

Artisanship, Innovation and Indigenous Modernity in the Eastern Highlands of Papua New Guinea: Ataizo Mutahe's Vessel Flutes

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Abstract: This article is a study of clay flutes made by Ataizo Mutahe for the tourist market in Goroka, Eastern Highlands, Papua New Guinea. Ataizo's work is important because it disrupts commonplace assumptions about the nature of indigenous tradition and modernity in the production and use of musical instruments in PNG. While the flutes are hand crafted, using local materials and technologies, and are based on long-standing instrument designs in the region, they are a recent innovation and are made entirely for non-local use. This article argues that Ataizo's flutes encapsulate an important model through which to see the distinctly local iterations of modernity and to see local artistic forms and practices (as well as introduced ones) as sources of musical modernity in PNG. In the process this article engages Marshall Sahlins's work on indigenous modernity in the Pacific, arguing that his theory is too invested in a structuralist division between Western and Pacific cultures to see the ways that people in PNG use local resources to articulate an everyday modernity such as Ataizo's.

Résumé: Cet article présente une étude des flûtes en terre fabriquées par Ataizo Mutahe pour le marché touristique à Goroka, dans les Hautes-Terres orientales de Papouasie-Nouvelle-Guinée. Le travail d'Ataizo est important parce qu'il bouscule les idées reçues sur la nature de la tradition et de la modernité autochtones par rapport à la production et l'utilisation des instruments musicaux en Papouasie-Nouvelle-Guinée. Bien que ces flûtes soient faites à la main, avec des matériaux et des technologies locales, sur la base de modèles d'instruments anciens de la région, elles représentent une invention récente et sont entièrement fabriquées pour une utilisation non-locale. Cet article soutient que les flûtes d'Ataizo représentent un modèle important à travers lequel les itérations distinctement locales de la modernité peuvent être appréhendées et les formes et pratiques artistiques locales (ainsi que celles qui ont été introduites) peuvent être perçues comme des sources de modernité musicale en Papouasie-Nouvelle-Guinée. Ce faisant, cet article revient sur le travail de Marshall Sahlins sur la modernité autochtone dans le Pacifique, affirmant que sa théorie est trop engagée dans une

division structuraliste entre les cultures de l'Occident et du Pacifique pour voir comment les habitants de Papouasie-Nouvelle-Guinée utilisent les ressources locales afin d'articuler une modernité quotidienne comme celle d'Ataizo.

In Masi, a village just over five kilometres northwest of urban Goroka, the capital of Eastern Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea, an artisan named Ataizo Mutahe makes clay flutes, which he sells in the city, mostly to tourists. Ataizo's artisanship, profiled in the short film *Levekuka Clay* (Doiki 2009), is significant. As an innovator with traditional resources, working in dialogue with multiple local precedents and in direct connection with post-independence social mobility and tourism, Ataizo's work is a kind that is common but not always visible in the ethnographic literature on Indigenous arts in Papua New Guinea (PNG).

Ataizo's flutes are the product of his life in the village, but also a life spent interacting with economic migrants from other parts of the Highlands in Goroka and, significantly, with tourists. The flutes and Ataizo's account of making and selling them overflow and explode the languages of development and lack, cultural preservation and loss, and indeed the languages of radically bifurcated tradition and modernity that often dominate discussion of Indigenous music in the region. I argue in this paper that Ataizo's flutes are an ideal site for the investigation of the nature of Indigenous modernity in Papua New Guinea because his artisanship, the flutes he makes and sells, and their depiction in *Levekuka Clay* are fundamentally intertwined with ideas of cosmopolitanism and Indigeneity. (The film is a thirteen-minute feature directed by his grandson, Dilen Doiki, and produced by Yumi Piksa, a local film company designed to give Indigenous people the tools to tell their own stories in film.) This case shows the profound complexity of the experience of modernity in Papua New Guinea, and the ways that musical signs of tradition and modernity are often profoundly polysemic. Most importantly, looking at and listening to the film and Ataizo's flutes themselves allows for a crucial redefinition of Indigenous modernities away from the model proposed by Marshall Sahlins – in which modernity is inherently “other” from Indigeneity (1995, 2000) – toward one that sees Indigenous people as participants in the making of modernity at large.

This project grows out of ongoing fieldwork in Goroka (the provincial capital and home to one of three public tertiary educational institutions in the country), looking at Indigenous modernity in the music of three constituencies of the city: a stable population of local landowners; a fluid population associated

with the University of Goroka; and a somewhat transient population of economic migrants mostly from other parts of the Highlands. There is also a significant expatriate community in Goroka, largely from Australia and New Zealand, but my research has not dealt directly with their musical lives. The local landowners come from the surrounding districts' historically Tokano-, Alekano-, and Benabena-speaking peoples, while the university and migrant communities come from a much wider array of language groups.

Language is a fraught issue in contemporary PNG, and historical local language group designations may not fully capture the reality on the ground. English is the normal language of secondary and tertiary education, and everyone involved with the university – students, faculty, and staff – speaks English to some degree, many fluently. English is, however, virtually no one's first language. Most students and staff at the university, and some faculty, use Tok Pisin, the local English pidgin and national *lingua franca*, as a primary language except for official business. Relatively few people in Goroka not associated with the university speak English proficiently, and the majority do not speak it at all. Most people over thirty speak one or more local languages (collectively called “*tok ples*” in Tok Pisin) fluently, but younger people in the area often do not. Most people's identity affiliations continue to be with residential community, clan, and language group, but a number of my interlocutors said that they see this changing. Province and region – Highlander, Coastal, and so forth – are, for some, increasingly primary identity categories. As George Sari told me, “It is easy to say where I am from. My father is from Okiufo, his mother is from Chimbu, so I am a Highlander. I married a woman from Morobe, so my children are not just Highlanders; they are also coast people. Their children will be even more mixed up.” “One day,” he said, “it will take so long to tell where people are from, they will just say they are from Papua New Guinea” (personal communication, February–March 2012). Ataizo is a member of the Asariufa clan and speaks Alekano and Tok Pisin fluently, but only limited English.¹

My argument begins with a discussion of Ataizo's work and the film *Levekuka Clay* in the context of the socio-economic world of the Goroka region, and then moves on to look at the idea of Indigenous modernity in theory. Before addressing these topics it is important to offer a definition of terms. While the meanings of both the terms “Indigenous” and “modernity” notoriously resist definition, it is possible to reasonably circumscribe both in this context, and to do so in a way that opens up a space for the consideration of a range of Indigenous arts and their significance to the socio-political context of local and global circulation of cultural forms, such as music and technology today. The English term “Indigenous” is not in common use among

the communities with whom I work;² rather, a set of terms of varying scale to designate Indigeneity are used. The smallest-scale designations refer to a speaker's immediate community of origin and residence; for many people these are the most important identifications. In Tok Pisin, "*wantok*" ("one talk," meaning speakers of a shared language, but also more generally meaning people from one region) and "*lokal*" (cognate to the English word "local") are particularly important.³ The supra-national, regional "Melanesian" is most commonly used to describe the social category I mean by "Indigenous" here.

