

## 'TEAM SPIRIT'

### The Pervasive Influence of Place-Generation in 'Community Building' Activities along the Rai Coast of Papua New Guinea

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#### *Abstract*

This article focuses upon volleyball, the rhetoric of community building, and the potentially competitive nature of generative social relations. The setting is the Rai Coast of Papua New Guinea. It is also about places, and the deep and significant influence that both individual places, and indeed the imagination in relation to the potential of places, can play. It is an opening foray into the nature of various kinds of collaborative and institutional forms in Melanesia, showing, in this case, how the perception of a 'community' relies upon the active and generative differentiation of people and places. Through a mixture of narrative and analytic styles, personal anecdote, reported speech, published authority and descriptive evocation, I demonstrate that on the Rai Coast, landscape and place are not about what is 'out there' beyond people, but are sometimes about what is *in* people. As such, they are brought into people's projects and action in relation to them shapes developments around the idea of 'community'.

**Key Words** ◆ cash crops ◆ community ◆ development ◆ landscape ◆ Papua New Guinea ◆ place ◆ sports ◆ violence

Economic Development is properly defined as the material enrichment of the people's way of life. Their culture is their object of development, not the impediment.

(Sahlins, 2002)

People's sense of identity is often woven around a sense of difference, of (unequal) oppositions (us:them; man:woman; black:white and other more

subtle, overlapping, often contradictory oppositions), and that, therefore, identities are always relational, and also contingent in the sense that the construction of difference is always in process.

(Bender, 1998)

This is an article about volleyball, community, and the potentially competitive nature of generative social relations.<sup>1</sup> It is also about places, and the deep and significant influence that both individual places, and indeed the imagination in relation to the potential of places, can play. In the spirit of Barbara Bender's evocative and engaging experiments in writing about places, writings about how and what places come to mean for people, I relate a narrative of events that occurred on the Rai Coast of Papua New Guinea in September 2004. Entry through a narrative is clearly only one possible way into this material; it seems a plausible one in the context of a collection in honour of Barbara's work. Before even that however, I will introduce some description of the physical, political, and economic conditions on the Rai Coast in 2004.

The Rai Coast is the land that runs east from just south of Madang town on the North Coast of Papua New Guinea and extends to the border with Morobe Province, 100 km away. It is a narrow land, hemmed in to the south by the massive and dramatic Finisterre mountain range. It is also a rugged and difficult country for those wishing to move through it, as the underlying limestone rock is gauged and cut by fast flowing mountain rivers into myriad deep valleys, all running more or less parallel down to the sea. The area is densely populated in terms of coastal Melanesia for all that, with multiple language groups living subsistence lifestyles based around swidden horticulture, small scale animal husbandry, and cash cropping (to which we will come). Short yams, coconuts, fish, and cassava predominate along the coast, while inland, as the foothills of the Finisterre's rise above 300m or so, taro, long yam, sweet potato, and game hunted in the forests form the staples in people's diet. All Rai Coast people have some access to the cash economy, and many have small cash cropping schemes, trade stores or cocoa buying and drying operations. Yet the extreme nature of the terrain, where huge amounts of water come rushing down the mountains, spilling out into fast flowing and changing channels at the coast, means that there is no reliable road to Madang town for most of the year. Coastal dwellers tend to have the most access to, and certainly dependence upon, cash, which they earn through copra production. With no reliable road, it is the coast and the sea that provide the most direct route to town, markets and 'development'.

The conditions and events which make up my ethnographic description were located in the hamlets that make up Reite village, which lie between 300 and 700 m above sea level, and between 7 and 11 km

inland from the coast. Reite people speak a language called Nekgini and are predominantly subsistence farmers. They keep small numbers of domestic fowl, an average of one or two pigs per household, hunt birds and marsupials, and fish for fresh water crustaceans, to supplement their diet.

