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## THE "DANGEROUS AND DISAFFECTED NATIVE" IN FIJI:

### British Colonial Constructions of the Tuka Movement<sup>1</sup>

Martha Kaplan

#### Introduction

The Fijian "*Tuka* Movement" has been used as a paradigmatic example of the "millenarian movement" or "cargo cult" (Burridge 1969, Worsley 1968). "Indirect Rule" in the colony of Fiji has also spawned a scholarly debate over what Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) have recently labelled "invention of tradition" (Legge 1958, France 1969, Clammer 1975). Mindful of the relation of colonial hegemony and scholarly vision of "others" argued by Asad (1975), Said (1979) and others, I bring these two scholarly discussions together, not to analyze *tuka* in Fijian terms, nor to argue a new theory of millenarian movements, but instead to analyze discourse about *tuka* and the power of colonial discourse in the shaping of colonial and post-colonial societies. Taking as problematic the administrative codification of "danger" and "disaffection" in a paternalistic colonial system of "indirect rule through local custom", I argue that the "cult" as cult came into being first of all in the British imagination, a reification of Fijian practices that did not fit into a developing British orthodoxy.

The story of *tuka* as it has most often been told by westerners begins in 1885, a decade into colonial rule, when after fifty years of Wesleyan mission in the islands, the Colonial Secretary reported to the Colonial Office in London that "events of an unusual character were transpiring in the mountainous parts of Colo East [province of Viti Levu island]. A party of men in warrior attire had crossed into the province and were marching and drilling under the direction of a so-called sergeant. The men were followers of one "Navosavakadua," a hereditary Fijian priest who promised "*tuka*" (immortality). A colonial officer wrote

The priest Navosavakadua has stirred up a movement . . . based upon a very ingenious and dangerous compounding of Fijian mythology and belief with the teachings of Old and New Testaments.

He has given out that the return of Degei's [legendary Fijian ancestor god] two sons Nacirikaumoli and Nakausabaria, lost at the time of the legendary Fijian deluge is at hand when the world is to be upset (*vukica*) and Christianity and the colonial government driven out.

He also pretends that the teachings of the Christian Bible are altogether compatible with Fijian mythology and heathen practices, but that the people have been shamefully deceived by the substitution of the names of Jehovah and Jesus for those of Degei's sons already mentioned.

In anticipation of the return of these two he has required the constitution both of a force of "soldiers" and of female attendants, . . . in order to procure a fitting establishment in accordance with his assumed importance. The text preached

by this person is . . . "who shall ransom you? Leave all and follow me" (Carew in CO 83/43).<sup>2</sup>

In 1887 colonial officials enacted a new ordinance "To provide for confining Disaffected or Dangerous Natives to particular localities" (Ordinance number 20 of 1887) as legal grounds to deport Navosavakadua to Rotuma. When there was a revival of *tuka* in 1891 Governor Thurston personally travelled through the interior provinces, lectured Navosavakadua's kinfolk, and had them deported to Kadavu island. Well into the 1930s colonial officials kept close watch for reappearances of *tuka*, creating a massive administrative correspondence on the ethnographic characteristics and legal status of the phenomenon.

In "*tuka*" the British believed that they were encountering "events of an unusual character" which marred the natural and inevitable trajectory of their colonizing project in which Fijians, already Christian, were to become fully "civilized." They called these "unusual" events "superstition," "movement," "rebellion" and later even "cult". Offended by *tuka* and seeking to control it they labelled and reified it as a manifestation of Fijian disorder and irrationality, and sought to exorcise it from the body politic through deportations. But in Fijian terms, "*tuka*" was neither disorderly nor irrational. It was instead, I suggest, a movement of Fijian "people of the land" in the context of the colonial encounter (Kaplan 1988a)<sup>3</sup>. Indigenous Fijian society was ordered by a pervasive cultural distinction between chiefly people and people of the land (see Sahlins 1981). Divine chiefs ruled the land, but people of the land ritually installed chiefs, supported them in battle and, as oracle priests, linked them to empowering gods. In the colonial encounter the British recognized chiefly authority and forged relationships with chiefs in an elaborate system of indirect rule. But the British did not acknowledge and institutionalize the ritual-political authority of "people of the land". Encountering it in manifest form in Navosavakadua and *tuka* they identified and reified the events in British terms as "cult" or "rebellion", and sought to suppress it. This is not to argue that Navosavakadua and his followers were not planning warfare against the British. Rather, it is to call into question the ways in which the British apprehended challenge to their rule, and thus to examine the assumptions of their colonial project. It is to argue that the British constructed *tuka* and its prophet even as they sought to control them.

The paper traces the development of the British imagination of disorder in Fiji, through three stages of colonial expectation and experience. First, at the beginning of British rule, the colonial project itself was conceived as an ordering of disorder. Initial colonial optimism took Fijian Christian conversion and chiefly hierarchy to be signs of a natural trajectory toward civilization. Second, in succeeding decades, the British acknowledged awkward moments in the civilizing process. Third, in confrontation with sustained movements such as *tuka* they later came to reify a "rebellious" and "disaffected" substratum in Fijian life. The essay seeks to analyze the British reaction to Navosavakadua and *tuka* in the context of the wider colonial field of expectation and experience, demonstrating the projection of colonial categories of order and disorder onto different Fijians and different Fijian activities, and thus the "invention" of both positive and negative Fijian "tradition".

### British Culture and the Colonial Project in Fiji

Both scholarly admirers (e.g. Legge 1958) and critics (France 1969) of indirect rule in Fiji have written the early history of colonial Fiji as a conflict between "humanitarian"

administrators and missionaries who envisioned their colonial project in relation to "the natives", and rapacious white settlers and planters who were far more interested in exploiting Fiji's land. Arguing against colonial claims that Fijians were protected and ruled through authentic indigenous custom, France (1969) and Clammer (1975) have argued that colonial codifications of Fijian systems of leadership, kinship, land tenure, and even origin myth, were, "false orthodoxy" in contrast to diverse Fijian reality.<sup>4</sup> France focussed on Sir Arthur Gordon, amateur anthropologist and first colonial governor of Fiji (1874-1880), as the key figure in the creation of this orthodoxy, suggesting self-interest as the motivation for Gordon's "humanist" position.

When therefore Gordon based his native policy on the preservation of the basic institutions of Fijian society, the nature of these institutions was known to him, not from careful observation in Fiji, but from the recognition that all societies at Fiji's stage of development from savagery to civilization have the same characteristics. Gordon was further disposed to support [missionary Lorimer] Fison's view of Fijian society because his own position as interpreter of Fijian custom had been greatly strengthened by the revelations. Since the true and ancient customs of the people had been overlaid by corruption, their distressing unfamiliarity with "immemorial traditions" was explained; . . . it had become obvious that an arbiter was needed to distinguish between ancient and adulterated custom.

[France continues ironically] Gordon fitted the role admirably, having long concerned himself with the cultures of primitive peoples, being possessed of a unique sympathy with the Fijian race, and having been installed as its supreme chief. Further, as an aristocrat from the Highlands of Scotland, he considered himself peculiarly well bred to the task of leading Fijians along the evolutionary road so successfully negotiated by his ancestors (1969:124).

But missing in the debate between admirers and critics of indirect rule is a consideration of the British cultural order and the system of assumptions underlying the colonial project. It was not simply Gordon who was an arbiter of custom. Even the most "pragmatic" colonial administrators viewed Fiji and Fijians in terms of a system of cultural assumptions about the social evolutionary relations of the British and "others" and the role of the British in creating order out of disorder. Indeed "pragmatism" was itself a British cultural category.

Just as we can characterize nineteenth century Fijian culture in terms of a cultural opposition of chiefs and people of the land, so too can we analyze colonial British culture as particular and systematic. Crucially, in the nineteenth century, the English ruling class constituted themselves as society, simultaneously the personification of, and the arbiters of, the proper, the good, and the orderly. It is the "English peculiarity", write Corrigan and Sayer (1985:192) in their powerful analysis of enduring features of the English "state", that

dominant images of national identity and tradition - of, in that significant phrase, national character - are closely bound up with both the culture of the English ruling classes and the (claimed) history of the state forms through which their power is organized. We mean this to apply to those celebrated elements of "national character", the supposed reasonableness, moderation, pragmatism, hostility to ideology, "muddling through", quirkiness, eccentricity and so on of "the English", every bit as much as to the more evident patriotic

symbols of the rule of law, the "Mother of Parliaments", and the Royal Family. This very particular set of cultural images was fundamental to the construction of English capitalist civilization, in a number of ways.