My working understanding of Indigeneity in Papua New Guinea, following the centrality of affective connections to the land, is in line with the widely-quoted definition attributed to Cree author George Manuel: "peoples descended from [the] country's aboriginal population" (cf. Anderson 1993-1994:127; Dirlik 1999:76). Unlike many Indigenous peoples, Papua New Guinea Highlanders do not, for the most part, fit the second half of Manuel's definition, in that they have not generally "been completely or partly deprived of their territory or riches" (cf. Anderson 1993-1994:127; Dirlik 1999:76). In fact, while the position of the country of Papua New Guinea in relation to the global economy is a straightforward one of dependence and exploitation, the significant majority of people (as much as 95%) continue to live on, have ownership rights in, and derive the majority of everyday subsistence from ancestral lands.⁴ Beyond this essentially demographic meaning of the term "Indigenous," the rest of this article is dedicated to coming to terms with how Ataizo's flute-making reflects a larger perspective on the Indigeneity of ideas, objects and practices in Goroka. Members of Goroka's many interlocking communities do make significant distinctions between local and foreign culture. This, I believe, is particularly important for the faculty and students at the university, but it is also present in everyday discourse. Phrases which denote the local, like "*bilong yumi yet*" ("our own"), carry significant affective weight in national advertising and public service campaigns, for instance. In music, "*lokal*" is often understood in terms of, but is not limited to, pre-contact or precolonial culture, which is often called "*tumbuna*" in Tok Pisin.⁵

Modernity is similarly complex. Anthropological studies of modernity in Melanesia have often framed the argument in terms of a set of forms that come back again and again to the figure of the emergent nation-state and its place within the transnational flows of people, ideas, technology, and money that Immanuel Wallerstein called "the World System" (1974), Fredric Jameson called "Late Capitalism" (1991), and Arjun Appadurai called "The Global Now" (1996:2-4). The category of national identity – Papua New Guinean – is often only thinly present in people's lives, and tends not to be a significant part of the way Indigenous people in the Eastern Highlands articulate their

identities. Some members of the community – university students and faculty, and government officials, particularly – may speak about national belonging, but for others, aside from reproductions of the iconography of the national flag on shirts and string bags (*bilum*), the nation is a relatively insignificant abstraction.⁶

Beyond this, academics working in the region have argued from a position that attempts to understand distinctive aspects of Papua New Guinean modernity – in both institutional and personal senses – in local terms. In the volume entitled *The Making of Global and Local Modernities in Melanesia*, Joel Robbins, Holly Wardlow, Douglas Dalton, Aletta Biersack, and Stephen Leavitt have all argued for ways that the colonial encounter – whether through government agents, missionaries, or mass media – led to the development of modern subjectivities (2005). Pamela Stewart and Andrew Strathern have documented the shift of rituals of exchange in the Highlands, called *moka*, from competitive in-kind exchanges to one-time cash payments for death compensation and bride price (2005, 1998). David Akin and Joel Robbins have, in general, described modernity in Melanesia in terms of the shift to currency as the economic mode of emergent nations (including PNG) (1999). Robert Foster has tied modernity in PNG to advertising and the circulation of a few talismanic commodities (mainly Coke, but also tinned corned beef and fish, and rice as a staple to replace sweet potatoes, taro, and sago palm), all of which he ties explicitly to the emergence of a national consciousness and entwinement within transnational capitalism after independence in 1975 (1992).

In the context of Goroka and its environs at the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is productive to think about “modernity” as both a set of practices and ideas. I would tie modernity to practices of commodity capitalism and to the emergence of distinct public and private spheres. Here the institutions of secular, bureaucratic government, public education, mass media, and Christianity have been particularly influential. By extension, I would tie modernity to self-conceptualizations – subjectivities – that derive from these institutions and from the specific notions of public and private spheres that they fundamentally support.

Indigenous modernity has been undertheorized, to an extent, in the ethnomusicology of PNG, but there is a dialectic of the local, introduced and locally re-imagined. Modernity is essentially absent from Steven Feld’s influential studies of the Kaluli (1981; 1982; 1987; 1988) as well as Stella’s and Wassman’s studies of local traditions in Banoni and Kandingei communities (1990; 1991), as might be expected given their dates of publication. While modernity was clearly a part of life in PNG by the 1980s, it only emerged as

a subject of interest in anthropology toward the middle of that decade (with, for instance, Clifford and Marcus's *Writing Culture* [1986]). Dennis Crowdy's study of Pacific string band traditions in Papua New Guinea examines the localization of a transnational, modern tradition, but it does not engage explicitly with this level of analysis (2005). Jennifer Jones's work on music in the Seventh-day Adventist worship in Papua New Guinea is a method book for the incorporation of signs of the Indigenous in essentially modern forms (2004), while Michael Webb's article, "Palang Conformity and Fulset Freedom," also deals with local adaptations of Christianity in Lae by detailing changes that have made introduced music more local (2011).

Webb's *Lokal Musik: Lingua Franca Song and Identity in Papua New Guinea* (1993) and Kirsty Gillespie's *Steep Slopes* (2010) are important examples of scholarship that critique easy understanding of tradition and modernity in PNG. Webb's work provides extensive case studies of Tok Pisin songs and the problems of attempting to divide musical life into "traditional" and "modern" (or local and introduced). His theorization of this process is less extensive, being concerned first with an exploration of Melanesian string band songs as a musical *lingua franca* analogous to Tok Pisin or Motu, and second with the connection of musical syncretism to changes in social identity. Gillespie's is the study that comes closest to viewing contemporary musical forms in Papua New Guinea in the way I do here; a key difference between my study and hers is that *Steep Slopes* focuses on a remote Southern Highlands community. In my case, the rural-urban dynamic is central, while in Gillespie's it is not. Moreover, my study looks at Indigenous modernity in a relatively wealthy region connected to cosmopolitan circuits – of mass media, of tourism, of transnational commerce – whereas hers looks at a region she and the Duna people with whom she works describe as "disadvantaged," and is characterized by inaccessibility and relative "invisibility" in contemporary PNG (2010:4-5).

