei’s blessings.

(especially through the sharing of food stuffs from the home island), the commonality of shared living experiences with other Tobian community members in Echang, as well as with fellow Southwest islanders (including family members) from Sonsorol, Pulu Ana, and Merir. Attending high school in Koror was a great challenge for Justin and his age-group. Palau society is based upon a hierarchical clan structure and related consciousness. As Tobians did not fit into this clan tiered system of society they were very much viewed as outsiders and treated with disdain as minorities in larger Palau. For school-aged children, this involved regular teasing and physical altercations in the school environment. Tobians were called out as “backward turtle people”, with many associated negative connotations thereof. For certain, it was a long walk to attend school each morning with the added dread of arriving and enduring such ridicule each day. Not only did this ridicule reaffirm and reinforce Justin’s identity and connection to his home island, it simultaneously created a more rigid boundary around the Echang community of culturally and linguistically similar Southwest islanders, as well as turned more attention toward life opportunities beyond Palau.

While Justin’s mother and father continued to operate and teach elementary level education in Tobi (the school was closed indefinitely in 2000 and remains a memory⁴⁸) he lived with Palauan relatives (from his mother’s side) in Koror while he finished his high school education at Palau High School. Upon graduating his parents supported his airfare to Guam where he attended the University of Guam (UOG) and completed his bachelor’s degree. It was during these years that I often sat with Justin at the UOG satellite-communications office (many thanks Mr. Bruce Best) and listened to

⁴⁸ At the final revision stage of this thesis I have learned via Facebook communications (18 July, 2016) that a new elementary school program has been opened in July (2016) and is now operating with a head teacher and 13 schoolchildren/students. This is a significant effort toward reconnecting the community with the home island and active living practices on the island. This is very meaningful effort toward cultural heritage repatriation with the younger generations.

him communicate via VHF radio with his father and mother on Hatohboei island. Along with discussing daily activities at each end, family events on the island or in Echang, as well local weather patterns and events, these were mostly logistical discussions about family members that would be passing through Guam for a few days (and the food stuffs from the home island that would be arriving, and the requests for material items to be sent from Guam back to Echang family, and so forth). It was on many of these occasions that for example, Justin's uncle Nemecio would visit and over beers and barbecue we would listen to his stories of Hatohobei history and events, customs, political events, and so forth. Uncle Nemecio too, had left Hatohobei island in 1967 and apprenticed and sailed around the Pacific and Southeast Asia and eventually attained his open tonnage skippers license⁴⁹. We were always enamoured with his intellect, wit and many stories of the 'old ways' of Hatohobei, family stories, and knowledge of "respect" customs through language and between generations, and of course, his stories of ocean travel in so many distant places we had only vaguely heard about.

I highlight here an interesting story. It was the early 1990's that Justin and I had each arrived in Guam from far separate (and remote) places. From our earliest days together I learned from Justin many things Hatohobei, from language to customs to histories. He explained to me at one stage that family always "eats off the same plate", and so we did together, each and every day. Through Justin I joined the family eating

⁴⁹ Captain Nemecio Andrew is a respected elder of the Hatohobei community and is the only Palauan citizen to attain an open-tonnage master skippers license. After working abroad at sea for many years, this achievement allowed Captain Andrew the opportunity of being the only local Palauan skipper to navigate container ships through Palau's waters and into the commercial port area of Malakal. He retired in 2010. Sadly, he has recently left the physical world in July of 2016 and will be deeply missed by all of the family and community. He held a vast knowledge set of Hatohobei history and customs and has shared graciously to younger generations (including myself) over many years. Rest in Peace Papa.

off the same plate⁵⁰ and this led to ongoing Hatohobei family and community connections and respects to this day. Over time several of Justin's immediate brothers and cousin-brothers had later followed him to Guam to pursue work and education opportunities. In 1996 I joined Justin and brothers on an outrigger canoe paddling team. The camaraderie involved around our paddling practices and racing events, around barbecues and beers and stories, around our emerging life trajectories in our chosen new life opportunities in Guam, was very much guided by the knowledge and identity of these brothers and their connection to their home island of Hatohobei. We engaged in chants and songs while paddling. We barbecued and indulged in fish that we either had caught ourselves or had received from family in Palau. We engaged in humour and respects based around family and island community stories. While as an outsider to all of this knowledge, my continued interest and questions around Hatohobei language, culture and history continued to reinforce the brother's own connections, through recent memory and through stories with their visiting elders from time to time, with their home island.

At this time and during these visits, the nephew-uncle relationship between Justin and (Uncle/Papa) Nemecio continued to nurture at once. Justin's relationship with his respected elder was growing as he was now older and in a position to learn more in-depth knowledge of Tobi customs and histories from his uncle. During this period and over many barbecues and discussions I experienced (and felt) the instant linkage between history, past and present toward future. I recall actively observing

⁵⁰ Please see *Fishing for Taro on Tobi* (Black, 1981) for his analysis on the symbolism of valued food stuffs and gender relations in Tobi. I discuss this further below but choose to point out here his note of the significance of how traditional Tobian daily life is organised households and households are organised around outdoor kitchens (Black, 1981:26). This is the case in contemporary Echang and Tobi island. Where there is an operating outdoor kitchen (in either place), this is the area of social relations. Always, "eating off the same plate" relates to the social context of whom is linked to whom through the "in-charge complex" relationship respects, and therefore, the political decisions and influences that carry forward.

Justin learning stories, customs, and traditional knowledge from his uncle Nemecio. As an elder uncle figure to Justin, Papa Nemecio was in a valued, trusted, and respected position of authority and expertise. Over barbecues (an integral activity that entails the ethos and relationship meanings embodied in “eating off the same plate”) and storytelling sessions, I observed this relationship carefully, noticing how Justin showed respects through active listening, son/nephew responsibilities and deference expectations, language honorifics, and selective questioning around associated family/clan relationships. All of this exemplifies the importance of the “in-charge complex” (Black, 1982) that derives from earliest Hatohobei efforts of conflict management and community cohesion, as well as connections to the land. This is where Ingold’s “rhizome”, “meshwork” and “sphere of nurture” help us to conceptually link these dynamics and practices. I too, learned a great deal about respect relationship nuances that included active listening, spatial respects around elders, the power of silences and pauses, non-verbal communication, and overall, how nurturing these respect relationships through the “in-charge complex” structure, was a method for learning and becoming active in a much larger collective of Hatohobei (and for that matter, larger Pacific island networks). This was an empowering experience at that time, and which continues to unfold. Much of the traditional knowledge shared (i.e. fishing techniques, medicinal knowledge) from Papa Nemecio to Justin was no longer practiced in contemporary Hatohobei, of course. Yet it still served to guide and inform Justin’s groundedness in Hatohobei and his ongoing engagements with family relationships and knowledge therein. If we consider conceptually Ingold’s *relational model* and *sphere of nurture* through the ethos and practices involved in the “in-charge complex” (see Black, 1982), we can appreciate that this is the mechanism of Hatohobei knowledge transfer and support networks. This is the essence of Hatohobei, through

practice of daily relationship respects, or even with sporadic relationship between family/clan/community in the diasporic context. One knows what, how and when to engage and ask a Tobian elder a question depending on context, and also depending on context, one may receive select knowledge and guidance in return. In this way, one learns patience, reciprocity and deference. In the case of Justin and his Uncle Nemecio, Justin had come of age to the point that Nemecio could share select family and community histories as he slowly guided Justin's knowledge base into the future (and for maintenance of family histories, lineage and so forth).

Inspired by our mutual and deep affinity for the ocean, fishing and sailing, as well as our outrigger team efforts, and more importantly, ongoing stories with Nemecio, Justin and I engaged with him the idea of restoring and relocating a Tobian sailing canoe (*wara uhuh*) from Hatohobei to Guam. This involved VHF communications between Justin and his father, Isauro Andrew, in Hatohobei, asking permission for such an endeavour and then preparing the logistics involved. The canoe (one of several) had been sitting unused in his clan's canoe house and needed some repairs before it was functional again. Our idea was to use the canoe as an educational cultural tool for Guam area school kids and place it initially on display beach side, and eventually as a functional educational tool for sailing and fishing. More selfishly of course, our bigger agenda may have just been to enjoy a piece of Hatohobei in action in Guam and use it for sailing and fishing for our own pleasure. It was/is a piece of tangible Hatohobei culture and history that provided Justin (and others from the home island) a grounding of empowerment. Only over time did I come to fully appreciate the value and meaning of this traditional sailing canoe. This canoe was constructed by his grandfather and carried many stories and much family meaning with it. Justin and I secured a small grant from the University of Guam (thank you Dr Vince Diaz for all of

your guidance in this regard) to support this project and over the course of several months the canoe was transported via the Hatohobei State transport ship, the *Vincennes* (a Japanese long-line vessel converted to a supply ship) to Koror, where it was retrieved and stored at Nemecio's residence. In time, Justin and I then travelled to Koror from Guam, where we joined Nemecio's support and time for two weeks and made necessary repairs⁵¹ on the canoe to prepare for its later shipment to us in Guam. These two weeks spent with Nemecio were magical. Tohbwich whispers again in my ear, reflecting on these moments. He reminded me that the only other Hatohobei canoes to arrive in Palau prior to this event was when "burial" canoes washed up on Palauan shores in the distant past. Tohbwich recalled the impression Justin and I made upon him with our efforts to not only learn more through and from this particular canoe at a time when the canoe had been sitting unused for years, but our desire for this sea-going vessel to be shipped by boat to Koror and then again to the commercial port of Guam. Only in later years did I realise that Tohbwich was more than slightly amused back in these moments when he had clearly inspired Nemecio to tease us two young boys, saying more than a few times over the restoration process, "Why do you want to use this as an educational display piece? It is not art work to hang on a wall! It is meant for sailing and fishing in Hatohobei!", as he shook his head and sipped his coffee.

This restoration project was intensive. It involved nuanced respects at the individual, family and local Palauan political level. First off was morning coffee while

⁵¹ This was more a matter of Justin apprenticing with his uncle Nemecio. My knowledge and skills of working with Nemecio and the canoe were for too limited. In the moment I was completely aware of how rare of an opportunity this was to observe, listen and learn from an Hatohobei elder and "uncle" figure to me. Nemecio was then one of only two living Master canoe builders from Hatohobei. His knowledge and skill in this practice is extensive and at a time when no younger generations are learning to carve canoes, this was indeed a unique interface and engagement between uncle and nephew. This however, was not the carving of a canoe from tree to completion, but rather, minor repairs on a then 31-year old canoe (the canoe was first carved in 1965 and is actively used today in Saipan).

Nemecio enjoyed his first of many (Camel brand) cigarettes throughout the day⁵². We then would engage (by listening) to the first of many stories ongoing, from Palau topical politics of the day to family events and sometimes deeper stories around Tobi history, and then on into finding the necessary supplies for the restoration. I recall well when we travelled in Nemecio's power boat to the Rock islands and located a particular hardwood tree deep in the vegetation. Nemecio was seeking a particular shape (about 50cm long and 10cm diameter) of a root from this type of tree, which would be carved into a *yaach*, the point where the sail rigging is held into place at either end of the canoe. We did not have permission to be in this area collecting material resources, and although the Rock islands have been used in contemporary times for communal practices, there are families that hold ownership rights and claims to some of these islands. As we finished collecting this small piece of wood another boat with a Palauan family arrived and the following moments revealed to me once again the tensions of being of Tobian in larger Palau. Justin and I were very aware and could feel this unspoken tension. Of course, we sat silent while Nemecio (so very knowledgeable of both Hatohobei and Palauan histories and customs) spoke with this family who had inquired about our presence and activities in an area they claimed as clan land. I did not understand enough Palauan language at the time but realised well that Nemecio had paid the proper respects necessary in context. The family departed, as did we, having secured the necessary wood piece. At that time I did not realise how difficult it was to find the right piece of wood that would have in previous times, come from family property on Hatohobei island. This piece of wood (still in use today) was not from

⁵² To observe Uncle Nemecio devouring a Camel cigarette stick and sipping coffee while passionately discussing Tobi or Palau political events has been one of my more enjoyable life experiences. I have experienced this special activity on many occasions. Uncle Nemecio, Camel cigarettes, black coffee and animated, intelligent political discussions go hand in hand.

home but it was secured with respects to the Palauan land owners and only thanks to Nemecio's elder status and respectful negotiations.

Each day involved hours spent with Nemecio in his home patio and outdoor area while he explained different canoe parts and family and community stories. Nemecio pulled out various tools and material resources, from very old but completely functional coconut sennit to a carving adze passed along through generations. Us two young men sat and soaked up every moment with Nemecio. There were many questions from Justin and many nuanced responses from Nemecio. So many silences and pauses that revealed even more between these responses. Some areas were expanded upon as they related to general collective knowledge. Other areas were glossed over as they involved more intimate family knowledge or events. Some family matters discussed for Justin's benefit and some not, for my presence had its influence, as well. This type of knowledge was something I had no connection with and no context to work forward with at this time. All the while, Nemecio continued carving this particular wood piece into shape. As the methodical sound of the adze and hardwood resonated with a deeper meaning for us, so did the methodical transference of (practical and historical) knowledge from not only Nemecio to Justin, but from a deeper past that continues to transfer today. This is an example of how the Hatohobei diaspora maintains its connection to the home island (and cultural heritage), conceptually through Ingold's *relational model* and *sphere of nurture*, through family networks (Ward, 2005) and practiced through the "in-charge complex" (Black, 1982). This speaks again to Hatohobei resiliency and empowerment across the ocean and into other lands but always tied to the home island. I will never forget this rhythmic experience encapsulating and carrying us through time and space, how Nemecio spoke softly while he worked the wood. I remember him actively, presently feeling the

presence of his father, whom had shared the same knowledge transfer of wood carving a generation earlier. This would have been at a time when the German historical presence was very much alive in recent Hatohobei collective memory, the Japanese presence was recently active (400+ soldiers) on the island up through 1944, and just at the neophyte stages of American presence in larger Palau and specifically here, Hatohobei proper. A time when there was an active and robust community living on the island. Nemecio expressed how he remembered exactly the words and stories his father had shared with him while carving so long ago. I explicitly recall that he felt his father was right there looking over his shoulder while he carved and shared stories with us. These moments stuck with me in deeper meaning. I cannot imagine the depth and meaning for Justin and still continue to appreciate in new ways what this meant to him then, and even now as he may reflect on this and also share with his young children and grandchildren. The piece of wood took its shape, in the form that Nemecio's father and his father before had wanted. Nemecio's stories with Justin in particular during this event took shape as well, just in the form that the ancestors had wanted.

Justin and I will forever carry the memories from this 2-week intensive time with Nemecio and the *wara uhuh*. The experience actually provided a foundation that grew in many ways through extended family and involving many people. We returned to Guam after those two weeks and a few months later Nemecio had the canoe shipped to us in Guam (via a Japanese longliner fishing vessel). In Guam, Justin and I put the canoe on temporary display with cultural and historical information at *Jeff's Pirates Cove Bar & Restaurant* (thanks again, Jeff Pleadwell) while we eventually found funding for a new sail cloth (thank you again Oliver Seth). Many local school children and tourist school children (on holiday and exchange visits to Guam), as well as adult visitors inquired about and enjoyed the canoe while on display. Most folks had never

heard of Hatohobei, let alone appreciated the meaning within this canoe. We were able to sail the canoe several times off shore from the restaurant and soon after Justin relocated to Saipan (Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, 150km north of Guam) for a new position working with the CNMI government. Of course, he brought the *wara uhuh* (canoe) along with him (by transport ship). Today the canoe (please see below, Plate 4.2) is still in use, riding the winds, currents and swells off Saipan and providing fish for family and friends, providing ancestral sustenance as well. All the while, still carrying stories within it that contribute in creating more stories ahead. It is a focal point for family and community gatherings and provides much more than just fish from the reef. For certain, the ancestors still call out to Justin in many ways through this canoe. He carries that forward through his role as a family and clan elder in later years. Although I have not seen Justin in recent years⁵³, I have no doubt that his young boy Joshua, whom I helped care for as a new-born, has not only listened to stories from Uncle Nemecio through his many visits to Saipan over the years, but also from among other uncles and parents. I imagine with confidence, that now 20 years of age, in recent times his father Justin has sat with him in the canoe house in Saipan, with the *wara uhuh*, and discussed and performed repairs on the canoe, carried along by the same rhythmic melody of the adze shaping the canoe. Ancestral voices still call out forward with great clarity. With the *wara uhuh* in this brief story shared around the diasporic context of the Hatohobei Landscape, please consider again, the *relational model*, *sphere of nurture*, and the nurturing of respect relationships in the Hatohobei context (through the “in-charge complex”). The *wara uhuh* continues its seafaring

⁵³ Justin and I keep in touch via Facebook. I hope to share bbq and stories with him sooner, rather than later. Hapar mahatawai sewa mare (Thank you with the highest respects).

travels and is physically far from sailing for tuna off the reef in Hatohobei, yet simultaneously, it is *returning* home and it is *always* home.



Plate 4.2 Justin Haringesei Andrew, Launching the *Wara Uhuh* in Saipan (J.Andrew, 2005)

While Justin has not returned to Hatohobei since his youth, this brief story attempts to illuminate how he lives and connects with Hatohobei each day and how this is maintained and transferred forward through his relationship respects to/with family that reside in Saipan, Guam, the U.S., Japan, Palau and Hatohobei. While he followed his grandfather’s advice to leave for Western education this allowed him to continue his contributions with family and community in more physically distant ways. Justin and family are in contact over family events and this includes visits to/from Palau. His connection to Hatohobei is through the family and the vehicle of the “in-charge complex”, through local food stuffs, storytelling, and of course, through his own leadership role as an uncle, father, brother, nephew and cousin to many. Justin and I

continue to maintain correspondence and although we have both made regular visits back and forth to family/community in Echang (and for me, Hatohobei itself), we have not shared the same time and space together while in Palau since that time with Nemecio in 1996. Nonetheless, when we next see each other, through our mutual relationship respects around the “in-charge complex” over time, we are both in tune with family and collective Hatohobei events. Our respects are mutual and our next moments in person together will be full of missed stories, but also as if we had just seen each other the day prior. Why is this? It is yet another example of shared degrees of the same “sphere of nurture”. In this case, Hatohobei. For it was Justin Harengesei Andrew that kindly invited me to the centre of the Universe and if not for his generosity in this way, I would have missed out on so much along the way. In our case indeed, we have many overlapping degrees around this “sphere of nurture”, too many to not continue growing forward together and creating new stories for the younger generations of Hatohobei to learn from and share in their own ways.

4.9 Riding Camels with Nixon

In the 1996 canoe restoration visit to Palau Justin and I spent most of our time with Nemecio and the *wara uhuh*. One can appreciate that our canoe restoration efforts had spread through the whispering gossip channel (of course engaged through families and the “in-charge complex” system) in larger Echang and even then, I recall thinking about the amusement people would have about us attempting to take a canoe out of Hatohobei and into Guam. Again, as I recall Uncle Nemecio’s words in jest at the time, “It’s not an art display! It’s for fishing in Hatohobei!”. On one evening prior to our departure we went to a Palauan cha-cha club⁵⁴ near T-dock area. Although I

⁵⁴ There are several “cha-cha” clubs in Palau. These are places where both young and old generations enjoy live Palauan music and dance. This always involves a Palauan singer supported by someone

considered myself a “professional” Palauan cha-cha master at an early age in Guam (there are several Palauan cha-cha clubs in Guam and these are sites of Palauan unity and identity reinforcement in that context), this was my first time to “cha-cha” in larger Palau. Unforgettable, indeed, as that occasion continues to shape my life forward within the Hatohobei collective. Palauan cha-cha clubs always provide a vibrant experience. They can also sometimes lead to violence through village and clan tensions that become heightened through a lens of inebriation, not to mention individual transgressions between generations or gender. Especially at this time period (Palau had only recently established its political independence in October of 1994), a cha-cha club was most definitely a dominantly Palauan space. Rarely would Hatohobei folks venture out of Echang into the cha-cha clubs and if they did it would be in a group of family relations. Well, after a day with Uncle Nemecio working on the canoe restoration, Justin and I joined up with his cousin-brother Nixon Andrew and his wife Grace (Patris), as well as several other extended family members. I recall enjoying a long evening and morning of “exercising our feet” as we would often say, and to this day strongly assert that I impressed some then new to me family members with my cha-cha skills (so well researched and developed in Guam). Unbeknownst to me at one point in the early morning hours, out of breath and in-between dances, some aggressive conflict was erupting into violence at a nearby table. As I turned my head around in curiosity of the eruption, a half-empty beer bottled came whizzing by my head before smashing against a nearby wall. This was collateral fragmentation of violent aggression that had nothing to do with me or our group and table. However, out of concern for me and our table, Nixon was on his feet and carrying two young Palauans

playing a keyboard synthesiser. Cha-cha that has been tweaked Palauan style is the dominant dance style and this too, is a storytelling practice in and of itself.

out of the club doors and maintaining calm and resolve within seconds. One must understand three things in this instance. Firstly, at this time period (mid-1990's) there was rarely an outsider like me enjoying the cha-cha night club space into the wee hours of the next morning and certainly not within Nixon Andrew's protection; two) Nixon engages life strictly in honour toward respect relations and of course, this comes through the "in-charge complex" in the Hatohobei context; and three) nobody ever fucks with Nixon Andrew, period. As I share a bit more below about Nixon's character and style, we will see that he lives his life by Hatohobei customs and respects and this is all learned and engaged through the "in-charge complex" (Black, 1982). He follows the knowledge of custom and traditions as demonstrated and shared through his family and clan elders and nurtures all associated respect relationships accordingly. Nixon maintains a strong conviction toward these relationships across the Hatohobei Landscape and in my observations over the years, continually nurtures such relationships (and associated knowledge transfer, moral guidance) toward the betterment of the Hatohobei collective. He also suffers no fools.

So as we walked out of the club together our small group joined together on the T-dock waterway and watched a sliver of moon slowly drop while sharing catch-up stories between Hatohobei family and events in Echang, Hatohobei and Guam. I remember vividly Nixon asking me at one point if I wanted to "ride the camels with him" and of course I agreed, albeit hesitantly but eagerly establishing loyalty to my new and charming acquaintance. What indeed, did this entail? Riding camels in Palau seemed a sublime idea at this particular juncture of inebriation and falling moon slivers. Little did I know that Nixon's latest localised terminology for marijuana cigarettes at the time related to the Camel brand tobacco found in the local stores. Sure enough, he

pulled out a full pack of fat Palauan style marijuana sticks from the island of Peleliu⁵⁵ and the two of us enjoyed “camel riding” while we all engaged in ongoing stories. At this time, Nixon’s English language skills were not that great, nor were my Hatohobei language skills, but that night of cha-cha and the early morning camel ride provided us with all sorts of mutual understandings, curiosities and respects. At one point Nixon turned to me and said, “David, now we are *promised-brothers, you and me will follow respects as brothers. You are part of us (he meant family) now*”. I agreed naturally and as the sun started to wake and throw us soft light beams from the horizon, our group parted ways and I realised I had new obligations and commitments to embrace and enjoy. This again represents an example of the flexibility of Hatohobei culture to take on outsiders and is a model of the “in-charge complex” in practice. Nixon was inviting me to come spend more time with family and community in Echang and Hatohobei and this was the only way for me to fit in, as a promised-brother to him. His cousin-brother Justin in Guam had invited me to “eat off the same plate” years earlier. Now that “same plate” extended further into the Andrew family, clan and Hatohobei culture and history. This invitation would allow Nixon to fit me into family and community events and so forth. However much I chose to nurture this respect relationship, which involved relations across the community, would determine how much I learned and grew with the Hatohobei collective. Well, clearly, I continue to learn and grow from this relationship as a result. Riding camels with Nixon has turned out quite well indeed. Our relationship is not unlike the *promised brother/sister* relationship Nixon’s mother enjoys with Dr. Peter Black, which was established between them and family in the late 1960s when Peter did his Peace Corp volunteer experience and following PhD degree

⁵⁵ Peleliu, the island also known through outside histories as the place of intense battle between the Americans and Japanese in WWTwo, is today renowned for its local marijuana production.

and ethnographic research on Hatohobei. In fact, this would have been the model that Nixon used and continues to use for our own relationship, as it fits within Hatohobei traditions (through the “in-charge complex”).

And so began many ongoing visits and lengths of stay with Nixon and Grace and family over the years. While I nurtured (and reciprocally, received) Andrew family respects in Guam, this grew into nurturing Andrew family and community respects in regular visits to Echang and Hatohobei. This has all been grounded within the relationship with Nixon and Grace and the relations that emanate from them (past and forward).

Nixon is useful for our discussion here in that he exemplifies the maintenance of Hatohobei traditions through family respects and the “in-charge complex”. The singular and consistent advice for me from Nixon has always been, “We have to always pay respects”. And what he means by that is always respecting our “in-charge” relationships. By doing so, everything else falls into place going forward. While Nixon left the home island in the late 1980’s he has continued to engage in all matters Hatohobei, albeit from the Echang setting. While many traditions are no longer practiced as there is no longer an active living community on the island, what is actively maintained at all times is the family relationship respects and this comes through language honorifics, production and sharing of food stuffs from the home island and Palau, as well as family histories, all based on the “in-charge complex” consciousness. While Nixon has only visited Hatohobei once since leaving (on a visit we made together in 2007, which is discussed briefly below and in the next chapter) the island, at a young age he shows a constant check and balance for the moral guidance of the community, which he continually bases upon the knowledge passed along to him from his parents, uncles and aunties. All of his actions (and non-actions) are grounded

in and leveraged through his knowledge of family histories, with Hatohobei as his “sphere of nurture”. As he grows older, this helps guide and inform and empower his actions and leadership role within the community as it engages events, planning, hopes and decisions into the uncertain future around the home island.

4.10 Jamos, Caretaker and (unknown) Secret Agent

So we have shared brief stories about a cousin-brother (Justin) that has settled in Saipan and another cousin-brother (Nixon) that has settled in Echang. Jamos is a younger brother to Justin, was born on and has spent most of his time living in Hatohobei. We have shared food and stories on many occasions and I enjoyed my most recent visit with him on the island in late 2013. This particular occasion only allowed for a visit of a few hours on the island while our group had finished a project in Helen Reef (discussed in the following chapter) and then dropped off supplies to Hatohobei and continued back to Palau. I introduce Jamos in brief here to highlight the one Hatohobei man actively living on the island at that time (December, 2013). Also living on the island was his Palauan partner/wife, an extended family member from Merir island, and Hatohobei State Lieutenant Governor Jackie Victor. Over the years I have often asked Jamos about living and working in Palau and he has always been adamant about staying in Hatohobei. He has told me on so many occasions on his visits to Palau that he would rather be in Hatohobei. And so he enjoys the fresh fish every day, the taro patch (discussed in more detail in the following section) and the knowledge of living with the environment of the home island. On this recent and brief visit he passed along to me a bottle of his latest batch of “*hachy*” (coconut wine), *wot* (taro) and *buroh* (giant taro) *yaf* (coconut crab) and smoked fish, which I carried back to Palau for Nixon, Grace and other extended family to enjoy. Of course, through the “in-charge

complex” relationship respects, Jamos intended this for myself and larger family in Echang and he knew this expectation of this food sharing and the empowerment he and we all receive through this sharing. In this transfer of food stuffs, was the transfer of Hatohobei soil and nutrients, Hatohobei history and spirit, Hatohobei knowledge (through fishing and taro cultivation techniques), Hatohobei blood and sweat. For a person of Hatohobei, what food could possibly taste any better? When these food stuffs travelled with me back to Echang and as we family enjoyed the tastes and smells, at once, we were feeling the embodiment of Hatohobei. Enjoying and ingesting these food stuffs, we laughed, danced, sang songs, and shared stories that carried us forward.

Jamos and Lt. Governor Jackie Victor both maintain radio contact with the Hatohobei State Government office every day (9am and 3pm) and their regular presence on the island both maintains the living connection with the island (including food production for family in Echang and beyond Palau), while also preventing outsiders from leveraging a presence there. Indonesia continues to claim (see Prescott and Schofield, 2005; the *Palau Executive Summary, Submission of the Limits of the Continental Shelf, Pursuant to Article 76 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea*, 2009; Black, 1990) both Hatohobei and Helen Reef within its territorial boundary, as does the Republic of Palau. All parties agree that Hatohobei is a part of the Palau republic but this point of contention is still ambiguous and without resolve since 1994⁵⁶. The active living presence of the Hatohobei community on Tobi island and

⁵⁶ Please see Appendix A: *Status of the ROP Maritime Boundaries Delimitation and Provisions for an Extended Continental Shelf (A Briefing Paper for the Transition Committee)*, January 11, 2013. Also see Appendix B: *The 2nd Technical Meetings on Maritime Boundaries Delimitation Between the Republic of Palau and the Republic of Indonesia, 29 November – 1 December, 2010, Koror, Palau*. Note in this document Agenda item #18. Also see Appendix C: *The 2nd Round of Palau – Indonesia Maritime Boundary Technical Consultation, 17 February 2011, Koror, Palau*. Note in this document discussion point #4. I make further reference to this situation and these documents again in Chapter Six. Kind thanks to Victorio Uherbelau, Vice Chair, CS Task Force and Leader, Palau Delegation on Maritime Boundary Delimitation for generously providing these documents and sharing a more detailed explanation of these discussions in person (personal communication, October, 2013).

Helen Reef has significance in any Indonesian contention to these territorial waters. I half-joked with Jamos on this visit that he and Jackie are the sole Palau/Hatohobei “soldiers” protecting the island from the Indonesian army. The U.S. military spends trillions of dollars on its geopolitical interests and I suggested that Jamos may want to reconsider his role and budgetary needs in helping to protect the U.S. alliance with the ROP and its geopolitical strategies in the region, considering the U.S. government has maintained that relationship since 1950 out of fear of the Indonesian presence. I joked further that perhaps we can consider Jamos a secret agent for the U.S. military in this way. Humour aside, the point here is Jamos (and Jackie) in this case physically represent the Hatohobei collective presence and ownership over Hatohobei, Helen Reef and territorial boundaries, as well as the ROP territorial boundaries and Exclusive Economic Zone. Jamos’ (and Jackie’s) presence at this time (2013) represents the sole physical human presence on the island within a wide raging diasporic context that holds and maintains Hatohobei island as its *sphere of nurture*.

4.11 Mama Sisma and Mama Regina Returning Home from “Exile”

In 2007 on a visit to Palau I joined the Andrew family (and a few others) on an extended visit to Hatohobei for a land monumentation project⁵⁷. This was a unique opportunity in the sense that rather than a typical round-trip visit to drop off supplies to the island, this was a longer-term visit that involved several Hatohobei elders⁵⁸ that normally would not have had the time away from work and family in Echang. The

⁵⁷ An ongoing (2007) ROP *Bureau of Land and Survey* land monumentation project required all Palauan states, villages and families to survey and monument their land by a certain date. Some of the Andrew family had not yet done this so our trip involved a one-month (1 April – 1 May) visit to Hatohobei and an intensive land survey with family and *Bureau of Land and Survey* surveyors.

⁵⁸ On this visit were the following respected elders; Rosa Andrew, the late Lorenzo Simion, the late Domiciano Andrew, Regina Andrew and Sisma Andrew. Living on the island at the time in different households were Isauro Andrew and Katrdys Andrew.

focus of the visit was for the land survey and monumentation but there was much more meaningful value in this visit with these⁵⁹ elders and several younger generations that knew this was a rare opportunity and confluence of history (and traditional knowledge) on the island at one time. With this concentration of elders on the island there was an immense amount of human activity that was engaged with storytelling rich in Hatohobei history and knowledge. Both of my close cousin-brothers, Nixon Andrew and Wayne Andrew (the latter is discussed in more detail in the following chapter) joined on this trip and I personally, spent the entire journey and visit listening, observing, helping with the land survey, and learning.

For our purposes here I wish to reflect only on two points of interest that occurred during this time; the return home of two sisters, Regina and Sisma Andrew, and the significance of the (*bor*) taro patch. I will never forget our arrival to the island on 1 April, 2007.