Over the past 30 years an array of development projects have been undertaken by Nekgini speakers themselves (very little has come their way 'officially'), who, in common with all Rai Coast people I have come across, are interested in, and desirous of the perceived and imagined benefits that 'development' may bring them. Yet such projects seem to run into difficulties (Leach, 2000; Leach, 2005). Cash cropping, popular at times of high world prices for coffee and cocoa, is equally unpopular when prices are low.<sup>2</sup> There are instances most people can report of having to use all the money gained from selling coffee and cocoa to pay for the transport of the goods into town. Just carrying cash crops to the coast in order to find transport is a major undertaking. What is more, no one in Reite understands why or how coffee and cocoa prices rise and fall. In 2004, most Reite people had abandoned their coffee and cocoa, feeling aggrieved at the extremely low return they received for their work, and confused by the continual inflation in the price of goods they like to buy, such as tinned fish and rice, while at the same time, receiving less than in the past from coffee and cocoa buyers. The continuing decline of the value of the national currency, the Kina, now means that even when world prices are high, little of none of this increase finds its way to small-scale rural producers. It is not unfair of me to state explicitly that (as indeed would be true for the author) the workings of the international money markets, commodity futures and National buying schemes are something of a mystery to Reite people. The effects of such things on the state of Papua New Guinea's currency, how this is linked into both confidence in the nation, and to its perceived value in terms of commodity and resource production, and so forth, have little valence for people whose hard work appears sometimes worth a great deal, sometimes worth nothing, and who thus feel at the mercy of powers beyond their control. There is more to the perceived failure of development of this sort, however, and this involves perceptions that Rai Coast people have about themselves.

When I arrived in Madang at the end of August 2004, there had been a recent boom and bust in the planting of vanilla for their bean pods. Organic vanilla beans command a high price in relation to weight. Everyone was talking about vanilla. Their interest, and concern, illustrates in a condensed way the context for understanding the desire for 'community development'. In Reite, one man had benefited from the boom. Planting vanilla before anyone else because of advice by local government agricultural officers, he had received something like

K16,000 from his first year's harvest. This figure is massive for Reite people. His success had encouraged many others to plant vanilla, only by the time they took their beans to market, the price had dropped by a factor of 10. In the confusion surrounding this development, and the resentment you may well think it caused, attention was turned to those in Papua New Guinea who were responsible. Whatever the objective truth, vanilla buyers had been telling their producers that the world market had lost confidence in PNG vanilla because some unscrupulous producers in another province had been adding to the weight of their pods by putting small pieces of metal inside the bean pods, closing them up again, and passing them off as genuine organic vanilla. Prices had taken such a dramatic down-turn as there were no longer any international buyers for PNG vanilla. I say whatever the objective truth, because my interest here is in the way such explanations resonated with Reite people's own tendency to explain their lack of development as, in some way, due to their own inadequacies. Conversation centred on the need to develop an attitude and practice that understood how one person's immediate gain might work against all in the end. In other words, a sense of the wider interests of the community was necessary to development.

This feeling was a version of a wider discourse on the benefits and desirability of community in PNG currently. This article is an attempt to analyse what the discourse of community means to a particular group's efforts at development. In this case, as it turns out, this sense of community is closely allied to notions of power and generation through association with places. And in turn, this means the kind of 'community' that is generated is appropriate to Rai Coast sociality. Perhaps not so much to world markets in vanilla, but any analyst might also say that trying to guess the future of world markets might be equally unhelpful. In this case, as Bender writes, 'People use the past as part of the way in which they create a sense of identity or identities, and they create links through myth and legend with established places in the landscape' (1998: 64). In Bender's work there has been an emphasis on the relational construction of identity - of one entity defined in relation to others that surround it, and also on the likelihood of contestation and dispute over the power and meaning of various places. This seems true at many levels for this ethnography.