It is in such images that the English ruling class identified itself with the nation as a whole and saw their own interests as that of the polity. These images provided as well the "moral energy for English imperialism" including both ruling class dominance in relation to such groups as women and working classes within England, and English imperialism from Wales, Scotland and Ireland to far away colonies such as Fiji (see Corrigan and Sayer 1985:193- 195). That is to say, that both the English polity and the relation of England to the colonies were conceived in these terms of relation between a core society, the ruling class, and the larger society it was seen to support and order.

In general, the European purpose in Fiji was to impose order from above, on a field, which though differently conceived by missionaries, planters, and administrators, was in all cases conceived to be inherently inferior and disordered. Planters sought to put wild nature to economic use, missionaries to lead the heathen to God, and colonial administrators to raise savages to civilization and the local Europeans to the rule of law, through the creation of a polity in the British mode. The relation of ruling class core to "others" was replicated contextually in colonies such as Fiji, even though planters, missionaries, and many colonial administrators were not themselves initially "aristocratic" or of the gentry or civil service classes.

Corrigan and Sayer have observed that the English ruling class manifests a contradictory

double projection of its needs onto the majority of the population. Insofar as the latter constituted labour power they were property to be used and improved like any other instruments or factors of production, but insofar as they were also potentially civic beings they were to be morally regulated and civilized into understanding their society and their place within it (1986:13).

In Fiji in the 1870s, first Governor Gordon was to make a choice between these two projections. In so doing he also chose between the settlers on the one hand, and the missionaries on the other.

Fiji was a late colony, and the settler and missionary constructions of Fijians were interpreted by Sir Arthur Gordon in terms of other colonial experiences and imperial possibilities. Settlers as planters sought to exploit Fijian labour, but Fijians had come to be considered inefficient and difficult on plantations. The use of imported "Melanesian" workers was standard, and had already provoked outcry against the blackbirding labour trade. Gordon resolved the contradiction of the need for exploitable labour and the desire to civilize the Fijians, on the basis of his experience of indentured South Asian Indian labour in Trinidad and Mauritius. A more "advanced" society, India, would supply workers, while the Fijians progressed. To aid the Fijians in their progress, all further alienation of their land to European planters and settlers was prohibited. Thus Gordon's government confounded the planter expectation that they would become the ruling elite and create a colonial society through the settlement and exploitation of the land of Fiji. A more "authentic" representative of Britain's elite (Gordon was the fourth son of a British prime minister, the Earl of Aberdeen) became the arbiter of policy and project.

Gordon's vision of the Fijians and their place in the social evolutionary hierarchy - and his vision of Indian society as well - are revealed in an address to the Royal Colonial Institute in 1879.

No one would dream of placing on one level the acute and cultivated Hindoo or Cingalese and the wandering and naked savage of the Australian bush. The Fijian resembles neither; but he has more affinity with the former than the latter . . .

The people are not nomadic; they live a settled life in towns of good and comfortable houses; they respect and follow agriculture; their social and political organization is complex; they amass property and have laws for its descent; their land tenures are elaborate; they read, they write and cypher. Women are respected, hold a high social position and are exempt from agricultural labour. There is a school in almost every village. The chiefs possess accounts at the bank, conduct correspondence, and generally exhibit capacities for a higher grade of civilization. On the whole I class them in this present condition with the Horas of Madascar . . . Like them the Fijians all profess an at least nominal allegiance to Christianity, and that it has largely influenced the life and character of the great masses of the population, not the most incredulous can, I think, deny. Like them too they have shown a gradual progress, which is, in my estimation of far more hopeful augury than a rapid imitativeness of unfamiliar habits . . .

It should always be borne in mind that the state of society for which they are intended is not that of England in the present day, but more nearly resembles that of the Highlands of Scotland some three or four hundred years ago, or that of remote parts of Ireland in the days of Queen Elizabeth (1879a:12-14).

Gordon approved of the settled and ordered aspects of Fijian life, as he perceived them, but his version of Fijian society was a partial and constricted one. Gordon and fellow colonial administrators took for granted as "Fijian" many of the practices and institutions formed in nineteenth century relations between certain Fijian groups and European settlers and missionaries, including many from the precolonial "Cakobau Governments" of the early 1870s, coalitions of high coastal chiefs and white settlers claiming sovereignty throughout the Fiji group.<sup>5</sup> Gordon's image of Fijians as civilizable rested on a two-fold foundation: the apparent successes of the forty years of missionization in the islands prior to the establishment of the colonial polity and the complexity and hierarchy of Fijian society, especially the leadership of Fijian chiefs. Ironically, "Hindoos" of a more advanced civilization (in Gordon's estimation) would be found, later on in the colony, to be less deserving of administrative affection than the incipient-Christian Fijians. Equally, Indian "coolies", advanced enough for exploitation, as the Fijians were not, would be denied (in Fiji) their social complexity, indeed would be degraded into casteless "equality" in the service of economic exploitation, while Fijian hierarchy was idealized, reified and codified, and Fijians protected from the iniquities of the plantation system.

#### *Christianity and the Civilization of the Fijians*

The mission presence in the islands was important to Gordon not because he shared with the missionaries a "mystical" or "humanistic" attitude as opposed to a "pragmatic" perception of Fijian realities (cf. France), but rather because missionaries and mission-

ary success had shown the Fijians as civilizable, the civilizing project was possible. From 1830 on, the Wesleyans had created a religious polity in Fiji.

[T]hat for which I was most unprepared, for I had heard least about it and do not think its political significance had been hitherto fully appreciated is the really wonderful organization of the Wesleyan body here. I know nothing equal to it except the Jesuits. In every village there is a "lotu" teacher. The different links of superior administration are admirably fitted on to one another and finally the Head at Navuloa has at his command a perfect machinery which enables him to know down to the minutest detail all that is doing in every part of the islands. His statistics and information are far grander than those which the government can obtain and his power is real, absolute and in constant exercise (Gordon to Carnarvon 21 August 1875, Carnarvon Papers, quoted in Legge 1958:25).

At the inception of the colonial polity, the missionaries and their institutional framework of circuits and teachers were "routinized" (Weber 1978, Asad 1975). Following the conversion of Cakobau of Bau in 1854, the islands were ostensibly largely Christian, notably excepting the interior, northern and western peoples of Viti Levu island. Jehovah had triumphed in the islands, imposed - it seemed - from the top down, by white men and chiefs. To Gordon and other colonial - officers, Methodism seemed to be the religious component of Fijian tradition, the "established church" (Brewster 1922).

For colonial administrators and missionaries alike the categories of conversion were straightforward, both in Fiji and among the peoples of the world more generally. Knowledge of the true God was held by Europeans and preached by them to heathen others. The process of individual or local conversion might be subject to interpretation (was chiefly conversion sometimes opportunistic and "political"?) but the categories were fixed. By the 1950s the terms "Christians", "heathens", and "backsliders" were regularly used to distinguish different categories of Fijians, used by Europeans and Fijians as well. Settler, missionary and administrative narratives of battles, enmities and strife among Fijians well into the 1870s used "*tevoro*" (devil) or "heathen", and "*lotu*" (Christian), as the denotations for various opposing Fijian groups. Indigenous histories and motivations, though often known, were equally often subsumed in the implications of these categories of conversion.

Fijians were called upon to assert or acknowledge conversion as such a defining characteristic in appearance as well as behaviour. "Putting on clothes" was to both Fijians and Europeans the outward sign of inward conversion (e.g. Wright 1901:55). Wearing *sulu* (wrapped garments) of imported cloth and cutting the hair were social indicators, implying, Europeans believed, the acceptance of European God and rule, and the putting away of nakedness and unruly warlike display. In the missionary rhetoric, and that of early colonial usage more generally, conversion implied a movement from nakedness to decorum, from warfare and cannibalism to warfare for the sake of conversion of others, and thus, ostensibly to a state of "peace and good order", and ultimately a movement from savagery to civilization.

