

## ANGER, GENDER, LANGUAGE SHIFT AND THE POLITICS OF REVELATION IN A PAPUA NEW GUINEAN VILLAGE

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### Introduction

In a number of recent publications (1986, 1990), Catherine Lutz has explored the network of associations in Western culture that link women with emotion, which in most cases is overtly devalued. A contrasting situation is described by Bambi Schieffelin (1990) and Steven Feld (1990), who argue that among the Kaluli of Papua New Guinea, it is males who are "stereotypically culturally constructed as the emotional gender" (Feld 1990: 262), even as their work and that of E.L. Schieffelin (1976, 1985) has demonstrated the strong value placed on emotional displays by the Kaluli. These studies, as well as many others by anthropologists (e.g. articles in Lutz & Abu-Lughod 1990; Bloch & Parry 1982; Watson-Gegeo & White 1990; White & Kirkpatrick 1985), have shown that in probably all communities throughout the world, the expression of affect is engendered, and that, therefore, "any discourse on emotion is also, at least implicitly, a discourse on gender" (Lutz 1990: 69, see also Ochs 1988: 177-83, 215-16).

Because both emotion and gender are indexed and expressed in large measure through language, we can augment Lutz' generalization with the observation that discourses on emotion and gender will also be bound up with discourses, or ideologies, of language (Ochs 1992: 341). We can, furthermore, expect that at certain periods in the history of a language and its speakers, the links that exist between discourses on affect, gender and language may come to salience and work to compel speakers to engage in linguistic practices that may result in changes in the language itself. Michael Silverstein has drawn attention to this type of process in his discussion of the Quaker challenge to the 17th century English system of distance and deference (Silverstein 1985). Silverstein argues that a decisive factor in the shift from a pronominal system signalling deference and intimacy (through the second person *ye/you* - *thee/thou* opposition) to one in which these affects were no longer encoded grammatically was first of all emergent, widespread ideas about the value of "plain English" as a means of signifying opposition to traditional knowledge and authority and as a means of directly apprehending religious and scientific "truth", and secondly, on Quaker applications of those ideas in their everyday speech and their rhetoric about language. Quakers defied contemporary sociolinguistic norms by refusing to use the polite deference (*ye/you*) forms when addressing others, partly because English scriptural prose used the familiar *thee/thou* forms, and partly because they felt that the *ye/you*

forms contradicted their religious doctrine that all people were equal before God. Quaker usage was in this sense "explicitly subversive", even as it was "societally shocking [and] insulting" (ibid: 249) to non-Quaker interlocutors, who spoke to the Friends with the polite 'you', only to be answered with the familiar 'thou'. A situation thus arose in which:

"Friends [i.e. Quakers] use symmetric T [thee/thou], and hence others had to avoid it, lest they be mistaken for members of the sect; Friends avoid symmetric Y [ye/you], and hence others must use only it. Consequently, a new system emerges, in which societal norms abandon T decisively as usage indexing speaker as Quaker and take up the invariant usage of Y. A STRUCTURAL or FORMAL change in the norms of English has been affected." (ibid: 251; capitals in original).

Silverstein summarizes and generalizes this process as follows:

"Ideological rationalization [can] engage...with language at and through an intersection of structural form and indexical usage, producing tension in the highly charged "metaphorization" of indexical meanings and forms. The resolution of this tension seems to move the very structural system into new configurations, generally unforeseen by the users of the language." (ibid: 252).

I draw attention to this analysis by Silverstein because in this paper, I will focus on a similar - though much more far-reaching - process of ideological and linguistic change that is underway in a small village (population ca. 110) in Papua New Guinea called Gapun<sup>1</sup>. Gapun is located about 10 km. from the northern coast of Papua New Guinea, roughly midway between the lower Sepik and Ramu rivers. It is a relatively isolated village, and the villagers are self-supporting through a combination of swidden agriculture, hunting and sago processing. Despite their isolation and their consequently low level of participation in cash cropping or other money generating projects, the villagers of Gapun are very keen to "develop", and thinking about how this might happen occupies a great deal of their time. The villagers have been nominally Roman Catholic since the late 1940s, and their hopes for development are pinned in elaborate ways on Christianity and on the immanent second coming of Christ.