In this case, far from 'community' embodying the notion of a shared set of meanings and interests, ambitions which somehow encompass a group, 'community' refers to a rather agonistic, highly contested process of making power appear as aspects of specific places. In a context where generative power is something achieved through knowledgeable work on the land, and on other people using the products of land, and where this power is specific to hamlet groups as named social and political entities,

'places', rather than a community, emerge from efforts to make sociality and commonality visible. It is in active juxtaposition and competition that a viable social world emerges in these people's perception. The competition is not *over* places directly, but *between* places defined as centres of generative identity. As what I describe revolves around how places and groups emerge as the same process, how places are thus multi-layered, both politically and phenomenologically significant to people's identities, I am sure the inspiration of Barbara's work will be clear (Bender, 1998: 36–38).

As Bashkow (2000) has articulated, the reasons that rural Papua New Guineans cite for the continual failure of development projects and business ventures often focus upon a perceived lack: of the correct moral attitude towards business, or lack of competence and understanding. He makes this a *moral* matter for his informants. There are other routes of explanation, but Bashkow is clear and useful in pointing to Papua New Guineans' tendency to bemoan their position as backward while at the same time, being resigned to this position because they feel that many of their kin and countrymen are just never really going to be able to conduct their affairs in the way necessary to business or development initiatives.<sup>3</sup> One failing often pointed to on the Rai Coast is people's sense of autonomy, and in consequence, where business is concerned, difficulty in organizing group endeavours where hierarchy and authority are necessary.

Amidst this set of perceptions and rhetoric, one strand emerges again and again over the years. That is, the need to organize villages such as Reite as a community, as a collective organization with coherent aims in terms of business development, and thus consensus about who is in charge. This, and a desire to give young people from the village a reason to stay there and not drift towards town, is the background to the establishment of a volleyball league in the village. Volleyball, like all sport in PNG, is seen as a fun way of organizing people into collectivities with a common aim, and fostering fitness, team spirit and co-operation.

### THE GRAND FINAL

Here I begin a narrative in a rather different descriptive vein.

I would like you to consider: What would be your response to the following series of events? Imagine yourself asked to present the prizes at a community event. In fact, imagine being asked to *donate* the prizes, and then present them. For the purpose, you have been placed, along with various other local 'officials',<sup>4</sup> on a 'grandstand' (Figure 1). This grandstand has been carefully constructed from bush materials for the use of officials during the Grand Final of the Community's Volleyball Association Annual Cup. Carefully constructed, but not very robustly. It



**FIGURE 1** The Grandstand built in Marpungae hamlet for the Grand Final of the Sayarema Community Volleyball Association Annual Cup 2004.

*Photograph: James Leach*

is wobbly, and not at all comfortable, especially with addition of opaque plastic sheeting for a roof, a roof that magnified the ferocity of the sun's heat and made the interior of the grandstand rather like a stationary car parked in the summer sun. You are in the middle of a hamlet constructed entirely of bush materials, about 8 km inland from the North Coast of Papua New Guinea, and some days' travel from the nearest town.

The programme for the day begins at around 11 am, when the sun is already fierce. Hundreds of people mill around the newly marked out volleyball pitch, sitting in the small patches of shade underneath the shrubs and cordylines that decorate the hamlet. There are four recently constructed 'doorways' one on each side of the pitch, each decorated with flowers and the name of the team that will emerge from them (Figure 2).

After watching some entertainments, and the emergence of the teams from their enclosures (the latter a process which mirrors the emergence of initiates from seclusion (see Leach, 2002) the two matches; one for men and one for women, take place. There is both tension and excitement in the air. The women's game finishes peacefully, but as the men's match draws to a conclusion, angry mutterings are heard, not from the amassed crowd but from one of the officials. One of my neighbours on



FIGURE 2 'Doors' are constructed through which the teams emerge from their secluded preparation.

*Photograph: James Leach*

the grandstand is beginning to thrash about, speaking more and more loudly of poisoning, and how unfair this all is. At one point the Chairman of the association tries to calm him, explaining that this is a game, and that we must observe fair play. The reaction of my neighbour is to threaten to destroy the grandstand and all the prizes lined up there, if the Chairman does not keep quiet.