⁵⁹ Because it was such a rare time for these elders and this large of a group to visit the island for a somewhat extended time, Wayne Andrew, Nixon Andrew and myself borrowed a Sony Hi-Fi digital video camera and used it to record 6 hours of video footage of the island and our activities. We later edited this footage into a one-hour family film that we titled, *Hatohobei State of Mind*. This was our successful amateur film making attempt to capture the sights, sounds and (almost!) smells of the home island and to share this with everyone back in Echang, many of which had not visited the island in years.



Plate 4.3 Sisma and Regina Andrew, Sisters Returning Home (D.Tibbetts, April 2007)

It was Easter Sunday and those few living on the island, along with all that had arrived from Palau, prepared to feast for the occasion. This involved of course, all the various local food stuffs from Hatohobei (including that of Helen Reef, as well, because several of us younger generations had just made a 2-day overnight visit there and were returning with *wor* (turtle) and bird eggs). It was memorable because we all knew that it was a rare moment for this number of elders to be together again for an extended period of time. I remember the deep sense of emotion and meaning for Sisma, whom had not visited Hatohobei in 19 years and Regina, whom had not visited in 5 years. They were physically together at home, the physical space that (through genealogy, traditions, food stuffs, storytelling) informs all of their life and decisions the entire time that they have been away. As we sat and shared food together, among many other stories, I recall how they both reflected together on how special it was to physically work the taro patch again and then share the taro (along with other food stuffs) together. Food in the belly. Hatohobei food in the belly. Tobians have always

explained to me how *wot* (Taro) (*Colocasia esculenta*) and *buroh* (Giant Taro) (*Cyrtosperma chammisonis*) from the Hatohobei (*bor*) taro patch (see Plate 4.4) are more delicious than any they have tasted from any other islands (including nearby Sonsorol, with a more shallow fresh water lens resulting in a salty taste and scratchy texture on the throat, as well as taro from Palau). With this particular occasion though, this took on more meaning coming from two sisters (highly respected and valued elders to me and others) that grew up on Hatohobei and learned to work the taro patch from a young age, and obviously, now enjoying together years later after quite some time away. This had more meaning in the sense that they left Hatohobei (like many others) to raise family in Echang where they could take employment, enjoy closer access to health care services, and allow for their children to access elementary and higher education. These are mothers that took on the best interests of their children and futures by relocating to larger Palau. In a sense, theirs (and others) was a self-imposed “exile” scenario forced out of pragmatism facing the realities of outside opportunities and influences. Of course, they have always maintained their connection to Hatohobei from the Echang space, but they are of the generation that grew up with an active and larger population on the island and chose to leave for necessary reasons. This again speaks to that fine line between the physical disconnect and the imagined connection to their *sphere of nurture*.

I sat and listened carefully to their memories of events and knowledge about the taro patch and various taro food recipes. I consider here Black’s (1981) analysis of the division of labour around food stuffs in Hatohobei (women nurture and cultivate the taro patch and fish the reef flat, the men fish the reef flat and over the reef) and how select food stuffs are symbolically valued around these roles and have meaning in their exchange relations. Where women are expected to provide vegetable type foods

(*munga*), men are expected to provide protein/meat type foods (*fitigu*). Central to the ethos and daily relations (then and now) is this balance in food production, exchange and sharing. Black discusses how Tobians focus on eating one “real meal” each evening, where people share food together and that “people who are unable to achieve ‘real meals’ on a regular basis run the risk of becoming ill and dying” (Black, 1981:28). This male – female relationship around food is significant to Hatohobei custom and implicit in daily life, whether in Palau, Hatohobei, Helen Reef, or elsewhere within the Tobian diaspora.

I point us back to the stories and memories of Sisma and Regina on Easter Sunday and their reflections on the taro patch. It is clearly this site that is solely the sphere and empowerment of the Hatohobei woman/mother/aunty/sister in Hatohobei society and this is why such meaningful value is placed on the taste and sustenance (and strength) received from the taro from Hatohobei when it arrives in Echang, larger Palau, Guam, Hawaii and beyond. It was within these moments that I realised the excitement shared when receiving, sharing and tasting *wot* and *buroh* (whether in Hatohobei or other communities with Tobian family and friends). I also suggest that this takes on even further depth of meaning when we consider the taro patch is a physical feature constructed by early Tobians around 600ypb (see Hunter-Anderson, 2000) and that supported 980 people in 1909 (please see Plate 2.2, p. 33). In my opinion, considering the land mass of Hatohobei, this is an enormous physical accomplishment and engineering feat of human adaptation toward sustainability. Despite the community’s diasporic and physical disconnect from the island, and despite the reduced human activity on the island, the taro patch continues to ground (certainly, pun intended) the Hatohobei imaginary and sphere of nurture.



Plate 4.4 *Bor* (Taro Patch). Please contrast with 1909 photograph, Plate 2.2, Chapter Two (D.Tibbetts, April, 2007).



Plate 4.5 *Buroh* (Giant Taro) (D.Tibbetts, April, 2007)



Plate 4.6 Harvesting Giant Taro (D.Tibbetts, April, 2007)



Plate 4.7 *Wot and buroh* (Photograph: D.Tibbetts, April, 2007)



Plate 4.8 Three Sisters Preparing the Taro for *Uhm* (Underground fire pit) (D.Tibbetts, April, 2007)



Plate 4.9 Setting the *Uhm* (D.Tibbetts, April, 2007)

At one broad theoretical level we have critically examined the nature:human disconnect found within Western epistemology and alternative conceptualisations of the nature:human relationship, as well as our relationships with each other. In more

grounded ways I have discussed several examples that highlight the historical intimacy between the Tobians and their environment, the associated knowledge and practice, and the idea of the range of experiences with ongoing physical connections and disconnections from the island, as well as a range of ongoing spiritual and imagined connections. The following chapters reveal how this physical disconnect:imaginary connection relates to future directions for the community. Chapter Five takes us on an historical journey into early Tobian interfaces with outsiders and then segues to the contemporary setting and follows another cousin-brother, Wayne Andrew, and the community development of two local non-government organisations. These further stories show how from this diasporic Hatohobei Landscape context, customary principles continue to guide contemporary events and developments, as well as how notions of traditions are politicised with certain methods for certain contexts.

Chapter 5 From Taro Patch to Reef, From Hatohobei to Silicon Valley: Navigating the *Suryiot* through Unexpected Pathways and Community Agency

5.1 Introduction

Tohbwich and Medichiibelau were no longer whispering. Rambunctious storytelling was all I could hear from them now. Earlier they requested and helped us carry on a discussion about our relationship with nature, and now it has them ravenous for more stories. Of course, Ingold's broader theorizing of our relationship with nature and each other, the history of the taro patch on Hatohobei and a few contextual stories around three cousin-brothers and two sister elders naturally evolved into the significance of the Tobian connections to land food stuffs and storytelling through "in-charge complex" relationships. The reality that this connection is maintained so well even in physical distance is significantly empowering and speaks to Hatohobei resilience and community agency. This is especially salient considering the aforementioned dynamics of a minority group from a disconnected and remote home island that continues to negotiate and navigate successfully through the turbulent and consistent hegemonies of broader neo-liberal and capitalistic driven global society, as well as larger Palauan societal dominance.

Discussing the importance of the "in-charge complex", the sharing of food stuffs, and the taro patch in the previous chapter was ever important to Tohbwich as he is always lamenting the loss of traditional knowledge and practice with younger generations, since the community began leaving the home island for Palau and increasingly, beyond Palau. Concerned for maintaining scholarly balance for our purposes here, I remind Tohbwich and Medichiibelau that we must discuss further concepts and theories to make sense out of the contemporary Hatohobei landscape. As

I now begin to turn our gaze toward another area of related discussion, I am finding Tohbwich is getting rather cantankerous and I worry for the mischief to follow at some point along the way. Yet I have learned well from my legendary friends that their mischief always invokes deeper meaning in time. We can understand how the stories around Hatohobei food stuffs and family relationships have Tohbwich completely absorbed in memories, and he is demanding for more. His belly is grumbling and he is in a “devouring” state, if you will. I am familiar with this physiological and emotional reaction with Tobian food stuffs. The same happy devouring feeling happens any time the topic of local *wor* (turtle), *wot* (taro), *buroh* (giant taro) or *yaf* (coconut crab) comes up in the presence of any Tobian, near or far⁶⁰. Tohbwich is elated for everyone to understand the deep meaning involved with the delicious food stuffs of Hatohobei and how these are so very important today, and he insists on more of these stories.

Our Palauan trickster friend Medichiibelau too, of course, desired further stories from the Tobian oral historical record. Having Tohbwich as his new ghostly and jokester character partner, he was now privileged to hearing all sorts of fine details and significance about these stories. Oh, it was sometimes similar and sometimes far different from his Palauan history and customs. He expressed his regret that he neglected to meet up with Tohbwich in the cosmological sphere much earlier. I offer Tohbwich and Medichiibelau some betel nut as I know this will curb their hunger and set them into a contemplative state of mind for the time being. Betel nut (see Plate 5.1

⁶⁰ In the past 24 months I have noticed increased activity on Facebook with families in Echang sharing images (almost real-time in some cases) of local foodstuffs and the reactions to this imagery by Tobians abroad in distant places (away from Echang/Hatohobei) relates directly with the nostalgia for home and family. These images continue to fill that gap in the Hatohobei physical disconnect and imaginary connection and I am curious to research this interface further at some point.

below), as always, is the great remedy toward both hunger and thoughtful and sensible decision making.



Plate 5.1 A *tet* (purse) with *buuch* (betel nut) in Hatohobei, 2007 (D.Tibbetts, April, 2007)

I also assure them that our next effort here is to show, among other things, how certain traditions are valued and maintained in the contemporary Hatohobei setting, where increasingly, many outsiders and outside models are resources too. I again remind them that we can enjoy many more of these treasured stories and customs with others in time and that we will share a few through relevant examples below, but we must also put this discussion in further theoretical and conceptual perspective for a better understanding of contemporary Hatohobei. I suggest that we must examine further the varied ways in which Tobians have engaged with outsiders, and what this means regarding tradition and agency.

Into a good betel chew and a more calm state of mind, Tohbwich's ghostly ears perked up on this point. He spoke in a respectful whisper again. He was making a

strong assertion to me, saying, “*Outsiders? You are going to discuss stories of outsiders? Make sure that you explain that the ancestors of Hathobei have been dancing with outsiders since their earliest visits and also through canoe voyages to other islands. We are always looking to outside visitors in ways that are based around reciprocal relationships. We all grow this way. Our approach with outsiders is a pragmatic tool that allows our small island resources to grow through endless pathways. “Does your friend Ingold like that?”*”, as he giggled quietly and spit out a long stream of betel juice.

So, in brief for this chapter, let us first consider varied notions around concepts of cultural heritage, tradition and agency. And then if we can quickly recall the impressive historical community construction of the Hathobei taro patch mentioned in both Chapters Two and Four, we will then examine how the Tobians are successfully nurturing and utilising another Hathobei natural resource, Helen Reef (*Hotsarihie*), and how this engagement over time has evolved in to further vehicles of empowerment in the ongoing reconnections with the home island. So, while we may lament the limited use of the taro patch today (literally, of course, and figuratively, as a loss of traditional knowledge and practice), perhaps in yet another paradoxical contrast, we will continue to celebrate all that Helen Reef provides in empowerment for the community today and for future generations. As per Tohwich’s good point above, in this examination of ongoing contemporary reconnections, we will indeed provide an historical reminder of Tobian engagements with outsiders.

5.2 Notions of Cultural Heritage, Tradition and Agency

Conceptually speaking, the concept of cultural heritage has no value to historical or contemporary Tobian culture and society as lived through Hathobei lives

unfolding. However, if we are going to consider the ongoing reconnections with the home island, perhaps an abstract critical discussion of this concept will be helpful in our conceptual understanding of what these reconnections mean for future Hatohobei.

If we can recall our earlier discussion around binary oppositional thinking and reductionist logic, as well as Ingold's theory on the human:nature interconnection and the ongoing engagement of nurturing (or not) various pathways as a continual and processual unfolding, our analysis of this concept begins.

Cultural heritage involves tangible and intangible attributes of a group or culture. In one way we can understand cultural heritage as a process of historical practices that maintain and inform cultural identity and human and non-human agency. The Tobian term that most closely approximates this notion is *moumou* ("custom" or "tradition"). It is not something that is fixed and given, but rather, it is actively produced in the face of change (Henry and Jefferey, 2008). The paradox of 'heritage' is that we want to hold on to something that is always changing. As Henry and Jeffery state, "...cultural practices, objects, places, land and seascapes become valued as heritage in the face of their potential loss" (Henry and Jeffery, 2008:15). Cultural heritage embraces the 'roots' of a collective, the traditional values and principles that guide and inform a collective. While a collective group continually endeavours to preserve or hold on to select traditions, monuments, or practices, in the process of doing so, their heritage is constantly in the present and evolving toward the future. I wish to emphasize that as an abstraction this holds true, however, in living reality we are at once always engaged in our "processual flow", of life unfolding. In this discussion we will see that "cultural heritage" can facilitate and empower a group, or individuals within that group, to understand and maintain their connection with the past, so that they can understand and maintain their path toward the future. Relating with Ingold's

perspective, Henry and Jeffery (2008) describe this conceptually as something that is always in the process of 'becoming', "where cultural heritage values, while referring to the past, are actually present and future oriented" (2008:16). For the people of Hatohobei, it is *moumou* (custom) that refers to the past and guides future directions.

Broadly speaking, a group's cultural heritage is subject to a multitude of diverse threats that range from climate, pollution and natural disasters to economic pressure, development projects and uncontrolled tourism (Hassler, 2006). Abstractly speaking, for this reason, cultural heritage is a key component of human (and ancestral) and non-human agency, which in practical turn, can make cultural heritage very much a political tool in the prevention and/or mitigation and adaptation to various pressures. Indeed, Henry and Jeffrey suggest that cultural heritage is a valuable political tool in coping with change (2008:16). Coping with change involves natural disasters, as well as historical and contemporary hegemonic and societal dynamics. For example, in coping with climate change events in northern Australia, Green (2009) suggests that although indigenous peoples of northern Australia historically have successfully adapted to environmental change for thousands of years, present day social inequalities have reduced their resilience to climate change events (2009: 218). Cultural heritage, agency and empowerment are all intertwined. For many indigenous peoples, this process includes the entanglement with historical colonial dynamics, as well as neo-colonial dynamics of contemporary globalisation.

As a tool in coping with change then, explicit and implicit notions of tradition, as components of cultural heritage, are engaged. Traditions are fluid and often selectively remembered and are used to connect the past with the present (and future). Further, it is the leaders of a group, holding a more robust knowledge of their cultural heritage, that are empowered as agents of change throughout this process. More

publicly and politically, explicit traditions can be invoked and manipulated to engage political agendas for the betterment of the community (or otherwise). Traditions become politicised by leaders and groups for different reasons at different times, and for different situations. Understanding the selective assembly and use of “cultural heritage” by a group requires further analysis of how and why traditions are selected in certain situations (i.e. recent climate change events in Tobi).

This requires a brief consideration of notions of tradition and the “politics of tradition”. There is extensive material and debate on the politics of tradition and notions of change and continuity and authenticity. All of these debates relate to a framing around the dichotomous oppositional binary of “tradition” versus “modernity”, or “genuine” versus “spurious” tradition, and “authentic” versus “inauthentic” tradition, and what this means with regards to culture and politics in given settings. Having reviewed several salient works and debates (see Turner (1997); Handler and Linnekin (1984); Hanson (1989 and 1991); Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983); Howsawm (1983); Jolly and Thomas (1992); Keesing (1989, 1991); Trask (1991); Linnekin (1991); Sahlins (1999), Clifford (2001), Diaz (2001) and Otto and Pederson (2005), I focus on two articles, differing in approach, that provide insightful analyses and perspectives that best deconstruct the conceptual oppositional binary and rigid framing of tradition and authenticity in practice, and focus more on the fluidity of tradition and the significance of human agency in this process.

Clifford’s *Indigenous Articulations* (2001) and Otto and Pederson’s *Disentangling Traditions: Culture, Agency and Power* (2005) treatment of culture, tradition and agency, provide a more clear understanding of implicit and explicit traditions and cultural heritage as a political tool that informs agency and identity. These works are useful for the later analyses of Tobian implicit and explicit traditions,

especially the explicit traditions that may arise in the engagement through climate change events and their adaptations to these events.

James Clifford's, *Indigenous articulations* (2001) discusses indigenous notions of home through ties to land (and genealogy) and by knowing and feeling their secure connection to home, their "roots", how indigenous peoples are very comfortable with a wider mobility, "their routes". Wary of binary oppositions, he reminds us to appreciate that there is not a sharp dividing line between concepts such as "edge and center", "indigenous and diasporic", or "before-after progression from village life to cosmopolitan modernity (p. 470). Rather, at once, "native islanders" or "indigenous" peoples are actively maintaining their cultural heritage, their identity (and are empowered through this), through engaging with varied historical and contemporary influences and systems from their home spaces, as well as while living and operating away (spiritually, philosophically, ideologically politically) from their home islands and communities. Relating this with historical and contemporary physical (and otherwise) indigenous Pacific movements, ('grounded mobility', my choice of words here), Clifford frames this as "articulated sites of indigeneity" (2001: 472). There is a dynamic sense of security in their adaptability, flexibility, and mobility that connects with their home space (and cultural heritage). The Tobian efforts toward climate change adaptation will help us to understand in more complex detail the significance of cultural heritage, tradition and human agency in the context of the dramatic loss of an island home and what this means with regards to "grounded mobility", security of one's collective (and individual) "roots", and how Tobian cultural heritage empowers the community and informs future "routes".

Indeed, indigenous Pacific peoples have negotiated and incorporated outside paradigms and actors since the origins of their founding populations, while

simultaneously maintaining their cultural values and identities. Sahlins describes this as “indigenization of modernity” (1999:x), while Diaz terms it, “native productions of indigeneity” (Diaz, 2001b:315).

Clifford’s “articulation theory” conceptually relates this with both selected speech (and meaning) as a discourse, and that “tradition is a collective ‘voice’...always in a constructed, contingent sense”, and also “refers to concrete connections, joints” (p.478). Conceptually, then, tradition is *selectively* (italics mine) articulated in varied ways, for varied reasons, in varied situations, and this is an empowering process. He suggests that this articulation perspective offers a nonreductive way to think about cultural transformation...where it is more a matter of processing the new through dynamic traditional structures (p. 478). Here then, notions of authenticity are less of a concern, but rather the *process* (italics mine) of articulating cultural heritage and how it has informed history (and contemporary society), and therefore, human agency, is primary.

The processes and events around globalisation are becoming increasingly more ambiguous. Clifford poses that the current hegemony – call it neo-colonialism, post-modernity, globalization, or neo-liberalism -- is significantly open-ended (Clifford, 2001:473). He further suggests that, “Very old cultural dispositions...are being actively remade. Pacific decolonization struggles, thus, have their own temporalities and traditions. And neo-colonialism (or contemporary globalisation) comes to the Pacific when sovereignty is an increasingly compromised reality, we see the emergence of different forms of national identity, new sorts of negotiations among the local, the regional, the national, and the global” (Clifford, 2001:475). Clifford posits, “Communities can and must reconfigure themselves, drawing selectively on remembered pasts. The relevant question is whether and how they convince and coerce

insiders and outsiders, often in power-charged, unequal situations, to accept the autonomy of ‘we’” (Clifford, 2001:479). This is precisely the area we explore and analyse below in the context of Tobian cultural heritage.

Otto and Pedersen’s, *Disentangling traditions* (2005) provides a thorough analysis of the debates around the conceptual dichotomies of tradition, authenticity and the politics of tradition. They engage the theoretical background to these debates and why it is important to tease out, or “disentangle” some of the conceptual knots for a clearer understanding of the cultural process (p.12). Their analysis of Hobsbawm and Ranger’s (1983) “The Invention of Tradition”, as well as the “invention of tradition” debate in the Pacific (Keesing, 1989; Sahlins, 1999; Trask, 1991), approach the structural critique of tradition. The analysis traces the debates, and highlights how the dialectic progressed to Tonkinson’s (2000) argument for the conceptualisation of tradition as a resource. Otto and Pedersen (2005) then suggest that this perspective emphasises the agency of humans as actors in relation to the cultural process (p. 18). Otto had previously examined this in the context of local leadership and the uses of tradition at the local-level (see Otto, 1992a, 1992b).

In understanding notions of tradition and what this means to human agency, Otto and Pedersen (2005) carry the discussion further through an exploration of Berger and Luckman’s (1967) conceptual framework of habitualisation, institutionalisation and legitimation (2005:26). We develop our habits through repetition, we then engage, or reciprocate them through our understanding of our role with others and within society, and as we internalise this process our actions continue to be habitualised. This dialectic leads to legitimation, where we want to ensure our continued validity in the social world (p. 27). This, Otto and Pedersen (2005) suggest, is “tradition”.

Carrying this forward, Otto and Pedersen (2005) suggest that with the continuing process of institutionalisation, as new situations and unsolved challenges arise, discrepancies between established customs lead to miscommunications and then to new processes of finding acceptable patterns of interaction (p. 32). This is where we find “human agency” in process. They suggest further that the enactment of traditions involves more explicit actions (agency) than the norm of reproducing cultural or customary patterns or expectations, and that these more explicit enactments of tradition are very useful political and economic resources. This is a brief summation of their analysis but their discussion and conclusions help facilitate the more in-depth analysis of explicit traditions and “agency” in this endeavour.

Here we can see, that notions of tradition, both implicit and explicit, are part and parcel of cultural heritage, and this in turn, through the agency involved in engaging new challenges, very much informs ongoing political agendas. We can see even more clearly now, the linkage between cultural heritage, identity and agency. Let us now consider these concepts and arguments through some historical and contemporary stories from Hatohobei.

Tohbwich was getting quite bored with our abstract discussion around cultural heritage and the politics of tradition. He explained to me that this was pointless talk, and that the fact of the matter was that our Hatohobei younger generations do not know their customs and history and are so disconnected far from the home island and traditional life how could we expect them to know these things. His frustration at this juncture emanated further out of the recent loss of the three of the eldest Tobian community members. Their passing is an acute reminder of the waning knowledge and wisdom that remain with our few living Hatohobei elders. Our ghost spirit lamented all of this and I feared we may lose him momentarily toward a melancholic episode. He

expressed again to me that what I am calling cultural heritage is something that has no meaning in every day Hatohobei. I asked Tohbwich to hold off on any judgment for a moment (or three) and allow me to dig into a few stories and make more sense out of these concerns. I have learned over time how to tickle this trickster friend. Gathering inspiration in an effort to show Tohbwich again the provocative, subversive and meaningful method of storytelling in the western framed context, I tossed him a full *tet* (purse) of *buuch* (betel nut) and well-worn copies of *Tales of the Tikongs* (Hau’ofa, 1983), *Kisses in the Nederends* (Hau’ofa, 1987) and *Sniffing Oceania’s Behind* (Diaz, 2012). He had never been exposed to these materials and they soon reminded him of his many and varied jokester and trickster efforts across time and space and he began to feel back to his old self, once again. This perspective and approach indeed, evoked within Tohbwich pleasant memories and ideas looking ahead. While these two brilliant novels and colourful and respectful memorialising, yet critical commentary around notions of “development”, “tradition” and “modernity” in the Pacific refreshed and rejuvenated Tobwich’s spirit, I decided to now take a few moments to share some more grounded stories around cultural heritage politics in Hatohobei.

5.3 Tattooing the Visitors, Nurturing Helen and Transforming Hatohobei Society

To examine cultural heritage and contemporary Hatohobei life and politics we are wise to understand several historical engagements that Tobians have had with outsiders, the significance of *Hotsarihie* (Helen Reef), and the role and ongoing actions of two community leaders, (now former) Governor Thomas Patris and (now former HSG delegate) Mr. Wayne Andrew.

Our first story involves the first documented engagement of western visitors to Hatohobei island in 1832. As the published story (Holden, 1836) goes, the American

whaler vessel, the *Mentor*, had left New Bedford, Massachusetts with a crew of 22 on a commercial whaling operation to the Indian Ocean. Having sold off some whale oil in Fayal (Malaysia) they proceeded on down the coast of Java with the intention of stocking up with supplies and crossing through the Molucca Straits into the Pacific Ocean. They missed this passage and found themselves low on supplies coming to Moratai island and then redirected north again to the Pacific Ocean with the intent of stopping in the Mariana Islands (then known and misrepresented as *Islas de los Ladrones*, “*The Islands of Thieves*”). Due to a severe storm on this passage they shipwrecked⁶¹ off of eastern Babeldoab (Palau). After 7 months under the tenuous care of local villages in Babeldoab these men then set sail in their repaired tender vessel (along with a canoe constructed by Palauans) that included three additional Palauan crew. Caught in a storm the canoe and supplies were lost and the vessel carrying these 11 men slowly drifted southward for 15 days. While in complete starvation and despair the drifting voyagers were approached by 18 canoes approximately 10km north of Hatohobei island. While Horace Holden (1836) tells in detail the story of two years of “captivity and sufferings” by the Tobians, which eventually resulted in his and Benjamin Nute’s escape⁶², our good friend Tohbwich suggests perhaps an alternative version to Holden’s colourful and dramatic narrative. This first documented experience with western outsiders we can contrast with another historical outsider event that transformed Hatohobei society, the *Hamburg Südsee Expedition*, (Hellwig, 1927),

⁶¹ On 21 November, 1832 (Holden, 1836).

⁶² For example of the cross-cultural perspective and dramatic romanticism of the period in context, here is the title of Holden’s book (verbatim): *A Narrative of the Shipwreck, Captivity and Sufferings of Horace Holden and Benj. H. Nute: Who Were Cast Away in the American Ship Mentor, on the Pelew Islands, in the Year 1832; and for Two Years Afterwards Were Subjected to Unheard of Sufferings Among the Barbarous Inhabitants of Lord North’s Island*. Contrast this with journal entries from the *Südsee Expedition (August 27 – September 4, 1909)*, where ethnographer Hellwig described the island and islanders as “idyllic and peaceful” (see Buschmann, 1996:329) and expedition leader Kramer describes it as the “island of love...not just in the erotic sense, but also in terms of the social interactions...”. This far better describes the Hatohobei world view and practice of respecting relationships, as I have observed over a 20-year period.

which then illuminates the current engagements with outsiders from Hawaii, Silicon Valley and beyond.

Tohbwich reminds me that this was not the first Tobian interface with white-skinned outsiders. The earliest Tobian experiences with western globalisation⁶³ happened through curious and reciprocal interfaces with Spanish and Portuguese traders and (later) British and American whalers and traders. These commercial trade vessels sometimes passed through the area when off course enroute to trading ports in the Molucca Straits of Indonesia (then known as the Spice Islands) and Guam (in the Mariana Islands, or known in that period as, *Islas de los Ladrones*), as well as the various ports of Singapore, Malaysia, Manila and Hong Kong. These vessels usually passed right on by the island but on a few occasions stopped offshore when approached by Tobian canoes and engaged in trade with the Tobians. Most commonly, iron pieces and tobacco were traded for fresh coconuts, taro, and other foodstuffs. Tobians had historically often received drifting canoe voyagers⁶⁴ (usually from Moratei, Halmahera and other Indonesian islands, and sometimes from further south in the Papua New Guinea area) that would visit for short period, make repairs and then return on to their home islands, but never a boat load of forlorn men drifting at sea like this.

⁶³ See Victoria Lockwood's *Globalization and Culture Change in the Pacific Islands* (2004 ed) for analyses on historical and contemporary trade and influences in Pacific Island cultures and societies.

⁶⁴ Personal communication with Justin Andrew (1998); Wayne Andrew (2008). Additionally, there are some Tobian oral histories (personal communication, Justin Andrew, 1998) about visitors and relations from unknown nearby Indonesian islands, as well as possibly islands near Papua New Guinea.

Tohbwich further recalled this event⁶⁵ that involved a boatload of *wasera* (outsiders)⁶⁶ drifting at sea in the fishing grounds of Hatohobei. They were first noticed by one of the master fishermen while sailing back to Hatohobei from Hotsarihiie (Helen Reef)⁶⁷ after a seasonal fishing expedition. Upon returning home he shared this sighting through proper channels of chiefly authority. A quick decision was made to send out a larger contingent of *wara uhuh* (Tobian sailing canoes) with younger men early the next morning. The Tobians knew the local currents and seasonal patterns so acutely they of course were confident of where to sail and intercept the drifting vessel. A plan was also put in place to first intimidate and subdue these unknown and potentially hostile men and then bring them back to the island. Several chiefs debated strategies for receiving these men and there was great disagreement as to whether to take them in or whether their arrival was a bad omen from Yaris⁶⁸. Eventually, it was

⁶⁵ As per the storytelling methodology discussed in Chapter Three, this is an alternative imaginative version of the story that contrasts with Holden's perspective and highlights the varied and differing cross-cultural approaches, values and misunderstandings between the Tobians and these particular visitors. Eilers (1936) also questions Holden's dramatic (and traumatic) perspective of Tobi islanders as per her review and analyses of the ethnographic documentation of the *Südsee Expedition* and the formal diary entries of Kramer, Hambruch and Hellwig on that expedition (also see Buschmann, 1996:330). Nonetheless, It is clear that of these 11 visitors, two left after 2 months by joining a passing vessel, 7 passed away from apparent starvation, beatings and difficulties adjusting to the local culture and environment, and the final two (Holden and Nute) had requested to join the next passing boat in 1834 and were granted this request.

⁶⁶ As explained from Wayne Andrew via Skype, "The word *wasera* is a Tobian word for visitors and was mostly used for people lost at sea who do not have roots (clan) or family on Tobi. They were usually brought to stay with the Chief (so *wasera* to Hatohobei in the past meant someone visiting or lost at sea and drifted to the island). Now in today's Tobi, because transportation made access easier for the islanders to travel out of Hatohobei and marriage was possible, the children of our male elders (male married outside of Hatohobei) are referred to as *wasera* by the elders (of) whom their mother is from Tobi. This is to imply that you are visiting (kind of bad meaning) but important because there are clans and the clans rule Hatohobei". (Personal communication with Wayne Andrew, who discussed the term and concept of *wasera* with family elders (15 July, 2015).

⁶⁷ This is a 60km one way voyage.

⁶⁸ Holden (1836), Eilers (1936), Buschmann (1996) and Black (1982) all refer to the traditional religion that involved shamans, a spirit house (*fare kikak*), religious rituals and ceremonies, ghostly spirits (*yaris*) and *Rugeiren*, the main diety that had final authority over the social and physical environment of Hatohobei. Holden in this case refers to *Yaris* (literally, ghosts, spirits) in his understanding, as a singular God. As we recall from our discussion in Chapter Two, *yaris*, and the fear of them, served as a "check and balance" system for moral and spiritual guidance in the community (see also, Black, 1982). For our purpose here I will use Holden's usage of "yaris", where he most likely means, "Rugeiren" in the Hatohobei context.

decided (but still not in whole agreement) to take these *wasera* in and several families then prepared to receive them into their homes and family structures. This is a common feature of Hatohobei and Pacific Island cultural systems, to adapt (and adopt) outsiders in to the family structure and in this Hatohobei dynamic, again involves the “in-charge complex” (*usaur*) discussed in Chapters Two and Four. These men would fit in to a family structure and have senior people “in-charge” of them and ensuing roles, commitments and expectations. In this case, they would fit into the family and community structure and partake in work activities such as taro gardening and harvesting ⁶⁹. Their labour efforts were considered a reciprocal contribution to the community and these men were also outside resources with potential future access to valued items such as iron and knives, and potentially otherwise.

As the chiefs’ debate came to a conclusion, several lower/sub-chiefs were then sent out with younger men in canoes to assess and communicate with the unknown *wasera*. While the initial interface involved verbal and non-verbal misunderstandings, the Tobian canoes and men overwhelmed the *wasera* and made sure they were not able to aggress them before hauling them into their canoes. Tohwich reminds me, and this is confirmed in Eilers (1936) (also see Buschmann, 1996) of how all of these men were taken in to their respective family homes and embraced respectfully by these families and the entire community. Upon arrival several feasts and welcoming ceremonies (Eilers, 1936) were enjoyed by all and the visitors were fed well and cared for with proper hosting respects, which is normal Tobian customary protocol for outside

⁶⁹ Work in the taro patch was the culturally appropriate space and activity for these outsiders to contribute to the community (and to allow them to feel the dignity and agency in doing so). It would not have been considered culturally appropriate for these *wasera* to learn the sacred knowledge and practice of various fishing techniques, nor would they have been considered physically able to engage in fishing activities until they had possibly shown proper learning respects and aptitude over time. Tohwich reminds me that this certainly never happened.

visitors. As Tohbwich recalls, over time, the insolent, lazy and ungrateful attitude of these *wasera* guests proved to most Tobians that they did not want to fit in with the family and community structures, protocol and practices. They had become a consistent drain that went against the careful maintenance of social harmony that the community required for living on the remote island of Hatohobei.