Colonial administrators of the 1870s were based in the domains already "*lotu*" (converted). This transition to Christianity and all it implied was the *status quo*, an accepted part of Fijian social nature, and tautologically verified the colonial goal of further civilizing the Fijians. In 1874, as Governor Gordon began the colonial codifications of

Fijian custom for the purpose of indirect rule, Christianity was conceived not as deviant but as standard, in the Fijian way of life.<sup>6</sup>

#### *Hierarchy and the Civilization of the Fijians*

Fijian chiefly hierarchy was the other basis for colonial assessment of the civilizability of the Fijians. The legal legitimacy of British rule was itself defined by a Deed of Cession in which thirteen Fijian chiefs ceded the islands to Queen Victoria. Gordon knew little of the ritual relations that informed the creation and empowering of indigenous Fijian rulers as divine chiefs, relations based on both hereditary status and installation by the ritual authority of "people of the land." His Colonial Secretary, John Bates Thurston, though more knowledgeable about Fijians, saw them from the vantage of a European planter and politician. Both, as the British were wont to do from earliest contact, saw "pragmatic" power from the top down as the basis of Fijian political leadership, unconnected with "religion" since it was not "true religion". Thurston clarified the relationship of legitimate authority and Christianity when he harranged a group of "tuka" practitioners in 1891:

The Tuka or worship of ancestral spirits, the building of *Bure Kalou* [temples, literally gods' houses], and the assumption of authority by the old priests or the sons of the old priests of cannibal and heathen days was, I explained, inconsistent with the worship of the true God and also inconsistent with the order and good government of the country established by the Queen.

There was no question of a Fijian religion in any way consistent with the true God and good political order. The assumption of authority by Fijian priests was now illegitimate. In the context of a project of indirect rule, what Fijians might legitimately assume authority?

Gordon wrote of Fijian chiefs that they "generally exhibit capacities for a higher grade of civilization" (1879a:12). It was at root a projection of British hierarchical principles rather than an understanding of, or endorsement of, Fijian principles of divine kingship that informed this British construction of chiefship. In preferring the chiefs, Gordon and Thurston followed traders and planters, who had already constituted chiefs as economic and political agents, and the missionaries (e.g. Williams 1858:36) as well, who early on had found that access to Fijians, and indeed the conversion of Fijians, had to be accomplished from the top down. But it was Gordon and Thurston, especially, who fixed the Fijian chiefs as an aristocracy.

Like Christianity, chiefship was taken by Gordon and by later colonial administrators as a baseline, as natural and proper order in Fiji. It was an aspect of Fijian culture which was to be "preserved" and utilized in the colonial process of legislative and institutional ordering and civilizing. Fijian chiefs, conceived as British aristocracy, endeared the Fijians to administrators, and presented the aspect of "civility" that Gordon so often remarked upon. When it suited them, colonial administrators joined in putative "chiefly rituals", transforming chiefly apparatus through their own participation.

The colonial projection of an aristocratic model of rule made Fijian chiefs into a class. Certainly Fijian chiefs made use of European guns, goods, God, and the system of indirect rule to their own culturally-defined ends.<sup>7</sup> A working congruence in understandings of this new version of chiefship arose between the British and the Fijian chiefs they favoured; the core (though not the whole) of this new class was connected genealogically and in cultural aims to precolonial chiefly figures.



But once colonial administrators had constituted themselves as the arbiters of tradition, with a vision of Fijians as increasingly Christian in spirit and hierarchically ordered in polity, the administrators found their authority threatened by aspects of Fijian life that did not fit the colonial model.

### The Colonial Project and People of the Land

There was no place in the British top-down polity for ritually and politically autonomous "people of the land." Contradictions arose when authority was claimed by Fijians who were not the colonially empowered. War in the mountainous interior of Viti Levu island in the 1870s, protests in the northern kingdom of Rakiraki in 1878 against the colonially appointed Provincial chief, and the rise of Navosavakadua and *tuka* in the north and interior of Viti Levu island in the 1880s were all assertions of various aspects of unrecognized Fijian interest. *Tuka* especially was an assertion of the interests and authority of people of the land. Such claims were not identified or conceived by the British as projects of "land people", since no such category was identified as part of Fijian tradition in the official view. Rather, they became what I call negative tradition, imagined as different from proper custom. Onto Fijian practices outside of and in conflict with those selected for inclusion in the civilizing process the British projected images of disorder and later of disaffection and danger<sup>8</sup>.

#### *British Optimism and the Hill Tribes*

The first challenge to Sir Arthur Gordon's early optimism was the problem of the northern and hill tribes of Viti Levu island. Years earlier missionary Richard Lyth had recorded his impression of the Ra (northern) coastline of Viti Levu island during a voyage in 1848.

We glided along the coast almost imperceptibly till we found ourselves opposite the lofty Kauvadra mountains the supposed abode of the serpent god Degei, who lies in the sacred cave which I suppose no living person ever saw . . . His name will soon be forgotten (Voyaging Journal).<sup>9</sup>

The missionaries came from the east, through the Tongan connection with the Lau islands kingdom, and thence to the most powerful coastal kingdoms on Viti Levu and Vanua Levu islands. Ra and the Viti Levu highlands were to be their last "heathen" frontier, but this was not anticipated in the early missionary accounts. Writing in the 1840s, when the most powerful kingdom of Bau was yet to be converted, Thomas Williams did not prefigure the marked "heathen" classification of the hill people that would develop in the 1860s, writing instead that:

Native tales about the great size and ferocity of the mountaineers and their going naked, deserve no credit; the chief difference being that they bestow less care on their persons and are more rustic in manner. On visiting these highlanders, I always found them friendly, nor do I remember that they ever used me unkindly (1858:103).

Stereotypes of "mountaineers" based on the Scottish highlands later inflected colonial perceptions. But the missionary Williams, far from bringing to Fiji a predisposition to find particular savagery among mountaineers, ascribed to a coastal kingdom (Somosomo) a particular and superior depravity, as "the vilest of the vile" (1858:40).

It was in the 1860s that the indigenous Fijian coast - interior opposition (a spatial manifestation of the chiefs - land people opposition) became paradigmatic in the

European vision of the variation within Fiji, paradigmatic when overlaid with religious categorization. The "heathenism" of the interior hill people was decisively established for the Europeans of Fiji when missionary Thomas Baker was killed in the interior in 1860. Planters along the northern coast, on the Ba river and in Ra both before and after the missionary's death called the mountain people who raided their plantations "bigheads" or "devils". Within this framework of relations, the northern and interior peoples of Viti Levu island came to be considered, treated and legislated as different in the colonial body politic.

In 1876 Governor Gordon oversaw the "Little War" (as he called it) in which the interior people were subjugated to the new colonial polity. In an elaborate correspondence he later published, he chronicled a shifting colonial construction of the hill people from natural heathens to willful rebels<sup>10</sup>. Initially, in the administrative view the "Kai Colo" (hill people)<sup>11</sup> were differentiated as those peoples who remained to be persuaded to join the colonial polity, under the authority of the Queen. Cession, and their non-participation in it, marked them as a social and political category in the British administrative project. More broadly, they were the "heathen tribes" who eschewed both *lotu* (Christianity) and *matanitu* (government). Administrators sought to replicate the model of Cession, first at a meeting in 1875 at Navuso, where the hill people were told by a high coastal chief:

Now under the Queen's rule we, with the exception of one little cloud, have a clear and open sky. You are the little cloud, and that little cloud must clear itself away (Layard to Robinson, C O 83/6, cited in Macnaught n.d:24).

The optimistic colonial assessment that the hill people had voluntarily entered "into the pale of civilization, law and order", was to be checked by the reaction to an ensuing measles epidemic, unwittingly spread into the interior by the chiefs returning from the meeting and interpreted by the survivors as the anger of the old gods.

A second meeting at Navala in 1876 was held by Governor Gordon:

I told them that if they abstained from murder and cannibalism, and discontinued the practice of making forays on their neighbours, they would be unmolested in the enjoyment of their lands, the practices of their religion, and the observance of their ordinary habits and customs.

With the concurrence of this meeting, I, immediately after its conclusion, sent my Commissioner, Mr. Carew, and a body of police, to take up a position in an inland district, the villages of which were either nominally Christian, though without teachers, or heathen, but not unfriendly to the Government (1879b vol.I:vii).

In the colonial view, these meetings initiated the rule of order in the colony. Henceforth, warfare in Colo would require colonial attention. And indeed, the interior people did not immediately come within the pale of the Queen's good order.

#### *Awkward Moments in the Civilizing Process*

Governor Gordon's despatches to the Colonial Office describe his expectations, and the causes to which he attributed the "Disturbance". On the one hand, he portrayed the hill tribes as legitimately ignorant of the intentions of the Colonial government, and even, legitimately entitled to question Cession, since they had not been party to it.