The game finishes, and my neighbour immediately jumps from the platform and gathers his (losing) team into the enclosure where they have been given space to change and prepare themselves. Soon after, shouts come from inside that enclosure accusing other teams of using sorcery and poison to win. This echoes talk that has been circulating freely in the village prior to the Grand Final. Soon after, the shout comes that the referee was biased, combined with renewed accusations of sorcery. Movement starts on the field and around the enclosure/house. Soon mayhem is the order of the day. The house is shaken as the team inside start to kick down the walls. My ex-neighbour on the grandstand picks up a heavy pole, longer than himself, and careers onto the pitch, swiping at people in his path, and eventually smashing through the net and tearing it down. The hubbub around the team's enclosure grows as more young men join the fray, either trying to prevent damage to things

or people, or to take revenge for injuries and damage already inflicted. It takes 45 minutes for the scene to settle, and some compensation demands are already to be heard. My friend from the grandstand almost sets things going again by furiously redirecting any demands for redress to the team that poisoned his team, and the referee, as they are obviously the source or root cause of all that has happened.

In the tense calm that follows, the other officials move ahead with the day's programme. Prizes are to be presented, and speeches made. This all runs smoothly until the losing men's team approaches the grandstand. Their captain mounts the structure but refuses to shake hands. He turns to the audience, bellowing that he and his team reject their prizes (of a volleyball and a new net). He throws them to the floor. Last year, he tells us, his team came second in the Grand Final. They received a volleyball and a net that time, with the instruction to go away and practice with them, and thus return this year and do better. He does not want another net. This year they entered because they wanted a *trophy*. Thus he rejects the prize and indeed the food being cooked for all to eat communally after the presentations. Why, he demands, did they not receive a trophy?

Returning to their enclosure after this speech, the losing team interrupt the presentation of the trophy to the winners with shouted questions about their fees to join the association, about why the trophy was so small, about why they had not all received trophies, and finally, about the misuse of and appropriation of funds by the officials on the grandstand.

I went home, six or seven hours after arriving, through a seething mass of people, some of whom were trying to get at each other to start the fight again, others who were preventing them, and some people from further away trying to stop me and make it clear that this would not have happened in *their* village. It was only my close friends in Reite who behave like this. All in all, I was not convinced that community had been fostered.

#### PASIM TEAM SPIRIT

The notion that there may be something in a collective, something more than the group, which somehow emerges from their interaction, yet is above and beyond any individual is so commonplace in our own thinking that it seems wholly unremarkable. While we may well have developed our discipline through contestation and refinement of the Durkheimian 'super-organic', society persists and culture is still the shorthand we use for the common meaning systems, perceptual orientations, and creations of human artifice as a collective project.

And in the world of development, of emerging states and national consciousness (Foster, 1995) an allied focus on generating coherence, and

of the significance of *community* is prevalent. Contemporary Papua New Guinea, facing its share of contradictions and hindrances to smooth development (Dinnen, 2000; Pitts, 2002), exhibits a discourse promoting community, ranging from advertisements on national and local radio stations to the attempts of peripheral and isolated groups to access resources as various kinds of 'community' (see e.g. Ellis, 2003, Filer and Sekhran, 1998).

When I arrived in the village that year, I was taken aback by how empty the hamlets were. There were very few 'young people'<sup>5</sup> in evidence. Actually, many older people were also absent. On enquiring where they were, I was reminded of the upcoming Grand Final of the Sayarema Community Volleyball Association's annual competition.<sup>6</sup> The villages were empty because the four teams that would appear in the final, two days later, were secluded in different parts of the jungle with their supporters and elders. My enquiries elicited a description of their purpose that I found captivating. They were engaged in the activity of '*pasim team spirit bilong ol*', that is, 'capturing' or 'tying down' their team's spirit.