In addition to this context, it was an unfortunate time all around as a large typhoon had ravaged the island several months earlier (Holden, 1936; Chapter 8)⁷⁰ and recovery was slow. Although unusual, several earthquakes had recently rattled the island within a short period of time, as well. Resources had been depleted and there was general unsettled consternation around the island, with increasing uncertainty as to how to interpret all of these natural occurrences, what message *yaris* were sending, and how to appease the *yaris* (*Rugeiren*). Holden refers to this post-earthquake period as a time when the entire community was “terrified” (Holden, 1936; Chapter Eight). There is a particular quote from Horace Holden’s adopted father figure, Pahrahbuah, that highlights this feeling after the sequence of earthquakes, saying to him, “Yaris is coming and Tobi island will sink” (Holden, 1936; Chapter Eight). This highlights the ever present collective concern over the protection of this physically remote community (from natural disaster and any potential conflict that would disrupt the social harmony) and its long term well-being. This also indirectly reflects the chiefly authority and its connection to *yaris* and the spirit world, and how this was nurtured through ritual chants at the community spirit house, as well as the chiefly authority that guided the morality of the community and its structure, customs, routines, and protocol toward the maintenance of the social harmony, and of course again, the long-term well-being and

⁷⁰ The Holden (1836) publication is outlined with 10 chapters and without page numbers

perseverance of the community. This maintenance was an ongoing high priority and while the social structure around the “in-charge complex” (Black, 1982) is naturally adaptive and flexible, which reveals a resilience and strength of the Hatohobei people, this particular period of time was indeed testing for the chiefly leadership and community in general. Incidentally and relevant, the quote, “the island is sinking” also returns to us in Chapter Six where we discuss (and hear that same quote again from contemporary Tobian voices) rising sea levels, coastal erosion dynamics, and the uncertainties around the future of the physical island.

Tohbwich recalls that these *wasera* men were not at all suited for life on Hatohobei and did not take well toward the environment, food stuffs, the daily routine and various commitments and responsibilities (largely, planting taro, but also the manner of respect relationships between people). From the Tobian perspective around various interfaces and discussions, these men were obstinate and dishonest and consequently, had to be punished so they would learn proper protocols and respects. The usual verbal shaming gossip did not work upon these *wasera* men because they had no understanding or respects for customs and proper communicative approaches. They generally refused to engage with the community and soon became a great demand on each host family. Tohbwich explains that as a last resort the chiefs and shamans attempted to adopt these *wasera* further in to the community and appease *Yaris* (ghosts and in Holden’s understanding, *Rugerein*) by providing them with tattoos that showed their connections with each respective family and clan. This was a serious final attempt to integrate these outsiders in to Hatohobei society and yet these efforts also were not reciprocated with appreciation in return.

Tohbwich recalls that another large storm crossed over Hatohobei during this period and this exacerbated the situation even further. The large taro patch had been

inundated with sand and erosion (Holden, 1936; Chapter Eight) and was impacting several areas of the coast. Everyone was called upon to help with digging out the taro patch and also with helping to build several limestone rock sea walls (Holden, 1936; Chapter Eight), among other housing and community structures. At a time when resources were depleted, these men were not strong enough to continue on and several of them succumbed to the conditions. They were all given a proper Tobian burial at sea and proper respects were paid to *Yaris (Rugeiren)*, as well as these men. As Tohbwich explained, the Hatohobei collective felt that *Yaris* was upset and these challenging events, including the loss of life were all due to the anger of *Yaris*. In particular, there was a growing belief that these outsiders and their behaviour had most upset *Yaris*. This feeling is shared by a quote from the Holden narrative, where after many chants and ceremonial prayer were offered to *Yaris*, the community at one point explained to these men, “Before you came, we had plenty of things, but now *Yarris* (sic) is angry, and we are starving”⁷¹. Ongoing efforts were made toward rebalancing the Hatohobei world. Appeasements were made to *Yaris* for the future betterment of Tobi society. It was agreed that these men had been a burden on the community and that the remaining two men, Horace Holden and Benjamin Nute, who had been requesting to depart the island, would leave the island on the next passing vessel⁷². This decision was part of the efforts toward regaining social harmony once again for the island community.

In his appendix Holden shares an interesting conversation between himself and Pahrahbuah regarding Holden’s preference to leave the island on the next ship and his

⁷¹ Please see an additional printing of Holden’s narrative from *The Chinese Repository*, Art II; *Lord North’s island: narrative of two seamen, respecting their sufferings on that island; facts relative to the islanders; their means of subsistence, dwellings, laws, language, religion, etc.* Printed for the proprietors, 1835. Item notes: v.3. pp. 450-457. Original from the University of California. Digitized January 31, 2007, Google Books.

⁷² Horace Holden and Benjamin Nute boarded the British vessel, *Brittania* on 27 November, 1834.

adopted father's resistance to this idea. They are basically negotiating Holden's value by staying or leaving. At the same time, based on Tobian epistemology, Pahrahbua views Holden as a part of family (operating through the structure of the "in-charge complex") and expects that the idea of leaving also entails the ongoing reciprocal relationship and an eventual return. I first note below two general community responses (Holden, 1836; Appendix) to the event on 3 February, 1833 (just under 2 months upon the drift arrival to Tobi island), where Captain Barnard (of the Mentor crew) and crew member Bartlet Rollins joined Tobian men in canoes to meet a passing vessel and thereby left with that vessel after the Tobians had traded for some iron hoops (Holden, 1836; Chapter Eight). I then share a brief dialogue between Holden and Parahbua for the purpose of highlighting the Tobian view of outsiders as resources and the notion of adopted family and the expectations/commitments of their roles⁷³.

Tohwich reminds me to appreciate the Tobian perspective of outsiders not only as potential resources but also as untrustworthy and potential threats at that time, based upon their then minimal trade contact experiences with western trading vessels and the cross-cultural misunderstandings and challenges with such trade exchanges, as well as these particular adopted guests. This last point is highlighted by the miscommunications and misunderstandings involved in the event where Captain Barnard's actions on 3 February, 1833 were felt by the Tobians to be deceptive and dishonest (an ongoing theme with the cross-cultural misunderstandings between these groups).

Here is the general community response to Holden regarding the departure of Captain Barnard and Bartlet Rollins (from Holden, 1836; Appendix):

⁷³ This is recorded here verbatim from the appendix of Holden's book.

Ah! the captain will never get to England; the captain was a thief; he had not given To'bee man any iron, and he would die at sea; the captain talked, and talked with To'bee men, (that they should have) much iron, great many clothes, and much brass; for shame! Englishmen (are) all thieves and bad men; To'bee men (are) very angry; (we) will speak to God, and he will make the ship founder at sea, and the captain never will arrive in England.

And the general response to the visitor's request to depart the island:

What do you (wish to) go to England for? There is nothing to eat in England; if you go to England you will die; Englishmen eat rats and snails and filth; if you stay in To'bee you will live; To'bee men have very good (food) to eat.

One of two dialogues between Holden and Pahrahbuah (Holden, 1836;

Appendix):

Holden: *Pahrahbooah (sic), if you will put me on board a ship I will go to England; if I remain at To'bee I shall die, for there is nothing to eat on To'bee; in England, much food, much, much; and if you will put me on board of a ship, I will give you much iron, many clothes, and much brass; if you do not put me (on board) I shall die on To'bee and you (will get) no iron.*

Pahrahbuah: *Ah! I will not let you go; you talk bad; you will not give me any iron; Peeter Inghish is a thief, you are a thief, all Englishmen (are) thieves and liars; Englishmen (are) bad men; you (are) to stay on To'bee, to die on To'bee.*

And the second of two dialogues shared in Holden's (1836) appendix:

Pahrahbuah: *Horace, if you go to England will you give the men of To'bee iron of a large size, as big as a stick of wood, and big axes, and knives, and cloth, and fishhooks, an anvil and hammer, and needles, a*

trunk, and brass, and then come back to To'bee and give them to your father?

Holden: *Yes, I will go to England, and I will give to the men of To'bee iron of a large size, and big axes, and knives, and cloth, and fishhooks, an anvil, and needles, and trunks, and brass, and then come back to To'bee and give them to my father.*

Pahrahbua: *If you go to England you will stop (sleep) there, and not return to To'bee; this (will be) bad and not friendly, and you will be a bad man.*

Holden: *If I go to England I will not stop (sleep) there, but return to To'bee immediately.*

Pahrahbua: *You do not know the way to England; you will die (or be lost) at sea, and not come to To'bee.*

Holden: *Aye, I do know the way to England; I shall not die (or be lost) at sea.*

Pahrahbua: *Have you got ships in England, and a great deal of iron, and cloths and cocoa-nuts, and many men, women and children?*

Holden: *Yes, I have got ships in England, much iron, and cloths, and cocoa-nuts, and women, and a great many men and children.*

Pahrahbua: *Do you eat in England a plenty?*

Holden: *Yes, in England I eat a plenty, (or much).*

Pahrahbua: *Horace, if you go to England, and fetch us iron, and cloths, and brass, and axes, and fish-hooks, to To'bee men, you (will be) our friend, a very good man, a very great friend.*

Holden: *Yes, (if) I go to England I will fetch you iron, and fetch cloths and brass, and axes and fish-hooks, to To'bee, and give them to the people of To'bee.*

Pahrahbuah: *Horace, if you go to England and do not come back to To'bee, the men of To'bee will talk to God and you will die.*

Holden: *I will go to England and stop a short time, (i.e. sleep there) and shall return to To'bee.*

Pahrahbuah: *Horace, if you do not go to Yaris' house, (i.e. the place of worship), you will die.*

Holden: *Wait a minute; I will go. (Holden, 1836; Appendix)*

We can see in this exchange how Pahrahbuah has expectations on Holden that relate directly to the “in-charge complex” (see Black, 1982; 1990) and also how the Tobians (Parahbuah, here) were confident that while they did not trust that these outsiders (in this case, Holden) would reciprocate and return with iron and clothing, the attempt was made to leverage that expectation in the highest form of authority possible, that *Yaris* would be upset if Holden did not reciprocate and would make sure that Holden would die in such case. At any rate, these men had now left the island and social and spiritual harmony was now more likely to return. At least for a while...

5.4 Mantruior Dances with Kramer (The 1909 Südsee Expedition)

This brings us to the second documented interface between western outsiders and Tobians, which I discuss here in brief. This event once again shows the untrustworthiness of these outside visitors (from the Tobian perspective), but an evolving perspective of potential usefulness of the outsiders with a growing conflict between chiefs (accommodating the outsiders) and shamans (resisting the outsiders). This brief story provides us with an understanding of a significant transformative moment in Hatohobei history, and an ironic (albeit unfortunate) engagement with the concept of cultural heritage, which then allows us to contrast this with contemporary cultural heritage politics around Helen Reef.

Considering early globalisation and the spice trade commerce and geopolitics in Southeast Asia, we can appreciate the later context of European colonial efforts in the Pacific at the turn of the 20th century (Fischer, 2002; Ridgell 1984). In the Micronesian setting at the time this involved the expanding German Empire, which was competing with the Dutch (and later British) interests in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Micronesia as a German Protectorate then, became a platform for their colonial expansion experiment (Fischer, 2002; Hiery, 1995; Buschmann, 1996).

This German colonial administrative agenda⁷⁴ included the *Hamburg Südsee Expedition* (1908-1910), a comprehensive anthropological investigation involving multiple groups of ethnographers working on the islands of Micronesia and Papua New Guinea during the early 1900's. This was considered "salvage anthropology" (see Buschmann, 1996) and the research agenda focused on collecting as much physical and cultural information as possible from these presumed "dying peoples and cultures" as their societies underwent rapid transformations due to the colonial administrative policies aimed toward "civilising" the "savages". Within this framework Hatohobei was seen as the optimal "ethnographic prize" to fulfil the research agenda. Buschmann (1996) provides an insightful analysis of the power dynamics involved in the German museum politics, the colonial administration in the Pacific, and the specific visit to Hatohobei in 1909.

⁷⁴ See Heiry's, *The Neglected War: The German South Pacific and the Influence of World War I* for some background to German colonial agenda in the Pacific. While the German colonial administration had a scientific and "civilize the savages" and "humanitarian" bent, it also involved extensive commercial trade activities, particularly around copra and phosphate in the Micronesian setting (see Firth, 1978). The following Japanese colonial administration continued with these commercial trade enterprises (Owen, 1974).

This particular (albeit short) expedition was heavily documented, with three researchers⁷⁵ and each of whom recorded their own personal diaries. Around and through the cross-cultural interface we learn the significance of Rugeiren⁷⁶ as a spiritual/religious deity and the regular use of religious ceremonies, most often in a structure known as a “spirit house” (*fare kikak*) (see image below Figure 5.1, Plate 5.2), and also the tensions between the outsiders and some Tobians, in particular a shaman called Mantruior. While the high chief (*tamor*), Makiroa, appeared to accommodate these researchers and their requests, there was resistance from Mantruior, an elderly shaman who continued to conduct chants and ceremonies attempting to deflate the presence of the outsiders and appease Rugeiren, as well as encourage the quick departure of these uninvited guests and their unusual demands. There was particular tension between Mantruior (who was concerned that these visitors were upsetting the social and spiritual balance) and the expedition leader, Augustin Kramer (attempting to carry out the research project), where Manturiour continually expressed his displeasure with Kramer through chants, dances and influence over others not to accommodate the Kramer’s (husband and wife) requests (see Buschmann, 1996).

⁷⁵ The German steamer ship, the *Peiho* arrived at Hatohobei island on 27 August, 1909 and departed on 4 September. The research team included: expedition leader Dr. Augustin Kramer, his wife Elizabeth, F.E. Hellwig, and Paul Hambruch from the Hamburg Ethnological Museum. The former two were tasked primarily with providing descriptions of life on Hatohobei. Hellwig’s efforts were the collection of cultural artifacts (she collected several hundred artifacts that remain with the Hamburg Museum today), and Hambruch was tasked with gathering physical anthropological data. Unfortunately, although several regional monographs were published (PNG, Nauru) after the extensive *Südsee* Research expedition, the ethnographic documentation carried out in Pohnpei, Yap and Palau (including Tobi) was not published and with World War One soon to follow, the funding for these publication efforts was reduced and the Tobi monograph was not highly prioritised. With Hambruch’s passing in 1933, the second-generation Hamburg Museum ethnologist, Anneliese Eilers, whom of course had never visited the Pacific, let alone Hatohobei, was then tasked with interpreting, describing and analysing these records and produced a monograph (1936) that details life and society in Tobi and Ngulu (outer island of Yap)(Eilers, 1936) (also see Buschmann, 1996).

⁷⁶ Recall that Rugeiren is considered the main deity that had final authority over the social and physical environment of Hatohobei (see Holden (1836); Eilers (1936); Buschmann (1996); and Black (1982).

The research expedition lasted 9 days and what was learned from an administrative health inspection visit⁷⁷ six-months later was the reality of its significant impact toward a population decline on the island. Along with ongoing colonial administrative policies that encouraged many Tobian men to leave the island and work in the phosphate mines of Angaur, it is likely that the *Peiho* (Augustin Kramer, in particular)⁷⁸ also introduced influenza to the island community. What we do know from this research monograph (Eilers, 1936) and the personal diaries of the crew members, is that Kramer had visited all remote corners of the entire island and was capable of infecting a wide array of the population. There is a double irony here, because the expedition research agenda was to capture the last of a dying people and culture, while it helped contribute to a significant depopulation reality. Further, the ongoing practice of encouraging Tobian men to leave and work in the phosphate mine of Angaur was now justified as a “legitimate humanitarian salvage operation” (see Buschmann, 1996) and with Tobian workers and German recruiters returning to the island from Angaur the increase in infectious disease had a double impact causing the population of Hatohobei to drop to less than 300 by 1914 (the last year of German colonial rule in Micronesia) (see Buschmann, 1996).

⁷⁷ A Dr. Buse (Buse, 1910)(in German language) visited Hatohobei as part of a general administrative inspection tour to investigate health conditions in the Southwest islands of Palau (see Buschman, 1996).

⁷⁸ Expedition leader Augustin Kramer’s personal diary suggests he was taking medication (quinine) for a “preexisting febrile infection” at the time of his visit to Hatohobei (see Buschman, 1996).



Figure 5.1 Hatohobei spirit house (*fare kikak*), as drawn in 1909 by Elizabeth Kramer, wife of the Hamburg Südsee expedition leader Augustine Kramer (Eilers, 1936)



Plate 5.2 Spirit House (*fare kikak*). Photograph taken by Augustine Kramer in 1909 (Eilers, 1936). This sacred institutional structure would be burnt to the ground in the 1920's (see Black, 1988)

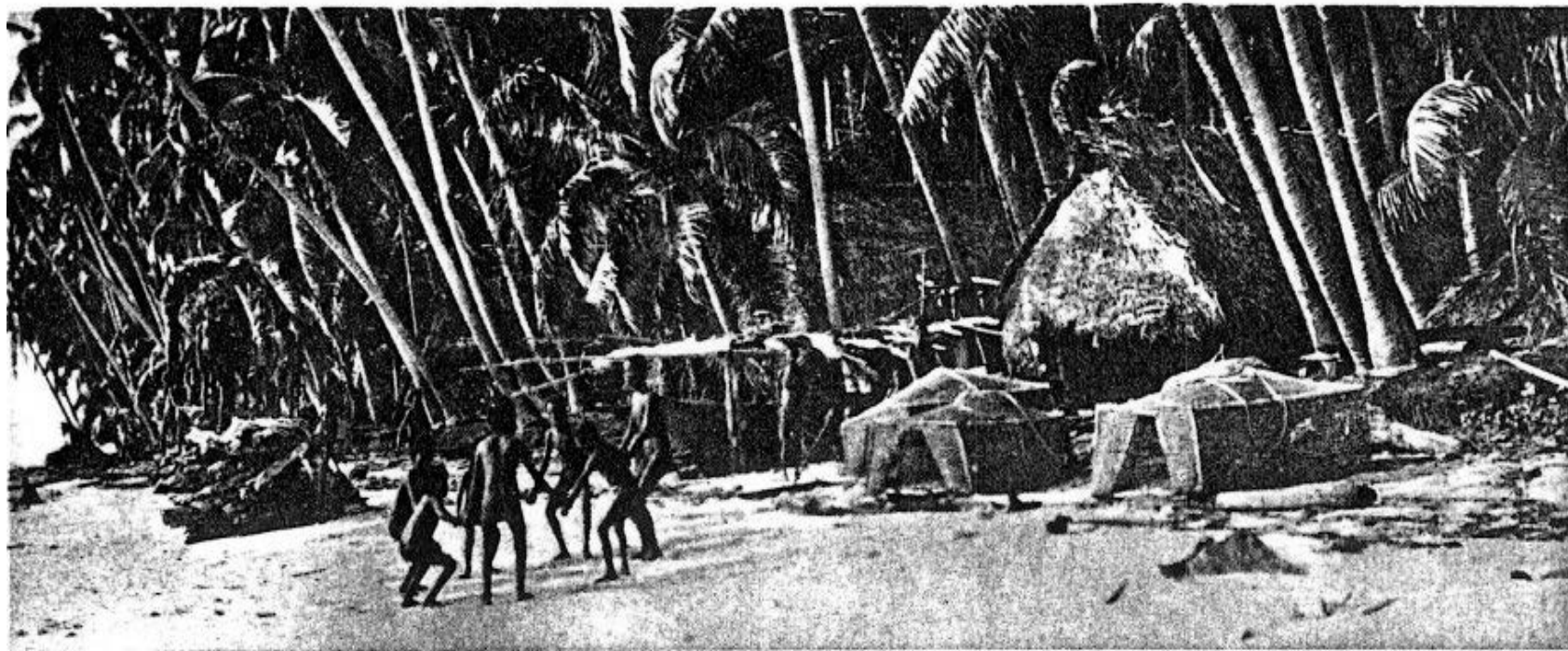


Plate 5.3 Young Tobians on the beach. (Photograph taken by Augustine Kramer in 1909 (Eilers, 1936))

5.5 Outsider Agents of Change

This early colonial interface is highlighted here for three reasons;

1. This early outsider intervention had a significant negative impact on the island population;
2. It provides an historical contrast for contemporary engagements with outsiders, which we discuss below; and
3. The people of Hatohobei clearly adapted forward through this social calamity but let us note that this is a particular marker point for significant changes that soon came in the religious, spiritual and cultural framework (discussed further below).

Tohbwich whispers for me to also recall that it turned out that the shaman Mantruior's concerns and predictions of doom to come from these visitors was completely correct. The island population was now experiencing rapid depopulation and increased fears for their stability and uncertain future. Tobians would soon and more rapidly engage with outsiders and outside systems and rapid transformations would take place. This is a marker point in Hatohobei history and cultural transformation. As a "keeper of tradition" (my emphasis), Mantruior's concerns and efforts with regard to the *Südsee* interface reflect his efforts toward cultural heritage maintenance abstractly outlined above. His insights proved quite predictive as history reveals, and the resilience of Hatohobei people and culture can be appreciated further through the continued perseverance of the community through such severe population loss and further social, political and environmental challenges.

Regarding point number three above, this period after the *Hamburg Südsee Expedition* events begins a period of great instability and exigence on the island and points toward a transitional community response that went away from several

fundamental features of traditional Hatohobei society. This significant period is what Peter Black recognised as the beginning of neo-traditional Hatohobei society and culture (Black, 1977, n.d., 1988). Black's (1988) analysis of this transitional period highlights well the core reasons involved. As a singular agent, if we can appreciate the impact of Augustin Kramer's febrile infection on the community, let us now appreciate two more historical outsider agents of change in the Hatohobei landscape; Yoshino and Father Felix.

As Black (1988) explains, along with the population decrease a significant chain of events took place to facilitate a mass conversion away from the founding religion (and sacred rituals) and toward Roman Catholicism. In 1909 after the opening of the phosphate mine in Anguar (within the Palau archipelago, 200km north of Hatohobei, Figure 2.1, the Germans ordered the high chief (*tamor*) of Hatohobei to leave the island with younger male labourers to work in the mine. The *tamor* selected an "assistant" chief to attend to select chiefly matters while he was away. These matters excluded at least one important rite that was later disobeyed by the assistant and led to the death of the *tamor* in Anguar (Black, 1988) (personal communication, Hangeresei Andrew, 1998; Wayne Andrew, 2012). His death was interpreted in various ways and created a fracture between families of the "assistant" chief and the expected successor chief. However, the *tamor* had not had the opportunity to transfer chiefly title with proper protocols due to his unexpected death. This was a significant break in a long history of sacred ritual, the chiefly succession, and really, the religio-political core of traditional Hatohobei (see Black, 1988). The factional contestation from this event has continued throughout and remains a sensitive matter today.

After WWI in 1914 the German Protectorate of islands in the Pacific was turned over to the Japanese government (Peatty, 1995). The new colonial administration's

presence in the Hatohobei experience was backed by growing infrastructure and commercial development in the urban centre of Koror, as well as a strong military (Hezel, 1992; Peatty, 1995). Commercial trade for phosphate and copra was continued on from the German administration and this related to an increased need for copra production on Hatohobei. Black (1988:53) explains the introduction of Yoshino ⁷⁹, a Japanese trade agent based in Koror, in the 1920's and how he had developed a strong relationship with the "assistant" chief's successor (not the expected successor from the deceased *tamor* in Anguar) and another young Tobian man, who helped Yoshino divide up a sacred parcel of chiefly land into individual plots for production of copra. This significant change (by the chief) going against tradition was yet another attack on the fragility of the collective socio-political system on Hatohobei. Uncertainty increased and Black (1988) describes this period as an attempt at secular society for the Tobians. During this period one final poignant event symbolises a final departure away from sacred religious practices (the foundation for keeping Hatohobei safe and secure) and toward a mass conversion to Roman Catholicism. In the 1930's, a Jesuit mission operated out of Koror (yes, welcomed by the Japanese colonial government) and was a growing influence with the few Tobian and Southwest island families living in Echang, Koror. Yoshino, who had befriended one of these Tobian families and a young son who at a later time arrived on a visit to the island, encouraged and influenced the destruction of three traditional and sacred Hatohobei institutions. The suggestion here is that the younger son was influential in explaining to the chief, who was already influenced by his relationship with Yoshino, the power and religious authority of the Jesuit priests, and Catholic religion. It also exemplifies a growing shift toward outsider

⁷⁹ Yoshino would have been the first (known) outsider since the Holden castaways of 1832 that lived for an extensive period on Hatohobei. Of course, by this time the Tobians had more experience and understanding of outsiders and in this case with Yoshino, an ongoing relationship with the Japanese administration and its power, authority and usefulness as a resource.

models and influences. Likely, younger generation Tobians had started to have contact (or hear stories about) with and from those living in Echang. These few families in Echang resided in the urban centre of Koror, which had a population of 20,000 Japanese civilians and military. Koror was a commercial centre of the Japanese Empire in Micronesia (see Peatty, 1995) and provided these few Tobian families with increasingly new experiences that were far removed from Hatohobei religious taboos, customs and protocols. A monumental Hatohobei historical transformative moment and fundamental shift took place in one evening of fire setting.

Armed with the chief's blessing, the young man joined with the youths from a school established by Yoshino and Yoshino's (Tobian) friend Johannes, and on a dark night they burned down the chief's spirit house, the women's menstrual house, and the sorcerer's canoe house – the entire set of buildings with religious associations. This event, rather than (religious) conversions that took place a year or two later, marks the end of the traditional Tobian order. The old rituals were scrapped, the chief abandoned his exclusive rights to certain food stuffs, and the great majority of prohibitions associated with everyday life were no longer observed. (Black, 1988: 54)

With the ongoing dispute around the chiefly position, the recognition by all contesting parties involved that the “flow of ritual power had terminated with the death of the old chief on Anguar” (Black, 1988, p. 54), and now the loss of these sacred religious institutions, rites and protocols, the chiefly leadership and community had reached a height of insecurity around who would protect the island from future disasters (natural or otherwise). Their answer came with the visit of a Jesuit priest, Father Felix (Black had mistakenly used the name Father Marino in his 1988 publication) (personal communication with P.Black, 1998), the first missionary to visit Hatohobei and his timing could not have been more perfect. Within a four day visit in the early 1930's,

Father Felix converted the entire population to Roman Catholicism, albeit, “Tobian style” Roman Catholicism. This rapid conversion and the Tobian interpretations of Father Felix’ role and the Church’s doctrine marks the first Tobian cultural appropriation of outside religious models, a process that continues today. Along with following Catholic ritual protocol, Tobians interpreted Father Felix’s words on his visit into seven teachings. I highlight several for our purposes here. One of these was that Father Felix held moral authority over the island and each individual and was final judge over each person upon death and hopeful entry to Heaven. He could raise the dead (and therefore, control ghostly activity, such an important role for the *tamor* and shamans). As well, clan endogamy was forbidden (Black, 1988). It is significant here to note that traditionally, cross-cousin marriage was allowed, albeit with selective (and flexible) provisions with regards to land resources and “in-charge complex” relationships. While accepting that this new father figure connected to the afterlife had allowed the community the security in a period of great anxiety, these rigid interpretations also created a very conservative religious institution that did not accept change very well. For example, the former interpretation took authority away from chiefly and shaman leadership, and the latter interpretation on clan incest had significant conservative implications on the already reduced population. With the already reduced population and an imbalanced high male to female ratio, the restriction on clan cross-cousin marriage left few marriage options for younger generations. The institution of marriage on Tobi was in a sense doomed by this interpretation. Subsequently, of course, this led toward a growing flow of marriages with outsiders, from low-clan ranked Palauans initially and later, American and Japanese administrators, military and civilians. Please see Black’s (1988) analysis for more detailed interpretations of this transformative moment. Considering the discussion

around cultural heritage politics, this is yet another historical event and dynamics that contributed to changing principles of Tobian customary protocol and speaks to the adaptive capacity of Tobians and their resilience as provided through the “in-charge complex” outlined earlier.

5.6 Who’s In Charge?

For our purposes now, let us turn toward contemporary events with these historical dynamics and transformations in mind. To understand the “in-charge complex” and the importance of clan relations and clan genealogy and connections to land on Hatohobei is to understand traditional, neo-traditional (Black, 1977) and contemporary Hatohobei culture and society. We can see the historical shift away from chiefly moral authority over the island and its traditional religion and sacred practices. However, the clan relationships and the “in-charge complex” continue as the fundamental components of contemporary Hatohobei society. However, who or what has replaced the traditional leader as the protector over the island through these historical and ongoing political and community transformations? If the “in-charge complex” is a fundamental feature of contemporary Hatohobei culture, especially within family and clan relationships (as discussed in Chapter Four), who or what maintains the role of highest “in-charge” person (or entity) that provides moral authority and guidance for the community?

Considering the transitional and transformative dynamics above and the “in-charge complex”, we can now highlight and contrast how the people of Hatohobei continue to engage with outsiders in contemporary times, with better outcomes toward sustaining their island home and population. We can then also consider how the “in-charge complex” features in this contemporary political moment and what this means.

5.7 Nurturing Helen: The Symbiosis of Sustainability

One cannot imagine the immediate, paradoxical and simultaneous feeling of isolated and physical remoteness and intimate interconnections with one's self and the world when sitting on the shifting sands of Helen Reef. One can only experience this in person. When you sit in this space you are immediately surrounded by the nature of a dynamic ecosystem involving a remote islet of less than .10km² surrounded by a reef of 165km² area. (Please see Plate 5.4.). In the ocean context, this is as remote as it gets. It is a slice of nature that is far removed from urbanisation and every day technology⁸⁰ that pervades the mainstream human senses. It is alive with an abundance of marine and bird life. It is alive and of course so much more than the human experience, yet graciously continues to provide for the people of Hatohobei in many ways, of which we shall discuss several below.

Historically, the nurturing of outsider relationships came through the land and resources on Hatohobei island proper. The mode of incorporating new outsider relationships (and resources) primarily takes place through the land and marine resources of Helen Reef. We physically located Helen Reef, known as *Hotsarihie* (“reef of giant clams”) to Tobians, in Chapter Two and highlighted that it continues to be a valuable resource for the community. In recent years it has become an integral aspect of Tobian identity and empowerment within larger Palau and beyond. This is because of the varied outside interests over Helen Reef's abundant marine resources (and high biodiversity) and the ongoing successful protection and management of these resources. Tobians take great pride in Helen Reef as it holds many important historical

⁸⁰ Although that is changing. The recent exception is a new satellite dish and growing telecommunications system on the islet, as well as solar panels. These new developments, through outside relationships and funding, speak to the reconnection with the home island and resources and Tobian agency and empowerment.

events, has an abundance of precious local foodstuffs, and expands the boundaries of Palau's territorial waters (and resources). Additionally, it is a growing source of pride because it has increasingly become of wide interest to many outside groups and consequently, provides security toward notions of uncertain futures. This security derives from knowing that the outsider interests and growing relationships with the community provide education, training, funding and open-ended opportunities.



Plate 5.4 Helen Reef and Islet (D.Tibbetts, 2012)



Plate 5.5 Helen Islet (Helen Reef), 2015 (HOPE Office, December 2015)

In the late 1990's the local stories about Helen Reef changed dramatically. While earlier stories described abundance and diversity of marine species at Helen Reef, the community began to express a concern about diminishing resources and destruction of the reef itself (Black, 2000:8; Johannes, 1992:87-89). This decrease in marine resources resulted in part from a local commercial project in the late 1980's and more significantly, the exploitation of Helen Reef (and surrounding waters) resources by illegal fishermen from Indonesia, the Philippines, and Taiwan (Helen Reef Action Committee, 2001). Further exploitative, was the common activity for national ROP officials to harvest marine resources (primarily turtle) from Helen Reef for family and political functions back in the urban centre of Koror (Black, 2000:8). Although a 75' marine patrol boat was gifted to the ROP by the Australian government in 1996, it can only patrol the area approximately every 6 months, unless exceptional situations occur. This had limited impact on illegal poaching in the Southwest island region of Palau. As

a result of all these dynamics, Helen Reef was identified as a reef at “high risk” by the World Resources Institute’s Reefs at Risk Program (HRAC, 2001). This validated the many community concerns over their traditional resource and maintaining it for future generations.