A large proportion of the natives inhabiting this part of Viti Levu had not even nominally embraced Christianity, or been represented at Navuso. They had never submitted to any coast Chief. They but very imperfectly realized the claims or power of the Government . . .

Unfortunately, too, their neighbours to the south, the people of Nadroga, always jealous of the river tribes, and filled with all the zeal of new Christianity, constantly taunted the heathens of the mountains with their inability to fight for their faith, and told them that, if they did not voluntarily adopt Christianity, they would be shortly made to do so by force.

Nor was the conduct of the white settlers always judicious, and it is to be feared that reason was given to the natives to suppose that the Government was prepared to enforce the most extravagant and unbounded claims of the whites . . .

Still, when I saw how rapidly alarm and irritation were giving way to confidence and security, in other parts of Fiji, I could not but hope that measures of a similar character to those which had been adopted with success elsewhere might ultimately produce the same result . . . (1879b vol.I:viii- ix).

When forced to qualify his optimism, Gordon sought to blame, not the Fijians, but outside influences. Fijian resistance to religion or rule was not only due to their evolutionarily simple social stage. The taunting zeal of the newly converted, and the evil influence of whites of the lower orders, in particular, could explain the interior peoples' resistance without implying that the Fijians were intrinsically unlikely to become civilized and to take their station in the colonial polity.

*The Prototypical "Disaffected or Dangerous Native"*

But when Fijians themselves were seen to act willfully in opposition to religion and government, they were conceived to be disorderly and illegitimate. Gordon assigned the blame for the Little War most particularly, to two "heathen" chiefs.

In fact, all the influences of which I have spoken, and others on which I do not greatly care to touch, might have failed to produce any sinister effect, but for the determined hostility to the Government of the Chiefs Mudu, of Qalimari, and Na Bisiki, of Driodrio . . .

On the 12th April, the village of Nawaqa . . . was burned, and during the next few days the frontier towns of the province of Nadi were destroyed, or threatened, by bands under the direction of Bisiki and Mudu; whilst by an evidently preconcerted arrangement, the Christian villages on the lower part of the Sigatoka were at the same time burnt, and a number of women and children killed, by the united forces of the tribes in that vicinity.

The young Roko Tui [Fijian provincial chief] of Nadroga, Ratu Luki, immediately collected a small force, and, crossing the Sigatoka, made a retaliatory raid on the heathen villages to the east of that river . . .

It now became evident that a collision was unavoidable. It was impossible to permit the perpetrators of such outrages to remain unpunished, and it was clear that it would be equally impossible to secure them without encountering resistance (1879b vol.I:ix-x).

Na Bisiki and Mudu figure prominently in the administrative correspondence of the Little War, not just in Gordon's despatches to the Colonial Office, but also in the voluminous practical correspondence between officials as the campaign was carried on. Ultimately, it was these Fijian leaders, rather than the white settlers, whom Gordon found to be the root cause of the "collision".

The initial account of Na Bisiki is from Resident Commissioner Carew, who blamed him for the frustration of his negotiations with the hill people, writing to the Colonial Secretary that

... the meeting which was held at Nasue ... when the Beimana and other tribes sent to inform me that they had decided upon offering no further resistance to the government, had ended unsatisfactorily; chiefly ... owing to the determined action of a chief called "Na Bisiki", belonging to a small village ...

This man is a most dangerous and active opponent of the Government and has lately plundered the property of a loyal village in his neighborhood, and acts on all occasions as the leader of the turbulent class of people in the interior, who have drilled themselves during the past two years in imitation of the police, and have placed themselves under his leadership (Gordon 1879b vol.I:63).

Carew continued in another letter to the Governor,

Nabisiki, a most determined scoundrel, is down again at Vatumoli, with the Naqaqa and other tribes, who are having a great feast and general slaughter of pigs, which for some time past have been tabu-ed, for any very special event. They have also "vakasikataka'd" the Kalou Rere, that is, brought outside for trial, their superstitious war rites, which they have been working up within-doors (sic) in private for some days past, or rather I should say weeks. I believe myself that they are bent on mischief and are perfectly reckless of consequences ...

They are so bad that, no matter what profession they may make hereafter, I would not dare to send the men amongst them, or to visit them myself. They know the power of Great Britain, and confess to that knowledge, but say they prefer to do prison labour to going on without a desperate struggle for their independence and I can place no confidence in anything they say ... All the "Ra" consists of a number of petty republics. The chiefs have no power except for evil, and the people declare that they, the people are rulers, and not the chiefs, who are only appointed to carry out the public will (Gordon 1879b vol.I:63-66).

Na Bisiki became an obsession to Commissioner Carew. Carew arranged to have a special set of handcuffs sent up in anticipation of Na Bisiki's capture and a price was set for his capture alive (Gordon 1879b vol.I:253,303). The other colonial participants in the "Little War" shared Carew's focus on the capture of the Fijian chief and his ally Mudu. But it was not simply because these men "worked eagerly and incessantly against the government". The colonial officials perceived and constructed them as opposite to their model of the proper Fijian chief, and their actions as opposite to the proper flow of political action in the relations of Fijians among themselves and with the new colonial government.

Exemplifying this contrast, Gordon explained his use of Fijian troops, under Fijian and European command, by insisting to the Colonial office that the Little War was not

between the government and Fijians, but between different Fijian groups, describing the campaign as

... properly considered, ... only the repression, by the peaceably disposed and orderly portion of the native community, of illegal outrages, committed by another section of the native population (Gordon 1879b vol.I:xiv).

Before the "perpetration of illegal outrages" Commissioner Carew had planned to negotiate with the group he conceived as the legitimate leaders in Colo, writing, "I should like to induce some of the old chiefs, who really rule the interior, to come to me and talk matters over" (Gordon 1879b: 8). Later, his plans frustrated, he wrote with loathing of the "petty republics" of the Ra area.

Implicitly juxtaposed with the illegitimate leadership of Na Bisiki was Governor Gordon's description of a representative of the "orderly portion of the native community", of whom he wrote, "Buli Nadrau is a fine and favourable specimen of a great mountain chief" (1879b: vol.II:x). Buli Nadrau and Na Bisiki represents a series of oppositions critical to the British view of proper order in Fiji. Buli Nadrau was constituted, from above, by the Government, as a Buli (district official), legitimately in authority over a bounded territory and properly subordinate to colonial authority. Na Bisiki, in contrast, belonged to a small village, yet extended influence "far greater than that to which (his) mere position as chief would have entitled (him)". Thus, Na Bisiki's influence, over a large, and unspecified range, was unnatural. Gordon characterized his authority as "direct terrorism over his tribe". The colonial self-constitution as arbiter of Fijian tradition created a double argument. Na Bisiki was neither a legitimate leader by Fijian customary right (for Carew had defined customary right as belonging to those reasonable old chiefs), nor was he sanctioned from above by the colonial authorities.

The threat of Na Bisiki was not simply revolt against the government but at a more fundamental level, a challenge to indirect rule and the arbitration of power and legitimacy by the government. Neither Christian nor a proper chief in British eyes, he embodied a threat to the whole premise of the natural civilizing of the Fijians. The British imagination of Na Bisiki who, eventually captured, was shot trying to escape before his trial, is a paradigm of the British fear of assertions of authority by those they did not control. It is not an exaggeration to see obsession in Carew's letters about Na Bisiki, nor to be struck by the symbolism of the special set of handcuffs, materially instantiating the urge to order and restrain.

Gordon insisted on the death sentence for such leaders. His despatches reveal a continuing optimism and belief in the civilizability of the Fijians, tempered now by a "prudent" concern for exemplary punishments, to secure "future good behaviour". He chose to make the example of leaders rather than any "tribe" as a whole.

It was open to me to follow the plan of the former Government, and direct the wholesale deportation of the tribes,<sup>12</sup> without taking life, or to show such severity in a few instances as would allow me to permit the population generally to remain in their own towns and districts. The latter course appeared to me the more truly lenient and considerate toward a subjugated people, as well as more consonant with the requirements of justice. It could not, however, prudently be adopted, unless the future good behaviour of the tribe was to be relied on, and this could only be secured by the infliction of exemplary punishment on the most guilty of their number.