I argue against Marshall Sahlins's structuralist vision of Indigenous modernity, because it sees the modernity of Indigenous peoples as the adoption and adaptation of aspects of one set of cultural structures (the modern and cosmopolitan) to aspects of its antithesis (the Indigenous). His key example, the "Develop-man," for instance, is ultimately antithetical to Western conceptions of modernity (2000:418-20). I am suggesting instead an anti-structuralist historicism. By this, I mean that I am arguing for a perspective that views modernity as a historical phenomenon: a phenomenon that happened in a specific time frame and also a phenomenon that happened because of particular conjunctures of events and ideologies. The Western experience of modernity, I am suggesting, happened and was conceptualized as it was specifically because of European global expansion and contact with Indigenous peoples. As such,

Indigenous ideas, ideals, ideologies, and so forth need not be construed as ahistorical-yet-prehistorical, as they often are in popular discourses (as so-called “stone-age” cultures), nor as antithetical to modernity; rather, their distinct historicity, which includes pasts, presents, and futures, can be seen as constituting one part of a larger modernity that ties together the global North and South, East and West, developed and developing, Indigenous and non-Indigenous.⁷

In thinking in this way, I draw particularly on Arif Dirlik’s argument in “The Past as Legacy and Project: Postcolonial Criticism in the Perspective of Indigenous Historicism” (1999). Citing a number of Native American, Pacific, and Chinese American writers, Dirlik describes Indigenous historicism as one that is able to subvert postmodernism’s ahistorical tendencies and knee-jerk celebration of “heterogeneity and hybridity,” not through insistence on “cultural purity and persistence” so much as through “the preservation of a particular historical trajectory of [an Indigenous people’s] own” (1999:86). One benefit of this orientation to the categories of Indigeneity and modernity in this context is that it largely circumvents the most obvious, but unproductive, aspects of analyses that rest on what I would call “discursive inventionism.” As Dirlik points out, definitions of both categories – Indigenous and modern – that highlight only the ways in which they amount to constructions, or inventions are at best limited, as in Hobsbawm and Ranger’s classic “invention of tradition” (2010 [1983]). Moreover, a definition of Indigenous modernity, if it fails to grasp the profoundly uneven power structures within which Indigenous people and colonizers have worked out these constructions, becomes, in Dirlik’s words, “morally irresponsible and politically obscene” (1999:80).

Following this line of thinking, I argue that a spatial, culturalist analysis that distinguishes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous in the highlands of Papua New Guinea as eternal or timeless categories of difference misunderstands both the context in which Indigenous people understand the present and the stakes against and upon which they are building a future. Instead, I propose an analysis in which the categories of Indigenous and non-Indigenous (or better, the categories of local and introduced) are understood as cross-cutting a historical trajectory that has at least three eras: precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial. It might be easy to mistake the precolonial for the Indigenous, but I argue that such a mistake is itself part of the colonial, cosmopolitan construction of culturalist difference, and neither necessary nor generally taken at face value by Indigenous people in the region. Understanding the cosmopolitan and Indigenous as social and ideological spheres that have separate, precolonial pasts, but also have intertwining, mutually constitutive colonial pasts and postcolonial presents has two important consequences:

first, it makes it possible to see Indigenous people in “unexpected places,” to borrow a concept from Philip Deloria (2004); and second, it makes it possible to imagine a range of futures for Indigenous people – in Papua New Guinea and elsewhere – that are not defined by the discourses of cultural decline and loss – discourses that most anthropologists and ethnomusicologists have left behind, but that still have currency in NGO and governmental development.

Ataizo Motahe, His Flutes, and *Levekuka Clay*

To tell the story of Ataizo Motahe, his flutes, and their significance in understanding Indigenous modernities, I begin with a look on a small scale at Ataizo’s artisanship and the instruments he crafts for sale in the main street of Goroka. It is necessary to have a picture of what the flutes are in relation to other instruments made in the region today and in the past, as well as to have a picture of Goroka itself and the social and economic lives it supports.

I met Ataizo in 2010, getting to know him first as a craftsman. I had gone to Goroka to study the activities of the expressive arts department at the University of Goroka, and to try to understand the place of local music in contemporary urban PNG. A consortium of local and foreign researchers affiliated with the university (including Ataizo’s grandson) had recently finished the film *Levekuka Clay*, and Ataizo had maintained a connection with the university, visiting his contacts on campus on a semi-regular basis. I spoke with him, arranged to buy some flutes, and visited him in town at the market. In 2012, I met a number of times with Ataizo on campus and in town, and conducted a more formal interview at his home. He lives in Masi, a village⁸ comprised primarily of local round and square houses built of woven bamboo and thatch, with a small number of Western-style houses made of wood, with metal roofs, as well as hybrids of the two architectural types. The community is in the Asariufa clan area of Alekano- or Gahuku-speaking people’s traditional land, which includes most of the west side of Goroka, the Goroka market, and land to the west of the town extending roughly eight to ten kilometres, where it abuts the Ifiufa clan area of the Tokano-speaking people’s traditional land. Alekano and Tokano are mutually intelligible, but described by their current speakers as distinct languages.⁹ It is easy to get to Masi from Goroka, and although Ataizo usually walks, it is possible to take a mini-bus. Ataizo’s wife and one daughter were present at the interview, helping us find comfortable seats, getting flutes and other items for Ataizo, and adding occasional comments. Over the course of an afternoon I sat with Ataizo, talking about his life in Masi, Goroka’s recent growth and its implications for his business, and most

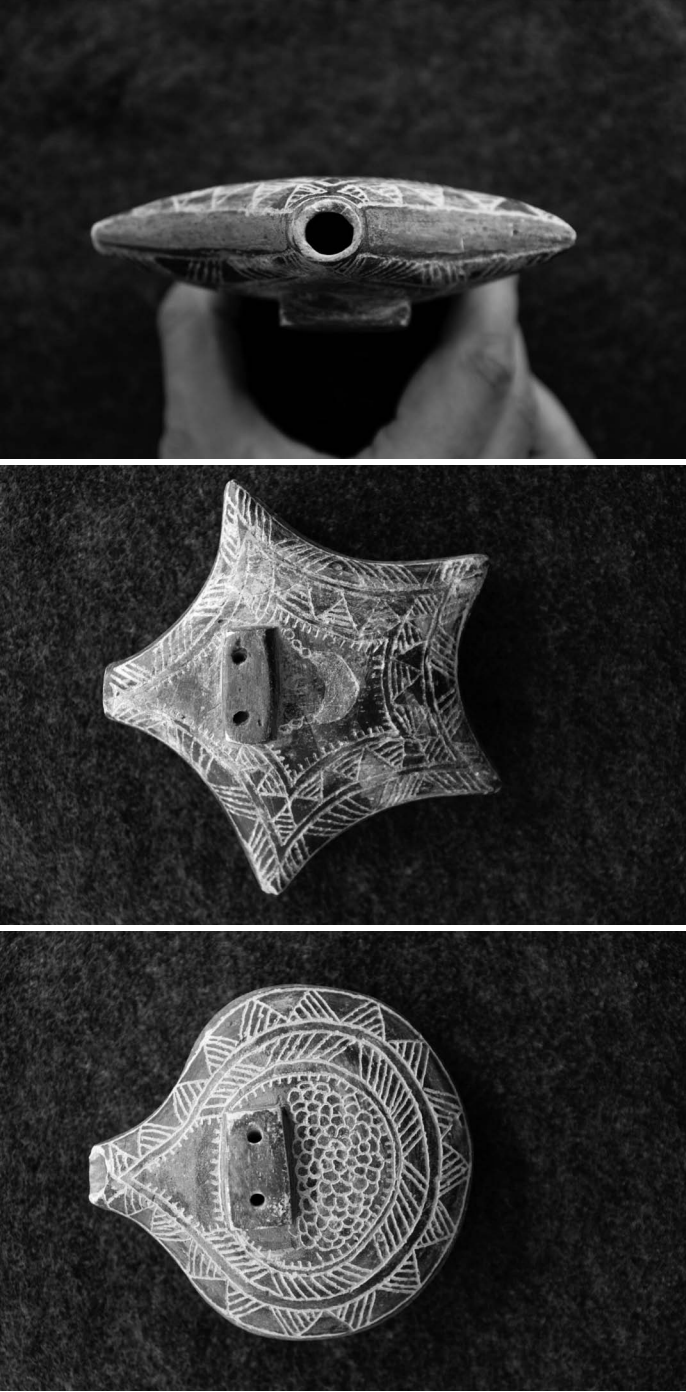


Figure 1. Round flute with fruit seed design, triangular line pattern, and finger hole block