This ecological dynamic initially drew the interest of environmental non-government organisations (NGOs), particularly the Community Conservation Network (CCN), based in Hawaii, and later, Conservation International (CI). CCN first approached the Hatohobei State Government (HSG) in 1996, and in particular, with then HSG Governor, the late Crispin Emilio. Governor Emilio worked diligently to help facilitate their initial proposal to preserve the Helen Reef turtle population, and with a longer-term vision of protecting the Helen Reef resources for future generations. This outside interest in conserving Helen Reef’s resources paralleled with Tobian community concerns and the Helen Reef Action Committee (HRAC) was developed in 1999. This committee consisted of Tobian elders and community leaders and worked with CCN toward a community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) program. Although initiated as a pilot project, it is now well established and known as the Helen Reef Marine Resource Management Project. After many community consultations, a comprehensive baseline marine survey of Helen Reef biodiversity (Birkeland, 1999), grant proposals submitted in conjunction with CCN directors (primarily, Mike Guilbeaux, Scott Atkinson), and executive decisions by the then Helen Reef Action Committee (HRAC), the pilot project was initially funded with \$USD25000 from NZAID in 2000. This pilot project established an office of operations in Palau, law enforcement training for several community members, marine conservation education and awareness, and the initial infrastructure for law enforcement personnel to reside and maintain a presence on Helen Reef. These officers

began 6-month rotations and daily patrol operations that continue today as the Helen Reef Marine Resource Management Project continues to grow.

This is a salient marker point for the contemporary Hatohobei engagement with outsiders as resources and it is important to note four significant features of the engagements around the establishment of the Helen Reef Marine Resource Management project.

1. The community elders and HRAC established that Helen Reef was collectively owned by the Hatohobei community⁸¹. This is acutely contrary to ownership of land in Hatohobei, which is tied directly to each clan and is primarily passed through matrilineal lineage, and often contested. This decision came through several public meetings in 1999 and involved typical Hatohobei clan factionalism over ownership (Please see Appendix D). I attended several of these meetings and only realized much later how significant it was for the clan elders and state leaders to all come to the agreement - that it was historically a collective ownership over Helen Reef and not tied to one clan. Ultimately, this decision derived through the various acknowledgements of family and clan oral histories. The decision and collective recognition allowed for all future engagements over/with Helen Reef to be void of clan contestation and therefore, the associated inevitable blockage of potential community projects and developments (i.e. the Helen Reef Marine Resource Management Project, now operating successfully for 17 years). Basically, negotiating through tradition and also with the vehicle of state and national level machinery, this community decision opened up an entire new pathway for the Hatohobei community and its future. I return to this decision momentarily.
2. Engaging in collaboration with outsiders (CCN) and attaining outside donor funds to support a community project for remote Hatohobei (and Helen Reef) was the first realisation of successful project development efforts (and empowerment within that process) via the global/NGO apparatus. This marks

⁸¹ Please see Appendix D Helen Reef Ownership Public Meeting for the public records of the final meeting (20 August, 1999) and this decision.

the opening of an experience and consciousness that continues to inform and facilitate Hatohobei community decisions. I recall this successful grant application news in the community at the time and it marked a huge shift in optimism for Hatohobei futures. In this period and specific event, this minority community in Palau was finding its voice (and future) in the contemporary nation-building context of Palau, as well as in the neo-liberal global setting.

3. In the relationship with CCN there was a transference of Western concepts of conservation, preservation, and sustainability to the community. These new terms spread quickly and provided people with a sense of better control and/or a vision forward with their traditional resource of Helen Reef that was experiencing biodiversity depletion. Also, these new concepts became useful tools in the discourse and leadership efforts forward.
4. As well this new vehicle of engaging with outside environmental groups (and donors) now provided a sense of realisable empowerment beyond the marginalised minority status in the ROP where national and state level priorities, agendas and practices for the most part ignored Hatohobei State Government needs and requests and the Hatohobei community in general.

For these four reasons, a shift in contemporary Hatohobei consciousness and community efforts now looked toward Helen Reef (and the HRMRMP) as a vehicle for community development. This shift also highlights the political use of Helen Reef as a resource and tool for cultural heritage maintenance. If we consider our discussion on cultural heritage politics through this dynamic, we can appreciate that Tobian elders and leadership carefully promoted and utilised Helen Reef as a source of empowerment for the collective. The community could now see potential training opportunities and employment (i.e. marine enforcement officers, SCUBA, marine conservation pathways, administrative duties and pathways) while developing and maintaining a closer physical connection with the management of their traditional resources. We will see that this shift and development has expanded successfully since that period.

To highlight an early success of the pilot project and the varied intersection of interests over Helen Reef, I share a brief example here. On 25 May, 2004, the then largest seizure ever of illegal fishing vessels was made by the ROP national patrol boat. Five fishing vessels worth a reported value of US \$1 million and over 2,000 pounds of tuna were seized (see 2 June, 2004 Palau Horizon article). Seizures of illegal fishing boats happened regularly in and around Helen Reef during these years whenever the patrol boat made its regular visit, which at this time was every 6 months. This seizure was initially assisted by three young Hatohobei men that were trained by the ROP Marine Enforcement office and lived on Helen Reef and were paid as marine enforcement officers.



Plate 5.6 Newly Trained HRMRMP Patrol Officers, 2014 (HOPE)

In this one brief example we can see that the national government has interests in protecting its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and in the profits generated from

illegal fishing boat seizures. CCN's models of conservation, preservation, and sustainability are fulfilled, the Helen Reef patrol officer's (Tobian community members) family and professional agendas are met, and the NZAID funding source sees its contributions contributing toward local community empowerment, as strategically planned from the outset. The Hatohobei State Government gained support in its efforts toward providing for the community, and the Hatohobei community began realising the successes of their use of outside resources to fulfil their efforts toward guardianship over Helen Reef, as well as community benefits in action. This event in 2004 encapsulates the multiple stakeholders and interests involved. Further to this, due to the HRMRMP and Hatohobei leadership and community efforts in maintaining their ownership this traditional resource (Helen Reef), and through this the growing HRMRMP infrastructure and capacities toward marine deterrence and conservation efforts, the ROP national government has been able to grow and enforce its overall national level marine patrol enforcement program as it works to protect its territorial waters from illegal fishing. In fact, considering the remote location and growing success, in these early days it was the HRMRMP marine enforcement program that served as a model for the ROP national government, which has since expanded its marine conservation and enforcement programs.

Let us contrast this 2004 event with a recent 2016 event near Helen Reef⁸². In this case, the Hatohobei patrol officers stationed at Helen Reef had radioed to the ROP Marine Patrol office and alerted to them that an illegal fishing vessel had been working nearby Helen Reef and was heading westward. Email correspondence between the

⁸² Please see <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/analysis/2016/05/27/palau-authorities-target-illegal-vietnamese-fishing-vessel> for further details of this 26 May, 2016 event.

ROP Marine Patrol office, the ROP patrol boat *Remeliik*⁸³ captain, and a data analyst working for a non-profit organisation called SkyTruth (based in West Virginia, USA), provided detailed information via drone technology that had been tracking this particular vessel. The large number of trawlers, FAD's⁸⁴ and poaching fleets working and traveling across the Pacific, and in our case here, ROP territorial waters, makes for a serious challenge for the ROP marine patrol operations. On this occasion, the *Remeliik* patrol vessel was able to successfully depart Koror and intercept this illegal fishing vessel in Palau territorial water. A new ROP enforcement policy and method of deterrence is to seize the crew from these vessels and burn the vessel in the open ocean. This provides both visual imagery and enforcement action to the companies and boat captains operating illegally in ROP territorial waters. We are experiencing a growth in technology and the marine deterrence relationships in the region and the HRMRMP, in the case of the ROP context, has helped spearhead such efforts beginning in 2000. Because of the proximity of the HRMRMP base station infrastructure (and trained personnel), it becomes an integral aspect in this marine deterrence relationship. The series of photographs below, taken at a location near Helen Reef, visually highlights the global issue of large scale illegal fishing, nation-state sovereignty, and the multiple relationships involved in protecting marine resources. For Hatohobei, the HRMRMP is successfully enforcing both ROP territorial waters and HSG traditional resources. The HRMRMP continues to develop community skills, provide income and training opportunities, and an ongoing and active presence in the home island and surrounding

⁸³ The sole ROP patrol boat, the *Remeliik*, is responsible for patrolling approximately 230,000 square miles of open ocean, which comprises the ROP Exclusive Economic Zone. Obviously, the HRMRMP presence in the remote southern boundary of this EEZ is integral to supporting the ROP Marine Patrol efforts.

⁸⁴ Fish Aggregation Devices (FADs) are floating fish attraction buoys that often have Global Positioning Systems (GPS) attached to them and help companies and boat captains follow and track pelagic fish aggregations as they migrate.

area. The ROP makes a political statement with regards to its territorial boundaries and marine preservation practices through media exposure. And on the regional and global scale, illegal fishing companies are forced to change their practices and territorial boundaries are more clearly defined (or contested on a larger scale). In this way, intersecting the Hatohobei community efforts with national and global entities and efforts, the community is actively maintaining (and protecting) its resources and cultural heritage.



Plate 5.7 Patrol Boat and Burning Illegal Vietnamese Fishing Vessel, 26 May, 2016. (R.Brooks for the Pew Charitable Trusts).



Plate 5.8 Patrol Boat in foreground, 26 May, 2016. (R.Brooks for the Pew Charitable Trusts).



Plate 5.9 Illegal Vietnamese Fishing Vessel, 26 May, 2016. (R.Brooks for the Pew Charitable Trusts).



Plate 5.10 ROP5.9 Patrol Officers and Burning Illegal Vietnamese Fishing Vessel, 26 May, 2016. (R.Brooks for the Pew Charitable Trusts).

5.8 Transformative Leaders Maintaining the Vision



**Plate 5.11 HSG Governor Thomas Patris, 2012
(D.Tibbetts)**



Plate 5.12 Wayne Andrew, 2008 (D.Tibbetts)

The successful development of the Helen Reef Marine Resource Management Project was made possible first through the leadership and vision of the late and former Hatohobei State Governor, Crispin Emilio, Lt. Governor Dominic Emilio, and (then) Hatohobei State Government (HSG) Delegate Thomas Patris, as well as the Hatohobei State Legislature and the aforementioned Helen Reef Action Committee. The progressive foresight of these leaders and support of the collaborative efforts with CCN in the early stages of development, unknown territory for Tobians and Palauans at that time with regards to marine resource protection with outside relationships, opened a door to ongoing contemporary community projects and empowerment. This is especially impressive considering the successes achieved in establishing a large scale marine resource conservation operation in such a remote location. This leadership vision that nurtured the respects for traditional family and clan relationships, as well as

the political relationship with ROP national government politics (from the position of a minority group) and relationships with outside funding entities set a progressive path that Tobians continue to nurture today. Again, the operating foundation of such leadership and actions take place through family and clan relationships and the “in-charge complex”.

During the earliest period of the HRMRMP development, then HSG Delegate Thomas Patris also played a key role as the President of the Helen Reef Action Committee (HRAC). With the government leadership in support, the HRAC committee (composed of community elders), which later became the Helen Reef Marine Resource Management Project Board, developed an action plan and carefully managed and implemented the inception and growth of the project through various challenges. These early challenges included a complete lack of funding⁸⁵, lack of training and experience in project management and western-modelled conservation management, the remote physical distance of Helen Reef, and the (especially early on) varied expressions of concern and resistance from community members whom were not sure of the intent and outcomes of this pilot project and the multiple and varied stakeholder interests. Between the years of 1996 – 1999 many public meetings were held, many consultations were made with CNN representatives visiting from Hawaii, and many HSG legislative meetings were held and resolutions passed. Each step of the way the community and leaders wanted to make sure that; a) illegal poachers were deterred; b) the biodiversity of Helen Reef was protected; c) traditional practices were valued and promoted; and d) that the community had opportunities for training in project related areas.

⁸⁵ It had always been difficult to secure national ROP funding or international donor funding for any projects to support Hatohobei or Helen Reef as from the outsider perspective and development models, these places were too remote to successfully manage conservation projects (or otherwise). Clearly, the Hatohobei community has proved this misconception wrong.

With that initial \$USD25,000 NZAID funding, the early successes of the program resulted in a grant renewal for \$USD35,000. On the 3rd year the HRMRMP secured a \$USD700,000 grant. This helped secure infrastructure for the officers at Helen Reef, training for office administrators, SCUBA training, and a foundation for an operational office in the Malakal commercial port district of Koror. With the initial funding in year one, several young Tobian men successfully completed a marine enforcement training program with the ROP police force and were soon actively living and patrolling on Helen Reef. The ongoing challenges for leadership and the project continued to involve the limited access to the remote island, limited supplies and therefore, concerns for the health and safety of these young men. This was especially a concern considering their potential (and actual) engagement with illegal fishing (primarily from Indonesia and the Phillipines, but also Taiwan and Vietnam) boats and the dangers therein. An additional and unexpected early challenge was conflict with the first project manager, an outsider recommended by the CCN representatives. The conflict was largely due to the expectations of this outside conservationist whom was working with outside models and a community that had no education or experience working with western conservation methods. Of course, this was all exacerbated by the remote conditions and minimal funding support. A key development at this point involved the leadership of then HSG delegate Thomas Patris. After the resignation of the first project manager and an open hiring application process, the HRMRP committee hired Wayne Andrew (see Plate 5.12), a then 25-year old Tobian man whom had no experience whatsoever in project management, but also was someone with potential for growth and that first and foremost, lived within the framework of Tobian tradition and respects. Once again, the foundation here is around the ideology and practice of the “in-charge complex”. When communication, projects or decisions need

to be made, when support and leadership is required, it takes place through the fluidity of the various and layered “in-charge complex” relationships throughout the community. With regards to support with projects and/or tasks, elders can call upon younger siblings or other family members to provide that active support. In the case of values, priorities and traditions, in the end, this process places deference toward the elders of the community. Information is passed on and guidance is made through the senior elders in “in-charge” relationships. Political contestations will often take place but these are negotiated through respect relations within these networks. At times, these contestations stall or block activities but this all serves well as a check-and-balance system that is maintaining values and principles of Hatohobei culture and society.

Well in this case, and in contrast to the first (outsider) project manager for the HRMRMP, Wayne was/is embedded in the community through his clan and family “in-charge” relationships and as he lives through these relationships, it places him so very well with engaging development and leadership efforts in this capacity within the community. With this all in mind, as a natural leader and within this working foundation, Wayne’s larger efforts have consistently been toward community development and the best interests of Hatohobei (and Helen Reef). Most of his generation had left Palau and not returned or did not have education or training beyond a year or two of high school. Wayne had grown up in Hatohobei, graduated from Palau High school, and then left to study and complete a vocational training program in construction at the Pohnpei Agriculture and Training School (PATS) in Kolonia, Pohnpei, the capital of the Federated States of Micronesia. Wayne had returned to Palau in 2000 and was teaching elementary education and engaging the Tobian youth in various sporting activities and study groups when this opportunity arrived. During this

time, Wayne initiated and organised the Hatohobei Youth Association (HYA). If the first significant decision that founded the success of the HRMRMP was the public acknowledgement that Helen Reef was collectively owned by the people of Hatohobei, then the second significant decision for the ongoing successes was the hiring of Wayne as the HRMRMP project manager. Wayne is a charismatic and skilled leader with a deep passion for the future of Hatohobei. Through his efforts, first as the HRMRMP Project Manager and later as Project Director (and now Executive Director) the pilot project has grown into a fully operational program that is a successful working model for community based marine resource management across Micronesia. He has helped to facilitate the educational growth of the project staff, managed capacity building and linked this all with the community's values and long-term interests. Although in the Tobian worldview he was seen as too young to hold a leadership position in the community, Wayne had (and has) the unique ability to engage and transcend both local community respects and politics, as well as Palau national level politics, and also outside Western models and practices. On numerous occasions, I have observed Wayne trouble-shooting political, logistical, human resource, and management challenges. He was/is able to work within the Hatohobei traditional respect relationships through his local knowledge (and relationships through the "in-charge complex"), as well as with the relationships with the Palau national government leadership, western international donors, NGOs and personnel, as well as the wider (and diverse) Micronesian communities and leadership. Wayne is well versed in these varied epistemologies, approaches, values, models and overall differences, and has the capacity to continue nurturing these varied relationships for the betterment of the Hatohobei community. At the local level, I often observed Wayne meeting the challenges of the developing project and negotiating carefully through conflicts with

various clan leadership positions and priorities. He would carefully negotiate through these contentious issues and events by nurturing the respect relations with the elders through the “in-charge complex” relationships. Every step of the way, all challenges and decisions for such community development efforts entailed Wayne consulting with his elders (through the “in-charge” relationships) and troubleshooting conflicts and contestations as necessary. This was almost always through storytelling sessions. At the same time, Wayne was able to call upon community members to reach out through their “in-charge” family relationships and step through contestations or contribute to various project tasks and development as necessary. This was/is not without challenging political sensitivities within clan leadership interests, agendas and even individual personalities. I have often observed Wayne working his best to engage and action western-modelled activities, agendas and funding requirements for the community betterment but finding contestations within the community based on varying clan positions and agendas. This is a tricky position to engage and requires patience, sensitive communications, and a thick skin. Overall, Wayne operates very well in nurturing these relations and sensitivities, along with the outsider agendas and models and this has benefited the community in many ways that continue to unfold. I consider him to be a formative transformative agent for and with the Hatohobei community, but also within larger Palau and wider Micronesia.



Plate 5.13 Wayne Andrew presenting overview of management plan on transport vessel outside of Helen Reef, 2009 (D.Tibbetts)

Under Thomas Patris and the HRMRMP Board guidance and Wayne Andrew's leadership and networking skills, the project has expanded significantly over the past 17 years. With Wayne now as Executive Director, the HRMRMP has trained local staff that occupy various positions; Director, Project Manager, Finance Officer, two Administrative Staff, and eight marine enforcement officers that rotate on 6-month intervals to Helen Reef. The HRMRMP continues to provide training to upcoming younger generations and has become a source of income and wider opportunities for many Tobians. The program has developed working relationships with larger national and regional networks including the Palau Area Network (PAN) and Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMA), as well as national and regional donors such as the Micronesian Conservation Trust (MCT) and the Palau Conservation Society (PCS), as well as international NGOs and donors such as Natural Equity, Conservation International, The Prince Albert of Monaco Foundation, and OneReef. These

relationships and the successes of this small community are now modelled in various small island communities across Micronesia. Wayne and the HRMRMP team continue to lead collaborative efforts in sharing the HRMRMP challenges and successes in community meetings across the region, all with the intent of promoting cultural heritage maintenance across Micronesia, as well as, of course, Hatohobei.

5.9 Providing HOPE

Because of these successes and the experience and networks gained through the HRMRMP development, through Wayne's initiative a local NGO called Hatohobei Organisation for the People and Environment (HOPE) was established in 2010. With the HRMRMP focused on Helen Reef community efforts, HOPE (yes, a well suited acronym) was established to focus on community concerns around the loss of traditional knowledge and capacity building (whether it be learning Hatohobei traditional practices or writing formal reports, or otherwise). With such concerns in mind, HOPE was constructed entirely around the concept of cultural heritage maintenance and is an infrastructure and machinery that paradoxically politicizes Hatohobei culture and heritage while also providing a vehicle for the community to engage forward from this grounding concern around cultural heritage maintenance. HOPE operates to secure grant funding for various community programs, as well as provide logistical support as needed. Both the Hatohobei Youth Association (HYA) and the Hatohobei Women's Association (HWA) operate under the umbrella of HOPE, which also serves as a fundraising tool for community projects in these areas. I make note here of significant community efforts toward promoting Hatohobei cultural heritage in more explicit forms than we have experienced before. Here we find the use of cultural heritage as a tool that promotes Hatohobei identity while simultaneously

reinforcing pathways toward and within relationships that all ground to Hatohobei as a “sphere of nurture” for individuals and the collective.

Spitting out his betel chew, Tohbwich laughs at the double irony involved with the similarities between the Hatohobei Organisation for the People and Environment formation and the shaman Mantruior’s contestations (and later lamentations) over Augustin Kramer’s Südsee Expedition demands and impacts on the Hatohobei people over a century earlier. Where Mantruior, out of concern for Hatohobei traditions and future, demanded that these early outsiders leave the island for the continuity and safety of Hatohobei heritage, HOPE is now embracing the outside influences and dangers by utilising outsider models and infrastructure and engaging cultural heritage politics in order to preserve Hatohobei heritage into the uncertain future. Tohbwich is tickled yet again. He suggests to me that this is yet a new method of the community, through its “in-charge” relationships, connecting through and engaging within its common “sphere of nurture”, and successfully imagining and making their future forward with various local and external resources. He suggests that Mantruior, whom predicted the negative impacts of the Augustin Kramer visit on the Hatohobei community so long ago, is still guiding the community through the stories and events of history, and the community is actively engaging that history forward in a proactive and positive way. He suggests to me, that where Mantruior was at that time so frightened and concerned for the island and people, as a shaman that connected with the spirit world, he had never lost HOPE for his people. He continues to chant and dance to this day. Once again, I find myself learning from my dear friend Tohbwich.

Several recent events and projects supported through HOPE have been the 2012 Hatohobei Constitution Day Festival, the first ever organised event for the community to recognise and celebrate its state constitution status and Hatohobei heritage. I was in attendance at this event in Echang that included speeches, food stalls, dance performances and many visitors from across Palau. This was the first organised and

formally (and politically) recognised display of Hatohobei cultural heritage in the history of Hatohobei at the nation-state level. Since 2012 HOPE has organised and held bi-weekly community fundraisers in the Echang community where they provide local foodstuffs (for a donation), sell “Helen Reef” and “Hatohobei” styled T-Shirts, and show a mainstream film on an open-air cinema apparatus. These funds go toward future and ongoing HYA and HWA projects and programs. These HOPE funded projects include learning traditional practices such as weaving from the elders, as well as recent and increasing youth visits to Hatohobei and Helen Reef (see Plate 5.14a-d, p. 220). This latter effort began a reconnecting of younger Tobian generations with the physical environment of both Hatohobei and Helen islands. This cultural heritage movement through the vehicle of HOPE introduces younger generations to the physical “sphere of nurture” that grounds all of Hatohobei (through the land, ancestors, genealogy, and of course, carried through relationships within the “in-charge complex”). These younger generations have not grown up in Tobi, they have not learned and engaged in active living practices on the island. Rather, they have grown up in Echang and larger Palau listening to stories from their elders and they have shared and enjoyed foodstuffs from the distant home island and learned to identify with the significance of Hatohobei and their identity through their “in-charge complex” relationships and the physically disconnected, Hatohobei “imaginary”. They are enjoying this reconnection to their “sphere of nurture” as a generational group and this is indeed a new marker point in Hatohobei history. This is an entirely new and transformative period and process that is actively reconnecting the Hatohobei youth with their heritage. These first-time youth engagements with Hatohobei and Helen Reef are an empowering revival of a linkage to the physical home environment that suggests a very promising future for Hatohobei.

So, this active pride and presence in promoting Hatohobei cultural heritage is experienced at two levels; a) more active participation in the ROP national level sphere activities and promotions; and more deeply empowering, b) an increasing and unified participation of Hatohobei youth that are realising the deeper connections and meaning of Hatohobei as their sphere of nurture. With the youth engagement also comes the parenting engagement and linkage with the elders (and all the knowledge that is then shared through storytelling and practice). The latter youth engagement is taking place through the HOPE vision (initiated by Wayne Andrew and Thomas Patris, and supported by the elders and HSG) and formal activities organised through the HYA and HWA groups. A huge component of this empowerment comes through the Hatohobei women that comprise the latter group. It is consistently through their efforts on the ground that activities and events are initiated and carried forward. These women are continually looking toward traditional practices and knowledge to prepare younger generations for the uncertain Hatohobei futures.

For a few brief examples, I point to a national-level Palau Arts festival in 2015 where HOPE supported the Hatohobei Youth Organisation (HYO) and Hatohobei Women's Organisation (HWA) in providing the infrastructure for Hatohobei dance performances and a display booth promoting local food stuffs and craftsmanship. (Please see Plate 5.14, Plate 5.16 below).

As mentioned above, with more frequent chartered visits to Hatohobei and Helen Reef (through HRMRMP funding and infrastructure), we are now seeing organised youth education and awareness programs that include visits to Hatohobei and Helen Reef. These programs are promoting both conservation awareness as well as knowledge of customs, skills, and practices that are linked with the home environment. (Please see Plate 5.15, Plate 5.16). Additional HYA and HWA activities now include

weekend Echang village rubbish clean up and tidying of public spaces (this includes youth and parents/adults). HOPE is also now providing the infrastructure for tutoring programs for elementary and high school students, as well as gardening programs and the newly formed Women of Tobi (WOT) group (detailed in Chapter Six, p. 283).



a.



b.



c.



d.

Plate 5.14 a-d: Hatohobei Youth celebrating Hatohobei Culture, Palau Arts Festival, 2014 (HOPE Office, 2014)



Plate 5.15 Hatohobei Cultural Display, Food stuffs, Palau Arts Festival, 2014 (HOPE Office, 2014)



a.



b.



c.

Plate 5.16 a.-c. Hatohobei Youth Association, Hatohobei Visit, July 2015 (HOPEOffice, 2014)



Plate 5.17 HOPE and HSYO launch Hope for Youth Tutoring Program, Echang “Making Waves Giving Hope” (HOPE Office, 2016)



**Plate 5.18 Weekly HYO Weekend Community Clean-up, Echang
(HOPE Office, July 2016)**

In 2013/14 HOPE also helped host and facilitate a language project with Dr. Peter Black and his wife Barbara (Bobbi) Black⁸⁶. This reveals community empowerment through a long-term relationship between community friend (and researcher) and “promised-brother” to Sisma Andrew, through the in-charge complex relationship, roles and expectations. Through his role as “promised brother” to Sisma, Dr. Black has engaged in his community relationships and actions through the “in-charge complex”. The long-term nurturing of these relationships (and the pathways involved) has provided him with the framework, guidance and support to initiate this project and speak and collaborate with elders holding extensive traditional knowledge and language abilities. This project took place over a 12-month period and as I explain

⁸⁶ Please see the FOTI website <http://www.friendsoftobi.org/> to view the 3 research reports for this collaborative language documentation project with the community and Dr. Peter Black and Barbara (Bobby) Black.

in the next chapter, I was fortunate to be visiting Palau during Peter and Bobbi's 2nd of three visits for this project. The project, Documenting Ramari Hatohobei ("documenting the language of Hatohobei") is yet another example of the community efforts to preserve and promote Hatohobei heritage, knowledge and identity (through language documentation). With Peter and Bobbi's long-term relationship with the community, several community members, including elders, worked intensively in this project and the outcomes involve video documentation of Hatohobei language speakers, training of community volunteers on video and audio-recording techniques, an ongoing database of language documentation, and a Tobian-English dictionary for the community to continue to develop and maintain. This invaluable collaborative effort (please see Plate 5.19, Plate 5.20, and Plate 5.21) between long-time community friends, the HOPE infrastructure and staff, and community elders and volunteers exemplifies again, the community concerns toward language and knowledge loss, and their efforts in cultural heritage maintenance and the support for this over the long-term. All of these examples highlight community-based efforts that are engaged through the implicit family and clan respects of the "in-charge complex" and with the organisational and logistical support of HOPE.



Plate 5.19 Dr. Peter Black, Barbara Black, Nixon Andrew, Documenting Ramari Hatohobei in Malakal, Koror (D.Tibbetts, October, 2013)



Plate 5.20 Nixon Andrew, Audio/Video Interviewing Elders for the Documenting Ramari Hatohobei Project (D.Tibbetts, October, 2013)



Plate 5.21 Sisma Andrew, Nixon Andrew, Barbara Black, Documenting Ramari Hatohobei Project. (D.Tibbetts, October, 2013)

I point us to a few more examples that have reconnected the community to the physical environments of Hatohobei and Helen Reef. There is now increased funding for infrastructure at Helen Reef and this provides for a more secure working/living environment for staff and visitors. In 2013 the HRMRMP was able to purchase two new outboard boats to be based in Helen Reef. In December of 2014 new satellite telecommunications infrastructure was put in place at Helen Reef. All of this provides more safety for the personnel at Helen Reef and grows the infrastructure toward long term sustainability.



a.



b.



c.

Plate 5.22 Satellite Infrastructure. a: New Satellite Communications Tower; b.: Enforcement officers' swearing-in; c.: New Housing, Helen Reef, January 2015 (HRMRMP).

Additionally, with more funding the project has now been able to contract a 90' vessel (see Plate 5.23) for alternate monthly visits to Helen Reef and Hatohobei. This has allowed more return visits by more community members than has been realised in the recent past, and as mentioned above, is now including organised activities around environmental education and awareness as well as cultural preservation and knowledge transference.



Plate 5.23 HOPE, HRMRMP and OneReef Micronesia now hire this vessel for transportation to/from Hatohobei and Helen Reef. (HRMRMP, 2015).

The most interesting recent development has been Wayne's engagement with an International Donor NGO, Natural Equity, based in San Francisco. Through several visits and presentations to marine conservation groups in Hawaii and Silicon Valley, what developed out of this relationship was the establishment of OneReef (based in San Francisco) and OneReef Micronesia (with Wayne as Director, based in Palau) in 2013. The idea of OneReef Micronesia is a relationship that connects philanthropists interested in protecting coral reefs and marine biodiversity with local-level communities that best know how to protect and manage those resources. Through this relationship, HOPE and OneReef Micronesia have recently (December, 2014) brought

outside marine conservationists and philanthropists to visit with the community and discuss opportunities together (Plate 5.24). This is entirely new and empowering territory for the Hatohobei community. Such outsider funding and support (through technical expertise and otherwise) on this scale assures the community of security and a foundation to protect and utilise their resources sustainably and promote their community development and visions forward.



Plate 5.24 HOPE and OneReef Marine Conservationists' Visit December, 2014.

What HOPE and OneReef Micronesia are presently working on for the community is an USD\$1,000,000 (one million) endowment fund that helps to sustain the community and future generations into perpetuity. The seeds of this potential endowment project have already been established through the recent \$USD150,000 Prince Albert of Monaco Fund. These are exciting developments that bring yet more potential for re-establishing an active community on Hatohobei. Not very long ago, one would not have imagined that the Tobian engagements with outsiders would develop ongoing linkages all the way to Silicon Valley. The Hatohobei voyaging spirit is alive and well. And with it returns the revitalisation of Hatohobei cultural heritage.

Returning again to the development of the HRMRMP and regarding the challenges of establishing and progressing the project, I highlight here the impact of the leadership of Thomas Patris and Wayne Andrew through two short stories below.

Firstly, there has been a consistent leadership vision for the community from (former) Governor Thomas Patris since 1984. Thomas Patris served as the Hatohobei State Government Delegate to the ROP national government from 1984 – 2008 (24 years) and has served HSG Governor since 2009, his second term running through to July, 2016. During this period as a state-government leader, Thomas experienced the U.S. Trust Territory Government, Palau Constitutional Government, the nine political referendums and associated violence before Palau independence in 1994, and since independence, the ongoing challenges of nation-building in the Republic of Palau. All of this experience comes through the lens and position as a leader of a marginalised minority community in Palau. I recall a time when Governor Patris explained to me his actions over his years as a delegate in the national government.

“Dave, we are Tobians, we are not a priority for the national leaders. I have always had to be very quiet and cautious with our state-level agenda and only slowly planted seeds that could grow over time. It is about respects and our relationship to grow together. The national government leaders have many other priorities and concerns and we are not high priority. We have always had to have a long-term vision and stick to it and it has been very challenging so many times and we just have to keep trying.” (personal communication, Governor Patris, August, 2012).