Sir Arthur Gordon could not appeal both to custom and to colonial right in creating the colonial system in the interior and northern territories. As an administrative consequence, Gordon maintained the decision that these people were to be ruled at the provincial level by European officials and Fijians from other areas. Further, a broad category of indigenous activity was construed as disordered and unsanctioned. Yet, even if the hill people were not construed as completely blameless, the British attributed the "disturbances in the interior" to outside influences, or sinister, terrorist chiefs. Their motives were conceived political and they had been "subjugated". But the contradictions and the creation of "negative tradition" would come to the fore all the more vividly in the British apprehension of further disturbances in the north and the hills: the rise of Navosavakadua and the corollary construction of the "*tuka* movement".

### Dangerous Disaffection in Colonial Fiji: Navosavakadua and "the *tuka*"

Like the "heathen", "terrorist" chief Na Bisiki, Navosavakadua challenged the British construction of legitimate leadership, as we shall see as we trace the attempt to contain him. But even more critically, the British vision of *tuka* was of a "thing" ("movement", "doctrine", "creed", "superstition of mingled elements", "new religion", "semi-political movement", or "political-religious doctrine") apart from Navosavakadua and located spatially amongst the peoples of the interior north and west of Viti Levu. Seeking to control this disorder, in 1887 the colonial administration passed both an ordinance which provided for "the deportation and confinement of disaffected or dangerous natives" and an ordinance against "the practices of *luve ni wai*, *kalou rere* and other similar and kindred practices . . ." (Fiji Gazette 1887) under which people were later prosecuted for "*tuka*"<sup>13</sup>. These ordinances thus reified disparate aspects of "negative tradition" as criminal. In confronting *tuka* colonial policy shifted from blaming and deporting individual leaders in 1878 and 1885, to deporting towns and groups of people in 1891 and 1914, to the reification of this British category of negative tradition, grounds for a potential - but never fully realized - reevaluation of the "nature" of Fijians entirely.

In 1878 a group of chiefs in the northern kingdom of Rakiraki consulted the oracle priest Navosavakadua while making charges against the *Roko Tui Ra* (government-appointed Fijian provincial official) (see CSO 78/570 and Scarr 1970). Initially Governor Gordon and his administrators blamed discontented local whites and the "malfeasant petty chiefs" of Rakiraki rather than focussing attention on the oracle Navosavakadua. The "superstition of mingled elements" as Gordon termed it, or the "*kalourere-ism*"<sup>14</sup> (as his interpreter David Wilkinson called it) was considered to be subordinate to comprehensible political motivations.

This religion was designed as a common bond of union among those whom the leaders wished to make use of for the accomplishment of political ends (CO 83/16).

Indeed Wilkinson conceived the "*kalourere-ism*" as manipulable custom, a vehicle for political disaffection if used by the Rakiraki chiefs, but a vehicle for the good if used by the new colonial administration.

The chief cause for any apprehension is on account of the power and means of secret combination it possesses or is the agent of, which if united with, or supporting any disaffected movement against authority would be disastrous to all peace or progress, in fact to the race [? word unclear].

He proposed, no doubt to Gordon's interest, that the "*kalourere-ism*" itself be used as a sort of indirect rule (spelling and punctuation are as Wilkinson wrote):

I would leave its devotees unmolested while there is no breach of morals or good order leave them to pursue their own sweet will subject them to no coercion, restraint or even ridicule. It is a Vakaviti or Fijian affair. Regard it as such, and treat the whole thing Vakaviti. . . . The free operation of the same customs and usages of the country will be the best and most effectual observer controller and restrainer. Every chief in the [government] service of any importance as well as those true chiefs who seek the real will [?] of their people . . . let them feel their responsibility at the same time that they have the support of government, in fact let them feel as far as possible that . . . they are expected to share its burdens and its benefits. In all matters of customs prejudices or superstitions let their advice or recommendations be very well weighed . . . and there is little to fear from Kalourere-ism or anything of the kind. In fact rather than attempt to put the thing down by any form I would make use of the fanaticism as for instance every "tamata dina" ["true man, participant] is to get ready during the four years, he is to have plenty of pigs, fowls, and good of every kind so as to be able to entertain his ancestors in a becoming manner when they return at the time Vakataovovoki (I believe the millenium is a very good rendering of this word) by all means let him feed pigs, poultry and plant food and if he don't do so make him. Promote their industry and it will form the best correction of superstition and ignorance, Or in other words let the native feel that the government is his friend his protector in the broadest and commonest sense and the most inteligable to his mind that it is Fijian that it recognizes him as a Fijian the customs and habits of his every day life and treats him with a friendly easy freedom not suspicion while it deals summerly and effectively with evil doers and those who do him injury . . . (78/550).

Wilkinson's rather extraordinary optimism, well received by Governor Gordon, was not shared at the time, or later, by other administrators such as Resident Commissioner Carew and the then - Colonial Secretary Thurston. Yet this document displays the initial attitude of Gordon's indirect rule: "Chiefs" of Fiji, already part of the governmental structure, are proposed as examples of and arbiters of "custom" for the common people. Custom itself is conceived as benign and positive, because it is conceived of as manipulable. The notion that "fanaticism" could be used by government as easily as by "disaffected" Fijian chiefs implied that with the deportation of the Rakiraki chiefs and other leaders including Navosavakadua, and the substitution of the proper leadership of Europeans and their selected Fijians, all would proceed naturally

and Kalourere-ism and every thing belonging to it will pass away . . . [the average Fijian] will be a supporter of the government and a peaceful and respectable member of his mataqali (kin group), paying their dues both local and general . . . (78/550).

But by 1885, when colonial officials found Navosavakadua, returned from the brief deportation, to be leading a "*tuka movement*" administrative attention focused sharply on the "prophet" as root and cause of disorder. Like Na Bisiki, Navosavakadua was from the north and his "votaries" were from the interior, a group already perceived as lower in the racial-social evolutionary scale. Assistant Commissioner Joske wrote of Navosavakadua, "he was certainly not much to look at, being very black and of a

decidedly Melanesian type" (Brewster 1922:245). This description of the unprepossessing, "Melanesian" black "prophet" juxtaposed with a description of a vital young Bauan chief, in government service, assigned to guard him, amplifies the hill tribe - coastal chief distinction that prevailed in the British vision of the illegitimacy of Na Bisiki.

But further, Navosavakadua was not even a chief like Na Bisiki ("terrorist" though he might have been). Rather, he was a *bete* (oracle priest), "a heathen priest hereditarily" wrote Carew. The image of the utilitarian, self-interested charlatan, the manipulative *bete* (priest), prevailing in European commentary from the missionaries on (see, e.g. Williams 1985:226-7), informed the colonial interpretations of Navosavakadua's ritual practices (see Brewster 1922, and CO 83/43). They viewed sacrifices to him as extorted payments. The assistant Native Commissioner framed his report in these terms:

"Tuka" (immortality) was promised by these men on behalf of Navosavakadua to such as should believe in his doctrines and follow him, and they thus succeeded in inducing a number of people to believe accordingly. From these believers they exacted a "Ka ni bula" or payment for immortality consisting of whale's teeth or such other property as the converts might be able to contribute (CO 83/43).

Assistant Commissioner Joske, commenting on Navosa's doctrines, argued,

It may be urged that Navosavakadua is mad and therefore harmless, but it is apparent that there is a good deal of method in his madness. Witness for instance the large amount of presents he has received. His votaries were continually presenting pigs, tabuas (whales' teeth), masi (barkcloth), and yoqona (kava), and to such an extent as to very much rouse the jealousy of Roko Tui Ra [the government-appointed Fijian provincial head] (CO 83/43).

Thus sacrifice was interpreted as clever extraction of goods, which should only have been offered up as taxes, or in proper customary form to legitimate, proper Fijian chiefs, such as the Roko.

A frequently cited anecdote detailed the reaction of the coastal chief and government-appointed district official Buli Tavua to the powers of Navosavakadua.

Buli Tavua, however, promptly stamped out the endeavours to propagate the belief in his district.