In Gapun, a language shift is currently underway from the village vernacular - a Papuan language called Taiap - to Tok Pisin, the creole language that has become Papua New Guinea's most widely spoken national language. Children are no longer learning the vernacular, and no one under 14 years of age actively commands it. The reasons behind this shift are complex and many-stranded, but here I will focus on what I see as one of the most central reasons behind the shift, namely links that exist in village discourses between gender, the expression of anger, and particular ideologies of

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<sup>1</sup> Fieldwork in Gapun was carried out during 15 months in 1986-87, and for 7 weeks in 1991. My fieldwork in 1991 was conducted as part of a Post Doctoral Fellowship at the Department of Linguistics, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University. I thank the department for funding that trip, and I thank Christopher Stroud for his comments on an earlier version of this paper.

language that see language as indexical of sociability and the ability to handle knowledge.

Two specific speech genres invoke these links very clearly for the villagers. The first is a kind of dramatic public display of anger that occurs virtually daily in the village. The word by which the villagers most commonly call this genre is a Tok Pisin word, *kros*, which literally means "anger" (in the village vernacular, the name is *pwapaŋgar nam*<sup>2</sup>, lit. "angry talk"). *Kroses* are considered by Gapuners - both men and women - to be stereotypically feminine expressive modes. The second speech genre I will discuss is called "men's house talk" (*ambagaiŋa nam*). This talk is oratories, by men, that occur inside or in the immediate vicinity of one of the men's houses in the village. Unlike *kroses*, which foreground and proclaim anger, men's house talk is not explicitly and always concerned with anger as such. However, a central organizing characteristic of men's oratories is concern to downplay conflict and reframe disputes so that everyone appears to be content and harmonious. And on certain occasions, such as during meetings called to help heal a sick person, anger is made an explicit topic of discussion, and men are urged to "expose" their anger and "reveal" their complaints<sup>3</sup>.

In my discussion of *kroses* and oratories, I will be concentrating on how discourses of gender, affect and language are mutually reinforcing and sustained through specific linguistic practices. Ultimately, my point is that these discourses and the practices which constitute and inform them are nowadays invoked by villagers to position women and men in different and opposing relationships to those institutions and values that everyone in the village agrees are important: namely, Christianity, modernity and civilization. This positioning constitutes the kind of "tension" that Silverstein refers to in the quote above. And as he suggests, the resolution of the tension is moving the linguistic situation itself into new, unforeseen configurations, ones that in this case are resulting in the demise of the village vernacular.

### Language ideology and knowledge

A basic tenet of village language ideology is that speakers do not normally say what they mean. That is, unlike much Western philosophical tradition and contemporary middle-class values, which see language as a "transparent window to truths both formulable and communicable in it" (Silverstein 1985: 248; cf. Reddy 1979), villagers in Gapun do not interpret a person's words as a reflection of their inner state or as an accurate representation of their opinions on a matter. In fact, the general assumption is that language "hides" (*haitim/ambu-*) meanings that the speaker either cannot or will not state openly. Consequently, interpretation in the village is geared towards getting

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout this text, words that are underlined and italicised are vernacular language words. Words that are only italicised are Tok Pisin words. In the translations of village speech, which are not italicised, talk that occurred in Taiap is underlined; Tok Pisin speech is not.

<sup>3</sup> See also my discussion on oratorical harangues in Kulick 1992: 139-47.

"inside" or "underneath" the words actually used in speech.

The realizations and consequences of this linguistic ideology have been discussed in earlier work on Gapun with relation to literacy (Kulick & Stroud 1990), language socialization (Kulick 1992: 223-47) and code-switching (Stroud 1992). In those works, Christopher Stroud and I have examined the villagers' ideas about language by embedding them in local notions of personhood that make it very risky to appear too blunt or demanding. Here, I would like to foreground a complementary consideration that is mentioned but not elaborated in those earlier analyses: in addition to being linked to and reinforced by conceptions of personhood and sociability, village language ideology is also related to particular village ideas about the nature and consequences of knowledge.