Figure 2. Star-shaped flute with kina shell necklace design, triangular line pattern, and finger hole block

Figure 3. Top of star-shaped flute, showing blow hole (Photos by Eric Benson. Used with permission)

importantly, about his flutes and their place in his life history.

Ataizo and his family own the land they live on, and maintain gardens according to local practice, growing sweet potatoes, greens, bananas and other fruits (which together make up the primary diet of most people in the region), as well as keeping chickens and pigs. Ataizo is among the oldest of four generations living in Masi; his exact age is unclear, but he is no younger than sixty and perhaps as old as seventy. His grandchildren have been educated in the city, and at least one, Dilen Doiki, the director of *Levekuka Clay*, was a student at the University of Goroka. Ataizo participates to a degree in gardening, though most of the labour is done by other family members. Small-scale farming is, for most village people in the region, the family's primary subsistence activity. In addition, Ataizo is an artisan who makes a number of items besides flutes – which he and others in the area describe with the English word “artifacts” – for sale on the street in front of the Bird of Paradise Hotel in the main commercial area of Goroka.¹⁰ These artifacts are mostly clay objects, including small figurines (notably clay pigs) and the vessel flutes, as well as stone axes and bamboo jews' harps, called *susap* in Tok Pisin. I do not know when people in the area started calling these items “artifacts,” but it suggests the impact of anthropologists and museum collectors in the way such items are understood. The presence of the university and the J.K. McCarthy Museum (which has a collection of local arts as well as historical photographs from the area and both modern and historical weapons) likely contributed to the adoption of the term, since both institutions are apt to use it.¹¹

The vessel flutes Ataizo makes are fairly simple as musical instruments, but they are ornately decorated with patterns that he uses on other clay figures and *susaps*. Using white clay dug from the riverbank near his house, Ataizo fashions the flutes into shapes four to five inches square at the widest dimensions. The two main shapes are ovals and stars, intended to echo the shape of common fruits in the region. The size of the vessel is somewhat deceptive, in that the chamber of the flute is relatively small, its circular blow hole roughly one-half inch, and its tube just over two inches long. The tube is inversely conical, widening from the blow hole to the bottom of the chamber, reaching perhaps an inch at the widest. The tube would be a simple end-blown single pipe, but Ataizo makes a small block on the outside of the instrument, towards the bottom of the chamber, into which he bores two finger holes. These theoretically allow the instrument to play three pitches, roughly in whole steps,¹² but I have only ever heard Ataizo or anyone else play two pitches. When I played the instrument myself, the highest pitch, played with both finger holes open, was harder to produce and not as clear as the first two (fully stopped and one finger hole closed). As with any instrument of this

type, either finger hole can be opened to produce the middle pitch, so long as one is kept stopped. When I asked Ataizo why he puts two finger holes in the flutes, but only opens and closes one of them, he replied that the flutes don't sound right if he only bores a single hole. His concern is not only with pitch, but with clarity of tone and overall quality of sound.¹³

The decorations on the flutes are a mix of types common to Asariufa, but the particular work of Ataizo in their distinctive elaboration. The first type, which echoes the shape of the vessel, is a set of non-representational line etchings. The lines follow the outline shape of the vessel, and also fill in space with a series of triangles, some of which are filled with lines and some of which are unfilled. This pattern is not unlike geometric patterns woven into *bilum* (bags); used for decorative regalia for dancing; painted onto bark cloth; and etched onto a variety of other decorated objects. But it is recognizably Ataizo's in the way he uses it on the flutes.¹⁴ On the centre of each flute, immediately below the finger hole block, is a representational image. The oval flute in Figure 1 has a set of overlapping circles carved in the spot, meant to resemble the seeds of a passion fruit. Carved on the star-shaped flute in Figure 1 is a kina shell necklace, a symbol of power and wealth throughout the Highlands.¹⁵ Kina shells are no longer an important mode of exchange,



Figure 4. Main market in Goroka, section dedicated to selling tobacco and betel. (Photo by author)

but they remain significant items in regalia used for dance performances, or *singsing*.

Ataizo's proximity to Goroka is significant, since it is the provincial capital, home to the University of Goroka, and the primary urban centre not only for Eastern Highlands Province but the whole eastern and central Highlands, including much of Chimbu province and highland portions of Madang and Morobe provinces. Goroka has more economic activity than most cities in the region. With twenty to thirty thousand residents,¹⁶ it is the second largest city in the Highlands (after Mount Hagen) and has formal shops, restaurants, and service-oriented businesses, as well as a large informal sector. There is a large outdoor market on the southwest side of the main town centre, where local farmers sell produce (see Figure 4). Much of the coffee business – the largest cash crop of the region – is transacted nearby, but not actually inside the market.

On the main street in the town centre, in front of the provincial administrative buildings and the Bird of Paradise Hotel, there is a craft market, divided into a section where women sell string goods – mostly *bilum*, but also dresses and hats – and a section, sometimes referred to in Tok Pisin as the “*tumbuna maket*,” where men sell non-string items, including stone axes, shell



Figure 5. Craft Market in Goroka, section dedicated to selling *bilum*. (Photo by author)

and feather jewelry, carvings, paintings, and musical instruments.¹⁷

There is one other tourist hotel in Goroka, the Pacific Gardens, but because of its location outside the town centre and behind a security fence, it does not have a substantial craft market.

The *bilum* are an item in everyday use by essentially everyone in the area; most people have many *bilum*, because different sizes can be used for different tasks, from carrying small personal items to carrying groceries and even small children. The women's *bilum* market is busy and even though the bags are not inexpensive (costing K30-100, or CDN\$15-50, in comparison with, for instance, bananas, which might be half-a-kina or CDN\$0.25 per bunch, or a chicken, which can be bought for roughly K25, or CDN\$12.50), there is a brisk business in them. By contrast, the men's wares are not in common use by local people – a fact made clear by the term “artifact” – and are intended for sale to visitors, principally foreign visitors. There are vanishingly few tourists in Goroka for most of the year (with the exception of the May Coffee Festival and the September Goroka Show), but there are a significant number of visitors for business, associated with government, development agencies, and corporate projects. Still, the limited commercial potential for the craft market suggests that men like Ataizo have more reasons than money to make



Figure 6. Ataizo holding clay flute in front of craft market in Goroka. (Photo by author)

and sell their artifacts.