As with much of this material, the description was given to me with rather a dismissive air. I surely understood about team spirit, coming, as I do, from the place where 'sport' of this kind originated. In fact, as I proceed, I would ask you to remember that it was assumed that I knew more about what was going on than I did, that people expected me to understand what Sayarema leaders were up to, and that the behaviour of the teams, the referee and so on were just transparent. The perception that 'community', 'sport' and most importantly, 'development' were things white people knew all about and actively promoted, lay behind this.<sup>7</sup> The assumption of knowledge and approval on my part was made evident by the shorthand used. The volleyball competition and the association established for the clubs were almost so self-evidently geared to the task of 'generating community' ('*kerapim komuniti*') that this required little comment or elaboration. By merely having the association, and focusing people's attentions on a volleyball league, community would appear.

As it happens, I think they were right in this. But as I have already mentioned, the kind of 'community' generated reflected priorities other than those of an overarching set of shared goals, or identities, or meanings, or agreements about future trajectories even. Most noticeably of all, it had nothing to do with harmonious and peaceful internal operation. Generating community for these people was in fact generating diversity, diverse positions from and within the landscape. Thus the '*kerapim*' aspect, the generative power of the process of '*kerapim komuniti*', is made apparent by, and is visible in its effect, only if this differentiation is achieved. The focus is on generation and process, not on 'community' as an entity that might ever be achieved as an end.<sup>8</sup>

### THE DAYS LEADING UP TO THE EVENT

Soon after my arrival in Madang town, I was asked by those who had come to meet me if I would contribute to the 'community' through purchasing trophies to be awarded to the overall winners of the men's and the women's competitions. Much was made of how grateful the community would be to me for this. ('Once again, thank you so much for your contribution. I know the community will highly praise you for your kindness'),<sup>9</sup> how it would make my return visible, and perhaps offset any residual resentment against my association with one hamlet rather than another. In other words, the organizer of the event (the Chairman of the Volleyball Association) framed my (potential) financial contribution as a contribution to something like 'the community' as a whole. Easily suckered by such rhetoric, I acquiesced. It turned out that the 'trophy' I had been asked to buy was in fact two trophies, two volleyball nets, seven volleyballs, four whistles and four air pumps. 'Community' interest was thus apparent from the outset, and a wider distribution than I had at first thought, was being planned.

However, my awareness had not extended to an understanding of how the thing would be run. It was the extraordinary image, referred to earlier, of a team disappearing into the bush for 48 hours prior to the match in order to 'capture their team spirit', that alerted me to the seriousness with which people were taking their community building efforts. I wonder if, like me, you would have reversed the two descriptions of activity. One often hears of *generating* team spirit by socializing and practising together, and one might think of 'capturing' the goodwill in a community. The image of coercion involved in capturing a spirit as if it were already there, and forcing it to remain through ritual means (Lawrence, 1965), was intriguing. In doing so, they were following the taboos more usually associated with initiation, or making magical power effective (*kundeing* in Nekgini).

The importance was also apparent in a rather less pleasant sense of anticipation. As my house was used as a meeting and sitting place for many different people, I became aware of a level of tension surrounding accusations of sorcery. A sorcery accusation is extremely serious in this area. It appeared that in the previous year's final, the losing side had immediately accused elders of the winning team of sorcery.

### TEAM SELECTION

The teams were all drawn from within the boundaries of the administrative district 'Reite'. That is, they were closely connected to one another through ties of kinship and affinity. I am not describing antagonism between mutually hostile groups, nor of people who are strangers