In Gapun, a great number of forms of knowledge consistently carry with them associations of danger. All those forms of knowledge that have been explicitly valued traditionally, for example - such as knowledge of increasing or healing chants, knowledge of certain myths, of the men's *tambaran* cult and of special skills such as yam planting or wood-carving - all of these are bound up with hazard. Knowledge about any facet of the *tambaran* cult, for example, is believed to have the power to cause the deaths of women and non-initiated boys who might somehow acquire such knowledge. Even initiated men must carefully guard their knowledge of the cult secrets, for to reveal them to the non-initiated would cause the cult deities to kill the speaker. Magic chants, even benevolent ones, link their knower to ancestral spirits or men's cult deities who may act entirely on their own to bring harm to anyone who displeases the knower, even if the knower does not wish this. Overhearing certain myths may cause sickness, and uttering secret names may cause environmental disturbances or death for large numbers of people. Even private knowledge is fraught with danger. Unlike some Melanesian societies, such as the Sepik river Avatip, where knowledge appears to be dangerous only to the extent that it is made public (Harrison 1990: 102), in Gapun, the private discovery of knowledge is enough to put the knower in danger. On one occasion, for example, a senior man explained to me that he had repeatedly tried and finally managed to recreate, on a fan he was weaving, a specific mythologically important pattern that he recalled seeing as a boy. "Nobody taught me to weave the design", he told me, "I exposed (*kamapim*) it in my thoughts". This exposure, however, apparently angered the ancestral ghost-owners of the design, who retaliated by inflicting the old man with a serious illness.

This kind of understanding of knowledge makes possessing it and imparting it a somewhat risky business. Knowledge is valuable, but it is also - and this, of course, is part of what constitutes its value - potentially lethal. It must be handled, passed on and made public in very delicate ways. Anthropologists working in Papua New Guinea have noted that this kind of orientation to knowledge seems very widespread throughout the area. They have also noted that practices of knowledge throughout Melanesia tend to pivot around an oscillation between concealment and revelation. At certain times and under certain conditions, knowledge of sensitive matters, say, of cult secrets (Barth 1987), or clan wealth (Strathern 1979: 249) is revealed to initiates or trading partners. But such knowledge, once revealed, is almost immediately hidden away again, and

furthermore it frequently carries with it an implicit tag (made explicit in subsequent revelations) that the revelation only disclosed part of, or perhaps even a false impression of, what there is to know.

Gapun villagers' language ideology, which privileges ambiguity, hidden meanings, and meanings construed by listeners rather than those conveyed by speakers, provides them with ways to traffic in knowledge without putting themselves or their interlocutors in too much danger. By oscillating between "inside" talk and "outside" talk (Stroud 1992: 147), by making deliberately ambiguous, self-contradictory statements (Kulick 1992: 127-31), by pressing into service specific structural features such as code-switching (Stroud 1992) and diminutives (Kulick & Stroud in press), and by deploying discursive features such as repetition and dissociation (Kulick 1992: 127-36), speakers in Gapun manage to reveal, discuss and circulate knowledge even as they conceal it and thereby gingerly sidestep many of the potentially fatal consequences that stark, unmitigated knowledge is known to have.

## Anger

Anger enters this discussion as a singularly inflamed object of knowledge. In village discourses on emotion and knowledge, anger in adults is always linked to danger. If anger is not voiced or acted upon, it will, villagers explain, remain in the stomach (the seat of emotions) and "rot" (*sting/pisimb-*). The putrefaction of anger may mobilize the ancestral spirits associated with the aggrieved person, and these may cause harm to whomever provoked anger in that person. Alternatively, rotting anger may "give bad thoughts" to the aggrieved, driving them to seek out the services of a sorcerer, who will be paid to murder the object of the anger.

If anger is voiced or acted upon, then there is a risk that its expression will provoke the wrath of the ancestral spirits associated with the person who is abused or attacked. Abusing or attacking another person may also drive *that person* to a sorcerer. So no matter how it is ultimately dealt with, anger is dangerous. People in Gapun die of anger. Village deaths (all of which are held to be caused by sorcery) are almost inevitably accounted for at least in part by recalling past arguments or fights that the deceased or his/her close family members or matrilineal relatives had with other people.

Anger (*kros/pwap-*) is one of the relatively few affects that villagers regularly speak about and attribute to themselves and others - the other affects featuring in village discourse are shame (*sem/maikar-*), concern and sadness (*wari/punat-*), dissatisfaction (*les/mnda-*) and fear (*pret/rew-*). Of these emotions, anger and dissatisfaction are seen as the earliest and most basic. They are tied to a dimension of personhood that the villagers call *hed* in Tok Pisin, and *kəkir* in the vernacular. Both these words mean, exactly, head. Each individual, the villagers maintain, has *hed*. Each individual, they mean by this, has a basic and volatile sense of personal will and autonomy. The concept of *hed* in Gapun signifies egoism, selfishness and maverick individualism. It denotes emotional bristliness and defiant anti-social behavior, and it

is roundly condemned in village rhetoric.