It is inevitably difficult to enumerate all of the reasons people engage in any activity, be it artistic, commercial, ritual, or simply habitual. On top of that, O'Hanlon describes a common reticence in Melanesian societies to provide verbal exegesis for art works (1992:588). Indeed, I had little explicit discussion with Ataizo of the meaning of the flutes in a hermeneutic sense, but I was able to develop a fair picture of how he views the market and to establish a sense of their material value to him. He says that he only began selling things in the market after getting married, and although he couldn't tell me how many years, he said it had been a long time. When I asked why he only began after marriage, he said that with a wife and children it was good to be able to make money, and that he got recognition for the quality of his work. It is hard to establish exactly how much he earns, but it is probably not insignificant. He does not keep accounts, and does not keep track of how many items he makes. However, he said that "*sapos tourist i kam, em i gutpela. Olsem i baim fopela, fivepela, trinpela flute. Mi salim twenti long de*" (If tourists come, it is good. They buy four, five, three flutes. I sell twenty in a day). He added that when there are no tourists he does not sell any. It seems that the money he earns through occasional sales is of limited significance in his family's day-to-day sustenance, but contributes measurably in other ways, such as much-needed cash for school fees, for example. On the other hand, I also believe that being a skilled artisan, who makes something no one else in the vicinity made (at the time of the making of *Levekuka Clay* and of my first visit in 2010), confers a level of importance and satisfies a strong creative urge for Ataizo. Not only that, but by 2012, when I returned to Goroka, Ataizo had taught two more men (one from Simbu and one from Benna) to make the flutes, although he maintained (and I concur) that his own flutes show a finer attention to craft. In our conversations, he was at pains to impress upon me the fact that he had not learned his trades directly from anyone, but rather had seen models then worked out his own versions. Moreover, he emphasized that in everything he makes, his focus is on making them well. This dedication to craft and ingenuity marks him as someone concerned with more than just producing a commodity for the market.

The making of *Levekuka Clay* adds a significant wrinkle to understanding Ataizo and his work in this context. The film shows the process of gathering clay, making and decorating the flutes, and selling them in the market in Goroka. Ataizo is the primary speaker in the film. He does not offer much in the way of exegesis of the flutes, but he does talk about how they are made and their place in his own vision of local tradition. The discussion, prominently framed in the language of affect, provides a vision of what O'Hanlon offers

in place of “exegesis” for thinking about the ways Papua New Guineans do talk about their arts, as “being part of a wider local theory of significance” (1992:590).

The film follows Ataizo through the complete process of making and selling the flutes, with only Ataizo’s words for narration. There are three sections to the film, marking a movement from conceptualizing the flutes as something entirely local and understood in Ataizo’s biography, to something through which he understands his own and his generation’s relationship to later generations, and finally to something that connects village life in Masi to the city, tourism, and thereby the world of cosmopolitan modernity.

When he first describes the flutes, Ataizo sets them in terms of a dynamic life history. He explains that he did not make clay artifacts of any kind before he was married, and that no one in the region made them. Clay is used not far from Masi, in the area around Asaro, a different language area, to make ornate masks for dancing, but not generally for sculpture or crafting instruments. He describes searching for a source of clay, presumably from which to make things, but not necessarily flutes (as we learn later). It was only after he was making clay objects for sale in Goroka that he met someone from Simbu, the next province to the East, who made clay fish.¹⁸ It is unclear in the film whether this person from Simbu made flutes or only clay figures; in conversation Ataizo clarified that the person from Simbu did make clay flutes. At one time, women in Masi and the surrounding area made whistles from tree fruits for use as signaling devices to announce their presence and identity in the densely forested mountainside gardens.¹⁹ It is difficult to know the exact construction of these women’s flutes because no one in Masi makes them now; Ataizo and others said that text messaging has largely replaced musical signaling devices. According to the film, and as Ataizo reiterated in conversation, he was inspired to make flutes by the interaction with the vendor from Simbu and his memory of the women’s whistles. As he says: “*Wisil bilong meri em pikinini bilong diwai. . . . Nau mi ting ting mi wokim samting flute. Mi wokim long kle.*”²⁰ (“Women’s whistles are [made of] tree fruits. . . . Now I thought I [would] make a kind of flute. I [would] make them from clay.”) The film then shows the process of making the rough flute vessels, smoothing their surfaces after they dry, painting the smoothed flutes, and incising the designs. Ataizo shows the process of sending a child to gather fruits from which to make a paint for the flutes, which is his preferred method – for obvious reasons, not least that it is ready to hand, and free; but as he says, “*Na em i no karim [pikinini bilong diwai], mi yusim pen bilong stoa.*” (“And when it doesn’t produce fruit, I use paint from the store.”)

When he has finished making the flutes, Ataizo’s discussion turns to

the question of his children's and grandchildren's relationship to the flutes. He scolds the grandson who helped him gather fruit for paint, and who has watched the process, "*Oi lainim samting bilong tumbuna... Yu lukim gut, yu lukim han bilong mi.*" ("They learn something of their grandfather's.... You watch carefully, you watch my hand.") Ataizo then worries that his children will not make the flutes, and the practice will die with him.²¹ He reiterated this in conversation with me, but then shrugged and said, "*Em olrait, taso!*" ("It's okay").

This shift from a language of inspiration and innovation is explained more fully in the final section of the film, which shows Ataizo walking into the town centre of Goroka, from the East, and setting up his flutes and other clay artifacts for sale. Here, he says, the men make things but don't use them, they only bring them to the market to sell. If there are tourists, that is good, because they can sell the things they have made, but if there are no tourists, that is bad, and they do not sell anything. The intergenerational, communal nature of craft is not there, he says. "*Nau yangpela i go i kam; nau i lukluk long mi plang, na i go i kam.*" ("Now young people come and go; they look at my layout [of items for sale], and they come and go.")