While this quote provides insight into the barriers toward community development at the state and national level, a quote from Wayne provides additional insight into the challenges of leadership and community development efforts in

Hatohobei. He shared with me that he has always been conflicted with notions of tradition and working with outsiders and outside models toward the program's conservation efforts and otherwise. I remember him sharing with me on the beach in Hatohobei in 2008 that, "It is always as if one fist (tradition) is punching another fist (western models/modernity) (with his closed hands showing this action)". This highlights the differences between cross-cultural approaches, models and expectations, as well as the internal politics within the Hatohobei clan system. Regarding the latter here, there has been a continual contestation and strategizing by various leaders within the Hatohobei community to control the HRMRMP Board and the increased interface and relationship opportunities with outsider NGOs and donors. This is a normal feature and process of political strategies within the community and is highlighted at certain times and with select individuals that are (understandably) sensitive to deep family and clan division, including the contested chiefly leadership history and contemporary status. While my ghostly mentor friend Tohbwich quietly asks me to refrain from sharing further around these sensitivities, I will say that this feature and practice emanating from this factionalism results in a constant check and balance system within the community around important events and decisions, but also acts as a deterrent to community project outcomes, or in some cases, considerably slows them down. Along with the conflicting approaches and expectations of outside donor models and practitioners, this is the frustration that Wayne is speaking about in his quote above and another quote below (p.233).

In a 2007 storytelling session with Thomas Patris he expressed that he thought there would be changes away from this clan factionalism with upcoming generations. I share an excerpt from this session with him below. At the time we were sitting in the Longshoremen Restaurant in Malakal. This is a favoured restaurant and meeting place

for Palauan elected leaders, and happens to occupy a space right next to the Hatohobei State Government office, and across from the Palau commercial port operations.

The old style communication and family style, this also related to family differences. It came from some land claims and chiefly claims...Andrew and Patris families, by customs. In the in 60's things happened over the land. They then went separate. Those generations, there are a few left. I am still part of it, as I saw the beginning of it. Few years later, people moved off Tobi, came to Koror, and they stick together. Families in Koror, though, needed each other, and came together, used the same canoe, same house, etc. Relatives, cousins, they all shared. But somehow, the older people, who had bitterness in them, were, are still stubborn, and start to split things again. But the younger ones, teenage and twenties, they stick together. Somehow, the new kids, the word got out that something was happening, then the whole family just split (two families). The old ways, family politics, communication was slower and information (and politics) (more) easily kept from people. The youth coming up (now), with better communication technology, are seeing how some of the old family ways/politics (clan factionalism), some trickery, some lying... is hurting future progress. The youth now with internet, cell phones, are getting more information circulated more quickly and realising some of the negative things with the old styles of communicating (politically, factionally). Kids start to see the lies tricks, old ways, between families and they don't like it. The new generation is changing. They could really see this old style of politics in the last election (2006) and have learned how they want to make changes, working together more, united, for the future of Tobi and Helen Reef. The new generation see the families today as the pillar of the community, and they also know the family histories, and the family politics. They have learned and see things differently than before. Kids now are aware of what's going on, what is happening in the state and in the national government. Some are very keen as to what is going on with the (Helen) project and want to get involved. (Thomas Patris, August 2007).

Before making sense out of this further, I share below a Skype text update to me from Wayne Andrew in July, 2015. I had initially asked him for an update on the status of the HRMRMP, HOPE, OneReef Micronesia and the proposed endowment fund from Conservation International and Natural Equity. Via Skype text Wayne replied to my query as follows:

[6/07/2015 8:16:15 p.m.] Wayne Andrew: When i was involved in 2006, i did not like the approach with CI and Natural Equity by incentivizing our efforts with dollar amount. I protested this giving us money in exchange for conservation at Helen Reef. Later in 2009 when i became chair of Helen Reef Board, i resumed talks with Natural Equity (Chris Lafrachi) and he liked my recommendations for a equal partnership agreement, where we own the resources and like to protect it. he has a pool of community who loves coral reefs and want to contribute to its protection so by linking us up we can have an equal partnership that can work for a trial of 5 years and if it all works well during the trial then we can have a longer agreement. HOPE continued to explore the endowment idea for Helen Reef. In 2012 we got a small grant from Packard to hire a consultant to do the due diligence study on it. At end we have completed a sub account with the Micronesia Conservation Trust and are working with OneReef and CI to seed the fund. We secured with CI a 150K Euro from Prince Albert of Monaco for project recapitalization and a small amount to seed the endowment. We are formalizing the contract this week on this grant to give it a go.

[6/07/2015 8:20:29 p.m.] Wayne Andrew: we have a Marine Conservation Agreement in Place with OneReef to fund about 35K each year in addition to what we are getting from PAN

[6/07/2015 8:21:10 p.m.] Wayne Andrew: This agreement is for 5 years trial and this year is the last year and up for review and renewal

[6/07/2015 8:26:01 p.m.] Wayne Andrew: We are working so hard here

[6/07/2015 8:26:59 p.m.] Wayne Andrew: Sometimes my community dont see, and so thats why i feel very hurt when people talk trash about me...they dont do anything to help us forward...just talk trash

[6/07/2015 8:27:47 p.m.] Wayne Andrew: Whether Delegate or not...I am still Tobian...and i better do the best i can for my children and the future of Hatohobei...We are doing well here mare and hoping you will come home soon.

If we consider both Thomas Patris' (2007) story and Wayne's brief Skype text above, we can see that despite all of the ongoing successes, contrary to Thomas' wishful thinking, Tobian clan factionalism continues to feature in community decision making processes. Although Wayne expresses frustration with this, he also knows that he must continue with his leadership efforts that are guided by Helen Reef, HOPE and OneReef Micronesia board members (the former two consisting only of Hatohobei community members), and continue to use these entities as collaborative vehicles that provide funding relationships that provide for the betterment of the community. Wayne is also very cognizant that everyone (although sometimes contesting leadership actions and decisions) in the community is working their best for the security and betterment of the community and that his efforts will serve the community well and be carried forward by new leadership after him. During this rather progressive development period in Hatohobei, I suggest again that through his 'in-charge complex' relationships and particular skill sets, he has very successfully balanced efforts to combine traditional knowledge with outside models and also respectfully progress through clan factionalism in a way that benefits all going forward.

In addition to Wayne's carefully nuanced nurturing through this clan factionalism, it could be that in another 10-20 years, the younger generations that Thomas speaks about above will be in better positions to ignore such factional politics.

Or the clan factionalism will evolve constructively in new ways, especially around the revitalisation efforts that continue to unify community members around and through the community empowerment felt through the reconnections with island of Hatohobei and through the increasing and meaningful usefulness of Helen Reef as a resource. Either way, for now, what continues to work beyond this factional strategizing is the western-modelled NGO boards that have their own check and balance systems. If we return to the “in-charge complex” and ask ourselves who is in charge of the island and community today, we may consider that it is the outside donors (actively and potentially) that are providing the stability and sense of security to the community for the long term. Yet that is foremost within the framework of Hatohobei tradition and the “in-charge complex”. It is the clan elders that have continued to contest, inform and guide the decisions of the community and this has happened through the elected leadership roles of Governor Thomas Patris and former Delegate Wayne Andrew. This has taken place through the the “in-charge complex” and engaging *momou* through family and clan relationships each day and especially, around important events. This will continue with future elected leadership and elders in future generations. Hence, the ongoing nurturing of traditional values and respects with progressive community empowerment by the community. This interesting flexible and adaptive feature of the Tobian community empowerment (through the “in-charge complex” relationship respects structure) is especially so if it is this largely unseen, unknown, outside source that they nurture to help revitalise Hatohobei cultural heritage, when for years prior, all of the Hatohobei elders could do was lament the loss of this heritage. As outlined conceptually at the beginning of this chapter, Hatohobei living traditions and Helen Reef as a marine conservation project/resource have become tools that both politicise Hatohobei culture and identity as well as sustain it forward within the paradoxical

nature of cultural heritage maintenance. As well, the community has come a long way with managing their natural resources, from engineering and maintaining the impressive taro patch on the interior of the island, to the engineering of HMRMRP and HOPE projects that protect and maintain Hatohobei traditions and the abundance of resources from Helen Reef.

With a seraphic smile as he husked a coconut and pondered these stories, Tohbwich pointed toward the horizon and calmly suggested that we be mindful of the darkening skies ahead. His new friend Medichiibelau had just rushed off in haste, with his own concerns about the changing weather and more immediate to this concern, the welfare of his friends in Kayangel, the far north atoll island of Palau⁸⁷.

As we leave our discussion of grounded examples of more explicit forms of cultural heritage that are leading toward a cultural revitalisation within the Hatohobei landscape, I share a photo (see below Plate 5.25) of the late former Governor Crispin Emilio's son now living and studying in Hawaii. In the past 20 or so years I have lived, worked and connected with many younger generation Tobians living abroad. They have all continued to live the Hatohobei way implicitly through their family relationships and the "in-charge complex" structure. This was always done quietly and informally with humility. It is interesting to note now that with increasing younger Hatohobei generations born or assimilating into new cultures and societies from a young age, we are now experiencing nostalgia and pride for home that is expressed more explicitly, as in Plate 5.25 below. Here, Dex Emilio overlooks the Hawaiian seaways with a view to family and community in Hatohobei and with the Hatohobei State flag enveloping his physical body. These new embodiments and expressions of

⁸⁷ This concern is highlighted early in the following Chapter Six.

pride and nostalgia for Hatohobei cultural heritage are just the beginning. What will these younger generations, with their new and developing skill sets and respects for the home island do with these feelings and connections?

As an overview and reflecting on our discussion in Chapter Four, we can see through these stories and examples that the Hatohobei community is greatly concerned about its heritage and physical disconnection from the island. Engaging through the family “in-charge complex” and clan system, the community is grounded to and empowered by, its “sphere of nurture” (Ingold, 2012), which is Hatohobei island, family land and genealogies. Community decisions and empowerment comes through “in-charge complex” (Black, 1982) relationships and behaviour. It is through this flexible and dynamic setting of relationships (and continual contestation and negotiation through concerns and events) that the collective Hatohobei leadership continues to selectively and creatively engage projects and programs with outsider models, funding, pathways and expertise. With the discussion I outline above, such actions have led to an ongoing reconnection to the physically distant home island. When we consider our earlier discussion around cultural heritage, this re-engagement with the home island by younger generations is guided by elders that hold knowledge of active living on the island. The knowledge transfer that takes place comes through “in-charge complex” pathways (and respects) and is continually remembered and selected by the elders based upon these relationships and the dynamics of contemporary events. The knowledge that comes through this selected memory (and knowledge transfer) comes from the history of relationships prior, and this continues to unfold through the “in-charge complex” and actions and decisions forward. The imagination involved in significant decisions, events and projects, is also a continued unfolding from the Hatohobei “sphere of nurture”, from history, into the future. This again,

speaks to Ingold's (2000) *relational model* around the concept of a *rhizome*, where we are constantly nurturing our life lines and intersecting with others that are nurturing their life lines. Those that are nurtured well grow further and continue on for others to link in and nurture forward. With the case of Hatohobei as a sphere of nurture for the community (in physical practice or in the diasporic imaginary), the contemporary physical reconnection highlighted above (especially with the younger generations) brings together an intensified, concentrated number of intersecting life lines that are engaged in a knowledge transfer process that is making a significant positive contribution toward community concerns around traditions and uncertain futures. In the case of the transformative leadership I discussed above, it is these two individuals, Thomas Patris and Wayne Andrew that carry the skills to work through the challenges of engaging often conflicting outside models and resources with local traditions and relationships, including clan factionalism. They were/are able to navigate through such conflicts and challenges for the betterment of all involved and with the long-term interests of the Hatohobei community in mind. If we think about "cultural heritage" as a political tool, as discussed early in this chapter, these two leaders have carefully nurtured relationships with outsider funding organisations and models and through this they have helped established local NGO's that are actively working to promote and sustain Hatohobei "cultural heritage". They and the community are actively using this tool for the benefit of the community into the long term. Future generations will take these events and stories and leadership actions forward into the continued unfolding of Hatohobei.

Tohwbich feels naughty and nostalgic again and asks me to recall one more time our friend Mantruior, the shaman whom warned the Hatohobei community that the visiting Augustin Kramer (and crew of four on the *Südsee Expedition*) (discussed

above, pg. 187) would bring danger. We can recall the irony that Kramer and the *Südsee Expedition* were operating under the framework of collecting ethnographic and biological data from a “dying culture” in the context of “western civilisation and modernity”, while simultaneously introducing influenza that wiped out a large number of the Tobi population within 6 months. Mantruior chanted, danced and cursed at these outsiders to leave. He tried his best to alert the community that these outsiders should leave and predicted correctly that they would bring calamity to them. As we consider Mantruior’s correct prediction here in these contemporary moments, and the impact that event had on the Hatohobei population (and decisions made thereafter), we appreciate the careful decisions that future leadership made with outsiders and their concerns for protecting the long term future of the community. As we can see with Thomas Patris and Wayne Andrew, they have carefully nurtured relationships with outsiders with the same intentions in mind. Whereas the German Administration and the *Südsee Expedition* historically attempted to collect, measure, record and document a “dying culture and people”, we can see that on the contrary, Hatohobei resilience and adaptation through unfolding events over time has continued to empower and sustain their unknown futures and an ongoing sense of identity to the island and its resources. All of this empowerment comes through the “in-charge complex” and through it, the sharing of local foodstuffs and storytelling.

As we leave this discussion around the Hatohobei community and cultural heritage, in Chapter Six we will now consider the collaborative efforts toward successful community development and reconnections with the home island while simultaneously facing various threats from increasingly erratic and unpredictable climate change events.



Plate 5.25 Dex Emilio, Honolulu, Hawaii, December 2015 (D.Emilio)

Chapter 6 Changing the Climate: Digging in the Taro Patch

“The weather change is very scary now...and Tobi is almost gone, the state have to charter a boat to take supplies to the islands...”

--Sheila Pedro, 28 July, 2011

This quote came from Sheila via a brief Facebook⁸⁸ private message in 2011. Sheila is from Hatohobei and lives in Koror, the urban centre of the Republic of Palau. At the time of this Facebook message I had not spoken with her since my last year-long visit to Palau in 2008. This happened to be the longest period of time that I had been away from Palau and Hatohobei since my first visit many years ago. Sheila was touching base with a brief hello and query as to my next return visit, and included this alarming statement. I had recently arrived in Cairns, Australia from New Zealand to begin my PhD studies at James Cook University. As outlined in Chapter Three, the impetus for the research emanated out of the community concerns around climate change events that we experienced and discussed in my 2008 visit. During that period, I managed to visit and stay on the island for over two months. On this particular visit I and my Hatohobei friends and family (that also had been away from the home island for a long time) found ourselves deeply concerned with the increased levels of soil erosion around the island⁸⁹. Along with this visual evidence I also listened to stories

⁸⁸ At this time in 2011 not many Tobians had access to computers. The Facebook utility is a recent phenomenon in the community and has become a useful and inexpensive method for communicating with family and friends living abroad. As recent as 2015 almost all younger generation Tobians are accessing the internet and Facebook on a regular basis. Through photo uploads and updates this method of correspondence continues the strong connection with the home island for those living abroad. This is a very interesting area to further explore and analyse how such telecommunications technologies contribute to Pacific island community diasporic dynamics, as well as what this means with regards to cultural heritage and the commodification of traditional knowledge.

⁸⁹ Upon arrival by ship at early sunrise when we were close enough to view the island shore with binoculars, our first and mutual surprised acknowledgements were the amount of coconut trees and earth that had been naturally removed from the island shoreline. We were in shock. After being away for significant amounts of time (I had last visited Tobi island in 2006, some others had been away much longer.), the loss of earth and overall coastal erosion of the island was very noticeable. Our first moments on the island amounted to an entire walk-around survey, where we took the opportunity to take numerous photo images of the earth and soil erosion.

from several elders (Katyrdis Andrew, Lorenzo Simeon, Domiciano Andrew) explaining about sea water encroaching upon the fresh groundwater lens and, consequently, its negative impact on the fresh groundwater lens and growing healthy taro. After two months on the island we returned to Echang and shared our stories and concerns through a video (*Hatohobei State of Mind*⁹⁰, 2008) we made from film footage during that visit. From those conversations and stories I learned that there had definitely been a general community concern around changing climate events and impacts in recent years. With a sense of increasing reality and uncertainty, elders were asking me what they could do about these events and concerns. I had no answers whatsoever. Indeed, what can a small and remote island community do in face of increasingly erratic climate threats?

Since that visit in 2008, Sheila's 2011 message to me is the first time I have heard this type of dramatic description of climate event impacts on the island. It also proved to me that my research efforts were definitely important at the community level, with this kind of message obviously a part of the local-level discourse. Having a close and long-term relationship with the Hatohobei community and having visited the island many times, this is something that I found both shocking and unimaginable while sitting in my new office space at James Cook University, completely detached from the realities of the island. My mind and heart spun around a few times as I pondered her message on the screen. What did she mean exactly? How can the island be 'almost

⁹⁰ Erik Tomlinson, a friend of the community who was visiting Echang at the time, kindly lent myself, Nixon and Wayne Andrew a Sony Hi-Fi Video Camera for our extended visit to Hatohobei and Helen Reef. Nixon, Wayne and I filmed 6 hours of video footage over a one-month period. Upon return to Echang, Erik kindly assisted Nixon and I with editing that 6 hours into a one-hour film, with Nixon adding in a narrative voice in select scenes. This family video has circulated widely amongst the community and was very welcomed, especially by those who have not been back to Hatohobei in many years. At the time, this film experience and surrounding dialogic initiated many new (and ongoing) discussions around nostalgia for the home island and food resources, the lifestyle, and also ongoing concerns about the environment and climate change impacts.

gone'? If the island is almost gone, what happens to the Hatohobei people, community, identity and collective histories and memories, as well as futures? My thoughts connected immediately to memories, relationships and connections to the physical island, as well as the potential consequences for the community from this threat (both real and perceived). A doomsday scenario is also a real-time reality in such situations.

After nine months of ethnographic fieldwork in 2012 (and two months of follow up fieldwork in 2013) it became clear to me that the island of Tobi is not physically "almost gone" (although very low-lying Helen Reef islet is rapidly sinking). There are rapid and increasing climate change events happening in both Hatohobei and Helen Reef. Through local experience and observations, the realities of climate events and the resulting uncertain futures contribute to a great confusion and concern from community members, which explains the meaning of Sheila's message to me in 2011. As we have discussed in connection with historical and contemporary events, the entire fabric of Hatohobei society, grounded in the "in-charge complex" and clan connections to physical land on the island, is grounded on the consciousness and practice of maintaining social harmony to protect itself from environmental or political threats. At that point, Sheila had not visited her island home in a long time (the case for many Tobians) but had heard of the physical changes and also knew that along with the physical threats to the island there were only a few people living there. Sheila was speaking primarily about more erratic weather events, as well as sea-level rise, erosion, biodiversity loss, food security concerns (in particular, the threat to fresh water), and sea-water inundation, especially with storms during high tides. In this context, she was also speaking about the community physical disconnect along with these climate threats when using the phrase "Tobi is almost gone". The phrase served as a metaphor for the alarm and concern for the disconnection and perceived loss of the island and Hatohobei

culture. Considering the increasing physical disconnect and imagery discussed in Chapter Four, one can understand the concerns that arise around the threatened loss of one's home island and "sphere of nurture". For some, just knowing that it exists in physical space validates and grounds their "sphere of nurture" that makes sense in all of their present experiences looking forward. The threat of potential loss means a great deal to those on the island, those that hope to return to the island, and those that ground their identity to the island which they have never visited (and may never visit). It obviously also eliminates the potential for opportunities to return to the island in future and quite literally, the loss of the actual land that links people to their clans and validates all that takes place through their "in-charge complex" relationships. We can appreciate to some degree how a "doomsday" discourse takes on extra meaning in a physically remote, diasporic and dual society setting such as Hatohobei (see Connell, 2003; Rudiak-Gould, 2011).

As discussed in the previous chapter, the fact that the community has recently begun to revitalise a physical connection with Hatohobei and Helen Reef through decades of strategic, long-term planning and efforts brings two contradicting thoughts;

1. A sense of irony that such efforts are now to no avail with a rapidly threatened and sinking island (this includes Helen Islet); and
2. On the contrary, perhaps that revitalisation of cultural heritage and increased physical connection with the island provides further meaning and advocacy toward adapting to these natural threats.

If the people of Hatohobei had proactively resisted and appropriated the many and varied influences, coercions and threats from outside visitors and colonial administrations over the past 100+ years, were they now prepared to face the threatened physical loss of their island? How is the Hatohobei community experiencing and

responding to these events and uncertainties? In what ways is this process culturally transformative? Addressing these questions forms the crux of this chapter.

6.1 Typhoon Haiyan Says Hello and Goodbye

Tohbwich asks me to share a recent story that relates to the intensification of erratic and extreme climate events due to global warming. It is such unpredictable events that are noticeably increasing and due to what is now commonly termed (and contested) as “climate change”, which I discuss in subsequent detail using the following story as a contemporary contextual grounding point. Super Typhoon Haiyan visited Palau in the early morning hours of 6 November, 2013. It was not a quiet or peaceful visit. Because the Echang village community had prepared for its arrival in the 24 hours prior, we all felt that we would be safe and secure in our homes that we had tied down and boarded up with various resources. We stocked up on food stuffs, water and batteries, and some of us had radios for weather updates. We would not realise until the next day how much the high winds and tidal surges had impacted the entire Palau archipelago (including Echang village) and completely ravaged the northernmost atoll of Kayangel (destroying homes and temporarily displacing the entire island population). This was a category-5 storm with sustained winds of 235 km/h (145 mph) and up to a high of 315 km/h (195 mph). It was the second Super Typhoon to hit Palau within 11 months (Typhoon Bopha visited on 2 December, 2012)⁹¹, a very unusual occurrence as the island archipelago is located south of the normal typhoon belt in the western North Pacific. Prior to this, the last typhoon to significantly impact Palau was Super Typhoon Louise in 1964. Among the many increasingly severe and erratic weather events happening across the Palau archipelago, it appears this type of event

⁹¹ I had arrived in Echang for fieldwork 20 days later on 22 December, 2012.

may occur more often in future. Among other changing and unpredictable weather events in the Pacific region, because of existing sea-level rise, when a typhoon of this size impacts land, not only are the high winds damaging, but significant damage from tidal surges impact all infrastructure: homes, gardens, taro patches, fresh ground water sources and food resources. Without a history of yearly typhoon impact, the Palau archipelago (and the Southwest islands, for that matter) have not required or prioritised infrastructure and logistical planning for such an event. Recovery efforts take time and without substantial emergency relief funds at the national and state government levels, the immediate and longer term recovery relies on the strength of family and community relationships.

Earlier in the day the Hatohobei State Government office made their regular calls by VHF radio to those members living in Hatohobei and Helen Reef. They too were preparing for the shifting weather system but were of course far south of the eye of the storm. It so happened that Dr. Peter Black and his wife Bobby (as discussed in the previous Chapter) were visiting Koror during this period and working on a *Hatohobei Ramari documentation project* with several Hatohobei community members. On this day, Wayne and I also called to check in with Peter and Bobby who were staying in a hotel in central Koror⁹². They too, were preparing for the storm, and it would be a week later that I was able to interview Peter⁹³ (a respected community

⁹² Not only are Peter and Bobby Black long-term friends of the community, in the context of the “in-charge complex”, Peter is an uncle to Wayne and an elder so naturally, there was a responsibility to check on Peter and Bobby’s well-being as the typhoon approached the island archipelago. Of course, later in the day, Nixon Andrew paid the similar respects by checking in on these two respected elders.

⁹³ It was serendipitous for me that Peter and Bobby were in Palau at this time. We were all working on projects with the community and to spend time with them and enjoy their long-term relationship and status within the Hatohobei community is quite special. I was very conscious of this and was fortunate to find time with Peter (and Bobby) for a video interview at their hotel in Koror on 22 October, 2013. Incidentally, the last half of the interview was missed on film as the interviewer (myself!) inadvertently and unknowingly had shut off the video camera. As Peter and I settled in to our discussion he was soon providing exceptional insights into contemporary Hatohobei culture and politics that I did not capture in the first 20 minutes of audio/video. I did take written notes, however.

elder, scholar, mentor and guide to me) on his thoughts about Hatohobei culture and future directions, before he and Bobby departed Palau to travel back to their home (*Fare Haparim*) (“house up high”) in Hawaii.

As the last significant typhoon took place in 1964, Tobians and younger generation Palauans are not terribly familiar with typhoons. It is a weather event that they really have not had much experience in preparing for in recent times, unlike islands to the north and in the typhoon belt.⁹⁴ While waiting out the storm, around 25 of us hunkered down at Wayne’s 2-story concrete house in Echang. After barbecue and stories, and securing all of the elderly and young children, and with the winds picking up, I remember Wayne asking me later in the night if I thought we would be fine. I assured him we were fine, “Yeah, I have been through many typhoons before in Guam and this is passing a bit north of us and we’ll be fine in our concrete house. Let’s enjoy the experience, brother.” Over-confidence in my part indeed, and a life lesson learned once again. Around midnight the eye of the storm passed and all became calm for about an hour. The literal “calm before the storm” has so much more meaning than the cliché. By midnight the winds continued to pick up and rain and debris began to spray in every direction, around and through the village and the house. The howls of wind and crashing of debris outside were deafening. Several of us in the main room of the home on the second floor were wide awake and making constant efforts to patch up the increasing flow of rainwater flooding in through the tin roof and windows. And then arrived the storm’s latest announcement of a loud roaring BOOM, a reminder of the intense, powerful and unwavering force of nature. This was that moment of peak

⁹⁴ In the Northern West Pacific region tropical depressions usually form in Pohnpei island in eastern Micronesia slowly develop into typhoons as they move west across Chuuk, the Caroline islands, and then slowly turn north toward Guam, the Commonwealth of the Mariana Islands (the CNMI, including Saipan, Tinian, Rota and Maug) and on toward the Philippines, Taiwan or Japan. This is known as the “typhoon belt” for this region.

interface when the fury of nature impacts on a fragile human construction. I recall Wayne coming out of his room seconds later asking me how are things? I didn't say a word but rather, pointed up to the sky and Wayne gazed up at the tin roof and structural beams that were no longer there (Plate 6.2, Plate 6.3). He and I and the other younger boys stood there peering at the sky and the raging natural elements. We spent the rest of the early morning hours relocating the elderly and young children to the downstairs of the house structure and then stories, food and betel nut ensued as we waited out the remaining storm. As the sun came up over Echang village we emerged from the house with a few other early risers and began assessing the damage. Some homes and boats and many trees were displaced, the sewage system for the village was overflowing, but all in all, there was no serious damage or bodily injury. Without power and water (over the next days and weeks), initial efforts focused on gathering further fresh water supplies and contacting other families and communities to assess the damage (Please see Plate 6.4, Plate 6.5.)

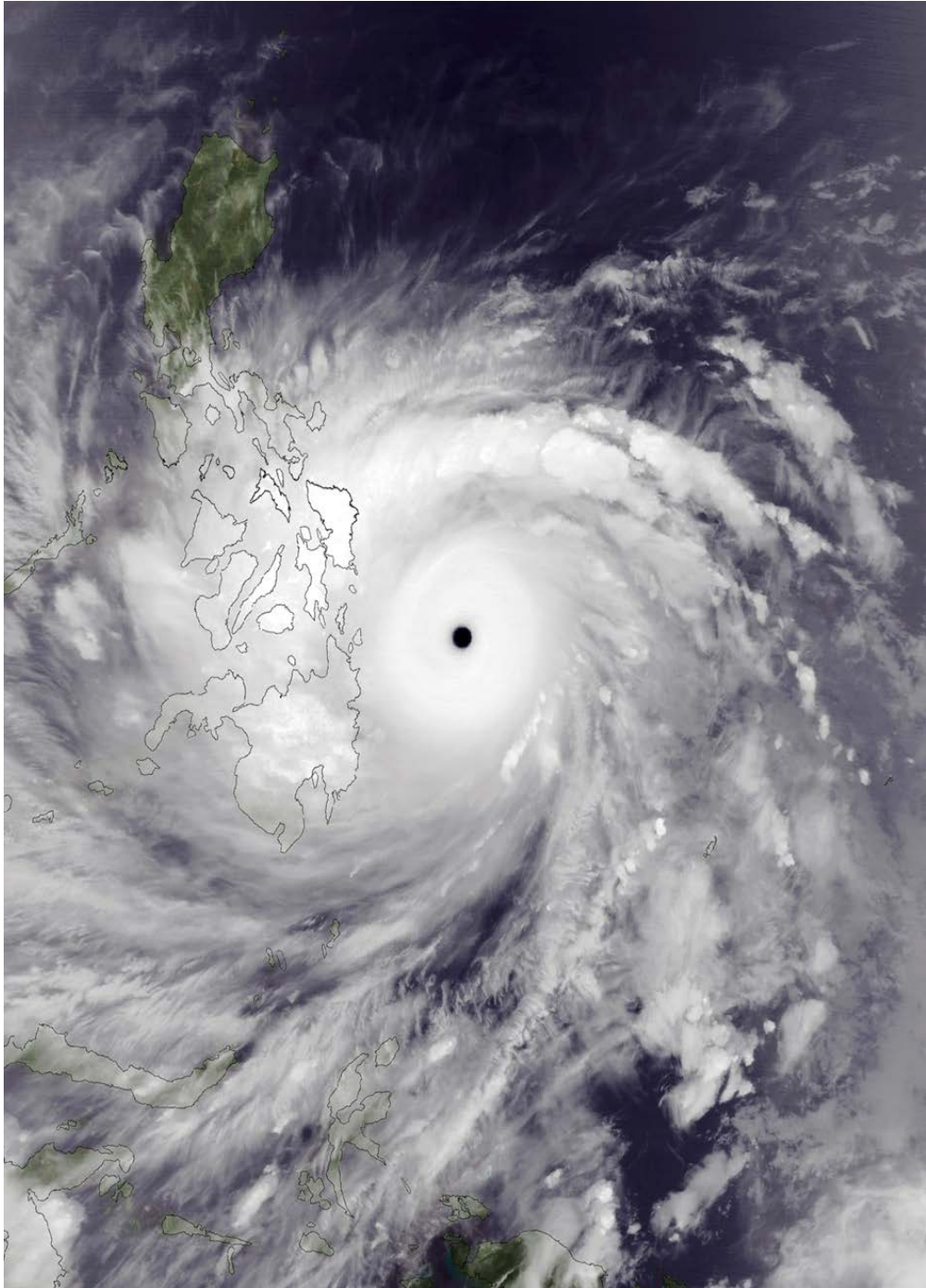


Plate 6.1 Typhoon Haiyan departing Palau and Heading to the Philippines (NASA, LAADS Web, HDF File, 7 November, 2013)



Plate 6.2 Wayne Andrew family home, post-typhoon Haiyan, 6 November, 2013. (D.Tibbetts)



Plate 6.3 Remains of the roof structure, 6 November, 2013. (D.Tibbetts)



Plate 6.4 Echang village, Post-Typhoon Haiyan, 6 November, 2013. (D.Tibbetts)



Plate 6.5 Post-Typhoon Haiyan, the rebuild begins. 6 November, 2013 (D.Tibbetts)

What I experienced in the village over this period was all of the family and community relationships coming together. All of such activities were operating of course, through the “in-charge complex” respect relationships. By the very next day there were pods of visitors coming to Wayne’s house, while many of us boys worked to repair the roof. The social support with food and drinks, labour and communications applied to all. This reminded me of the resilience of not only Pacific islands communities, but as I considered the Hatohobei community, the respects, security and resilience involved in the always unfolding process of the “in-charge complex” and associative decisions and actions involved. We went to check and assist sisters, brothers, aunties, uncles and parents’ homes and well-being. Everyone knew who to take care of and check on and how to carry forward as needed. This is but a brief example of how a severe acute temporal climate event is responded to with the physical, emotional and spiritual strength of the community. Through my discussions and observations that week with Wayne Andrew, (then) Governor Thomas Patris, and several elders, including an interview with Peter Black (discussed later below), I realised in a refreshed perspective that the Hatohobei community is well prepared for their ongoing responses to climate change. I discuss several events and these responses below, after I first share some more abstract background on climate change politics and adaptation.