For the villagers, one of the embodiments of *hed*, of this flammable dimension of personhood, is small children. Babies and toddlers in Gapun are routinely said to be, and treated as if they are, continually dissatisfied and angry. A child cooing softly on its mother's lap may suddenly be shaken lightly and asked "Ai! What are you mad about? Ah?!" (*Ai! Yu belhat long wanem samting? Ah?!).* Likewise, a mother seeing her 8 month old daughter reaching out towards a dog lying beside her will comment "Look, she's mad (*kros*) now, she wants to hit the dog", and she will raise the baby's hand onto the dog's fur telling the child "That's it, hit it! Hit it!" One of the clearest indications of how villagers view the affective state of children is in the first words they attribute to them. In the village, a child's first word is generally held to be *ɔki*, which is a vernacular word meaning, approximately, "I'm getting out of here". Attributed to infants as young as 2 months, this word encapsulates the adult belief that babies "do what they want" (*bihainim laik bilong ol yet*) and go where they want to go regardless of the wishes of others. The 2 words that villagers consider rapidly follow *ɔki* also underscore the notion of a baby as a gruff, independent individualist with a "strong" *hed*. These are the Taiap words *mnda* (I'm sick of this) and *aiata* (stop it).

In the villagers' view of the socialization process, children should come to understand that *hed* and the display of anger and dissatisfaction that typifies it must be suppressed (*daunim*). As they mature, the expectation is that children will curtail their expressions of anger, that they will begin to accept and accommodate others, that they will share with others and conduct themselves "quietly" (*isi/ tɔwerki*). Anger, in this cultural understanding, in addition to being fraught with danger, is also seen as childish and immature. Although it is explicitly recognized to be a central component of all people, it is one that adults should do their best to suppress and conceal.

Unfortunately, however, people do become angry at the actions of other people: other people who steal betelnut, who neglect to collect firewood for the evening meal, who forget to return a borrowed item, who engage in extramarital affairs, who talk behind people's backs, and so on. Villagers have developed a number of ways of dealing with the anger they see as being provoked in them, including destroying their own possessions and outright fighting (Kulick 1992: 50-52). The single most common way in which anger is conveyed, however, is through the village speech genre known as a *kros*.

### Proclaiming anger in a *kros*

The best way to give an impression of the general tenor of *kroses* in Gapun is to briefly examine an extract from one that was recorded and transcribed in June 1991. This is a *kros* between two sisters living next door to one another. It arose because for several weeks the younger sister, a woman in her 30s named Sake, had been complaining loudly about the fact that children who played in the area near her house littered the ground with coffee beans, which they shot at each other and at pigs through bamboo pipes. One afternoon Sake caught her sister's 10 year old son red-handed as he stood

shooting coffee beans at pigs underneath her house. She chased him and shouted at him and threatened him. At one point during her tirade at the boy, Sake asked him in a loud voice: "Does your mother come and clean up around here?!" (the answer, Sake knew, was no). Hearing this rhetorical question from inside her house, the boy's mother, a woman in her 40s named Erapo, began yelling at Sake. Sake strode up into her own house and responded in full force. This segment occurs about 5 minutes into the shouting match:

Sake: No good rotten big black hole!

Erapo: Smelly cunt bloody bastard!

Sake: I was talking to Erapo [sarcastic]. I was talking good about the rubbish [i.e. the coffee beans], Erapo gets up and swears at me. Fucking cunthole bastard you!

Erapo: This hole of yours

Sake: (                      )  
 Rotten! Your dirty cunt is a big black hole. Bastard. Black guts! What is she, what is Erapo talking to me about, kros-ing me about, swearing at me for?! Ah?! Erapo [you have] a rotten black hole!

[one utterance distraction]

Sake: Catfish cunt! Erapo has a black cunthole! A black cunthole Erapo! Erapo has a huge black cunthole! Erapo has an enormous black cunthole! Satan fucks you all the time, Satan is fucking you Erapo! Erapo! Satan is fucking you really good! Your cunt is sagging like dirt on a loose cliff. Catfish cunt!

This is a typical Gapun *kros*. It exhibits many of the conventions which characterize the speech genre, such as vituperative insults and gross vulgarity, loud voices shouted out over the village, the spatial placement of the speakers inside their respective houses, and harsh, explicitly confrontational accusations of wrongdoing. As the *kros* continues, the insults that the women exchange become interwoven with direct threats, and Sake, especially, repeatedly challenges Erapo to come down from her house so that Sake can 'beat her till she shits'.