When thinking about Ataizo's flutes and his construction of a world of significance around them, there are two important points to bear in mind. The first is that the flutes are not "traditional" in any of the ways that word has customarily been used. They are not a production of longstanding or common significance in the region, nor an important mode of communal reproduction, nor something with a stable form over time. Yet they are not "introduced" items, either: not European in any sense, and only indirectly a result of changes in social patterns derived from colonial contact. There is some question about their provenance. Michael Webb describes essentially the same kind of flutes in a book on local instrument construction produced for Goroka Teachers' College (now the University of Goroka) in 1987. He says that "in the Sinasina area, between Goroka (Eastern Highlands Province) and Kundiawa (Chimbu [sic] Province) ocarinas are made from clay with one, two or three fingerholes, and are sold to tourists" (24). Kenneth Gourlay describes a range of vessel flutes among other "instruments of lesser distribution and usage" (1979:62). He includes vessel flutes from all over the country – Sepik, Madang, the western Papuan coast, Torres Straits, Chimbu, Orokaiva – without implying any connection between them other than the fundamental principle of instrument construction. He includes some made from passion fruit pods, and some made from clay in Simbu, but with limited detail. Nowhere does Gourlay mention the connection with tourists, nor are the flutes he describes made to resemble fruit seed pods. However, the representational quality of the flutes he describes is similar to Ataizo's: "At one

time, the Chimbu clay ocarinas aroused great interest because of their alleged resemblance to pigs, with one opening at the pig's nose and two at the ears. . . . Later specimens. . . are more rounded than pig-shaped, and, if they resemble anything at all, look like birds" (69). Also in the 1970s, in *Musical Instruments of Papua New Guinea*, Vida Chenoweth describes flutes made of clay, passion fruit, and candle tree fruits from the Eastern Highlands (Siane, Tairora, and Bena-Bena districts), which she says were considered toys and used mostly by teenagers and children (1976:69-70). She does not mention these flutes in her more extensive volume, *The Usarufas and their Music*, in either the section on flutes or the section on musical toys (1979). Similar flutes are quite rare in the limited museum collections and catalogues I have been able to survey. Neither the J.K. McCarthy Museum nor the National Gallery in Port Moresby displays such flutes (though they may have them in their archives). The Field Museum has one similar flute in the Vida Chenoweth collection, from the Eastern Highlands. Hans Fischer shows a wide variety of gourd, coconut, and fruit shell vessel flutes from the collections of German, Austrian and Swiss museums in *Sound-producing Instruments in Oceania* (1986), but only two made of clay. Both of those appear quite similar to Ataizo's, and were collected in Chimbu. There are likely more in museums around the world, but the relative paucity of these flutes is marked in comparison with other instrument types; the same collections have dozens of *susap*, for instance. I believe that Ataizo's initiation of clay flute-making in Masi fills in the temporal space between Gourlay's and Webb's accounts. It fits the dates, since he likely started making them in the early to mid-1980s, and it fits the shift from Gourlay's description of the making of these flutes as a generalized practice to Webb's description of a practice in which the tourist market is directly implicated.

The second thing to bear in mind is while the flutes sit to the side of the major forms of both *kastam* ("custom") and *bisnis* ("business"), the post-contact forms of economic life generally relating to the incorporation of capitalism in the region, Ataizo's work nevertheless shows intertwining of the two domains; this is common in the Highlands, but less so, at least historically, in other parts of Papua New Guinea (Foster 1992; Otto 1992). The major forms of *kastam* in the region involve large-scale ceremonial activity – exchange ceremonies that initially involved shells and pigs and that now include cash, and intertribal dance gatherings called *singsing* in Tok Pisin that are now organized as "shows."²² The major forms of *bisnis* in the region revolve primarily around growing and processing coffee for the international trade, and secondarily around making fruit-based alcoholic drinks and dried fruit for national markets. As Foster notes, these activities generally combine elements of older and newer, local and Western social structures in the Eastern Highlands, while elsewhere they

have often been used to articulate the difference between such social structures (1992:290-91). Inasmuch as the major shows in Goroka (the Goroka Show and the Coffee Festival) are funded by coffee exporters and the local fruit processor, these two arenas may be understood as interconnected, at least in the Eastern Highlands.

Ataizo's flutes exist in a space that marks the intersection of local and Western structures – and, importantly, that incorporates the memory of *tumbuna*, or the practices of previous generations. In its material (clay dug from land which his family has owned since before Western colonialism), in its form (a whistle with a small pitch range that is decorated according to local styles, incorporating both abstract design and evocations of local sources of power and the environment), and in its techniques (dried, unbaked clay worked in the same way used to make Asaro mudmen masks), the flutes are tied to the local. Moreover, inasmuch as they are hand-made, artisanal works reflective of Ataizo's creativity and his social embeddedness in Masi life, they resist incorporation into the industrial logic of modern capitalist structures. That said, Ataizo's inspiration and ultimate reason for making the flutes are directly tied to changes in social and economic life in the region that are a result of colonialism. Not only is the fact of a tourist market in Goroka – and for that matter, the fact that Goroka is a substantial city in the first place – connected to its history as one of the most important administrative centres for the Australian colonial regime in the Highlands, but the interaction with someone from Simbu that led to Ataizo's decision to make fruit-shaped vessel flutes from clay is also part of a colonially-initiated process.²³ While the Highlands region enjoyed a significant measure of intertribal and inter-linguistic interaction before colonialism, the presence of men from throughout the Highlands selling goods in the market is a direct result of social dislocation that has come from disruption of Indigenous social structures in the colonial and postcolonial era. Goroka, as both an administrative centre and relatively prosperous city, has drawn large numbers of economic migrants from further west.

Ataizo's Flutes and the Nature of Indigenous Modernity in PNG

There is a well-known tendency in cosmopolitan discourse and popular culture to locate the non-Western (and indeed, the non-cosmopolitan within the West, as well) not only as elsewhere, but also "elsewhen" as a kind of global pre-modernity.²⁴ I argue, drawing on Ataizo's flutes and the film *Levekuka Clay*, that to follow this tendency in arguing for the nature of Indigenous modernities

is to begin from a premise that replicates a vision of Indigeneity as lack, or as “always-already failed” (Chakrabarty 2000:32-35; Povinelli 2002:39).

No writer has more strongly theorized the agency of Melanesians as they engage modernity than Marshall Sahlins. His work on modernity in the Pacific is extensive and subtle, and makes two somewhat different arguments about the process whereby the region has engaged modern history and modernity at large. The first, which has been strongly critiqued by Gananath Obeyesekere, has to do with an attempt to read the history of Polynesian contact with the West in Polynesian terms (Sahlins 1985; 1995; Obeyesekere 1992). Obeyesekere's objection to this work is that Sahlins reifies Polynesians as structurally unlike Westerners and “incapable of commonsensical inferences and a reflective form of practical reasoning” (1992:194). Thus, his attempt to see the effects of Polynesian (and more broadly, worldwide Indigenous) agency in shaping global modernity may read as little more than a reiteration of European myths about Indigenous peoples, if from an alternate perspective. The second way Sahlins has written about modernity in the Pacific, in his thoughts on syncretic culture in Melanesia and the figure of the “Develop-man,” is of more concern in this context. This work grows out of his elaboration of structuralism, which posits, following Lévi-Strauss, that distinct cultures differ from one another on the basis of coherent sub-conscious principles. His theory, unlike Lévi-Strauss's, attempts to account for change (through what he calls the “structure of the conjuncture”) largely via culture contact but potentially through other historical events (Sahlins 1985:152-54; 2000:471-550).