to one another. The teams were made up in an apparently logical manner. People from the same 'family' would join together, find a distinguishing name for themselves, and thus form a 'club'. But as with other aspects of kinship (Lawrence, 1984; Leach, 2003) there is an engaging complexity to their formation which belies the 'chosen because of family' explanation. For example the club 'Rinals'. The clubs take on new names based on a combination of the letters of the lands on which they live (Ririnbung and Nalasis in this case).<sup>10</sup> 'Rinals' consists of three 'brothers', that is, boys of different parents who all live together at Ririnbung hamlet and thus are siblings in Nekgini understanding, two boys from a geographically proximate hamlet called Saruk, and two from a more distant hamlet, Sarangama. The elder Sarangama boy, Pupiyana, and his younger sibling, are kin of the Ririnbung and Saruk brothers through their mother. Pupiyana's inclusion in Rinals was the outcome of a dispute among the team based at Sarangama (Napston), and Pupiyana, angry that his club would not listen to his direction, 'ran away' as they put it, and joined Rinals. Two other Ririnbung boys were part of Rinals, but they, in turn changed allegiance after internal arguments over authority. They went to the Club 'Napston', the Sarangama based club from which Pupuyana had defected.

Without spending pages on the intricacies, I wonder if you would be prepared to believe me that this process of group formation is exactly akin to the process by which hamlets are formed (the term for an emergent hamlet/kin group is *palem* in Nekgini, referring to a physical structure from which wealth is distributed, a named place in the landscape, and all those people who have given a gift of wealth to others from there *as emergent kin*). While men stay on the land of the fathers, and tend to live together with people they consider 'siblings', hamlet groups easily and readily incorporate other kin, and outsiders. A peculiarity of kinship in the area is that all the children who grow up together in a hamlet are considered siblings whatever their previous relationship, and may not inter-marry, *as a consequence* of where they have grown up. Disputes over authority in a hamlet are one major cause of new hamlet formation. And each new hamlet formation defines the emergence of a new kin group. Kin groups take the name from the land in which they are generated, and thus I have described elsewhere, a creative emergence of place and kinship in reciprocal and necessary relation is apparent.

Making a place come into being thus is a conscious effort on the part of its inhabitants. But this effort is dispersed and long term. To have a name as a place, or indeed to regenerate the name of an existing place in the current generation, its inhabitants are required to produce. From large-scale garden production for exchange purposes, to livestock, to children grown through the efforts of the adults in a place, to the means by which a place becomes known in ceremonial and magical terms.

Crops and children will not grow without the aid of spirits and ancestors. Spirits are discovered in, or reveal themselves as the musical and evocative voices/tunes associated with particular sacred groves, springs, or rocks. Ancestors' bones are placed in secluded areas of one's lands, and their bones bring hot dry power to the efforts of men to attract wives, perform sorcery and grow children into adults. It is the combination of production, and the power of lands, spirits, ancestors, spells, and thus 'knowledge' that this production evidences, which makes a viable place appear.

As shorthand: places are combinations of people, landforms, spirits, ancestors, names and history. And their appearance as places depends upon making the power of these combinations, always novel, but always versions of previous generations' power, apparent in attracting others, drawing them into marriage and exchange, and thus ultimately generating and regenerating persons as fully embedded in (as aspects of) the productivity of particular areas of land.

Difference then is quotidian. One place is not the same as another. The people there have their own combination of ancestors, of spirits they know and bring forth, of designs and procedures appropriate to the generative power of particular places. People are thus different from one another because of the different combinations of powers that have grown them, given them substance and form. The generative process is one of making difference, of developing situated positions and generating difference because of the different physical, social/historical, spiritual and artistic possibilities of specific combinations of people and land.

The comments of other villagers that I reported (that only my friends in Reite would behave like this) is both a shallow and a profound demonstration of making difference. Shallow as they position themselves as different because of coming from elsewhere, but profound in that the comment also draws on the fact that they, and I, know well that Reite people have a name in the region for being 'kastom' people. Reite's neighbouring villages and language groups have opted for business development, or Christian practice, as ways of trying to make the world of development and power arrive in their midst. Reite people have chosen the route of valuing and maintaining the importance of local ways in their everyday lives. I am torn between emphasizing the profundity of the observation: people in neighbouring villages probably would not have fought *for the same reason* and my observations from several years in these villages that they would have found *something* to dispute.