6.2 Climate Change Politics

Global climate and weather patterns are the integral natural forces that humans engage on a daily basis, having impacted nature and society from time immemorial (see Hassan, 2009; Peterson and Broad, 2009). Our unsuccessful and successful historical human adaptations to global climate and weather patterns reveal the intimate

connection we humans have (or increasingly do not have) with the environment. Paleoclimatic research on the historical climate timeline has further developed our knowledge and understanding of climate change but we are still unclear about the magnitude, scale, timing and frequency of climatic changes, and what causes can be related to past global changes (see Crate and Nuttall, 2009; Hassan, 2009).

Let us first establish that we are currently experiencing a significant rise in global temperatures, with successively, 2015, 2016 and (thus far) 2017 as the hottest years on record⁹⁵. Let us also establish that the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) definitively acknowledges that global warming derives from anthropogenic drivers⁹⁶. Clive Hamilton's, *Defiant Earth* (2017) provides a comprehensive treatment of these anthropogenic drivers from an earth-systems framework and analysis and successfully argues that we are indeed in a new epoch on the Geological Time Scale, the *Anthropocene*. Global warming, or the phenomenon of "climate change" as we know it today, cuts across all sectors of global and local society. Climate change is impacting all peoples and cultures, and cultural transformations will happen in varying ways. In this discussion I suggest that we will continue to learn from the experiences of those who are facing the current and most intensive impacts changing weather patterns and phenomena.

Climate change also highlights the power imbalances between those governments and peoples that are well-positioned and advantaged in the global economic machinery, and those whom are not. The social and political inequalities that exist are exacerbated by climate change. The irony is not lost here. Those that are

⁹⁵ The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has announced we are set to pass the 1-degree Celsius of warming since pre-industrial times and that 2016 was the hottest year on record and this pattern continues into 2017.

⁹⁶ Please review IPCC, AR5 at http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg2/ar5_wgII_spm_en.pdf

leveraged well also are the ones that have helped contribute to global warming through over-consumption of resources and excessively affluent lifestyles, and who are also more inclined toward disconnection from the natural environment and changing weather patterns. Those who are more disconnected from the natural environment, of course, are more likely to be in denial about climate change or at the least, unaware and uninformed about it. Conversely, it is those that are marginalised by the dominant developed countries of affluence that share a stronger relationship with the environment and are of course, acutely feeling the impacts of climate change. Considering the geopolitics involved, as Crane and Nuttall state, “If we frame our inquiry on the scale of global geopolitics, we see the causes and effects of climate change to be about people and power, ethics and morals, environmental costs and justice, and cultural and spiritual survival” (Crane & Nuttall, 2009, p. 11). Naomi Klein’s *This Changes Everything: Climate Change vs. Capitalism* (2014) provides a thorough critique on neo-liberal capitalistic policy and how it informs geo-politics and perpetuates this cycle of growing social injustices and environmental costs. Her broader critique suggests there is only hope for a sustainable future if capitalistic models (and practices) are significantly altered and that this will only happen through immediate social and political movements.

Indeed, contemporary global discourse on global warming and climate change is prominent in all political, economic and social agendas. Since the turn of the millennium, climate change has been debated on a regular basis and is increasingly a part of our daily consciousness. This discourse has become ideologically driven and politicised between and within governments, and this has been carried replicated in mainstream global media.

Unfortunately, the politics around this phenomenon of climate change have certainly slowed down both mitigation and the creation of adaptive policies. While statistics, stories, experiences and events all over the world reveal that the globe is warming, sea-levels are rising and erratic climatic events are increasing, the neoliberal discourse and policy agendas remain slow to react to this, for it then requires acknowledging accountability and global interdependence. In the case of Hatohobei, of course, the community cannot wait for global political and commercial leaders to slowly engage (or not) in these realities through their political agendas. Before sharing Hatohobei community realities and responses to climate change events later in this chapter, I ask us first to consider broader climate change politics and dynamics.

In brief, there are two initial stagnant areas to consider here: denial politics and the research approach to climate change. In the recent past, scientific data and analyses were clear on global warming but mostly unclear as to the causes and correlations of this phenomenon (Barnett and Adger, 2003; Crate and Nuttall, 2009). Even a sliver of uncertainty has provided many political opportunists to argue against the reality of climate change. Early this millennium the International Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) reached scientific agreement that climate change is occurring and *very likely* (my emphasis) impacted by human activity (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 2001, 2007). Nonetheless, many climate change sceptics continued to fuel political agendas of policy-making denial, with regards to both mitigation and adaptation. And for those researching the risk management components of climate change, the primary focus has been on quantitative analyses of the economic costs and impacts on businesses and societies. There has been a severe lack in researching the human and cultural dimensions of climate change. Hence, the further impetus for this research project.

Regarding the political discourse and global level political machinery, the denial approach is slowly becoming discredited. Scientific research has concluded there is a direct link between direct anthropogenic causes and global warming. As mentioned, the very recent 2014 IPCC fifth assessment report (AR5) now confirms with high confidence that the increase in global temperatures is due to anthropogenic causes (Allen et al., 2014). The American Association for the Advancement of Science (Molina et al., 2014) confirms this as well:

Climate scientists agree: climate change is happening here and now. Based on well-established evidence, about 97 percent of climate scientists have concluded that human-caused climate change is happening. This agreement is documented not just by a single study, but by a converging stream of evidence over the past two decades from surveys of scientists, content analyses of peer-reviewed studies, and public statements issued by virtually every membership organisation of experts in this field.

(Molina, et al., 2014, p.1).

This was a huge advance in the political discourse and impetus to (ongoing) policy-making efforts. Globally and locally, governments, activists, communities and individuals are taking action. Although there continue to be geopolitical power plays, sceptics and denialists, the ongoing scientific research, education and awareness and political activism are contributing toward a global/local consciousness and dialogue. Unfortunately, it will take more communities feeling the impacts of global warming and climate change events to realise systemic changes must take place and then begin to embrace this more informed conversation. Nonetheless, the current dialogue is beginning to engage how we as humans can collectively address the greatest and most urgent threat to our security and future. More governments are now beginning to

address their responsibility and accountability by constructively engaging with our interconnected climate change realities. This is highlighted, at least symbolically, in the recent Paris Climate Conference (COP21) (30 November – 11 December, 2015), and the social and political activism engaged in across the world prior to and during this conference.

Grounding this a bit further for us here, at the national level, the ROP President Tommy Remengesau has led Palau in its efforts to draw global attention to urgent climate change impacts in the Pacific islands. It is not surprising, as well, considering Palauan hospitality and strategic diplomacy, that while advocating on climate change policy, mitigation and adaptation efforts at the COP21, President Remengesau made good use of his brief time with a global celebrity and environmentalist, Leonardo DiCaprio, whom he invited to visit Palau and experience climate change concerns first hand. DiCaprio's brief visit to Palau 3 months later⁹⁷ (Plate 6.8) speaks well to the strategic thinking and global interconnectedness of climate concerns and politics. I would suggest that this particular relationship will continue to influence efforts in Palau and the wider Pacific. I highlight this celebrity visitor here for the significance this had with the Hatohobei community. Speaking with Wayne via Skype around this particular event, he alluded how, "This really shows our small community that our efforts for protecting our small island and resources are part of a bigger global concern and cause. We are not alone and our work is helping make a larger voice." (Wayne Andrew, Skype conversation, 30 March, 2016). For Tobians, the well-known Leonardo DiCaprio from *The Titanic* (1997) blockbuster film, previously adored solely for that film work, was literally in their home area actively working with them on the same cause. This was not

⁹⁷ For details of this visit and the relationship with The Nature Conservancy please see <http://www.pireport.org/articles/2016/03/29/actor-leonardo-dicaprio-visits-palau-dives-president>

lost on them at all and provided hope that fit with their proactive community efforts in the face of climate change events.



Plate 6.6 ROP President Tommy Remengesau (3rd from left) and the Palau Delegation, COP21 (ROP Presidents Office, December, 2015)



Plate 6.7 ROP President Remengesau (4th from left), Getting the Message Out and Developing Strategic Alliances toward Global Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Policies, COP21, December, 2015. (ROP Presidents Office)



a.



b.

Plate 6.8 a, b.: Leonardo DiCaprio Visiting President Remengesau and Representatives, Palau, post-COP21 Conference. Palau Pacific Resort, 29 March, 2016. (ROP Presidents Office, April, 2016)

Regarding the climate conference, in brief, the 195-nation agreement seeks to transform the world's energy industry by replacing coal, oil and gas with renewable sources that do not introduce emissions that cause the 'greenhouse effect'. Sounds great but in reality, there will be continued opposition from neoliberal politicians around these mitigations for years to come.

There is a significant disconnect between the positions of governments, leaders and policymakers on mitigation policies and the realities of people having to adapt to their changing environments. The political ideology around capitalism and economic development (Klein, 2014), and the "have's and have not's", has led us toward a media driven 'doomsday' scenario (Connell, 2003) based upon a deterministic over-simplification of climate change (Barnett and Adger, 2003; Connell, 2003). This model (and practice) suggests that those peoples that are experiencing the severities of climate change now (i.e. low-lying islands) are "doomed" and without any choices. Of course, this simplistic approach continues to marginalise many rural and indigenous people around the world (Connell, 2003; Crate and Nuttall, 2009; Jacka, 2009). As hinted at above, the irony of course, is that while these marginalised peoples did not contribute to the global processes that contributed to this climate change, they are nonetheless experiencing the (varied) impact of rising sea-levels and increased climate activities and events, and all that this means for their uncertain futures. Crate and Nuttall (2009) refer to this as environmental colonialism, where climate change will continue to exacerbate existing social, economic, political and environmental trends, problems, issues, tensions and challenges (p.11). Inspired by former Kiribati President Anote Tong, the late Teresia Teaiwa (2016) shines light on this environmental colonialism from a Pacific islands perspective, likening climate change to the slave trade (<https://e-tangata.co.nz/news/how-climate-change-is-like-the-slave-trade>).

Prior to the recent COP21 agreement, the initial governance response to the politicisation of climate change has resulted in carbon-emissions policies that fall in place with the hegemonic business-modelled political and global economy. This speaks again to the callous nature of political and business leadership that is focused on policies that support and subsidise big business even when at the short and long-term expense of the environment (and really, our future). Another anecdotal way to state that attitude and priority is through the voice of Tony Abbott, recent Liberal conservative Prime Minister of Australia, who (13 October, 2014) claimed that, "Coal is good for humanity, coal is good for prosperity, coal is an essential part of our economic future, here in Australia, and right around the world," and that, "Coal is essential for the prosperity of the world" (<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-10-13/coal-is-good-for-humanity-pm-tony-abbott-says/5810244>). In the recent past many nations (including the U.S. and Australia) refused to sign the Kyoto Protocol (confirmed in 1997) that requested for reductions in emissions. Outside the symbolic words of the recent COP21 agreement, the reality remains that geopolitics will continue to dominate, and action on global carbon emissions remains uncertain. This in itself is a continued marginalisation process of peoples who are already disadvantaged within the global capitalistic world system. These peoples do not have the luxury of time, and, most seriously, are acutely experiencing the impacts of climate change on their lifestyles, resources, spirituality, land, culture and identity. What are the cultural implications of climate change for these peoples and what can we learn from their experiences?

6.3 Researching Climate, Culture and Adaptation

Regarding the research approach to understanding climate change impacts there is a push (Adger, Barnett, Brown, Marshall, and O'Brien, 2013; Crate, 2011; Crate and

Nuttall, 2009; Dove, 2013; Hassan, 2009) for more understanding of the human and cultural dimensions, as opposed to the material and economic. Hassan (2009, p. 42) suggests that current efforts to cope with climate change focus solely on reducing emissions and alternative technologies, rather than considering the social dimensions of climate change. Moving away from deterministic cause and effect models, oversimplification of climate change, and alternative technologies, there has been an increased call for multi-disciplinary and anthropological research focusing on the social, cultural and economic impacts of climate change.

Anthropological research has begun to focus on adaptation and the human dimension of climate change, in general (Christoplos et al., 2009; Crate and Nuttall, 2009; Dove, 2013). Recent case-studies in *Climate change and anthropology: From encounters to actions*, (Crate & Nuttall, 2009) reflect the growing contributions of anthropological theory and ethnographic data collection and observation. Hassan (2009) speaks of the need to understand the temporal and local shifts in climatic events and that impact from any given climatic event depends on the local and ecological setting. Hassan also suggests that we will gain a more comprehensive understanding of climate change events and impacts and human responses through archaeological and historical analysis, in association with a detailed examination of local and regional social dynamics (p. 40). This is certainly a necessary research component that will provide crucial longitudinal data on the human dimensions, but we require more understanding of the impacts, options and responses from contemporary settings. There is a paucity of research on the human dimension and climate change adaptation and what this means to changing cultures and what such knowledge may provide. This again is further impetus for this type of ethnographic project with the Hatohobei community.

To understand adaptation, we must focus on the human relationship with the environment. Past anthropological theory has examined this relationship through various models, including Rappaport's (1968) biologically derived ecosystem and Harris' (1968) model of cultural materialism that links culture with ecological adaptation. While these models were sometimes useful for understanding traditional cultures and their adaptations to the environment, our rapidly changing contemporary local/global cultures and environments now require more sophisticated knowledge of the interconnecting and varied local, regional and global relationships involved around local climate change dynamics. These relationships include notions, policies and practices around the concepts of mitigation, adaptation and political discourse and debate at the global (and national) level. Part of the adaptation process (successful or not) must factor these relationships in with the realities of the changing physical environment.

Crate and Nutall's (2009) anthology points to the need for more anthropological and ethnographic examination of contemporary climate change impacts and human responses. Recent anthropological studies have shifted toward theory and research practices that focus on group behaviour under conditions of uncertainty (Peterson and Broad, 2009: 71). Peterson and Broad adopt a multidisciplinary focus on adaptation, and identify three major past simplifications that affect the issue.

1. Climate is only one of several drivers of human behaviour,
2. Climate on most timescales is not static, and
3. We are capable of influencing and changing global climate (2009, p. 70).

The ethnographic study of socio-cultural dynamics and the cultural implications of climate change are beginning to provide deeper insights into human agency,

vulnerability and adaptation, human security, biosecurity, Indigenous knowledge systems, and cultural heritage. Presently, ethnographic research into human agency in these areas is lacking, though recent studies are beginning to highlight this gap in climate change research, as well as making significant scholarly insights into the climate change and cultural heritage dynamic (Crate and Nuttall, 2009; Dove, 2013; Henry and Jeffery, 2008; Jacka, 2009; Lazrus, 2009; Roncoli, Crane, and Orlove, 2009).

Adger, et al. (2012) discuss the importance of culture in the dominant modes of production, consumption, lifestyle and social organisation that give rise to emissions of greenhouse gases. It is equally important to understanding adaptation, including the risks, decisions about responses, and the means of implementation (2012, p. 112). They also suggest a turn away from cause-and-effect relationships between environmental risks and social responses, to a focus on cultural dimensions to better explain the differentiation in such adaptive responses (2012, p. 13).

Roncoli, Crane and Orlove (2009) highlight the significance of ethnography as a way to gain insights into the relationship between culture and climate (p. 88), and focus on four overlapping axioms that elucidate the different ways cultures engage their world. This occurs through the prism of climate change: perception, knowledge, valuation and response (p.88). Rudiak-Gould (2011) also argues for the need for “reception studies” that appreciate how the human agency of indigenous peoples on the front-line of climate change is founded on both their knowledge and relationship with the natural environment, *and also* the knowledge, discourse and practice they have learned from outside discourses (i.e. media, government, Western science, researchers, NGOs) on global climate change. Any ethnographic study examining climate change in a local community must also factor in the impact of global discourses of climate

change on their local perceptions, knowledge, valuations and responses to climatic events (or perceived future events).

In a region with many low-lying islands, people of the Pacific are perhaps the most vulnerable to global warming impacts. They are experiencing the effects of climatic events that include erratic and unpredictable seasonal weather patterns, increased ocean temperatures, coral bleaching, king tides, sea water inundation, erosion, loss of infrastructure and sacred institutions, sinking islands, biodiversity loss, food security, and related cultural heritage concerns. However, we are reminded not to view Pacific peoples as ‘tragic victims’. Connell (2003) has criticized the ‘doomsday’ prediction of islands disappearing into the sea, suggesting it may have more negative consequences for the proactive decision making toward local environmental degradation that may not relate to climate change. Barnett and Adger (2003) suggest that if atoll communities were to lose confidence in their island futures, this may lead to changes in domestic resource use and decreased assistance from abroad. Doomsday predictions and discourse remove Pacific Islander agency, resourcefulness and resilience. For many Pacific peoples, there are far more immediate concerns than climate change, including poverty, unemployment, housing, education and healthcare. However, Henry and Jeffery (2008) report that their study in Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia, revealed a concern with issues around cultural heritage and a deep sense, or imminent sense of cultural “loss” (2008, p. 13). They also suggest the need for a more locally specific ethnographic research agenda, because, while climate change events are a global phenomenon, there is great regional and local variability in terms of impact (2008, p. 16). Several other recent ethnographic studies on low-lying islands in the Pacific have highlighted the impact of climate change on cultural heritage, as well (Connell, 2003; Foale, 2008; Jacka, 2009; Lazrus, 2009).

As discussed in Chapter Five, we can understand cultural heritage as a process of historical practices that maintain and inform cultural identity and human (or group) agency. The paradox of ‘heritage’ is that we want to hold on to something that is always changing. And of course, it is the process in itself, based on the values and principles and practices of a group that is culture (and the maintenance thereof). In the discussion below we will examine the vulnerability of the Hatohobei community and how it is responding to the risks of climate change, and how the Hatohobei creatively continue to hold on to “something that is always changing”.

While there is a need for a deeper understanding of these intimate human responses to climate change, as Rudiak-Gould (2009) and Crate (2011) point out, this also requires an understanding of the complexities involved in the linkage between the local and global level discourses. Any ethnographic study examining climate change in a local community must factor in global impacts on local perceptions, knowledges, valuations and responses to climatic events (or perceived future events).

For our purposes here, along with a few anecdotes, I will use Roncoli, Crane and Orlove’s (2009) four overlapping axioms and Rudiak-Gould’s (2011) “reception studies” perspective as models for analysing and understanding global warming, increasing climate events and community adaptive responses in the contemporary Hatohobei context.

We recently visited Helen Reef in Chapter Five, and shared a few relevant examples and discussion around cultural heritage politics and cultural revival transformations over time. This chapter of course relates and overlaps with these politics and transformations. Tohwich has now returned from his latest jaunt with Medichiibelau and is over inquisitive once again, querying me for stories as to how this

successful and ongoing Hatohobei cultural continuity and visits to the home island reconcile with the fact that both Hatohobei island and Helen Reef are sinking into the ocean. Further, he asks, with the likely loss of these physical spaces in the future, what happens to Hatohobei people and future generations? I feel that he knows the answer already, but is really seeking for me to explain this to a wider audience. I shall acquiesce to his request with five stories: one about a typhoon named Haiyan, one around the first ever climate change adaptation workshop in Palau in 2012, another about a visit and stories with Frano (and others) on Helen Reef in 2013, a current look at the remains of the last canoe house in Hatohobei, and finally, a post-Typhoon Haiyan interview with Dr. Peter Black conducted in late November, 2013.

6.4 “Changing the Climate”

As an overview, with the increasing concern over climate events impacting the island and its marine resources, community leaders have proactively engaged a three-pronged approach toward adaptation efforts:

1. Community education and awareness;
2. Creating local NGOs and community working groups; and
3. Nurturing relationships with donors that help support the local NGOs, in particular the successful Helen Reef Marine Resource Management Program.

This has been an evolving adaptation strategy that has its roots in 2008, when elders and leaders began discussing increasing climate impacts and their concerns about soil erosion, sea-water inundation, drought periods and long-term security of the island. In particular, there were three immediate concerns:

1. Increased salinity of the fresh ground water lens, which directly impacted on;
2. The health of the large taro patch in the interior of the island (as well as other plant species); and
3. Soil erosion that was/is increasingly impacting the northwest side of the island that contains residential, cultural, and public infrastructure.

The other significant concerns were the increasing loss of coconut trees and vegetation on Helen Reef islet, warming ocean temperatures that may be negatively impacting fish and coral species, and the decreasing size of the small islet. These latter concerns are especially observed regularly and therefore of greater concern because of the regular presence of the HRMRMP rangers stationed at Helen Reef (and living on the islet). I discuss this in more detail with a story later in this section.

It is important to note that at this time (2008) there was no community awareness of “climate change” as a term or discourse at government and global levels. Rather, there was discussion amongst the community members, primarily the elders and leaders in general, and queries (many made to me during my visits) about what can be done about these increasing and erratic climate change events and concerns.

Community education and awareness began more formally with the efforts of then Hatohobei State Delegate Wayne Andrew and the Hatohobei Organisation for People and Environment (HOPE) staff, in late 2012 and 2013. As previously mentioned, from December, 2012, I spent 9 months in Palau, Tobi and Helen Reef. Shortly after my arrival for fieldwork, and after the New Year holiday festivities, I found myself immersed in conceptual and organisational discussions with Wayne and the HOPE staff. These participants helped to initiate, organise and facilitate the first ever Climate Change Adaptation workshop for the Republic of Palau in February of

2012 (30 January – 3 February, 2012). This was a 5-day workshop⁹⁸ led by Wayne (in his role as mentor to PIMPAC⁹⁹ and as a state representative, as well as then Executive Director of the Helen Reef Marine Resource Management Program) and two PIMPAC regional advisors, Scott Atkinson and Meghan Gombos, and Supin Wongbusarakum, a consultant with The Nature Conservancy. It is notable that these three consultants have worked with Wayne and the Helen Reef Marine Resource Management Program, as well as the Hatohobei Organisation for People and the Environment, in the past. This relationship began when Scott Atkinson and Mike Guilbeaux, along with the Hatohobei State Government (HSG), initiated the Community Conservation Network (CCN) NGO in 2000. This body worked towards developing the then embryonic Helen Reef Marine Resource Management Pilot Program. Thus, the earliest Hatohobei relationships with outside NGOs continue to nurture progress, and are an ongoing and growing resource for community development efforts. Scott Atkinson and Meghan Gombos have subsequently been instrumental in working with Wayne in developing the local Hatohobei NGOs, HRMRMP and HOPE.

The workshop was funded by the Micronesian Conservation Trust (MCT) and the Micronesian Challenge¹⁰⁰ partners. It was attended by representatives from eight of Palau's 16 states, and various Palau national and state government leaders and non-

⁹⁸ Please see http://www.pimpac.org/images/file/FINAL_Palau_CC_Adaptation_Workshop_Report.pdf for the summary report of this workshop.

⁹⁹ Pacific Islands Managed and Protected Area Community (PIMPAC), is a regional NGO that formed in 2005 with initial funding and coordination support from NOAA, The University of Guam Marine Lab, and the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI). Its focus is primarily on supporting national and regional efforts to develop community-based networks of marine protected areas. Areas of support include technical training, information sharing, learning exchanges, and capacity building where needs are identified. Please see <http://pimpac.org/aboutus.php> for more information.

¹⁰⁰ Initiated in 2006, "The Micronesia Challenge is a commitment by the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands to preserve the natural resources that are crucial to the survival of Pacific traditions, cultures and livelihoods. The overall goal of the Challenge is to effectively conserve at least 30% of the near-shore marine resources and 20% of the terrestrial resources across Micronesia by 2020" (<http://www.micronesiachallenge.org/>).

government organisations, as well as government representatives from Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). The workshop was based on education and awareness, and the idea of area communities working toward developing vulnerability and risk assessments, with community action plans toward climate change adaptation efforts resulting from them. The two training tools used were the “*Adapting to a changing climate outreach toolkit*”¹⁰¹ and the “*Guide to vulnerability assessment and local early action planning (VA-LEAP)*”¹⁰². These tools emphasized the difference between climate variability and climate change, explained the concepts of vulnerability, exposure, sensitivity, resilience, preparedness, adaptation, described the practice of a “vulnerability assessment” and lastly, taught that optimal adaptation successes derive from having a healthy community. The notion of a “healthy community” in the Hatohebei setting is perplexing. If very few are living on the island how can it be considered a healthy community? To the outside observer, taking the economic model perspective of neoliberal society, this would appear as an unhealthy society. However, I argue that in the Hatohebei landscape, which is dualistic and diasporic, with the HRMRMP and ongoing increasingly fluid physical reconnections to the island, we have a healthy community that is actively adapting to climate change impacts. This can be a useful model for similar remote Pacific island communities facing these challenges.

The staff of the Helen Reef Marine Resource Management Program (HRMRMP) and Hatohebei Organisation for People and Environment (HOPE) all attended this workshop. It is from its successes and the resulting infrastructure created for the HRMRMP, especially, that the Tobians had the largest representative group in

¹⁰¹ Please see <http://www.cakex.org/sites/default/files/SMALL%20Booklet%20FINAL.pdf> for this booklet in PDF form (42pp).

¹⁰² Please see http://climatechange-asiapac.com/sites/default/files/Tool_4_VA-LEAP_Guide_US_CTI_CCA_Toolkit_Version_1.pdf for full toolkit (137pp).

attendance. This participation and unity indicates the strength of the HRMRMP, as well as the level of concern for the vulnerability and unknown future events for Hatohobei Island and Helen Reef and associated resources. In comparison, where the other community representatives all had concerns and their own specific risks and dynamics of changing climate impacts, it was clear from the anecdotal examples and discussions in the workshop, that Hatohobei, as a low-lying and physically remote island, had the most urgent conditions to consider relative to the other groups.

This was a very successful workshop that involved intensive conceptual discussions, group mapping of their individual community concerns, exercises on how best to transfer knowledge and information back to their communities, and group interactive educational activities. As well, several sites in Babeldoab (Palau's largest island) were visited and local residents and elders were able to share their first-hand experiences with climate change impacts. Post-workshop activities involved each representative community "working group" to engage with the communities toward the Vulnerability-Assessment and Local Early Action Planning (VA-LEAP), if the communities so desired. This VA-LEAP process involved each community developing an historical timeline of significant cultural and environmental events, a seasonal calendar, a transect walk, a SWOT¹⁰³ analysis, an overall "climate story" for the community, and lastly, a localised "Threat/Action model" target for social, cultural and environmental resources. In the case of the Hatohobei working group, they continued to work on their VA-LEAP models subsequently, which I discuss in more detail below.

¹⁰³ An analysis for climate change adaptation measures that involves assessing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for/to a community and is intended to provide data toward a community action plan addressing present and future climate threats.



Plate 6.9 Climate Change Adaptation Workshop, Koror, Palau. Hatohobei VA-LEAP Working Group, 1 February, 2012. (D.Tibbetts, February, 2012)



Plate 6.10 HRMRMP Manager Rosania Victor, Working on a Seasonal Calendar for Hatohobei, VA-LEAP Working Group, 1 February, 2012 (D.Tibbetts)

For our discussion now, I point to several significant events around this workshop that highlight some of the Hatohobei climate change adaptation

predicaments, and the more formal engagements resulting from the Hatohobei climate change adaptation workshop group engaging with the VA-LEAP and the community.

In one of the latter working sessions at the workshop a young Palauan community leader, marine scientist and member of the Koror community stood up to express his concerns about one particular area of the climate change adaptation discussions. His query and statement fits a quiet discourse that I often hear whispered in the Koror State and national level Palauan contexts, but on this occasion, it surprised me, if only because it came in this more formal and public workshop context (held at the Koror State government building), in which each community was sharing its concerns about climate impacts and disclosing what they signify. Steven Victor, then a conservation planner¹⁰⁴ for The Nature Conservancy Palau office, followed up several Hatohobei community presentations about climate impacts on the island with a query as to why this community would consider worrying about addressing these impacts and concerns if most Tobians actually resided in Koror (D.Tibbetts field notes, February, 2012. His point was that it was not feasible to spend money and efforts toward a remote location that had only a minimal population. Further, if the Hatohobei community is addressing climate change concerns, shouldn't those efforts, and any related future funding, go through the Koror State government, and toward addressing the community climate change issues in Echang village (within the Koror State district), where most of the Hatohobei (and Southwest islanders) reside? The logic here suggests that if nobody is living on the remote islands, why bother anyway, and rather, put your efforts and funding toward Echang village, where it is considered by some that

¹⁰⁴ Steven Victor (BA, MSc) is currently the Director of The Nature Conservancy – Micronesia Program and has done extensive conservation research with the Palau International Coral Reef Center (PICRC), as well as development planning efforts around Marine Protected Areas (MPA's) management for the Republic of Palau.

the community puts an added burden onto the Koror State Government budget and infrastructure. From an economic and demographic perspective, this attitude is understandable, yet it is also indicative of the strains within the Koror State Government leadership and its frustrations with growing population demands in this urban centre. In addition, and more significantly for this analysis, this example speaks again to the lack of understanding of how significant Hatohobei island (including Helen Reef) is to Tobian cultural identity, especially in view of the relocated community in Palau. I refer to my discussion in Chapter Four around Ingold's "sphere of nurture" and "relational model" to briefly reiterate the complexities of the Hatohobei landscape and the imaginary. Unfortunately, Steven's query holds uniformed, simplistic, reductive and essentialist logic that devalues Tobians. It is found in many development and economic policies at the state, national and global levels. As for a response to Steven's pointed query at the workshop, as always, the Hatohobei community representatives remained silent and we moved the discussion toward the next topic. This too, is the reality of living as a minority group in larger Palau. And of course, that, as well, is part of the resilience and adaptive nature required and enacted by this small community. To speak to that further, Wayne and I discussed that workshop query in our later and more informal meeting about the community's climate change adaptation efforts. We discussed ideas and realities around adaptation measures that required technical expertise and therefore, funding support, and how adaptation funding in its early stages was difficult to attain. At this point in time, most climate change funding was toward mitigation efforts and where adaptation funding was available, it was channelled through national government channels, rather than straight to state and/or local-level infrastructure. We discussed Steven's query and Wayne reminded me how this was always a feature to be considered for the Hatohobei community and we both

quietly discussed the notion of “changing the climate”, making a play on the words of climate change and suggesting that community efforts and leadership shall continue to make efforts toward “changing the (political) climate” as a way to better adapt to climate change impacts. As usual, this was yet another Tobian humoured approach to a deeper and more delicate situation. This situation and their (ongoing) response underpins community development and adaptation efforts with regards to the contemporary Hatohobei landscape.

The following story relates the same reductive and essentialist approach around a grant application put forth, in part, by the Hatohobei climate change adaptation “working group”. In September of 2012 Australian Aid (AUSAID) allotted funds toward researching climate impacts, strategic planning and vulnerability and adaptation assessments, finance implementation at community, national and regional levels, and toward contributing to multilateral adaptation funds¹⁰⁵. For the adaptation funding component, AUD\$9,000,000.00 was allotted toward up to nine Pacific Island country groups (AUD\$1,000,000.00 per group). After the Climate Change Adaptation workshop finished, by March of 2013, Wayne began working jointly on this grant application with the Palau Conservation Society (PCS)¹⁰⁶, which is an NGO in the Republic of Palau that had secured this type of funding in the past. The idea was to work off the VA-LEAP efforts of the various community working groups and request funding for Palau’s more immediately vulnerable communities. Three communities

¹⁰⁵ Please see

https://unfccc.int/files/adaptation/groups_committees/ldc_expert_group/application/pdf/leg_2012_pacific_workshop_ausaid_presentation.pdf for an overview.

¹⁰⁶ And more specifically, with Joyce Beouch, PCS Communication and Outreach Coordinator, but also along with post-climate change adaptation workshop community groups from across Palau that were working on their VA-LEAP’s in their home communities. I attended all of these working group meetings and shared dialogue around all of the varied concerns, dynamics and issues, as well as the final grant proposal put forth.

were selected as higher priorities than others; Hatohobei, Koror State and Ngiwal. This is because of their particular vulnerability dynamics and also the level of commitment from each community, who were working on their VA-LEAP's with their community leaders and elders. If successful, the AUD\$1,000,000.00 grant would be facilitated by PCS toward the Palau communities that were working on their VA-LEAP's, with those three particular communities as high priorities.