*Kroses* in Gapun are gendered speech genres that are associated with and almost inevitably enunciated by women<sup>4</sup>. Whenever Sake or some other woman has a loud *kros*, those village men not directly involved in some way make clucking sounds of recognition, shake their heads disparagingly and mutter knowingly that "this kind of rubbish talk is the habit of women, it's their way" (*desela kain rabis tok em we bilong ol meri, pasin bilong ol*). Women are collectively held by village men to be more *bikhed* (willful, big-headed) than men. In ways similar to most Melanesian societies, women in Gapun are associated with individualism, atomicity and anti-social behavior.

<sup>4</sup> Those men known throughout the village as ones who sometimes have *kroses* are men who are either old widowers or divorced middle-aged men. That is, they are men without access to a woman's voice. Kulick n.d. is a much more detailed analysis of gender and *kroses*.

Traditionally, men, through their common residence in the men's house and through their perpetual preparations for and acting out of funerary feasts, initiation rites and war raids represented and embodied cooperation and society. The collective actions of men were considered the "bones" (*bun/nig*) of society. The actions of women, even though these were sometimes collective in nature, do not appear to have been accorded the same type of cultural significance as those of men, and women were and continue to be represented as divisive troublemakers whose selfish actions constantly threaten the solid, manly group. Echoing a statement heard all over New Guinea, village men sometimes remind one another that "we fight over women"; that is, we would not fight if there were no women. Women, with their anger, their *kroses* and their unwillingness to "suppress" their *heds* are the root of all conflicts.

Individual women in Gapun do not share this view of themselves as destructive trouble-makers. Women who have *kroses* do not interpret their own behavior in reference to the stereotype. When Sake, for example, has a *kros*, she does not consider that she is being divisive; she is legitimately defending herself from some violation and attack. When another woman has a *kros*, however, then Sake will often be quick to sniff that the woman is "a woman who always gets angry for no reason" (*meri bilong kros nating nating*).

The existence of a culturally elaborated stereotype of women as quarrelsome means that such a role is available for any woman to act out, however. And as a stereotypically female role, it is unattractive for men. Men in the village like to pretend that they have no conflicts with others, and they dismiss *kroses* as *samting bilong ol meri/nagema crak* (what women do). The village stereotype of what represents ideal male behavior puts pressure on the men to be more sociable, generous, dignified and temperate than their wives, who are expected to fly off the handle and have a *kros* at the slightest excuse. In most cases, in a manner remarkably similar to that described by Elinor Ochs (1989: 137-38) for Madagascar, a married man is able to uphold this stereotype and simultaneously announce infringements by simply informing his wife about some slight or infraction that he has been subjected to (such as somebody not returning a borrowed axe or shovel). The wife can usually be counted on to take it from there, and in doing so she reinforces the stereotype of quarrelsome, loud-mouthed women. Even on those occasions when men publicly *belhat* (get angry, shout), this anger is usually directed at that man's wife or his close female relatives. So public arguments almost inevitably involve women at some level. Both men and women blame (other) women for making trouble, for not being able to contain their anger and for "showing *hed*" (see also Goldman 1986: 236; Nash 1987: 105; Harrison 1990: 162).

### Concealing anger in the men's house

In very marked contrast to women's *kroses*, oratories in the men's house are occasions on which men in Gapun engage in speeches that downplay tension, smoothe over disagreement and stress consensus in the village. Oratories occur whenever meetings are called in the men's house to announce the need for labor to clear overgrown paths



or repair rotten footbridges, to work out the arrangements which have to be made for funerary feasts, to discern the meaning of messages and news items which villagers bring back with them from their travels to other villages or the Marienberg mission station, to arrange to help a village man and his wife in some task which requires a number of laborers, such as carrying house posts, roofing a house, or clearing the forest to plant a garden, or to discuss any number of other public issues.

Because they are so strongly associated with the men's house, oratories, par definition, are male. Only men in Gapun are considered to orate. There is no rule or explicit consensus in the village that women cannot orate, and there are a few strong-willed women in Gapun who do occasionally speak in public gatherings which concern both men and women. Women's speeches contain many of the same rhetorical features, such as repetition, which are predominant in oratories, but they differ importantly in that they are much briefer than most men's speeches (which usually last about 10-15 minutes, but which can go on for up to 45 minutes), and they never contain any of the particular formulaic tags which the men use to mark their speech as oratorical. Furthermore, women, who are not allowed inside the men's house, obviously cannot speak from there, and so their contributions to a discussion have a peripheral character that is underscored by their spatial placement. Because of factors like these, women who make short speeches at public gatherings are not considered to be orating; they are, rather, "complaining".