I find this work interesting because it recognizes the ways in which the global expansion of Western capitalism has discursively “made the colonized and ‘peripheral’ people the passive objects of their own history and not its authors,” and decries an anthropology that reinscribes “the academic form of the same domination” (Sahlins 2000:416). Sahlins argues instead for “a sustained analysis of how local peoples attempt to organize what is afflicting them in their own cultural terms” (416-17). Even so, his work is problematically invested in ideas about difference so complete and abstract as to seem like a reinscription of an ahistorical essentialism. In short, he posits the “Develop-man” as the figure of the Melanesian “big man” creating a distinct modernity. Having made good in the transnational world, typically abroad, whether in New Zealand, Australia, or elsewhere, the “Develop-man” uses the fruits of his connection to modernity's resources, but not in the ways Western development agents would have him do. Rather, the “Develop-man” deploys those resources in ways that might seem irrational to those agents, but which are in fact fully understandable within autochthonous social and cultural power dynamics (Sahlins 2000:490-91). The “Develop-man” is, ultimately, a force of

continuity, a way of arguing for a Melanesian modernity that replicates the structures of Melanesian pre-modernity.

My understanding of Ataizo's work as an example of Indigenous modernity in Papua New Guinea places me at odds with much of this literature in two different ways. First, I cannot agree with the structuralism of Sahlins's basic theory because it necessitates a vision of change in which there is only either underlying continuity or catastrophic loss. I agree with him when he says, "for the people concerned, syncretism is not a contradiction. . . of the Indigenous claims of authenticity and autonomy – but, rather, its systematic condition" (2000:493). But I do not believe, as he does, that those syncretisms are governed by a rigid structure in which they become part of a binary set: Melanesian or Western. I am convinced that Ataizo's artisanship shows a case in which some third possibility emerges that neither clearly replicates older structures, nor simply operates within structures governed by transnational capital.

The language of "hybridity," as in Homi Bhabha's classic analysis of colonial cultural forms (1994) or in Marwan Kraidy's recent *Hybridity or, the Cultural Logic of Globalization* (2005) is also insufficient to understand Indigenous modernity in the case of highland Papua New Guinea, and perhaps in most cases. By retaining the idea of a coming together of clearly distinct parts, theories of hybridity continue to underwrite an analysis that looks too much like Sahlins's structuralist Indigenous modernity. Rather, following Chickasaw scholar Jodi Byrd's call in "In the City of Blinding Lights" (2009) to centre Indigeneity in the project of cultural studies, I am proposing a way of looking at such activity that recognizes its integrity and sees it not as marginal to modernity at large, but rather as something that has, to return to Dirlik's phraseology, "a particular historical trajectory" and a historical trajectory that places it at the core of modernity. Byrd's work is more sharply political than mine, but her insistence on hearing Native American, Hawaiian, and Australian Aboriginal voices in contemporary critical discourse has a direct bearing on the larger project in which my article sits. Recognizing the otherwise invisible ways people in PNG domesticate modernity is a step towards resisting the marginalization of Melanesian perspectives in international development activity in the region. Following the implications of this gesture is beyond the scope of this article, but will be crucial in future projects.

In thinking about this I turn to Dipesh Chakrabarty's work, which critiques the ways paired discourses of historicism and political modernity are used to place colonized peoples outside the teleology of historical development as "archaic" (2000:12). Chakrabarty's use of memory as a term for the ways colonial subjects have understood their own pasts is useful in understanding the significance of Ataizo's flutes (2000:37, 40). Memory, for Chakrabarty, allows subject peoples to envision pasts that do not replicate developmental historicism, but that also

do not write them out of political modernity. The flutes, incorporating as they do both a memory of local practice and a functional place for it in the nominally cosmopolitan spheres of urban Goroka, allow Ataizo to craft more than tourist trinkets. Through the memory of sonic signaling, they are a reminder of a time before cell phones, and of a time before the city; but as composite objects based on multiple precedents, they are not simply icons of a lost past. To Ataizo, at least, they represent agency and skill in dealing with cosmopolitanism. As Paul Sharrad says of the work of “such marginal figures as artists and women” in Papua New Guinea, Ataizo’s flutes “occasion unsettling disruptions of old and new in their encounter between the two” (2005:131).

In conclusion I would cite Philip Deloria’s argument for the importance of Indigenous activity in modern forms (2004) and Byrd’s discussion of the role of Indigeneity in the production of American modernity (2011). Deloria describes the efforts of American Indian artists, writers, musicians, actors, and athletes working in the early twentieth century – Francis LaFlesche, Luther Standing Bear, Jim Thorpe, Zitkala-Sa, Tsianina Redfeather, among others – as something less than a movement, but rather a “recognizable cohort of Indian people engaged in a congruent activity: the making and remaking of a spectrum of expectations” (229). The activity of intervening in representational strategies was vital because, as he says, “the imaginative superstructure that helped define modern American senses of self relied heavily on long histories of nationalism and primitivism figured around Indianness. ...It is...the case that the entire world of the modern belonged – and belongs – to Indian people, as much as it does to anyone else” (232).

Ataizo Mutahe is similarly engaged in making a life in the world of the modern in Papua New Guinea, and the young filmmakers associated with Yumi Piksa are likewise “making and remaking a spectrum of expectations” (Deloria:229). While this is a less spectacular example than, for instance, cashmoka in the Western Highlands or the Goroka Show, it is nevertheless important. More in line with Kirsty Gillespie’s work with Duna-speaking people in the Southern Highlands province (2010), it shows the resiliency and continued relevance of local forms and local innovation, as well as the quotidian experience of an Indigenous modernity in Papua New Guinea. The everyday, local quality of modernity is central to the polysemic quality of instruments like Ataizo’s flutes. His flutes can represent tradition, and local culture, as they certainly do for Ataizo. When he speaks of their relationship to the flutes women made from fruits in the past, he emphasizes this quality, as he does when he laments the fact that his grandchildren are not learning to make them. Yet the flutes can also represent the modern, as they do in other ways for Ataizo. When he talks about the ways these flutes put him in a relationship with tourists, anthropologists, and

expatriates, he emphasizes these qualities. I see this case as important because the flutes shed light on the ways that local and introduced, and traditional and modern in PNG are not so much fixed points as they are moving targets. Someone like Ataizo, whose life has been spent in the space defined primarily by the few square miles between Masi and Goroka, has access to modernity, and is able to creatively engage with it, as do the country's internationally-connected elites. 🍀

Notes

1. Conversations with Ataizo for this article were conducted principally in Tok Pisin and occasionally in Alekano with the help of Lawrence Ikime, a staff member of the University of Goroka's Centre for Cultural and Social Media.

2. That said, the term "Indigenous" is in occasional use when people speak English. The University of Goroka's programming is more likely to use "Melanesian," but George Sari, an Alekano/Gahuku-speaking Okiufa elder who lives in a village immediately adjacent to the university women's dorm, used the phrase "my Indigenous knowledge" a number of times in conversations and interviews in February and March 2012.