Hatohobei was featured in the grant application as a high funding priority for obvious and urgent climate impact events. As well, the Hatohobei "working group" (HRMRMP and HOPE staff, as well as then Delegate Wayne Andrew and Governor Thomas Patris) was the most organised and committed group at that juncture. Unfortunately, the grant application was turned down, and, as the community (and myself) have heard many times before when requesting financial support for Hatohobei community development, the rationale for this decision was that the island is too remote and only a few people live there, so what is the purpose? Further informal feedback included a query as to why Hatohobei was prioritised highest at risk, when there were so few people living there (Wayne Andrew, personal communication, 15 April, 2013). For that significant rationale perhaps, this prioritisation of highest need areas (i.e. Hatohobei), potentially took away funding toward other communities. Yet, Hatohobei is arguably one of the most vulnerable communities in Palau and one of the most organised and committed toward climate change adaptation efforts at the local and state levels. Once again, an outside development and funding model has privileged economic models over social and cultural realities. It has failed to understand the complexities of this small community and the significance of their home island that grounds their diasporic community and uncertain futures. Let us also note here that this is also a community that helps the ROP justify and maintain its EEZ and sovereign

territory that is contested by the Indonesian government. This again speaks to the problems involved with reductive and essentialist development and aid policies and approaches (and cost-benefit analyses). Like the Helen Reef Marine Resource Management Project, which has become a working model of successful community-based marine resource management for other Palauan and Micronesian communities, this funding would have supported a well organised working group and community that was (and is) committed to adaptation efforts and working with other communities. This is a clear example of the challenges of community development for small Pacific communities, and specifically, another challenge involved in climate change adaptation efforts for small and vulnerable communities that are feeling the more extreme risks with climate change impacts.

Our final story around the Climate Change Adaptation workshop of February 2012 relates to the post-workshop engagement of the VA-LEAP activities by the newly formed Hatohobei climate change adaptation team “working group”¹⁰⁷.

Tohbwich teases me at this point in the story as he knows I am passionate about this experience and what it meant toward both the elders’ concerns about the community disconnect with the home island, and for my research efforts. For years and during this fieldwork phase I had often sat with younger generation community members and queried them about Hatohobei and the environment. Of course, not having grown up there, lived there, or in some cases with the youngest generations, having never visited the island, their disconnect was evident through their lack of

¹⁰⁷ This group was composed of then HSG Governor Thomas Patris, Rosania Victor (Manager, HRMRMP), Albino Fernando (then Accountant, HRMRMP), Tracy Marcello (Assistant Manager, HRMRMP, administrative assistant for HOPE), Wayne Andrew (executive director, HRMRMP, HOPE and then Delegate for HSG), William Andrew (then LMMA regional representative), and HRMRMP staff Hercules Emilio, Petra Tkel, Stella Patris, and Erwin Moses. I also assisted in activities, primarily with filming meetings, taking notes and dialoguing ideas. As I discuss in this section, these activities were serendipitously constructive and informative toward my PhD fieldwork efforts.

knowledge of traditional living practices on the island, local names for marine and terrestrial species, local place names, as well as select stories and events.

Although there was no formal funding support, our “working group” continued with efforts on planning and organising for two formal VA-LEAP community meetings in Echang village. We also separately interviewed (and filmed) several elders speaking about their knowledge of past climate events and their current concerns¹⁰⁸.



Plate 6.11 Tracey Marcello interviewing Obita Theodore in Echang village about historical climate events on Hatohobei island, March, 2012 (D.Tibbetts)

¹⁰⁸ In April and May of 2012 Albino Fernando, Tracey Marcello and myself filmed and interviewed the then eldest of the community, Obita Theodore, Domiciano Andrew and Lorenzo Simeon.



Plate 6.12 Tracey Marcello, Albino Fernando, in Echang village interviewing (the late) Domiciano Andrew about historical climate events on Hatohobei island, March, 2012 (D.Tibbetts)



Plate 6.13 Albino Fernando, in Echang Village interviewing (the late) Lorenzo Simeon about historical climate events on Hatohobei island, March, 2012 (D.Tibbetts)

On 15 and 22 May, 2012, the two formal community meetings were held at Itap, the Hatohobei central meeting place in the village of Echang. The HOPE office supported these events and provided tables, chairs, technical equipment, food stuffs and drinks. The initial meeting on 15 May was attended by approximately 25 community members and involved developing small groups to work on historical timelines and seasonal calendars with family elders. The meeting lasted from 7pm until late and we all realised the need for continued work on these activities during the week with another formal meeting to follow. What I observed in this process was something I had not witnessed before in such a large group setting. The entire experience was a microcosm of the key argument of this thesis focused around the Hatohobei landscape of physical disconnect and the role of spiritual and familial connection. The issues around climate change adaptation highlighted this dynamic perfectly. Furthermore, the interface and engagement between generations as they worked on the activities illuminated this dialogical process that involves both large knowledge gaps and very close familial and clan relations and a unified connection/disconnection to Hatohobei island. The younger generation Tobians (under 50 years of age) were all naturally engaging with their elders through the respect relationships based around the “in-charge complex”, and never have I seen such public discussions that curiously sought to openly learn the events, knowledge and histories of the elders. Each small group queried the elders about seasonal calendar cycles and historical climate events and this resulted in learning the names of select areas around the island, weather, wave and sea current patterns, locations of select marine species, stories about droughts and storms and techniques for managing such events, as well as other, more esoteric knowledge. This is knowledge that is very important for the younger generations to learn, if that reconnection is to strengthen Hatohobei and enable them to deal with the uncertain

future of the home island. Of course, these engagements led to the passing on of selective (and reframed) memories and stories that some younger generations had never heard before. All of the engagements were heightened with laughter over memories and stories and realisations of various community members that did not know select knowledge, as was expected of them. I must also mention here that only general knowledge was shared at this public setting, yet even much of it was unknown to younger generations (especially, those under 30 years of age). It was interesting to observe how the elders selected some stories as opposed to others that may impact clan and family relations. In this public space however, this process highlighted the younger generation's disconnect from the knowledge of the Hatohobei land, reef, natural resources, seaways and associated dynamics, events and histories. It also awakened many youngsters to their lack of knowledge of the Hatohobei environment, and stimulated them to learn more from their elders. I feel that there was a turning point, with some of the younger generations reassessing their connection to the home island (and all that means). I have witnessed this process of knowledge transfer many times over the years, resulting from my own personal and academic research queries in the Hatohobei landscape, but that has always taken place within private spaces and within smaller groups and family respect relations. In the past and throughout this ethnographic research project, my queries on Hatohobei culture and history have led to younger generations acquiring new knowledge from their elders, and this has led to further queries (which also contributes to my research). Throughout the week more younger generation Tobians were hearing about this new 'project', and community interest and involvement increased. And of course, as par for Hatohobei clan factionalism, some community members regarded the activities as foolish and

unnecessary. This is simply a reflection of clan politics and contestations of leadership in regards to these community awareness events.

On the evening of the second formal meeting (Please see Plate 6.14 below) on 22 May, there were at least 60 in attendance and almost all of them as participants (including many, but not all, of the elder generation). In the Hatohobei (and more specifically, Echang) setting, this is a significant number of people to attend a public workshop.



**Plate 6.14 Climate Change Adaptation workshop, Echang Village, 22 May, 2012
(D.Tibbetts)**

I was given an opportunity to contribute by providing everyone with a general overview of global warming, mitigation and adaptation concepts. Wayne Andrew provided an overview on the VA-LEAP process and how this can help the community with their concerns about climate impacts on Hatohobei and Helen Reef. William

Andrew explained his experiences working at Helen Reef for many years, and how there is a more urgent need for community involvement in future adaptation measures. While the English concepts of vulnerability, resilience, and adaptation were not necessarily important or received by the participants, it was from the core team members that these concepts were relayed and then received and acknowledged within the epistemological and ontological framing of the traditional knowledge holders. All of these Western concepts are implicitly understood and lived within the Hatohobei worldview. What became very interesting though, was the heightened knowledge transfer about the Hatohobei environment that sparked new queries from the younger generations. This meeting went well into the late-night hours, and while Wayne Andrew flew off to an HRMRMP meeting in Pohnpei that night, I later departed Palau for a 2am flight back to Cairns. Suffice to say, the pinnacle of the various climate change adaptation meetings and tasks that unfolded between February and May was this interesting engagement between Hatohobei generations. I understand these VA-LEAP efforts continued on in various ways since that time. I suggest here, that these early efforts of a community-based climate change adaptation workshop motivated the community toward informal and formal proactive measures that contribute to ongoing Hatohobei adaptation efforts. The informal aspect involved a renewed interest from younger generations in the Hatohobei environment and concerns therein. Where they had been aware of climate events in general prior, they now were/are learning more specific environmental knowledge from their elders that have the stronger history of active living in that environment. More formally, there is a working foundation and united efforts toward activities, such as those of the newly formed group, Women of

Tobi (WOT)¹⁰⁹. In this example, the local NGO HOPE assisted WOT with accessing a Global Environmental Facility (GEF) small grant of USD \$45,000.00 in September of 2015. This is the first formal attempt at addressing the community concerns over food security and the increasing salinity of the fresh water lens in Hatohobei. In particular, as we know from our discussion in Chapter Four, the taro patch (*bor*) in the interior of the island has significant historical and cultural value for the people of Hatohobei. It is an amazing feat of engineering and sustenance for the community, producing the highly valued *buroh* (*Cyrtosperma chammisonis*) and equally valued and more common *wot* (*Colocasia esculenta*). The project is attempting to recultivate the *bor* (taro patch) with a salt tolerant taro and also plant more fruit crops on the island. We see below, in Plate 6.16, a recent meeting of the WOT group as they review the progress of the project and consider a future gardening project with the Hatohobei Youth Group (HYG) in partnership with Palau Community College (PCC). It is interesting to see the ongoing concerns over climate change impacts getting addressed through working linkages and relationships within the community and with outside organisations. This is something I would not have imagined so easily only a few years ago when the environmental and cultural impact concerns were initially raised within the community. If we also consider the discussion around the historical significance of the Hatohobei taro patch (*bor*) in Chapter Four, as well, we realise how such practical activities of the WOT group are empowering the physical and spiritual connection with Hatohobei (and through the taro patch into the bellies of family members). The foundation of all these formal engagements took place through clan elders and their leadership. Through the “in-charge complex”, ideas were discussed, decisions were made and the younger

¹⁰⁹ This acronym is also a well-meaning and playful use of the term *wot* (*Colocasia esculenta*), one of two highly valued taro species produced from the Hatohobei taro patch.

generations within each set of family relationships engaged their responsibilities. Through the daily sharing of foodstuffs and storytelling, duties and tasks were given, outsider and local knowledge was shared, and the community achieved (ongoing) successes.

With typical Hatohobei humour and foresight, as Wayne recently mentioned to me via Skype, the new working slogan at HOPE is, “HOPE making waves, giving Hope!” I jokingly teased him back, suggesting that they are very doing well with “changing the climate” of “climate change”.



Plate 6.15 *Bor*, Taro Patch in Hatohobei, 2008 (D.Tibbetts)



Plate 6.16 Woman of Tobi (WOT) Committee Reviewing Taro Project Progress, 1 February, 2016. (HOPE)

6.5 Frano's Fears and Moving Islands

We would be remiss not to share in more detail the physical realities of living in Hatohobei and Helen Reef. I share a story from my recent visit to Helen Reef and then we will visit the remaining canoe houses on Hatohobei island. In Chapter Five, I detailed the physical and social dynamics of Helen Reef, with its varied confluence of Hatohobei culture and politics, a successful community-based marine resource management program, state, regional and national level interests, marine researcher interests, regional commercial fishing interests (illegal and legal), and International NGO interests. As mentioned in Chapter Five, the team of HRMRMP Rangers work and reside on roughly six-month cycles at Helen islet. These young men and women are quite literally at the cutting edge of global climate change events as they contribute toward efforts of marine conservation and long term sustainability of Hatohobei resources. As younger generation Hatohobei, they also enjoy an ongoing and uniquely intimate knowledge of the Helen Reef environment and its seasonal cycles and

changing weather patterns. Some of this knowledge has come from the older generations and also from active living in this extreme physical (and changing) space. Without their physical presence and actions the HRMRMP and Hatohobei community would be without the key linkage in the foundation that negotiates all the varied interests intersecting at Helen Reef. This includes the cultural and spiritual connection with Hatohobei island and future generations (see Chapter Five).

In October of 2013 I joined the HRMRMP on a marine baseline survey of Helen Reef over a period of 3 days, before we then continued on to Hatohobei island for a brief visit before returning to Koror. During this visit we conducted numerous coral and fish surveys around various locations around Helen Reef. In the evenings, of course, we spent much time sharing stories and enjoying fresh fish and other food stuffs. There has been continual talk over the years about Helen Reef islet getting smaller and the loss of coconut trees and other vegetation. This has been noticeable between the visits I have made over the years and this is a regular experience for any Tobians that have been visiting the reef.





Plate 6.17 Rare aerial views of Helen Reef and Islet, June, 2015 (HRMRMP Staff June 2015)

However, living there is another reality, and on one afternoon during this visit I enjoyed walking around the islet with Frano. Frano has known me since I was young¹¹⁰ and is in his 60s now. In the 1980s he was one of the few young men living on Helen Reef, and he holds significant historical and cultural knowledge of both

¹¹⁰ For me at a young age and even now, Frano is a respected elder and quite an amazing individual in the sense that unlike many of his generation, he spent a longer period of time living on Hatohobei as a young man and also spent time living on Helen Reef islet with a few other young Tobian men in the 1980's. As mentioned in Chapter Five, this was at a time when there was very infrequent supply ship visits from the Hatohobei State Government. During this period, these young men were quite reliant on trade with visiting fishermen from nearby Philippines and Indonesia. They were also supported by then Delegate Thomas Patris who hired them for a commercial fishing venture with a Taiwanese business. These were early efforts to promote and sustain the community utilizing Helen Reef resources. At times, Thomas Patris had to make great efforts to ensure the safety and security of these young men (i.e. sending emergency food supplies and other necessities). (Personal communication, Thomas Patris, May, 2012).

Hatohobei and Helen Reef. Frano currently works as an HRMRMP Ranger and had been living on Helen Reef for the past 6 months at this time. At one level, it was deeply meaningful to share time and stories with Frano, as we had not seen each other in quite a long time. At another level, Frano understood I was curious about climate events in Hatohobei and Helen Reef and he was eager to show me recent changes in his living and working space, his culture and livelihood - first hand. He knew we had only a short time together on this occasion. We chewed betel nut that I had carried from Koror (there are no betel nut trees on Helen islet), we chewed some more, we walked, Frano talked stories, I listened, asked a few questions, and listened some more¹¹¹. While, as a brief visitor again, I was naturally caught up in the beautiful and unique environment and catching up with an elder, yet I was soon provided with a dose of reality. While I have listened to many stories in the past from Frano, on this occasion I heard something more urgent than before, and this allowed me to understand more clearly the immediacy of concerns for those living and working on Helen Reef. Frano at one point said, “Dave, it is not safe here anymore, I am worried about what we will do if there is a big storm. I am more worried than the young boys. I might not stay here longer.” This statement was startling, coming from a person that had shared stories of long-term drought he experienced at Helen Reef back in the late 1980s. Certainly, I could see with my own eyes the drastically reduced size of Helen Reef islet, the loss of vegetation, and changing shape of the islet. But when Frano showed me a cement block that had been set deep into the soil on the east side of the islet (see Plate 6.18) and explained (and pointedly showed me) that it had physically been located 50m further east less than 6 months earlier, I realised the significance of changes at the islet.

¹¹¹ I also took photos and enjoyed a 20-minute video interview with Frano on this occasion.



**Plate 6.18 Frano sharing Helen Reef climate event stories, October 2013
(D.Tibbetts)**

In my stories with several of the elders (in particular, Albino Fernando, Domiciano Andrew and Lorenzo Simeon during my fieldwork period, they had all recalled how the islet had moved around often, shifting with the seasonal wave, wind and current patterns. The younger HRMRMP rangers tell me the same. This fits with many Carolinian navigation stories of moving islands and sunken reefs. The concept of “moving islands” is not new to me or Pacific islanders living on atolls or low lying islands. However, Frano explained further that in all of his years living on and visiting Helen Reef, this was happening more rapidly and there is significantly less and less vegetation and land area. His concern was pragmatically and profoundly about the safety and security of the people living on the islet and he suggested that it would not be long and they will all have to leave. He was very concerned about the impact of the next big storm around a king tide cycle. This was unsettling to hear, especially feeling the space with Frano in that moment. Frano’s concerns here highlighted such realities of the extreme edges of climate change impacts and the disconnect of this reality with

not only global society and climate policies and politics, but also including some of the Hatohobei diaspora living in Echang and further abroad.

Frano also shared with me the less visible realities that I could not take in on such a brief visit, and these included his concern about reduced nesting areas for seasonal turtles that come to lay their eggs, the warming ocean and how this will affect the reef and fish species, and how there is less soil for planting necessary crops for sustaining the small population at the islet. For me, hearing such things from Frano carried more meaning due to his long-term experiences at Helen Reef. Although the younger rangers understand the contemporary physical environment well at Helen Reef, they are unable to contrast it with this more longitudinal perspective. Of course, they hear the stories from Frano and other elders and this is important, but Frano has felt this extreme edge for a long period of time, and he is deeply worried about what these changes are bringing.

The Hatohobei State Government, the Helen Reef Marine Resource Management Program, and the Hatohobei Organisation for the People and Environment have continued to secure funding toward addressing the security concerns at Helen Reef. We will recall from our discussion in Chapter Five that in 2014 the HRMRMP secured two new motor patrol boats (see Plate 6.19 of one of these vessels transporting the Hatohobei Youth Group on a 2015 visit to Helen Reef). In 2014, the Hatohobei State Government secured funding for a satellite dish and this was installed in early 2015 (see Plate 5.22). This allows for regular internet access and communications for the rangers living on the islet. Additional funding through the HRMRMP has been allotted for constructing new and (relatively) safer housing infrastructure. This infrastructure is now being built with stilts as a security measure for the increasing tidal surges, especially at high or king tides. New freshwater tanks have been provided as

well, and this provides additional security in the anticipated droughts, especially with more severe impacts during an El Nino weather period. As mentioned in Chapter Five, the local NGO HOPE continues to secure small grant funding that helps to support the Hatohobei Youth Group with activities in Helen Reef (and Hatohobei). These programs are facilitating educational experiences, including learning about the environment at Helen Reef and Hatohobei (see Plate 6.19). These efforts are due to the community organisations and infrastructure that have continued to grow, and are now capable of securing these small donor grants toward pragmatic adaptive solutions. They may later be realised as futile, with the sea level rise, warming ocean, and increasingly unpredictable weather patterns, but it is such proactive efforts that show the adaptability, resilience and unified proactive capacities involved in the Hatohobei community's attempts at maintaining their cultural, spiritual and physical resources. This speaks to the Hatohobei consciousness and abilities to nurture relationships within and beyond the community as a resource management method that strengthens and empowers the community, even in such extreme physical conditions. Even in impossible circumstances, it speaks to hope, faith and spirituality. I discuss this further after sharing a brief story about two sacred cultural sites in Hatohobei.



Plate 6.19 Learning about the environment on Haohobei (HRMRMP)

6.6 The Hatohobei Canoe House and Ramoporuhe's Sacred Site

Canoe houses were more prevalent in early Hatohobei history when there was a larger and active living population on the island. With the out migration of the community the use of canoes (*wara uhuh*) decreased. However, Tobian history and lore is filled with the significance of the canoe and its use for fishing activities and

visits to Helen Reef. Tobian men were known for their expertise in handling these canoes (see Black, 1982) for deep sea-fishing. I first experienced the deeper meaning of the remaining two canoe houses during the 1996 canoe restoration project with Nemeccio Andrew and Justin Andrew (discussed in Chapter Four). These two canoe houses, belonging to two separate clans, have a long history and were used regularly in the past for storing canoes and other personal tools and items, and perhaps more importantly, as spaces for the men to carry out secret meetings¹¹². While they still housed the hulls of several canoes up until very recently (2015) (we see why in Plate 6.20-6.23), they were not often used with so few people living on the island in recent years. However, they continued to hold significant cultural meaning for the Hatohobei community, especially in the sense that they were tangible cultural artefacts that could (until very recently, obviously) be seen, touched, and felt with a deeper sense of meaning and cultural connection. I have spent many hours sitting in and around the canoe house (see Plate 6.20) listening to stories from the elders and sharing stories with my peers. I recall a time in 2008 when Wayne Andrew, Nixon Andrew, Paul Homer and I helped Papa Isauro Andrew to replace one of the foundational legs of this particular canoe house. It was not an easy task, taking us all afternoon and much sweat, blood, and discussions around rest breaks. On any visit to the island, the first outstanding structure one views upon arrival is this canoe house, sitting just at the edge of the northern shore and in front of the only channel through the reef. In that same 2008 visit when we put together our video, *Hatohobei State of Mind*, I recall us talking a lot about the coastal erosion and that it was coming as close to 1m from the canoe house. On my most recent visit to the island in late 2012 the canoe houses were both

¹¹² This is a common feature of Pacific islander societies, in particular, the Carolinian atoll islands. Also, in Plates 6.19-6.21 please note the structure of the canoe house and how the thatch roof reaches all the way to the ground. This is unique to Hatohobei and I consider this a feature of the secretive aspects of a meeting space in a small community that allowed for additional privacy.

still standing and approximately 50cm from the soil erosion interface. In my mind, I was curious and concerned as to what would happen as the sea slowly reached further into the island. Suffice to say, I recently (January, 2016) received several photographs of this canoe house from a recent visit by family and community. This was a visit that included the HOPE staff supporting a cultural education and awareness program with the Hatohobei Youth Group. The photographs below (Plates 6.24-6.27) show the remnants of this cultural site and I leave myself to ponder that meaning over future stories and research efforts. It is useful at this juncture though, to provide a visual context to the coastal erosion impacting Hatohobei island (see Plates 6.24-6.27), the canoe house remnants, and lastly, the sacred mound site where Ramoporuhe (see Chapter Two) buried the giant clam shell upon her first arrival to the island. We can see in that photograph below the significant impact of the erosion, which has obviously occurred to this degree in very recent times. I return to discuss all of these realities of climate change impacts more critically after one more story.



Plate 6.20



Plate 6.21



Plate 6.22



Plate 6.23

Plate 6.20 Canoe House, 2008 (Nixon Andrew, 2008)

Plate 6.21 Canoe House, 2008 (David Tibbetts, 2008)

Plate 6.22 Canoe House, 2015 (HOPE Staff Photo, 2015)

Plate 6.23 Canoe House Remnants (HOPE Staff Photo, 2015)



Plate 6.24



Plate 6.25



Plate 6.26



Plate 6.27e

Plate 6.24 Soil Erosion of Sacred Site (Belly Andrew, 2015)

Plate 6.25 Channel and Soil Erosion (Belly Andrew, 2015)

Plate 6.26 Erosion, Southwest Coast, Hatohobei (David Tibbetts, 2008)

Plate 6.27 Erosion, Southwest Coast, Hatohobei (David Tibbetts, 2008)

6.7 “Use it or Lose It”

Coming full circle, we shall recall that after Super-Typhoon Haiyan passed through Koror I enjoyed the rare opportunity to engage in an informal filmed interview with Dr. Peter Black at the hotel where he and his wife Bobby were staying as they prepared to depart Palau later that evening. Peter and Bobby had just finished the first of several fieldwork phases with the community on a cultural repatriation project,

Documenting Ramari Hatohobei (language of Hatohobei)¹¹³. They too, had just experienced the events of the Super-Typhoon and reconnecting with friends and family in Echang and Palau for the past four weeks. I asked Peter several questions about the transformations of Hatohobei society, and he reconfirmed many of my thoughts that have come through in this ongoing thesis discussion. At the end, I asked him a final pointed question about his advice for the Hatohobei community, with their uncertain futures around climate change impacts and the home island. Peter responded quite pragmatically and succinctly, “Use it or lose it”. This makes simple, pragmatic sense. Tobians are faced with this stark choice about their dualistic and diasporic landscape with its many natural resources and remote limitations, and it is indeed, what they are doing with all of their community development efforts. If the Hatohobei community does not use (in whatever empowering actions that may involve) their resources, albeit in physical practice and/or in cultural practices, even through their diasporic interconnections through the “in-charge complex”, either the Indonesian government may subsume these contested territorial waters¹¹⁴ or climate change impacts will do the same. This was grounded, pragmatic advice from a respected (long term) (*wasera*, outsider) elder.

Let us round Peter’s advice out with further perspective from Tintin, a young Tobian woman (and my niece) who is now studying at the University of Hawaii – Hilo. With great talent and dedication, she is intending to complete her education and return home to Palau and contribute to the future of Hatohobei. I have no doubt she will succeed in all of her future endeavours and the Hatohobei community will benefit

¹¹³ More information on this project can be found at http://search.language-archives.org/record.html?id=elar_soas_ac_uk_0295.

¹¹⁴ Please see Yamamoto and Esteban (2010) for an interesting argument around sea level rise, sinking islands, and territorial sovereignty. This is an area I wish to examine with further research.

immensely from her efforts and achievements. In late 2013, she and other young Tobians (residing in Palau and otherwise) were discussing ideas about how the community will manage with climate change impacts (namely, a sinking island) and uncertain futures. Tintin's suggestion was at once creative, optimistic and visionary. Her idea for the community was to, "Find ways to live under water. Why, because it's going to be SO SO COOL...we could attract more tourists...and we would be called the 'first people to live underwater' hehe..just my opinion!!" (Tintin Andrew, 18 December 2013 on Facebook). This reminded me of several things; the long-term planning instilled in the Tobian worldview, humorous optimism in the face of unsettling and uncertain futures, and the groundedness and continuity in knowing that if the island literally sinks, it is still the spiritual home of Hatohobei. This reminded me of the creative thinking that I have learned from many years living and engaging with Pacific islanders. And it is just this perspective that empowers Tobians and Pacific peoples into the face of climate change impacts. In this photograph below, Tintin shares a message in regards to the COP21 conference via Facebook.



Plate 6.28 Tintin Andrew, Hatohobei Political Activist on Climate Change (C.Andrew)

Tintin's quote above provides us with a deeper understanding of climate change adaptation capacities for low-lying islands such as Helen Reef and Hatohobei. Worst case scenario, as we think about sinking and moving islands, is that if Helen Reef does sink and become uninhabitable, the Hatohobei community still has the reef as its resource and a community managed program in place to facilitate its usefulness. The same applies to Hatohobei island. If it becomes uninhabitable in 100 years' time, the Hatohobei community has a new reef and resource to manage and support its spiritual home. The Hatohobei worldview, grounded in family and clan relationship respects through the flexible and adaptable "in-charge complex", has very successfully nurtured an ongoing diasporic and dualistic society through myriad challenges. Through the nurturing of multiple and overlapping outside agencies at the national, regional and global level, the community continues to prepare well for its future. As an adaptive response to climate change impacts, this model and experience is useful and provides optimism for other low-lying island populations that may need to consider relocating from their home island due to climate change. It reveals the more complex cultural dimensions that help show similar communities in similar predicaments that they will do well to nurture their outsider resources with a grounding in their cultural value systems, even in the extreme cases of community relocation.

As we close down these stories that have provided a glimpse of the Hatohobei experiences with climate change impacts, I recall a quote from Tohbwich that I initially took as humorous nonsense. I should have known better. At one point, when the community seemed most concerned about the perceived 'doomsday' scenario of climate change impacts back in 2008, he stood up on the beach, put together one more betel nut chew, did a naughty Tobian dance, and shouted, "Don't worry, we will always be fine. If the island sinks, together we will simply make a huge fish hook and pull the

island back up again”. Well, it took me awhile to fully appreciate his figurative speech. In closing down these stories, I leave with the photograph below. It was taken during an HRMRMP and HOPE annual retreat at Carp Island Resort (in the Rock Islands of Palau) in late 2014. Team members here are discussing the 2015 and longer term goals and objectives for addressing climate change adaptation at both Helen Reef and Hatohobei. If you look ever so closely, and with a bit of imagination, you will see Tohbwich peering through the far window, as he watches his beloved Hatohobei community constructing that large fish hook. Tohbwich has some final perspective to bring us full circle back to our *Survivor* story in Chapter One. We will enjoy his final words in our concluding Chapter Seven.



**Plate 6.29 HRMRMP and HOPE teams at Annual Retreat, Carp Island Resort, December, 2014.
(HRMRMP Staff)**

I outlined the conceptual climate change adaptation models of Roncoli, Crane and Orlove’s (2009) four axioms (perceptions, knowledges, valuations, responses) and

Rudiak-Gould's (2011) "reception studies" earlier. For an overview let us now consider the Hatohobei experience with climate change adaptation through these.

The earliest community concerns about climate change events in Hatohobei and Helen Reef in 2008 were based around the experiences of the elders, who hold a more intimate knowledge of the environment than younger generations. It was felt that this overall threat could be dealt with by further research and support from outside resources. As the elders and leaders sought new information and evaluated options forward, there was never a dismissal of continuing proactive and pragmatic efforts toward seeking adaptive solutions (and this is ongoing). This is a strong example of the Hatohobei value of long-term planning and resourcefulness. Considering Frano's fears for his security at Helen Reef, we can also appreciate the intensity of climate change impacts in such extreme conditions. These responses relate to Rudiak-Gould's (2011) suggestion for a deeper understanding of climate adaptation responses through an appreciation of local communities' knowledge and relationship with the environment *and* what they have learned with outside discourses and systems.

Firstly, 'doomsday' discourses were never accepted by the community. This was so partly because most of the community was not accessing such larger discourse, but also, that is simply not an option in the Hatohobei mindset. The leaders engaging in the outside discourses continued (and continue) to seek pragmatic and proactive solutions. Secondly, through the community leadership efforts of the former Hatohobei State Governors Crispin Emilio and Thomas Patris, as well as the HSG senate, the community sought support and created relationships with outside funding organisations. This is the strength of the contemporary Hatohobei community that is grounded in family and clan relationships and this is maintained well through the "in-charge complex". By establishing the local NGO HOPE (and community groups

HWA, WOT and HYA), balanced with the existing HRMRMP and staff, the community is better able to access outside expertise and funding toward adaptive responses. As discussed in Chapter Five, two key leaders in this process have been former Governor Thomas Patris and former HSG delegate Wayne Andrew. These two leaders have worked very well together maintaining the long-term planning vision for Hatohobei while negotiating and nurturing relationships at the local family and clan level and with the national government and outside organisations. Both of these individuals have continually allowed their efforts and vision to be guided by the collective community and with future generations in mind. Wayne Andrew has played a key cultural transformer role in this process by engaging with outsider models and approaches, learning from them, and then shifting toward the insider role with the community and helping to guide a reappropriation of those models and knowledges in a way that fits with the Hatohobei framework. He has continually transitioned between outside Western models and relationships, to Palauan models and relationships, and Hatohobei clan and family relationships. He has carefully and successfully minded “in-charge complex” relationships to both promote Hatohobei traditions and family and clan respects (across clans) within all outsider modelled relationships and developments, while also balancing clan and family contestations and concerns for the betterment of community decisions and actions forward. This is a delicate role and Wayne Andrew has managed it exceptionally well. With the support of many, he has nurtured these layered relationships in a way that has helped the community to establish community networks that extend far beyond the traditional clan relationships, yet that are grounded through them, all the while growing individual and community capacity through the programs and groups of HRMRMP, HOPE, HYG, HWA, WOT, and OneReef Micronesia.

In 2012 through the Climate Change Adaptation workshop, all of these relationships were in play as the community began assessing outside information on climate change issues and adaptation options. The community has continued to work together through these vehicles and assess pragmatically, what options were available, useful, and workable in addressing the unique climate impacts on Hatohobei and Helen Reef. Obviously, the most urgent needs were for Helen Reef, and through the vehicles of HRMRMP and HOPE, outside funding sources were accessed and selective adaptive responses were made (i.e. a satellite communications system, water tanks, new transport vessels, new housing infrastructure). Another recent example is the HOPE supported Woman of Tobi (WOT) group that is now focusing on re-establishing the Hatohobei taro patch with a salt-tolerant taro species. The two resources fundamental to Hatohobei culture and identity are the taro patch and Helen Reef. The future is never certain for anyone, of course, but the Hatohobei community has transformed within the contemporary neoliberal setting and is very much empowering itself to successfully engage with unpredictable weather events forthcoming. If anything, the way in which the community has responded to the changing climate has served to strengthen the community even further. I suggest here that the Tobians are “changing the climate” in this climate change environment, and in doing so, we can see that they have flipped around the ‘doomsday’ discourse scenario. Collectively, they are reconfiguring their connection with the home island and their cultural heritage. Their future is uncertain in the face of unpredictable and extreme climate change events, yet they are very much empowered forward through a vibrant and dynamic connection with their home island. Through their cultural framework (based around “the in-charge complex”) they are using their natural resources very well with regards to utilising outside resources, models and networks toward protect and maintain their heritage and futures.