Usually, anger is not an explicit topic of discussion in contexts dominated by oratorical speechmaking. Quite the opposite. Skillful orators draw on a wide variety of paralinguistic cues (e.g. speakers are called and assembled under the same roof), metalinguistic cues (e.g. speakers address their talk directly to a general public, use politeness markers to assume and relinquish the floor), and linguistic cues (e.g. there is a marked preference for speakers to use diminutives to downplay their own status and talk, and oratories are characterized by supportive repetition from listeners), to meaningfully ignore and downplay the tensions which infect daily life in the village and to promote an illusion that everyone is in agreement and that there really is no anger and consequently no conflicts at all. In creating this illusion and bringing the villagers together in this way, orators demonstrate for others their own social awareness and skills, even as they work to structure a context in which others can demonstrate their sociability by listening and contributing to the buildup of the consensus by repeating and agreeing.

Sometimes, however, village men focus explicitly on anger, and there are contexts in which they spend much time and talk urging one another to "expose" (*autim/ arni gur-*) their anger, to "break it open" (*brukim/kra-*), to "reveal" (*kamapim/mamanj-*) it. This kind of speechmaking occurs whenever somebody in the village is struck down by a serious illness that people conclude is being caused by ancestral spirits. When this happens, men gather together in a men's house and talk about conflicts. When everybody who wants to talk has had a turn, senior men invoke the village ancestors and call upon them to stop causing the sickness. Everybody present in the men's house then dips their finger in a glass of water, which is subsequently used to wash the sick person. The idea behind this procedure is that the

men in this context embody both themselves and their ancestral spirits, and by first "revealing" their anger, then dipping their finger in the water, they "cool" (*kolim/pkemb-*) the anger that is causing sickness in the afflicted person. The following text is extracted from a meeting in the men's house, attended by all village men, called to effect a cure for the author of this paper, who in June 1991 became afflicted with disabling pains that the villagers, upon hearing the symptoms, immediately identified as "a sickness of the ground" (i.e. a sickness caused by village ancestral spirits). Note how anger is talked about here.

Mone: Whoever feels that something isn't right, alright expose it. It's like we're breaking open the talk now. It isn't good if this [anger] remains in our stomachs, because he [i.e. Don] will suffer. We have to expose all the little talk.

Kawri: Yeah.

Mone: Like yesterday too I talked about doing work for him [Mone means that yesterday he exhorted the villagers to get to work building a house for me. Work on this house had been progressing extremely slowly, because even though the villagers had volunteered to build it for me, they found themselves unwilling to work together because of various village conflicts]. We were all lazy [and therefore did no work yesterday]. Or maybe we have some worries, or maybe we're tired of doing work, or maybe we're just tired for no reason, or like that.

Kruni: That's it.

Mone: Alright we're gonna reveal all these little worries: "This man said something to me and so I'm unwilling to work", this kind of thing. Alright, when we've finished talking we'll/or we'll talk about the spirits of the village, of the men's house, OK, and we'll put our fingers in the water alright Don will/we'll hold Don's pain, wash it in the water of our talk. Like just try it. It's not this [i.e. a sickness caused by a village spirit], it's a [white man's] sickness he's got, he'll go to the hospital.

Kruni: At the hospital it'll finish. We'll try it our way [first].

Mone: There's no talk [i.e. no dissention]. Like we can/maybe we don't have any talk, or maybe we can talk about the spirits of the village, we don't think that something is as it should be/we can talk about work or about something that is amongst us giving illness to him, alright we'll talk straight about that. Talk straight and put fingers in the water.

Later, towards the end of this session, after several men had "revealed" "little" irritations or conflicts that they were involved in or had heard about, the talk is summarized like this:

Kem: We're gonna hold the water and rub his pain. These things, there's not plenty of complaints.

Sair: No.

Andon: There's no complaints.

- Kem: Our { little talk, that's it.  
 Kawi: { little crumbs of talk.  
 Kem: We're making it.