One of the Navosavakadua's "betes" (oracle priests) trying to make a proselyte of the Buli, the Buli broke a plate in two and said: "Now Mr. Bete, I give you until evening to return that plate whole, if you can do so, I will believe what you say, if not I will flog you". Evening found the plate unmended, so the Bete was tied up and given 30 lashes (CO 83/43).<sup>15</sup>

Having heard the story, Thurston wrote to Carew, "Buli Tavua seems too nice in his estimate of "Vosavakadua" he shd [sic] have broken the prophet's head instead of his own plate" (Carew Papers, Thurston to Carew, 11 December 1885)<sup>16</sup>. The alliance of chiefs and government had solidified from the model of coastal chief as Christian to the coastal chief as government official as well. The self-identification of colonial officer with proper, legitimate chief is typical of Thurston. Typical too was his approval of the punishment employed by Buli Tavua. Public thrashings were to become the primary punishment for practitioners of the invulnerability rituals *kalou rere* and *luve ni wai*, and for those "votaries of the *tuka*" who were not deemed dangerous enough to be deported.



Punishment through force and example displayed in microcosm the British subjugation of those inferior "others" who asserted illegitimate authority.

As the British saw it, Navosavakadua and his followers were not simply ignorant but were instead subversive. The anecdote about Buli Tavua and the plate is as much about the *bete*'s (priest's) attempt to suborn an official as about the official's probity. Direct contradiction of administrative orders by "*tuka* votaries" was as significant as the form the disobedience took. (Told to build a leper's house they instead built a *bure kalou* ("temple"); told to move a village they built a *koro ni vuvuni* (settlement for plotting war) [(CO 83/43)].) Not only were officials disobeyed and regulations flouted, but also colonial boundaries and spheres of jurisdiction were traversed, as "Ra men", of Ra province, under the jurisdiction of Fijian provincial official Roko Tui Ra Ratu Tevita Rasuaki "crossed over the border into the town of Udu" (as all the colonial reports and ensuing narratives consistently state) and brought discord into Colo North province, the jurisdiction of Resident Commissioner Carew. The provincial boundaries were sacrosanct in British eyes, simultaneously legitimized in Fijian custom and British administrative utility, as was the equally "customary" system of indirect rule itself<sup>17</sup>.

Thus, Navosavakadua far outstripped Na Bisiki in his infamy among the British. To the British, Na Bisiki was a pure heathen, encountered on the frontiers of the civilizing projects of mission and administration. As well, Na Bisiki was a relatively simple "political" rebel, requiring to be "subjugated". His "heathenism", in that curious 1860s European discourse in Fiji, was a "political" category. In contrast, Navosavakadua truly threatened the sought-after order of the colonial project, for he initiated a simultaneous political and religious counter-theory, perceived as a witting creation of "doctrines" and "practices" in imitation of and opposition to the orderly institutions of colonial government and true god.

Gordon and subordinates had claimed that the "Little War" was between Fijians. But the administrators perceived Navosavakadua to be explicitly anti-European, opposing both "Lotu" (religion) and "Matanitu" (government)<sup>18</sup>. Discussions of his "doctrine" and his "organization" reveal that the colonial officials considered Navosavakadua to be both influenced by European ideas and institutions, and to be attempting to mimic them. Religious doctrines, no matter how unusual, were less the justification for administrative alarm, than the activities they did or might give rise to, including, as Joske and Carew were to point out, possible murder and cannibal sacrifice<sup>19</sup>. Practices, not beliefs, were "political", and it was the "armed, drilling men" of Navosavakadua's following who initially impelled inquiry and governmental action. Joske commenting further on the "method of Navosavakadua's madness" summarized,

His movement was organized with a great deal of skill, his followers being divided into bands of what were called soldiers commanded by "satinis" and in such villages as believed in him were "betes" who regularly reported to him in the way Wesleyan Native teachers report to their superior officers( CO 83/43).

Colonial observers, and later scholars as well, were to stress the ostensible imitation of European military drill, salutes, and the obscure passwords that none could translate<sup>20</sup>. They postulated Maori influence, or the influence of white planters.

It appears to myself and to Mr. Tripp that all these men were bound by an oath not to divulge. This may seem a new departure in Fijian habits, but I would

point out that nearly all the people concerned in this have done about three or four terms of indentured service with white men, the Ra province having been from the earliest times the favourite recruiting area.

Whilst among the white men . . . they have heard the Free Masonry and secret societies. This appears to be a humble imitation of them. They seem to use signs and shibboleths as a means of recognition amongst themselves (Disaffected, or Dangerous Natives file 86/253), Joske to Carew, 18 January 1886)<sup>21</sup>.

However humble, or crude, Navosavakadua's organization, unlike the hierarchy of the Wesleyan church, it was, to the British, an audacious mimicry. Moreover, its presumed secrecy, unlike the obvious warfare in the interior in the 1870s, was sinister and unpredictable. In a similar vein, the doctrine of "*tuka*", and the "compounding of Fijian mythology and belief with the teachings of the Old and New Testaments" seemed to Carew both "very ingenious and dangerous" (CO 83/84). Unlike a simple "heathen", Navosavakadua made use of Christian doctrine, within a Fijian framework, proposing it to be a delusion.

He says [the twins] sailed away to the land of the white men, who wrote a book about them, which is the Bible, only the missionaries in translating it have deceived Fijians in talking about Jesus Christ and Jehovah, their real names being Nakalasabaria and Namakaumoli (sic). They are shortly to appear and at their arrival the Fijian Millenium is to commence. All who believe in the doctrine that Navosavakadua preaches, are to have life eternal, and their ancestors are to rise from their graves. They are also to be rewarded with "sitoea" (stores) full of the wealth of the white man. Those who do not believe in him are to perish (Joske in CO 83/43).

Like Na Bisiki, Navosavakadua was seen by the British as an agent. Not simply deceived by low class whites, he himself was an active agent of deceit, corrupting his "votaries". Worse than Na Bisiki, Navosavakadua did not simply assert recognized Fijian "heathen" aims, but rather, seemed to mimic and pervert colonial and Christian forms. He was a symbol of the vulnerability of the colonial project, whether a sign of the success of low class whites in corrupting Fijians in the face of administrative and missionary protection of Fijians, or simply a sign that the colonial administration could not completely control the prerogatives of knowledge and authority in the colonial polity. In British eyes the combination of knowledge of European forms with the subversion of them rendered Navosavakadua a truly "disaffected" and "dangerous" native. He was therefore to be removed "for the public safety and welfare" (Carew CO 83/43). In 1886, the balance of administrative opinion believed that the problems in the north and interior provinces of Viti Levu could be solved through the permanent deportation of Navosavakadua. It became necessary to pass a new ordinance in order to confine him to Rotuma (Ordinance number 20 of 1887, concerning "Disaffected or Dangerous Natives"). Not simply dangerous but disaffected, lacking in that affection that the colonial rulers expected to inhere between ruled and rulers, he was removed from the colonial polity, to allow the civilization of the Fijians to proceed apace.

### The End of Optimism

Because British perceptions of disorder and ordinances of control focussed on the individual prophet, the illegitimate leader, the events of 1885 and 1886, like those of 1878, might have been read as further awkward moments in the transition to civilized

participation in the colonial "customary" order. But optimism ended between 1886 and 1891. Years later, Joske wrote that after Navosavakadua was sent to Rotuma in 1887

I said in my mind, "exit the prophet", and I thought I had done with him for at least a considerable period. But I spoke in my ignorance and foolishness of heart. Although the Government had seen to the detention of his body in far away Rotumah, it was not able to restrain his free spirit, and his astral form returned to his native hills and comforted his adherents by ministrations, and his doctrine of the *Tuka* exists in this present day (Brewster 1922:246).

Joske's retrospective description in his 1922 memoir takes a detached and romantic tone. But, confronting the "revival of *Tuka*" in 1891, the administrative tone was both urgent and severe. Since *tuka* had not been eradicated through the deportation of its prophet, the administration now located disaffection more broadly. In an elaboration of the coastal-interior dichotomy, "*tuka*" was no longer regarded as simple heathen ignorance, nor natural political avarice, nor the machination of an unscrupulous leader, nor even crude mimicry, but rather, an amorphous, inherent social characteristic of the "peoples living in the shadow of the Kauvadra range" (Joske 94/2036). The 1891 "re-appearance of *tuka*" and the deportation of the people of Drauniivi represents this projection of disorder onto groups of Fijians more generally. Thurston, now governor, amplified the precolonial attitudes of planters and coastal chiefs towards the interior people, seen not merely as political "rebels" but dangerous and disaffected racial and moral others.