#### SORCERY AND RESENTMENT

The behaviour of the losing men's team struck me at the time as extraordinary. As I walked back to my house that evening, I experienced a

range of emotions: shock at the violence, disappointment, frustration, even anger. I have over the years become perhaps too involved emotionally with the place. (Although this is a 'fault' Reite people would no doubt claim they have elicited in me.) But I could not get away from the idea that their behaviour was not only a demonstration of poor sportsmanship and lack of sensitivity to the needs and successes of others, but that it was selfish and destructive. Fancy, I thought, losing a fairly played game (I had watched the whole thing) and then complaining about the result for no less than *four* different, and equally spurious, reasons. Of course you don't get the trophy for coming second. Accusing the referee is a common but hardly noble response to loss, and trying to ruin the whole day for everyone by publicly denouncing the officials for embezzlement of funds, especially when I had provided the prizes, was just crass.<sup>11</sup>

But it was the sorcery accusations that struck me as the most absurd aspect. Think about my arrival in the village. It was not just one set of people, one team and their elders and spirits that were secluded in the bush, but all four teams. They were all there to draw upon the powers of their places and ancestors, to tie that power to their team, and thus have the strength to overcome the opposition. For the losers to complain about sorcery was surely the most absurd response. They had been engaged in exactly the same activity, only someone else's 'sorcery' had proved stronger. There is only one conclusion really. And that is, the complaint was not about the tactics of the other team, but simply about the fact that they had won.

However, if we return to the idea that these teams are formed on the basis of local ideas about making viable groups, about *place*, perhaps it is my emotive response that comes to look absurd given how long I have been trying to describe these processes. What were the teams doing in their bush seclusion? With their elders, they were attempting to ensure that the power and spirits of their ancestors and lands were attached to them, would give them strength and would demoralize the opposition. There are obviously precedents for this effort. People tell of the great past days when they took their spirit cult to a neighbouring hamlet, and through sheer force of sound and fragrance, and the arresting appearance of their carving and designs, they drowned out the spirits' voices from other places. This is called 'resis belong tambaran', in Tok Pisin (competitive spirit cult performance). The same seclusion and taboos are regularly practised prior to using love magic on a potential wife, and men also use this form of separation from the normal social world, and concentration of power, to achieve success in hunting and gardening.

We might say then, that volleyball in this case is not a game. Particularly in the context of community building, of wider 'development aims'. Losing is not acceptable because what is lost is a sense of the power necessary to attract wealth, to grow crops and animals, and in the end,

to be a viable social entity with affines. I think it is for this reason that people became so angry, quite out of the spirit of what I thought they were doing, but wholly in line with the efforts they were undertaking. Elders helping their teams put themselves, and their power, on the line. As the teams are proto-places, groups of people who come to work together, reside together, and have the common aim of demonstrating their power and therefore social effectiveness to others, there is a lot at stake in this new form of performance and competition. Whereas I said that *someone* has to lose for there to be a game, it was not the game that was the focus. It was the winning.

We might say that losing is not accepted as necessary to achieving the wider aim, the real prize of making a good day for all concerned, and thus bringing a sense of solidarity and 'community' to all who take part. Community is just not this at all times for these people, but rather the differentiation of people and places on the basis of their different forms of power and effect.

#### GENDER

In this article so far I have only focused on the antagonism between male teams. Both men's and women's teams took themselves off to the bush for ritual preparation, both were competitive. Why then was it only the men who fought over the result? I cannot answer in any definitive manner, but again I would look to the political and social aspects of land, place and movement to approach an answer. On the Rai Coast, it is men who stay on land, men who inherit land from their fathers. In some ways this stasis is *gendering*, rather than determined by gender. By staying on your father's land, a claim is made, not for continuity of substance *per se*, but rather for your knowledge of how to make that land productive in the same manner as your father did (Leach, 2003: 117-18). Knowing the same spirits and myths, having the same access to the particular history of the place through knowledge of its names, allows for a kind of regeneration of identity. In fact, men's names are ideally the same as their paternal grandfather's name. If the dominant understanding is that people are grown in places that have distinct characteristics, and that people come to embody, through growth, the particular generative power of a place, then the notion of regeneration makes sense. Each generation draws upon the substance in a place as it appears in relation to previous human inhabitants. One's connection to these inhabitants, their power and effect, is the growth and generative power one can demonstrate. There is thus a strong association between men and their fathers, but the association comes through place and generative power, not as a consequence of owning the same land outside, as it were, the history of this generative endeavour.