The aspect of this talk to which I want to draw attention is the way in which anger, even though it is explicitly spoken about here, is consistently embedded in speech characterized by hedges ("maybe we don't have any talk"), the presentation of alternative positions ("or maybe we're just tired for no reason", "it's a [white man's] sickness he's got"), and specific denials that the anger the men are supposed to be exposing is in fact anger at all. Choruses like the one here, in which several men hasten to agree with one another that there are no complaints, occur throughout meetings like this, and they become particularly insistent whenever somebody actually does "expose" a happening or occurrence that caused them to feel anger. At one point during this meeting, for example, a senior man "revealed" that the men present were reluctant to work on my house because they were angry at Allan, my adoptive village "father". The anger, it was pointed out, stemmed from the fact that Allan and his wife had moved into my previous, communally built house when I completed my original fieldwork and left the village in 1987. The couple made this move in defiance of received village opinion, and the other villagers now accused Allan and his wife of "ruining" the house. Every person present at this meeting was acutely aware of the truth of this senior man's "revelation", because in private villagers routinely expressed bitter resentment towards Allan and his wife for having moved into the house. In the men's house, though, the revelation was handled in the following way:

- Kem: Alright, you all gave up on poor Allan, he's by himself [i.e. working on building my new house by himself]. You all have this thought, I know, you can't cover it up it, we're showing Christian belief here. It's not anger (*kros*), it's like you're talking straight. OK, and you hold the water now and the spirit will go inside it. It's like that.
- Andon: Is it anger? [rhetorical question]
- Kruni: It isn't anger.
- Maramé: There's no anger, it's talk.
- Mone: Yes.

One of the most significant ways in which men's public talk about anger differs from women's is in this kind of cooperative recontextualizing work, where speakers weave together their words to reframe anger as not-anger, and where they sometimes even go so far as to congratulate themselves on talking about anger as a way of "showing Christian belief" (*autim Bilip*). I interpret this kind of supportive discursive interaction between men as a linguistic manifestation of the village orientation to knowledge as something which in many cases is safely revealed only if it is somehow subsequently reconcealed.

This is the point. One of the most significant differences between women's *kroses* and men's oratories - and the difference that seems to evoke the greatest degree of discomfort in villagers - is not so much that female speakers publicize anger: in many ways this is in fact commendable, since villagers agree that it is much better to express anger than to let it remain unexposed and rotting in one's stomach (indeed, this kind of exposure is the whole purpose of the kind of gatherings in the men's house discussed above). What is unacceptable and dangerous about *kroses* is that women only complete half the discursive equation. Women reveal anger without subsequently reconcealing it. They expose anger and leave it uncovered, where it is thought to act like a throbbing hot lightning rod of unleashed dissention, pulling sorcery, sickness and death into the village.

Women's linguistic practices for dealing with anger are in almost every way inversions of men's practices. In addition to exposing anger without hiding it again, women's *kroses* emanate from inside or nearby private dwelling houses. Men's oratories, on the other hand, occur in or near the communal men's house. *Kroses* are organized as competing monologues; in oratories, the people being orated at are free to contribute sympathetic interjections throughout the speech and follow the orator by producing a speech or a summation in which they "give support" to the orator. *Kroses* are dramatic declarations of self-display in which speakers assert themselves and their personal autonomy by broadcasting throughout the village that these have been violated. Oratories are characterized by self-effacement, speakers repeatedly remind their listeners in polite muted tones that they only have "little crumbs of talk" or "a little worry" to draw to everyone's attention. *Kroses* are meant to shame a specific, named person or a specific unknown, unnamed culprit; oratories are intended to generalize and address people as members of a group - even in those cases where the topic of an oratory is some sort of transgression committed by somebody, blame is inevitably diffused and generalized, and everyone is reminded that others in the village (though not necessarily they themselves) are just as lazy or uncooperative or big-headed as the (always unnamed) people who committed the transgression. For both men and women, *kroses* are associated with (other) women and divisiveness; oratories, on the other hand, are seen as concrete evidence that men in Gapun really are more placid, consensus oriented, sociable and reasonable than their tempestuous, forever bickering wives.

### Language shift

In the ways outlined above, we can consider anger as a kind of locus where ideologies of language, gender and affect all converge, creating in that convergence a discursive space in which gender stereotypes are both imagined and acted out. In large measure because of their linguistic practices for publicly dealing with anger, men in Gapun are credited by everyone with greater knowledge about how to handle knowledge, as it were. By exposing anger even as they deny it and conceal it, men present themselves and are understood by others as providing and embodying a protective buffer against the ravages that naked anger is known to be able to summon forth. Women,

contrastively, brazenly expose anger but subsequently do nothing to mitigate the negative consequences that may be generated by this exposure. This particular linguistic practice of handling anger has become representative of "what women do", and it permits the maintenance of a negative stereotype that demeans women as childish, destructive and irresponsible.