Governor Thurston assessed "*tuka*" as the continuant of objectionable Fijian practices found among the spatially and socially distant turbulent peoples of Ra and Colo. His despatches consistently characterize the "new religion established by Navosavakadua" as "reversion to heathenism", or "mischevious practice of the old priests of heathen times". His virulent objection to "*tuka*" paralleled his objection to another religion whose leaders seemed to challenge his authority, the newly proselytizing Roman Catholic mission in Fiji, of which he wrote,

There is not however, any Magistrate in the Colony or officer of the Native department, who does not testify to the altered bearing of the Natives wherever Dr. Vidal establishes a Missionary. Their first duty is to him, the second may be to the Government or their Chief, but all things must give way to priestly rule (CO 83/57).

Thurston's concern was with the order of the polity, which he had always conceived as hierarchical, privileging his vision of the coastal chiefly aristocracy. Now he sought to implement, perhaps with the zeal of the newly knighted, his aristocratic model of rule from the top, by personally overseeing the arrests and floggings as he made his way through the interior provinces up to Ra province. He informed the people of Drauniivi village, which he had identified as the "seat of authority" of "*tuka*" that his patience had run out, and (turning to the practice of mass deportation that Gordon had considered and rejected) he decreed that they be deported to the island of Kadavu, their villages razed, and the very name of Drauniivi forgotten.

The choice of Kadavu as the new residence of the Drauniivi people was motivated in the entrenched colonial vision of the proper native Christian coastal peoples. Unlike the dark, heathen followers of Navosavakadua, the Fijians of Kadavu represented Fijian orthodoxy, as Joske would explain:

His Excellency deemed it the wisest and most merciful course to remove [the people of Drau-ni-ivi] at least for a while to a more civilized portion of the group where there would be little likelihood of their pernicious doctrines . . . gaining credence . . . to prevent the spread of the "Tuka" superstition among the simple, yet wild, half-Christianized, half-civilized tribes living in the ranges at the back of Drau-ni-ivi . . .

The Drau-ni-ivi people have therefore been removed, and are now located on good fertile Crown lands in the island of Kadavu.

The Kadavu Islanders, possessing a large intermixture of Tongan blood, are perhaps the most advanced and intelligent . . . of our Fijian population. There is therefore no fear of the "Tuka" doctrines being received by them otherwise than with ridicule and it may reasonably be hoped that finding themselves among a strong but law-abiding and civilized community the Drau-ni-ivi people will profit by their association with them by qualifying themselves for what they will certainly long for - a permission to return to their own mountain district (Joske 1891).

The deportation of the people of Drauniivi was meant to remove a root and source of disaffection from the body politic, but neither Governor Thurston, nor Commissioner Joske considered that the deportation alone would put an end to disorderly practices in the highlands. Joske portrayed "the tuka" as a disease, "always smoldering in the Nalawa and Naiova highlands . . . endemic with occasional periods of epidemic activity" (91/1133). *Thurston planned roads, and a new station at Nadarivatu to maintain a Government presence in the hills; he also blamed the Wesleyan mission for neglecting to send white missionaries to the remote areas, considering that only leadership and decision-making by whites or aristocratic Fijian chiefs could keep order in the colony (Despatch 53). Identifying with high coastal chiefs, Thurston conceived the northern and interior people as inferior and substandard. And though Joske's affection for the "hill tribes" was genuine, he also echoed the long-set colonial framework which found them racially, socially and morally inferior to the coastal peoples.*

### Administrative and Scholarly Reifications of Tuka

The British administrators who succeeded Thurston, Carew, and Joske would inherit these attitudes, but would inherit as well the optimism of Gordon's civilizing project, routinized and unquestioned in the structures of indirect rule. In the early twentieth century "tuka" was still an administrative problem, but it was fast becoming a topic of scholarly speculation as well.

Considering that only a brief period had elapsed since the Fijians had practiced heathen customs that made their name a byword in the world, it was not surprising that a recrudescence of their old superstitions should take place in some form. It would have been too much to expect a complete transition from barbarism to peace and contentment as an immediate result of the new order of things.

Thus wrote William Sutherland, in 1910 (he had been the Native Commissioner for twelve years) in a paper for the Fiji Society, on "The 'Tuka' Religion". He told his listeners that even in 1910 "the tuka" and kindred superstitions were still practiced, warning that "they are smoldering always in various parts of the country".

In his account Sutherland paid tribute to Resident Commissioner Joske, whom he acknowledged as his authority on "*tuka*". A few years later, in 1914, the Resident Commissioner, Colo West province, went to local Fijians for definitions of "*tuka*", though his inquiry was framed by the assumptions of the 1887 regulation which labeled it "penal by regulation". More typical was appeal to the authority of the colonial figures, especially Joske, Carew and Thurston (see e.g. 14/6625). The reification of "*tuka*" in the routinized administrative form of "minute papers", despatches and ordinances set as authoritative the European vision compiled in the midst of the construction of the colonial orthodoxy and a policy of control. In the twentieth century, however, it was further reified as past event. The circumstances and cultural presuppositions of that construction were uninvestigated by the later administrators - and indeed by later scholars - who would begin to plumb the colonial record for the "facts" about "the *tuka*".

As the British sought to extend their vision of order to disorderly others, many disparate phenomena were linked together in what they called "disaffection", and what I have called "negative tradition". Disparate Fijian practices were linked, not because of intrinsic similarity or connection in the Fijian cultural system, but as problems encountered by British administrators in their organizing project. Only from the British perspective were "petty republics", "charlatans" and "heathenism" necessarily linked. Only from the British perspective, and within the British hierarchical project of the extension of the state in empire were the Maori HauHau, Catholicism, and Freemasonry linked. These connections and comparisons were motivated in the British colonial cultural project, in the vision of the orderly polity led by a defining ruling elite. All were practices of "others", in relation to the British ruling and ordering class.<sup>22</sup>

But there has been created, in the European imagination of Fiji, a "dark substratum of Fijian life", as one author has called it, just as the vision of "primitives in transition" more generally has made the Pacific "cargo cult", or "millenarian movement" a reified category. Scholars of such "movements" have sought to understand rather than control them, but I think that unexamined categories of colonial discourse have contributed to the scholarly vision of "*tuka*". In considering the relationship of "indirect rule" and "cargo cult" in the British colonial construction of Fijians I believe that questions are raised about the analytic concept of "cult" itself.

In the study of the Pacific, why have "cults" been problematized in a way that Christian conversion has not<sup>23</sup>? In analyses of *tuka*, why is leadership by an oracle priest a focus of scholarly interest as "cult", while a century of rule by divine chiefs has been studied politically as "leadership" or the development of "elites"? To what extent have colonial categories been projected back into indigenous social structure? Can we find *tuka* to have been even pre-European "challenge to authority" (Scarr 1984:93) without accepting that coastal chiefs were the constituted authorities?

What more of Fijian "cultural idiom" (Burridge 1969) can be problematised if colonial documents are themselves treated not as records revealing "classical characteristics" of a millenarian movement but as texts written in a British "cultural idiom"? If like Worsley we seek to analyze *tuka* sympathetically, must we see it as a "proto-nationalist" movement, seeking in Navosavakadua' project a stage in political-economic struggle? This may grant agency to Navosavakadua and the people of the interior and north of Viti Levu, but does it not deny the cultural particularity of such agency? Does indeed the very project of a general theory of Pacific "cults" imagine a need to explain awkward moments of inevitable trajectory, if not from savagery to civilization, then from

"otherness" to westernization? Does a general theory of millenarian activities throughout the world link disparate cases in space and time because of intrinsic similarities? Or does the very category of "millenarian activities" disembody local phenomena from context, linking and defining them on the basis of a western vision of the unusual?

### Affection and Disaffection: The Maintenance of Orthodoxy in the Face of Negative Tradition

Though in 1910 William Sutherland had concluded his paper on an optimistic note<sup>24</sup>, colonial administrators were to continue to discover dangerous and disaffected natives, especially in the north, interior and west of Viti Levu island. British and Fijian officials chronicled other "outbreaks" of *tuka* and related disorder in 1914, 1918 and as late as the 1930s. In these decades *Tuka* outbreaks shared a place in the colonial imagination of disorder with rumours of German sympathizers in the hill country during World War I, and with the incipient activities of another "dangerous and disaffected native" called Apolosi Nawai. Like Na Bisiki and Navosavakadua, Apolosi was not an orthodox coastal chief. This charismatic leader, founder of a Fijian co-operative movement run on ritual-economic principles, threatened the British decision to "shield" Fijians from business, and many other assumptions of the colonial orthodoxy. Apolosi, like Navasavakadua, would be deported, under the Disaffected or Dangerous Natives Ordinance. Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna, Fijian chief and Secretary for Native Affairs, constituted by both the British and many Fijians as an arbiter of legitimate order and custom in Fiji, would write of Apolosi in 1917,

The activities of Apolosi Nawai and his agents . . . create grave responsibilities which must be faced. In character those activities are undoubtedly corrupt and degrading, assuming a political nature for the purposes of low gain . . . They have only been possible (a) because of the ignorance of the Natives (b) because the Native Policy of recent years has prematurely left the natives with insufficient leaders and (c) because the suspicion aroused in the natives by a particular and special set of circumstances has been and is being cunningly trafficked with. Here it is as well to remark that, speaking generally, the more backward the people the more pronounced is the hold of the Viti Company . . . most of the papers emanate from the hills and Ba (Sukuna 1983).