Once again, we return to Ingold's "sphere of nurture" and "relational model" discussed in Chapter Four. Hatohobei is literally and figuratively the "sphere of nurture" for this community. Their relationships, grounded in the "in-charge complex", draw strength from Hatohobei and provide strength to it through a wide array of relationships that transcend time and space. This is where the people of Hatohobei have their resilience, empowerment and agency and climate change impacts will not change this. Tohbwich yells out to me in closure here, "Remember, Hatohobei means, 'to make better magic and find'. Well, that is what we are doing, making better magic and finding our future, our style." Go on then, I replied, "Hatohobei"!

Chapter 7 The ‘Imagineering’ and The Unfolding...

The glue that holds the natural world together appears to be a harmonious balance of opposites: day and night, light and dark, winter and summer, liquid and solid, acidic and alkaline, male and female, wave and trough, proton and electron etc. There prevails in our reality an explicit duality that represents and implicit unity, and the line of separation between those things just named is as thin as it is necessary: yang rubs up against yin, yin against yang, distinct but mutually supportive.

--Tom Robbins, Tibetan Peach Pie (2014)

Tohbwich and Medichiibelau had returned once again to their hammocks swaying in the soft breeze flowing through the *chemechong* trees of Ngeremdiu Point on Ngeruktabl island. We will recall that Medichiibelau had been busy assessing the typhoon damage on Ngeaur (Kayangel) island in the previous chapter and Tohbwich, of course, was recently playing with us in the Hatohobei taro patch (*bor*) and shifting sands of Helen Reef. Rejuvenated in spirit, he had returned with fresh *hachy* (coconut wine) from Hatohobei to rejoin with Medichiibelau in their newly formed meeting place in the Rock Islands. Medichiibelau, having satisfied his concerns for the Kayangel and larger Palau communities post-Typhoon Haiyan, brought along ample *buuch* (betel nut) from Ngiwal village, and the two now reflected on our research project. In between libations they were happily chewing and spitting betel juice, while cogitating on deeper matters. Who can know for certain, but they would likely be resting here and enjoying their meditations, contemplations and argumentations for weeks, months, or years on end. Such slow and methodical thought processes produce more deeply meaningful actions and outcomes. This is quite analogous to the very slow and long process of cooking turtle and taro in the underground oven (*uhm*), which produces succulent earthy flavours that are savoured and delicately placed within one's deepest cultural memory files.

This thesis takes an unconventional approach and unlocks and unfolds backwards to forward. Through a correspondence (see Chapter Three and Four) with the community and the research process as the community engages its uncertain futures in the face of climate change impacts, the thesis provides hints and then insights into how the community is imagining and sustaining its future. Through my long-term relationship with the Hatohobei community, it is also this approach and method of correspondence that provides validity and trustworthiness to the analysis and outcomes of the research.

The two shapeshifting tricksters were more than pleased with the storytelling approach and the moments, events and insights we shared throughout the thesis. They were also satisfied that the approach addressed the research query while providing a critical, contextual, rich and nuanced glimpse of this particular contemporary Hatohobei ethnographic moment in time. They expressed their gratitude for the use of metaphor and humor, for the appreciation of linkages with our Pacific island brothers and sisters, and for the distillation of relevant historical events and stories. They also enjoyed the imaginative interpretative analysis, the overall narrative analysis, the use of photographic imagery, and the select anthropological theories and Pacific studies discourses that help to reveal and elucidate these linkages to make meaningful sense out of contemporary Hatohobei dynamics and events. They were both elated for their first ever invitation and inclusion into an academic research project, and they expressed thorough enjoyment for the space provided to share and guide the analysis (and story) along.

I took a moment to remind them of Rey Chow's *Ethics after idealism* (1998) and Ian Chamber's *Culture after humanism* (2001), works that are the paradigmatic bedrock of this research approach and content. These works express a movement away

from dominant authoritative discourses (and policies) and the associated social and political inequalities involved. They are moving toward critical analyses that value the subjectivity involved in our diverse and complex cultures, histories and daily engagements within ourselves and with each other. They are speaking to a valuing of the intersubjectivities and nuances within our engagements, and toward a deeper meaning that ignores reductive reasoning and generalized theory and policy, and social inequalities. They look toward a world that embraces multiple perspectives and meanings, a world that values the voices and experiences of those who are marginalized by dominant discourses and hegemonic forces.

I also reminded Tohbwich and Medichiibelau of our specific usage of Ingold and Gatt's (2013) *correspondence* theory. In practice, through our overall correspondence with each other and the community *and* relevant theory, we have triangulated a deeper understanding of Hatohobei social and political transformations in the context of diaspora, disconnect, a *sphere of nurture* (Ingold, 2000, p. 144) and cultural heritage and climate change threats. In doing so, we have highlighted the empowerment and agency of Hatohobei people and culture in their challenging reality as a minority group from a small and remote island threatened by serious climate change events. Along with their deep connection to their home island through genealogies and histories, their strength through family and clan relationship structures (and practices) and core cultural values, what we are calling the "in-charge complex" (Black, 1982) provides a vehicle of resilience and resourcefulness in engaging and utilizing outside resources to help support in the protection of Hatohobei resources and cultural heritage maintenance as they face uncertain futures.



Plate 7.1 Merging Currents and Shifting Sands, Hotsarihie (Helen Reef), 2012 (D.Tibbetts)

The eclectic and charismatic Tohwich was emphatic that I explain our use of storytelling in the narrative analysis and textual development. Spitting a stream of betel juice into the sand, Tobwich lamented directly to me in exasperation (but intentionally loud so that others would hear him):

Why are people not listening to our stories? This is a shame! Why ignore such depth of knowledge and experience? There is such a vast amount of valuable Native knowledge within Hatohobei and the entire world. There is so much depth that you humans are missing. It seems that you humans are afflicted with the malady of Mammon! Why are people gazing toward the superficial Survivor mentality and listening to inane nonsense every day? Your human disconnect grows wider and I fear what this means for our futures. We have seen that the younger Tobians are beginning to listen again as they reconnect to Hatohobei. Can you feel them learning and understand how this is shaping their futures in a better way? The stories are inside the old women, inside the old men, inside our customs and respects. They are inside the potions and chants and incantations of love magic and black magic. They are inside

the art works, the poems, the songs, the orations, the chants. The stories are inside the environment around us and our interconnections within it. The storytellers, the poets, the dreamers, the visionaries, they are all around us and sharing. Listen to them! Listen and feel! The stories are waiting to be nudged, encouraged, shared, received and felt. This is the key my young friend, and these are the pathways to unlock and guide us into our futures.

As I reminded our mischievous provocateur friend, this was precisely the reason for my research design selection of *correspondence*, which embraces the spirit of Hatohobei storytelling (and the silences, subtleties and nuances therein) as the experimental methodological vehicle for this ethnographic intervention and narrative analysis. We have even visited with a few select literary storytellers along the way, and we have included photographic images to convey further meaning for the narrative analysis. Indeed, for Tohbwich, Medichiibelau and myself, images can also be lucid texts, and so our exegesis emanates from the photographic image above. This (Plate 7.1) is perhaps my favorite image of the Hatohobei Landscape (see discussion in Chapter Four) as it simultaneously captures very well the research methodology, discourse and narrative analysis involved in this ethnographic research endeavor. This image also conveys the metaphorical and literal realities of every day Hatohobei life. If I were requested to choose one image that explains the entire dynamics and issues around contemporary Hatohobei, climate change and cultural heritage, I would choose this one.

In this image you can view (and feel) two merging currents off the southern tip of *Hotsarihie* (Helen Reef). Please note their convergence and the transformative energy emanating from this phenomenon. Note the white-capped choppy waves engaging in multiple mini explosions on a rather calm and breezy day. This is a

continual process of emergent and convergent energy flow. A *correspondence*, as well, if you will. As we learned in Chapter Three, these two parallel currents run along the island and are known as *arm*. As these two confluent (*arms*) forces of nature merge together they form what is known as *hapitsetse*, a rough area. Overall, this wave and current system is known as *hasetiho* and traditionally speaking, it is the *marusetih* (master fisherman) that has learned how to navigate through and around this rough area to reach the *suryiout* (calm area).

These are serious, intensive and unyielding forces of nature that are constantly moving, changing directions, at times violently penetrating, and shaping the world around and within them. To achieve successful results toward individual or collective goals, to successfully transfer from conceptually abstract ideas into practical results, humans must continually *improvise* and work with the natural forces of the environment, just as they must work with the varied forces of society and politics. We will call this process *imagineering* and this thesis analysis and story captures how Tobians are successfully imagining their futures into practical ways that ground them for a sustainable future. The imagineering and the unfolding.

In the image above we also can view how these two merging currents are transforming the land mass (Helen Islet) and for that matter, transforming the people deeply connected to that land mass. The sands are constantly shifting, the island is constantly moving. In fact, it is currently sinking and will very likely return again at a later time. It is in a constant state of transformation, shaped by these merging forces. And as life within and around us, it is involved in a constant process of *unfolding*. Influenced by the French philosophers, Deleuze and Guattari¹¹⁵ (2004: 28), Timothy

¹¹⁵ Deleuze and Guattari's seminal work, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, was originally published in 1980. There was a later English translation published in 1987, and another in

Ingold, in *Being alive: Essays in movement, knowledge and description* (2011), explains this concept of unfolding in the following way,

One may set out to build a house or to cultivate a field, and eventually lay down one's tools in the satisfaction of a job well done, yet in the doing, life and consciousness have advanced, and other goals already lie on the horizon. For the same reasons that horizons cannot be crossed, it is impossible to reach the ends of life.

(Ingold, 2011, p. 14)

In this way for the people of Hatohobei, when we consider Ingold's *sphere of nurture, relational, and progeneration* concepts, we can realise that contemporary Tobians have continued to imagine their futures based on past events through storytelling, and as they create their futures forward to the best of their abilities, their efforts will carry forward by new generations of Tobians with different challenges and goals ahead. This unfolding though, continues to emanate from the *sphere of nurture* known as Hatohobei.

In the context of the Hatohobei Landscape, this image also represents the merging and converging *arms* (parallel forces) of internal cultural forces, national political forces, the forces of neo-liberal capitalism, and of course, the forces of global warming that are physically impacting the Hatohobei community and its home island and resources in varied ways.

Please take further note of this image and the vessel in the background on the horizon. This is the (Hatohobei State Government contracted) vessel that is carrying the Hatohobei leadership and HRMRMP staff that are actively working together (along

2004. This too, is where the notion of our life engagement within this world can be perceived as a rhizome (discussed in Chapter Four).

with outside funding support and varied technical expertise) toward marine conservation and cultural heritage maintenance into perpetuity. Speaking metaphorically again, let us imagine the Hatohobei collective as the *marusetih* (master fisherman) with the *hasetiho* (knowledge of waves and currents) that is continually navigating through the *hapitsetse* (rough area) of converging contemporary societal and physical life forces, toward the *suriyout* (calm area, productive fishing). We can view this as a continually unfolding, constructive and transformative process where the community is successfully nurturing its cultural heritage, which includes adapting to climate threats in a unique, diasporic context.

Considering our correspondence and storytelling vehicle Tohbwich and Medichiibelau have enjoyed, conceptually speaking, let us also imagine (through this image) such dualistic convergences (and tensions) as mind/body, life/death, history/culture, tradition/modernity, past/future, outsider/insider, and Art/Science. Speaking to the latter duality here, I have highlighted in the methodology Chapter Three that Laurel Richardson (2002) views science as one lens and creative arts as another. She suggests that, “we see more deeply using two lenses, and wants to look through both lenses to see a ‘social science art form’” (p. 937). I argue that it is the mystery of life and phenomena that lie between the tensions within these dualities, and that is what science and art will always attempt to curiously understand and share for/with humanity. By using and valuing both the Artistic and Scientific lenses when respectfully treating and examining the diverse, complex, and subjective histories of peoples and cultures, we can better understand that from these many tensions between forces in life, we experience transformations. The selected research design and scholarly analysis is constructed here to engage and understand the meaning of these transformations. For this experimental ethnography then, these two (*arms*) are indeed

converging toward constructive, meaningful, and rigorous scholarly outcomes (*suriyout*). I argue that the storytelling method and approach has allowed us to value and appreciate Hatohobei histories, methods of sharing knowledge, as well as complement and highlight the overall (and specific) critical and narrative analysis within. I also suggest that this storytelling narrative serves to connect anthropology and ethnography, where creative, imaginative artistic expression (informed through an ongoing 20-plus year relationship with the Hatohobei community), helps in bringing the unfolding of life into the audience. This is not a study of a people, but a *correspondence* with a community, where we are learning together, and in which this study with the Hatohobei community, anthropologically speaking, “educates our perception of the world, and opens our minds and eyes to other possibilities of being”. (Ingold, 2011, p. 238).

It is the imaginative and literary artistic effort in this analysis and text that allows us to subtly examine the nuances between merging forces that the Hatohobei collective is engaging and negotiating toward its best interests. This experimental and multi-sited ethnography (Richardson, 2002) utilizes participant-observation, autoethnography, interpretive analysis, and two mythological characters to complement the narrative analysis based around (and within) storytelling. From the long-term relationship between myself and the community, and through the ethnographic fieldwork period, select theories (discussed further below) revealed themselves to me as they helped to triangulate the narrative analysis. In this experimental ethnography and anthropological query, as a mode of inquiry, both Art and Science are used toward achieving a rigorous critical analysis of the ongoing transformations of Hatohobei society. And again, as with the image above, all of these components and dualistic conceptualizations merge together in a transformative process that continually unfolds.

As for valuing this form of experimental ethnography, I refer to Richardson's (2002) "creative analytical ethnography" (CAP) that engages the reader toward a deeper transference of knowledge and learning. For Richardson, CAP practices are "both creative and analytical" (p.930) and she suggests the following criteria for reviewing and assessing such ethnographic contributions;

1. Substantive contribution;
2. Aesthetic merit;
3. Reflexivity;
4. Impact; and
5. Expression of reality.

These are the criteria I have striven for in this ethnographic research and creative and analytical endeavor.

The above image, with its shifting and converging currents (and transformations), also expresses my unique insider/outsider and long-term relationship with the Hatohobei community. This has contributed to a research design that is twofold;

1. It was designed to embrace the collaborative efforts involved in an ongoing dialogic between myself and the community (and events within); and
2. Returning (again through the image) to our metaphorical framing above and our discussion in Chapter Three, it reflects my efforts to use *etak* (the Carolinian navigation triangulation method based around abstract 'moving islands') to best navigate through the *arm* and *hasetiho* (waves and currents: dynamics, challenges) and the *hapitsetse* (rough areas: events) and reach the resulting calm of the *suriyout* (the scholarly analysis and outcomes).

The ensuing aspect here is using *etak* to triangulate the abstract (select) theory through (select) methods to produce the textual analysis and outcomes. This triangulation of multiple moving parts is grounded in my intensive long-term relationship as an outsider/insider to/with the Hatohobei community. This relationship will continue and evolve in myriad ways through this thesis contribution and differing individual and collective political and emotional sensitivities within the community. Our Hatohobei *sphere of nurture* now embraces and guides this contribution too, for and with the community, as we navigate forward.

Yet another dualistic component we can tease out from this image of converging currents (and transformative outcomes) is the Western epistemology:Indigenous knowledge duality. The research design intentionally uses both knowledge systems in an inclusive manner to better privilege indigenous Hatohobei perspectives and values within a (Western academic) scholarly narrative and process (and product, for that matter). The research design selects a paradigmatic framing that privileges what I am calling Pacific studies discourses and research methodologies (see Diaz, 1997; Mahina, 1999; Nabobo-Baba, 2004; Teaiwa, 2001; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999), along with select anthropological theory (Black, 1991; Clifford, 1997, 2001, 2013; Gatt and Ingold, 2013; Smith and Otto, 2014). Through this paradigm and theoretical convergence, it provides a deeper emotional (feeling) and analytical (critical thinking) understanding of the transformations within contemporary Hatohobei culture and politics.

There are other ideological convergences and transformations involved here. We may recall in Chapter Three (p.67), Tohwich's lamentations of *hei boutama* (foul smells) floating in from the westerly breezes, and the Western scholars objectifying Pacific peoples. We can recall him shouting at me, "*Please stop "theorising" us! We*

are insulted by your efforts that place us under a microscope!” This was based upon painful experience and was my conflicted internal voice speaking out for many Pacific islander friends and scholars, as well as the Tobian community. As I promised Tohbwich in that moment, and as I reminded him in his trust in me, I would do my best to choose a research design and approach that valued and appreciated indigenous Pacific (and Hatohobei) values and perspectives. I also argued that indigenous Pacific discourse and research methodologies were inclusive and that these two paradigms can merge together in a transformative way. Tohbwich’s response to me as he lay in the hammock, gazing at the image above and chewing his *buuch* (betel nut), was typical. He giggled a bit, spit out his chew, and asked me when we could next have a barbecue and stories with Mahina, Ingold, Otto, Diaz, Teaiwa, Clifford and Richardson. He said he wanted to show them a new (and naughty, of course) Tobian dance that he has developed from this thesis story. He also whispered to me, “*Please invite that Tom Robbins fellow, too. I want to talk to him about his epistemological gyroscope*”¹¹⁶. With deep relief, I take his response as acceptance and approval of the research design and approach.

As explored in Chapter Four, Tongan scholar Okusitino Mahina (2002) discusses this dualism balance in the research process (and product), as attempting to achieve a balance in *Ta* (time) and *Va* (space) (or a balance in culture/history, form/function, insider/outsider), towards a “social harmony”. Mahina suggests this not only for the research process, but our engagement with life, community and our environment. This is precisely what the earliest Tobians worked toward with their cultural adaptations to the unique Hatohobei environment (see Chapters 2 and 5 for

¹¹⁶ Please see the use of this term in the novel, *Still Life With Woodpecker* (Robbins, 1980).

more detail). These adaptations included conflict management language, as well as a political structure based upon the “in-charge complex” (Black, 1982), among other features. This is also precisely what Ingold (2011) and Gatt and Ingold (2013) are speaking to with the concept (and practice) of *correspondence*, which I unpacked in Chapters Three and Four. So finally, the image above, also speaks to the methodological and theoretical vehicle that simultaneously grounds and moves this research analysis and outcomes. As I discuss below, *correspondence* embraces our engagement with the environment around us by appreciating that we are not acting on something, it is not acting on us, but together we are *corresponding*, and together with these merging forces, transforming our lives forward. Further, through this correspondence, humans are engaged in a constant attempt to design their environments, and this is a never-ending process. This again, is the *imagineering* and the *unfolding*.

At yet another abstract theoretical level and perspective, we have incorporated the above mentioned *correspondence* theory (Gatt and Ingold, 2013), as well as Ingold’s (2000) concepts of *relational model* and *sphere of nurture*. Correspondence (in theory and practice) is about our relationship *within* the environment around us, with objects, including other humans, fauna and creatures, smells, and even spirits within all of the above. As Gatt and Ingold suggest, “To correspond with the world...is not to describe it, or represent it, but to answer to it.” (2013, p. 141). The notion of correspondence then relates to our engagement with phenomena and that we do not act on such phenomena, it does not act on us, but rather we *correspond* together. We correspond in our every moment, whether it be with animate/inanimate objects, sounds of music, smells, or any other phenomena. Through this correspondence, there is a

continual transformational unfolding that is grounded to a *sphere of nurture* (see Chapter 4).

This helps us to better understand our “correspondence” within the ethnographic fieldwork experience, where we are actively corresponding in the diasporic living environment. This also relates to the active correspondence with the narrative analysis and textual development. My contribution as an insider/outsider researcher with the Hatohobei community and this research product engages an ongoing correspondence with the community that will continue to unfold in ways yet unknown. Already, the active correspondence has contributed to stories, discussions and debates and practices that are shaping the Hatohobei community. I have emphasized this with and through the two mythological characters, but it also relates to the active correspondence with you, the reader, and any future reviewers/engagers of this text. Storytelling embodies the concept and practice of *correspondence*, involving a dialogical process between the storyteller and audience, in which the audience is required to *listen* and *feel* and *meaningfully engage* (within and if so, beyond). In this way, the audience can additionally read between the lines, understand the nuances, subtleties, silences, pauses and underlying and overlying meanings. Specifically, in this storytelling analysis, the audience may feel with more depth the nuances, subtleties and humour engaged within daily Hatohobei relationships, decision-making and outcomes. Here again, we can pause and reflect on the image above, and consider the merging currents in the dialogical process of storyteller and audience and the resulting transformations that unfold from this nexus. The person engaging this text may be another anthropological scholar tomorrow, and it may be a young Tobian scholar, fisherman, political leader, musician, film maker, poet, artist, or lawyer at some future time. The correspondence involved will continue and engage Hatohobei cultural heritage (and futures). Consider

this with our discussion of Ingold's (2013, 2012, 2011) theorizing on our relationship within the environment. This storytelling thesis within itself, belongs within the Hatohobei Landscape and evolves selectively and dialectically within individuals and community that nurture their experience from this particular storyteller:audience engagement forward.

As detailed in Chapter Four, Ingold's (2012) *relational theory* and *sphere of nurture* emphasize how our relationships are continually unfolding and that life is a process of ongoing *progeneration*, where we continue to correspond and therefore nurture selective pathways that simultaneously evolve and maintain linkages to a common "sphere of nurture". Where individuals have common concentrations of life experiences, these pathways tend to cross and interact with more depth, meaningfulness, and empowerment. Where we have the highest concentrations of experience (knowledge production through our correspondence), we have a "sphere of nurture".

For the people of Hatohobei, their "sphere of nurture" is the land itself, and all the meaning through the stories of the ancestors unfolding along the pathways nurtured by the people of Hatohobei. In the case of Hatohobei, the ties to the homeland and ancestors are maintained through ongoing relationships that operate implicitly out of respect relationships through the "in-charge complex" (Black, 1982). Through several autoethnographic stories in Chapter Four, we explored the (physical) disconnection and (spiritual, imagined) connection the people of Hatohobei, in a diasporic context, have with their home environment. Through an interpretive historical narrative analysis, in Chapter Five we explored ways in which the Hatohobei collective is actively and successfully nurturing certain pathways that empower the community through explicit cultural and political forms. In particular, these are local Hatohobei NGOs (HOPE,

HRMRMP, and OneReef Micronesia) that are using outside funding and promoting community-based marine conservation, cultural heritage and climate change adaptation efforts. Combining the stories and analyses from these two chapters, through several stories at the global level and then on the ground in Hatohobei and Helen Reef, we engage a narrative analysis that argues against “doomsday discourse”, where Tobians can be seen as “tragic victims” of external circumstances. On the contrary, we instead reveal that Tobians are responding proactively and successfully to climate threats. Their resilience and agency comes through the spirit and strength of their connection to the past, which guides them well toward uncertain futures. The community efforts we have discussed relate to historical and ongoing negotiations with local, state, national and global interests and reveal great agency and empowerment of a small and minority group facing significant natural (climate threats) and socio-political (neo liberalism) forces. Indeed, their (unfolding) experiences provide models and hope for other communities facing similar challenges.

Encouraging the perspective, valuation and approach of “design anthropology” (see *Design anthropology: theory and practice*, Gunn, Otto & Smith, 2013), Gatt and Ingold (2013) discuss how as human beings, our “‘design ability’ constitutes our very humanity and that ‘design’ is linked to the pervasive dualism between the mind that projects and the body that executes” (p.139). They are arguing for an anthropology, “not *of, as or for* design, but an anthropology by *‘means of design’*”, where an “open-ended concept of design makes an allowance for hopes and dreams and for the improvisatory dynamics of the everyday, and for a discipline of anthropology conceived as a speculative inquiry into the conditions and possibilities of human life” (p. 141). Further, they are suggesting that life is constant improvisation and that anthropology, by means of design, can be a “method of hope” (Miyazaki, 2004; in Gatt

and Ingold 2013), where, “Like the lives that it follows, it would be inherently experimental and improvisatory, and its aim would be to both enrich these lives and render them more sustainable” (p.141). This is their foundation for the notion of “correspondence”. This also, is the intended contribution of my intervention and this experimental ethnography.

Considering *correspondence* and *improvisation* further, around the continual transformational unfolding of life discussed above, where we are always in the process of “becoming”, Gatt and Ingold (2013) argue how design, “it seems, must fail, if every generation is afforded the opportunity to look forward to a future it can call its own.” (p.144). This point is crucial and salient to note. We are in constant movement forward, where there is no perfect end point, but our “design attempts” continue to improvise forward in ever changing environments. For Gatt and Ingold (2013), “design is part and parcel of the very process of dwelling”, and therefore, we as humans are in a constant process of creating our dwelling environments, or an “ongoing creation of the kinds of environments in which dwelling can occur.” (p. 145). They suggest that “design is not so much about *innovation* as about *improvisation* (their emphasis)” (p.145). Lastly, they ask us to consider, “the process of designing environments for life as a *correspondence*: one that embraces not only human beings but all the other constituents of the life world – from nonhuman animals of all sorts to things like trees, rivers, mountains and the earth. This is a correspondence that is processual and open-ended, but also fundamentally inclusive.” (p.146).

In *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (2001), James Clifford expounds on the futures of indigenous peoples, suggesting that, “The movements of Native Pacific people suggest newly inventive struggles for breathing space, for relational sovereignty, in post- or neocolonial conditions of complex

connectivity. They are about finding ways to exist in a multiplex modernity, but with a difference, a difference derived from cultural tradition, from landedness, and from ongoing histories of displacement, travel, and circulation. (Clifford, 2001: 483).

In the case of Hatohobei, and considering the concepts of correspondence, design and improvisation, we can see (as discussed in Chapter Six) how the community is actively designing its environment in the face of climate threats. Coming from a diasporic context, grounded through the genealogies of land in the home island, and supported through relationships that cross nationally, regionally and globally, the community is increasingly leveraged well in facing necessary climate change adaptations and caring for its tangible and intangible resources in ways yet unseen. Young Tintin Andrew (Chapter Six) enlightens us when sharing her thoughts on climate change adaptation, saying, “(Tobians will...) Find ways to live under water. Why, because it’s going to be SO SO COOL...we could attract more tourists...and we would be called the ‘first people to live underwater’ hehe..just my opinion!!” Her imagination reflects the improvisation already taking place with the climate change adaptation efforts in remote Helen Reef (community meetings, stilted houses, telecommunications infrastructure, power boats, developing and nurturing a wide array of potential open-ended support networks) and Hatohobei island (planting salt tolerant taro species). Looking ahead, it is quite possible that future Tobian generations will design an environment that consists of steel pillars holding up the island and a floating airport to take on visitors, and so forth, maintaining their cultural heritage and sovereignty over their land and natural resources. (Tohbwich breathes). Indeed, the imagination and resourceful improvisational capacity within the Hatohobei culture and spirit gazes strong across the uncertain ocean and future. This experimental ethnography, through its method of correspondence and storytelling (as

correspondence), has contributed to that gaze (and pathway creations) and may continue to do so in forms yet unknown.

Tohbwich jumps up from the swaying hammock now and implores for more, asking us to reflect on our Chapter One title and the opening query of the research project, “Tobi (or Not) Tobi”. In this title selection and word play, the concern was whether or not (and how) the Tobians were able to withstand serious climate threats, and whether, in a diasporic context, if the increasing physical disconnection from the home island (and perceived loss of the island to sea-level rise) was compromising their heritage and identity as a people. This anthropological query addresses this question in a way that resists dominant and generalized discourses and provides alternative perspectives that reveal and educate scholars and similarly challenged communities on methods, strengths, and approaches to facing such climate and heritage threats. It has shown us how this marginalized minority community has empowered its future forward through the adept utilization of local and external resources. This imagineering and unfolding continues.

Further suggestions emanating from this research effort are to focus in the areas of global warming, sovereignty and maritime boundaries. With increasing ocean acidification, rising sea levels and eroding reefs and coast lines, what will happen to the EEZ's and political status of submerged and uninhabitable low-lying islands such as Hatohobei? Changing maritime boundaries and loss of commercial resources will have serious impacts on small island nation-states. This is an area that requires immediate research considerations across disciplines and toward diplomatic and policy efforts involved in Pacific Island state developments. The recent UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (2017) is an area to explore and then tease out through researching specific

contested maritime boundaries across the Pacific. The Hatohobei Landscape provides an exceptional dynamic that cross-cuts all of these contested areas of concern.

The now prevalent use of social media is in another interesting area to consider researching with regards to diasporic Pacific communities and their agency through their linkages to the home island. In the case of Hatohobei, considering the resilience and adaptable nature of the “in-charge complex” social structure, who knows where the growing resource management efforts of the HRMRMP may lead toward the empowerment of the diaspora living abroad and unable to physically engage in the community efforts of their home community. This is an area that may grow opportunities of education and commerce and may link us to an interesting interface with concerns over maritime boundary contestations and sovereignty.

Tohbwich is standing at the edge of the shore line now. He smiles back toward me and you, and takes great pride in stating, “*It’s not ‘Tobi (or Not) Tobi’, it’s ‘Hatohobei’*” (“to make better magic and find”). Earlier he had reflected with me on the *Survivor* productions that we discussed in Chapter One. He mentioned that he is less worried about the potential negative impacts from such outsiders and their machinations. Through our research and thesis story, he had decided that the resilient nature of the Hatohobei world view and social structure, strengthened through its diasporic community, was more than capable of facing the influences, inequalities and coercions of hegemonic global systems and the rapid changes in the natural landscape due to changing climate events. He said he was proud to be a part of the Hatohobei unfolding, and that he was happy I finally understood his ghostly spirit magic in this regard.

I now watch as he walks toward the forest edge and begins collecting firewood. He constructs a fire pit and prepares to go out night fishing with Medichiibelau. I ask him what is going on and when will I see him again? He giggled and rolled his eyes to me, *“You know”*. I reply, *“I do not know, mare (brother) Tohbwich”*. He then replied,

“Yes, you know. We are fishing and preparing for a big feast and the feast will take place as soon as you call your scholarly and literature friends to come and join us. (I then realized he meant his new textual friends I have introduced to him). We have work to do. I’m making a new, bigger and better fish hook to pull up the island and I want to ask your friends on their ideas about making it better. They will have all sorts of ideas on ‘making better magic and finding’. Tell them we must improvise together! Please tell them to come visit and we will feed them and I promise to show them my new Hatohobei dance”.

I shook my head and thought to myself, there is so much more work ahead. Tohbwich called out to me as he set down his partially completed new fish hook and prepared out to sea in his canoe (*wara uhuh*), *“Can you tell me again my favourite message from my new storyteller friend Tom Robbins”*? And as I watched Tohbwich lift the sail on his *wara uhuh* and enter the waves and currents for another spirit journey, I shouted through the winds, *“He said...(pausing and catching a deep breath to help carry my voice across the wind and sea to him), ‘Humanity has advanced, when it has advanced, not because it has been sober, responsible, and cautious, but because it has been playful, rebellious, and immature’”* (see *Still Life With Woodpecker*, 1980). I could no longer view Tohbwich on the horizon heading south and westward, but I can still hear him giggling today.

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Appendix A: Status of the ROP Maritime Boundaries Delimitation and Provisions for an Extended Continental Shelf (A Briefing Paper for the Transition Committee)

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**Appendix B: The 2nd Technical Meetings on Maritime Boundaries
Delimitation Between the Republic of Palau and the Republic of
Indonesia, 29 November – 1 December, 2010, Koror, Palau**

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**Appendix C: The 2nd Round of Palau – Indonesia Maritime Boundary
Technical Consultation, 17 February 2011, Koror, Palau.**

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Appendix D: Helen Reef Ownership Public Meeting

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