Although there are differences, this situation in many ways parallels Silverstein's example of the sociolinguistics of seventeenth century British society, discussed at the beginning of this paper. In the case of both Quakers in Britain and women in Gapun, a specific group of people comes to be symbolized in meaningful ways by specific linguistic practices. Once this symbolic bond becomes salient, it becomes important for people who do not wish to be identified with that group (non-Quakers in Britain, men in Gapun, as well as individual women who do not wish to be negatively labeled by others) to begin avoiding that type of verbal behavior that is seen as indexical of the group. Thus non-Quakers avoided the familiar second-person address forms, and men in Gapun avoid *kroses*. The question that arises now is the one with which I began this paper, namely: how is the convergence of anger, gender and the politics of revelation working to produce a tension in Gapun such that the linguistic situation of the village is moving towards new configurations?

The answer to that question lies in the ideology and practice associated with the two languages that villagers use in their day-to-day talk. Basically, the situation is one in which the vernacular language, Taiap, is nowadays associated with tradition, the land, the local concept of *hed*, and women. Tok Pisin, on the other hand, has come to be bound up with modern processes and phenomena. Tok Pisin is tied to Christianity, white people, money, schooling, and, significantly, it is also tied to men and those affective stances that are seen to characterize them.

These associative networks are frequently made explicit in men's house talk. At some point during each meeting in the men's house, no matter what the original reason for the meeting happened to be, somebody will inevitably make a speech in *Tok Pisin* extolling Christian ideals, reaffirming the value of education, devaluing the ways of the ancestors and urging the villagers, and specifically the village women, to suppress their anger and stop their fighting so everybody can "come up" (*kamap* - i.e. change, develop). The men's house has thus become an important arena in which individual men can publicly assert their familiarity with the modern world by reminding others that the Catholic Church, school, "Papua New Guinea" and *bisnis* (cash-generating enterprises) have altered the nature of village relationships and must be accorded a central role in village life. In making these assertions, Gapun men are able to substantiate their claims to knowledge about the modern world by choosing to orate primarily in the language through which that world is understood to be constituted, i.e. Tok Pisin (cf. Sankoff 1980: 44). Angry women employ what amounts to a similar discursive strategy in their public speeches. They substantiate their dissatisfaction and foreground their claims to having been violated and impinged upon by choosing to announce those claims primarily in the language through which affective discourse is constituted, i.e. Taiap.

Table 1. Summary of contrastive features of *kroses* and oratories

KROSES	ORATORIES
enunciated by women	enunciated by men
emanate from individual houses	emanate from communal men's house
vulgarity	politeness
self-display	self-effacement
competing overlapping monologues	supportive serial monologues
reveal anger	reveal anger only to reconceal it again
link village affairs to outside world	link village affairs to outside world
Taiap language predominates	Tok Pisin predominates

Both these practices and the ideas that inform them are moving the village vernacular towards extinction. Powered by its links with women and the associations bound up with stereotypes of them, it seems likely that the Taiap language itself will increasingly come to be associated with negatively valued aspects of life, such as affective access, discursive irresponsibility and dangerous knowledge. This process is already well underway, and is evidenced by situations such as when villagers sometimes (e.g. during periods of millenarian activity or during sensitive meetings with people from other village) pointedly refuse to speak their vernacular among themselves in order to prove that they are not "hiding" talk, or when village children understand purposeful parental switches from Tok Pisin into the vernacular as conveying disapproval and anger (Kulick 1992: 217).

Like the particular linguistic forms that became connected with seventeenth century Quakers in Britain, it seems probable that the Taiap language will eventually become abandoned. The main relevance of this here in the context of a collection of papers on language ideology is that what we see in Gapun is the way in which particular linguistic practices reinforce and are reinforced by particular ideas that exist in a community about language, affect and gender and the relationship between those phenomena. By speaking in particular ways, women and men in Gapun activate complex webs of associations linking a wide array of discourses. Women are not only spitting curses and men are not only making dispassionate, measured speeches that smooth over conflicts in the village: by using language in the specific ways they do, speakers are embodying and recreating salient stereotypes about what women and men are, they are engendering affect and they are positioning themselves socially in relation to Christianity, civilisation and the modern world. One of the contributions that I think this example from Gapun can make to our discussions of language ideology is the

reminder that language ideologies seem never to be solely about language - they are always about entangled clusters of phenomena, and they encompass and comment on aspects of culture like gender and expression and being civilised. Furthermore, this inherently snarled and delicately-layered nature of language ideology can in effect provide a point of entry for colonial discourses of Christianity and modernity to penetrate and, as has happened in Gapun, enmesh themselves with linguistic practice and with local ideas about gender, affect and language.

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