However, even though categories of negative tradition were not reified in law and administrative perception, the colonial construction of Fijians as Christian, hierarchical, and loyal nonetheless predominated. Over and over again most instances of negative tradition were re-constructed by colonial arbiters as awkward moments, or superstitions. For though I have here focused mainly on those aspects of Fijian culture and practice which the British could not ignore, and which they constructed as "danger and disaffection", it remains to be noted that the orthodoxy of indirect rule through "custom" established by the British in colonial Fiji was very successful and became very real. The Fijian polity within a polity, including structures of indirect rule, the land tenure system, and elaborate district boundaries, was established from the top down, with tremendous conviction in its simultaneous legitimacy in Fijian "custom" and British policy. For many Fijians as well, notably those whose own chiefly hegemonic projects intersected with those of the British, colonial order has long been accepted as constituted order. But perhaps the ultimate reason that the British were able to retain

their optimism concerning Fijians and maintain their affection, was a more basic opposition of order and disorder, affection and disaffection, in the colonial polity. A far greater threat to the British and their imperial project were the indentured and then post-indenture Indians of Fiji, brought to labour in the islands so that the Fijians might be spared. Identifying with the Fijians as Christian and hierarchical, the British saw and represented themselves as the protectors of the Fijians, against the even more dangerous and disaffected Indians who argued in European terms for equality with whites and new rights in colony and Empire. Far preferable in the colonial British vision and far more loyal to it, were Fijian chiefs and people who knew their place, and whose disorder seemed "primitive" still.

## Notes

1. I acknowledge research permission from the Government of Fiji and thank S.T. Tuinaceva, Archivist of the National Archives of Fiji, for access to the Colonial Secretary's Office minute papers series and other archival records. I acknowledge support from the U.S. Department of Education Fulbright program and from the U.S. National Science Foundation for twenty months field and archival research in Fiji, January 1984 to August 1985, and from the Institute for Inter-cultural Studies for six weeks field research in Fiji in 1986. I thank friends in Fiji for archival and ethnographic assistance. Special thanks to John D. Kelly for his readings of the essay.
2. Official minutes in the Colonial Office series, held at the Public Record Office, London, and consulted on microfilm in Canberra, are here identified by CO (Colonial Office) and the file number. Official minutes in the Colonial Secretary's Office series, held at the National Archives of Fiji, Suva, and consulted there, are identified as CSO (Colonial Secretary's Office) and the file number.
3. Elsewhere I explore *tuka* as a way in which Fijians made their own history, drawing upon field research among the Vatulaloko people of Drauniivi and other villages in Ra province in 1984-85 and in 1986 (Kaplan 1988a). I should like to note that in characterizing *tuka* as a "movement of people of the land" I use the rubric "people of the land" in reference to a fundamental Fijian cultural category; I do not intend to suggest a connection between *tuka* and the recently emergent anti-Fiji-Indian "*Taukei* Movement". (On the latter, see Kaplan 1988b).
4. For a discussion of the colonial period that takes as its focus not "authenticity" but the Fijian colonial experience more broadly, see Macnaught (1982).
5. Crucially, they accepted the styling of a particular high Fijian chief (Cakobau of Bau) as "Tui Viti" (King of Fiji).
6. This was despite that fact that Fijians were conceived to have freedom of religion. On the one hand, Gordon explicitly cited the rights of Fijians to maintain practices that were customary, including their own "religion". On the other hand, such practices could not include cannibal sacrifice ("murder") or warfare (1879b vol.I:vi-vii), and Gordon himself came to use the rhetoric of "heathen" versus "Christian" tribes in his accounts of interior warfare. Ultimately no non-Christian "religion" was ever found acceptable or substitutable.

7. In a certain sense the whole British colonial project served some Fijians to continue an indigenous trend toward centralization and increasingly powerful chiefship.
8. Colonial officials often individually reproduced the three-stage trajectory from optimism to caution and concern for control; some also had definable positions relative to one another. For example, Governor Gordon and Commissioner Joske display a pronounced initial optimism that is not found in the writings of Commissioner Carew or Colonial Secretary and later Governor Thurston who mixed even their earliest and optimistic pronouncements with a dour readiness to construct certain Fijians as "rebellious".
9. Lyth's *Voyaging Journal* and other papers, held at the Mitchell Library, Sydney, were consulted in microfilm at Regenstein Library, University of Chicago. The cited passage appears on reel 3:232.
10. *Letters and Notes Written During the Disturbances In the Highlands (Known as the "Devil Country") of Viti Levu, Fiji 1876*. For a history of this war see Parry (1987), and also Macnaught (n.d.) who criticizes accounts prior to his for accepting British characterizations of the hill tribes as "rebellious", convincingly arguing that the "Little War" entailed the "subjugation" of the previously autonomous hill peoples.
11. Gordon used the term to refer to the interior tribes to the west of the great range of mountains dividing Viti Levu. Later the three "Colo (hill) Provinces" would come to bound and define the mountain people in the administrative parlance, but "Kai Colo" was generally used contextually to refer to any inland or hill people.
12. Under the Kingdom of Cakobau, prisoners of war, sometimes entire communities were sold to planters as labourers.
13. On this second ordinance see also Kaplan (1987).
14. *Kalou rere* was an invulnerability rite, often performed before battle, one aspect of which was to invoke the gods to make men impervious to clubs, bullets and arrows. It created cadres of invulnerable warriors and special warrior priests (see Clunie 1977).
15. A similar anecdote had been told, two decades earlier by missionary Lorimer Fison (1867).
16. The Carew Papers are held at the Hocken Library, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand.
17. In fact the colonial districting cross-cut, marginalized, and dispossessed many smaller-scale polities (the "petty republics" in Carew's terms) including that of Navosavakadua (see Kaplan 1988a).
18. By 1885, there is no mention in the minute papers or despatches of Wilkinson's notion of turning *tuka* to the service of indirect rule. Indeed, with Thurston as acting Governor (Administrator) the rhetoric shifts from Gordon's emphasis on upholding of Fijian custom to the rule of the colonial government. That is not to say, however, that Thurston's notions of what constituted a threat to colonial government were not solidly molded in his projection of British aristocratic hierarchy onto Fijian chiefs.



19. To the missionaries, heathenism in belief or practice were both unacceptable. The colonial administration, however, could not legislate belief, instead codifying and prosecuting practice.
20. Though many of these practices could be understood in Fijian ritual terms, as Joske himself makes clear in his descriptions (CO 83/43). The marching was *meke* (gesture chant with ritual-political functions), the circumambulation by warriors was to "*Butuka*" ("tread the land") in order to establish a relationship between Navosavakadua and the members of his incipient ritual-polity (see Kaplan 1988a).
21. A group of CSO files concerning cases prosecuted under Ordinance Number 20 of 1887 "To provide for confining Disaffected or Dangerous Natives to particular localities in Fiji" are held in a separate series, at the National Archives, Fiji. I thank Dr. Deryck Scarr for assistance in locating these files.
22. Further, not all Fijian practices constructed as illegitimate by the British were activities of "people of the land". Indeed, the British "disaffected and dangerous native" model of illegitimate leadership encompassed both Navosavakadua and the Buli Naceva of Kadavu (the government chief of the district to which Navosavakadua's kinfolk were deported in 1891) who was found guilty of excessive oppression of the people of his district through extortion of goods and services beyond the legitimate levies mandated by the colonial authorities.
23. Worsley (1968) himself raises this issue.
24. He wrote: "the younger generation, let us hope, find it more profitable and less hazardous to devote their time and energy to honest work in which superstition finds no place".