For men then, the importance of their association with the power of places is vital to male identity. Women move between places in marriage. They are detached from one and incorporated into another. If you ask Reite people how a child is conceived, they deny knowledge. All they will say is that a man puts an entity into a women's belly, where it subsequently grows. Women gain their identity and power as women in different ways to men. It is tied to containment, to the generative power of encompassment and concealment. This is specific to where it is situated while situated, and also, moved around the landscape. Ideologically, one might say, women, to be women, do not take the same form as men do.

### CONCLUSION

The test of my thesis must be whether or not these volleyball clubs eventually become *palem*, become the basis for hamlet and place formation. We shall see. But for the whole period of my fieldwork this time, Pupi yana, much to his own disadvantage (as it meant a long trek to his garden land) resided with the other members of Rinals, in a house for young men, at Ririnbung hamlet, and not in his originating *palem* of Sarangama.

Through a mixture of narrative and analytic styles, through personal anecdote, reported speech, published authority and descriptive evocation, I have tried here to demonstrate that on the Rai Coast, landscape and place are not about what is 'out there' beyond people, but can be about what is *in* people, what people can carry around of the power to affect others. Tying down one's team spirit is to make the power of place itself, and its generative potential, an inseparable aspect of one's activities, whether those be growing crops, performing love magic, growing children or winning a volleyball competition. As Bender describes, places are multi-layered, and they are drawn continually into people's projects.

### Acknowledgements

The fieldwork that this article draws upon was supported by generous contributions made by King's College Cambridge and Alan Macfarlane. I record thanks also to Fleur Rodgers, Pinabin Sisau, Porer Nombo, Alice Street and Cherubim Lai.

### Notes

1. The article is an early foray into the nature of contemporary motivations in participating in, or indeed building, various kinds of collaborative and institutional forms in Melanesia, many of which come under the self-designation 'generating community' or 'kerapim komuniti' in Tok Pisin.

2. More than this, large and well-tended coffee plantations are left to return to forest at such times, making returning to production a huge undertaking.
3. It seems clear then that ethnographic and analytic work should be focused upon what these people do see as appropriate outcomes and objectives for their mode of sociality in the context of development.
4. Chairman of the volleyball association, local magistrate, ex-Local Council committee member, schoolteachers and headmaster, along with several old men there by dint of the respect due to them.
5. That is, aged between 10 and 50 years. The peculiar designation 'youth' (yut in Tok Pisin) on the Rai Coast seems to have more to do with identifying avenues through which to access resources ('Youth Group Projects') than simple categorizations based on number of birthdays (and see Dinnen, 1995).
6. 'Sayarema' is an acronym used to denote the collective efforts of people from the hamlets of SARangama, YApong, REite and MARpungae. Colonial policies lumped all these people together under the name of one hamlet/kin group (Reite) for administrative purposes (see Leach, 2003: Chapter 3).
7. See also Bashkow (forthcoming).
8. One could extend this examination by showing how places emerge as physical outcomes of the process of 'making community'. In some ways I will address this. However, as the emergence of place and person from the generative processes of separation, marriage, exchange, horticulture and ceremony is addressed elsewhere, I will leave that as background here.
9. Excerpt from a letter from Cherubim Lai 28 August 2004.
10. Just as 'Sayarema Community' is made up of the first two letters of the names of major hamlets.
11. There is more to this than I go into here. There were locally accepted grounds for some members of the volleyball association to think others might be acting autocratically with their contributions.

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