3. For a historical view of the meaning of the term "wantok," embedded in an otherwise problematic view of Indigeneity in PNG, see Standing (1979); for more recent discussion of "wantok" as a political concept in PNG, see Jell-Bahlson (1998) and Okole (2005). A number of Papua New Guinean scholars with whom I have spoken see themselves as part of a larger, global Indigenous movement, but this level of identification seems relatively uncommon among the general population. In comparison with the global Indigenous linkages developed by Aboriginal Australians, for instance, transnational Indigeneity in Papua New Guinea has primarily focused on developing connections with other Melanesians, secondarily with Australian Aborigines, and to a limited extent the larger Pacific community.

4. The statistic suggesting that 95% of land in PNG is under customary title is regularly offered by the national government (see <http://www.pngembassy.org/infrastructure.html>, for instance). Weiner and Glaskin offer a less sanguine assessment, pointing to increasing governmental pressure on the system of customary title and communal land ownership in the interest of economic development and control of resources by cosmopolitan elites (2007).

5. "Tumbuna" is a word with at least three common usages: "grandfather," "elders," and "ancestors." When used in the context of precolonial culture, it means something akin to the English term "traditional."

6. Pluralization of Tok Pisin words that are also in common use in PNG English – "bilum(s)," "kundu(s)," "susap(s)" for instance – is complicated because pluralization in Tok Pisin does not use the final "s," but when used in PNG English such words are

pluralized with a final “s.” In general I have followed Tok Pisin usage.

7. For another iteration of the basic argument about the modernity of contemporary Indigenous life in PNG, see Douglas, who says, “Actual villages are not the anachronistic museums of authentic tradition imagined in urbanite nostalgia, within as well as beyond the region, but historical products of more or less lengthy Indigenous engagements with commerce, Christianity, migration, and colonialism” (2003:8).

8. The term “village” was in common use by English speakers in the districts surrounding Goroka during my trips there between 2010 and 2012, to describe communities such as Masi, in order to contrast them with Goroka, which was commonly referred to as a “town” or sometimes “city.” While the term is not regularly used in the ethnographic literature, I use it here because of its currency among the people with whom I have worked.

9. For more on language groups in the Goroka district of the Eastern Highlands, see Wurm 1978, though note that Wurm does not distinguish between Alekano and Tokano.

10. The Bird of Paradise Hotel (often called “the Bird”) is significant, because it is one of the most exclusive locations in the region. Most visitors to Goroka either stay in homes with family and friends or (particularly if they are visiting on missionary or other church business) at one of the guest houses; but government officials and development agency visitors generally stay at the Bird. At as much as K371 (roughly CDN\$185) per night, rooms at the Bird are beyond the means of the vast majority of people who travel to Goroka, and mark those who stay there as people of relative wealth and power.

11. I am inclined to see at least a practical (if not theoretical) distinction in the use of the term “artifact” between items still in everyday use (which are not commonly called “artifacts”) and those that are not, but this requires further research.

12. The two flutes shown in Figure 1-3, play roughly 1022Hz, 1186Hz, and 1280Hz; and 833Hz, 943Hz, and 1020Hz, respectively, which is quite close to B, C#, and D; and Ab, Bb and C two octaves above middle C. Other flutes made by Ataizo that I have heard are slightly higher or lower, and have slightly wider or narrower finger holes, leading to significant variation in exact pitch and relative pitch relationships.

13. I have not had an opportunity to hear or play a flute built with a single, rather than double, finger hole, so have not been able to explore the theory in more depth.

14. While geometric decoration of this sort is common to the region, I have not seen any other work with precisely this line-filled triangle patterning myself, or in published museum catalogues. The closest I have seen is a bark cloth *laplap* (traditional loincloth) from the Ramu River coast of Madang province, made sometime in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, and housed in the Jolika collection at the DeYoung Museum in San Francisco (see Friede et al. 2005:112).

15. Kina were historically part of the trade networks that linked highland communities across long stretches of geography, and ultimately to the coast (Leroy

1979; Sillitoe 1979; Weiner 1988). While the trade routes are at least 9000 years old, the introduction of kina into the trade is relatively recent, with whole, crescent-shaped pearl shells only turning up in large measure on the edge of the Highlands for two to three hundred years, and in reaching the centre of the Highlands around the end of the nineteenth century (Clark 1991:310-11). They were exchanged by powerful men in longstanding trade relationships along with palm oil and pigs, and used for bride price, mortuary payment and other ritually important economic activity (e.g. Weiner 1988:63-65, 109-110). In general, kina were not only important for their material value as exchange objects, but also for their significance as objects of beauty – large and exceptional shells were even given individual names (Clark 1991, 1995; Weiner 1988:65). The kina is also the name of the primary unit of the national currency, named after the shell.

16. The 2000 census showed 19,523 residents. Results from the most recent 2010 census are not yet available, and so, although it is clear that the city has grown, the full scope of that growth is hard to know.

17. It should be noted that this “market” is informally organized – essentially a matter of men and women putting their items out on the sidewalk – while the main market is institutionally organized and regulated.

18. “*Wanpela Simbu em wokim pis. Em wokim pis, na mi kam salim long maket. na mi askim, ‘na yu wokim samting?’ Na mi tok, ‘mi wokim long kle.’*” (“A person from Simbu made fish. He made fish, and came to sell them at the market. And I asked, “how do you make those?” And he said, “I make them from clay.”) Incidentally, this is unusual Tok Pisin; I have followed the translation in *Levekuka Clay*.

19. Ataizo described the flutes in more detail to me, and said that they had a blow hole and could produce two tones, like his flutes, suggesting that they had a finger hole as well.

20. I note that here Ataizo uses the English term “clay,” rather than the more common Tok Pisin term “*graun malmalum*.” When I asked about this linguistic detail, he said only, “*Em i wankain*” (“It is the same”). Ataizo incorporates occasional English words in talking about the flutes (for example, “flute”), and I believe it comes from the interactions he has with English speakers while selling them.

21. “*Mi dai, na samting ol pinis. Ol i no inap wokim.*” (“When I die, then this will be finished. They won’t be able to make them.”)

22. These shows are a significant element of the traditional performing arts in PNG today. Small *singsing* may be organized for any event of significance – for instance, a *singsing* including fifteen groups representing the Goroka and Unggai-Benna districts was organized for the Prime Minister’s visit to Goroka in February 2012. Larger shows are organized annually in many parts of the country, drawing participants from across the country. The Goroka Show is one of the larger shows in the country, having started in the late 1950s. As the event organizers note, it was established partly through the work of Australian patrol officers and missionaries, and was intended to bring together communities from the province, perhaps to reconfigure tribal rivalries from warfare to ritualized competition. Currently it

brings performing groups from more than a hundred communities, not only from the highlands, but from coastal and island regions as well. The original regional goal has been expanded to a nationalist one – establishing a sense of unity through performance – and compounded with the goal of tourism development.

23. For a discussion of mobility in Papua New Guinea as an element of Indigenous modernity, see Bedford (1999).

24. See, for instance, an article in the Photographic Society of America's journal about the Goroka Show, which is one of the oldest and largest intercommunal *singsing* in Papua New Guinea, entitled "The People That Time Forgot" (Hamlin 2010).

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