

Introduction

Foi Songs and the Performance, Publication, and Poetry of Papua New Guinea Sung Traditions

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I am very pleased and honoured to introduce James Weiner's book of Foi song texts. This gives me an opportunity to discuss why I think this is such a valuable publication and to highlight its importance in relation to various topics of concern to Papua New Guinea ethnomusicology.

Weiner's book *The Empty Place: Poetry, Space, and Being among the Foi of Papua New Guinea* (1991) discusses many of the song texts in this present volume and shows how they highlight or relate to certain aspects of Foi society. A number of reviews of the book appeared (e.g. Reesink 1992; Turner 1993), including a review article focusing on Weiner's approach through philosophers such as Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty (Mimica 1993; see also the reply in Weiner 1993).

Foi speakers of Southern Highlands Province today number about 6,000–8,000, living in the vicinity of Lake Kutubu (the Gurubumena) and along the Mubi River to the east (Awamena) and southeast (Foimena) (Figure 1). The Foi of Hegeso, where the majority of Weiner's research was done between 1979 and 1989, call their region *awa hao* 'the empty place', because of the absence of meat there in contrast to other regions (Weiner 1991:22). The traditional residential unit for the Foi is the longhouse community (*a hũa* 'house mother'), a central communal longhouse with smaller individual women's houses on each side. In 1980, Hegeso had a population of 266 (Weiner 1988a:23).

Linguistically, Foi is a member of the East Kutubu group of the Trans-New Guinea family. The only other member of this group is Fiwaga, spoken to the southeast.¹ The Fasu language, to the west, is the sole member of the West Kutubu group and even further to the west is the Bosavi group; to the north and east of the Foi are languages of the Engan group, all belonging to the Trans-New Guinea family (M. P. Lewis et al. 2013). Except for Fiwaga, none of these languages is closely related to Foi.

¹ The impression shared by Weiner and many Foi speakers, however, is that Foi and Fiwaga should be regarded as one language.

In 1986, exploration near Lake Kutubu suggested oil existed in quantities large enough to warrant the development of an oilfield. Production of the Kutubu Oil Project began in June 1992 as the country's first commercial oilfield development. It is run by Oil Search Limited (Busse et al. 1993:21; Oil Search Limited 2012). Today, the Kutubu area may be featured in articles directed towards potential tourists (e.g. Brooksbank 2012) or in local television segments.

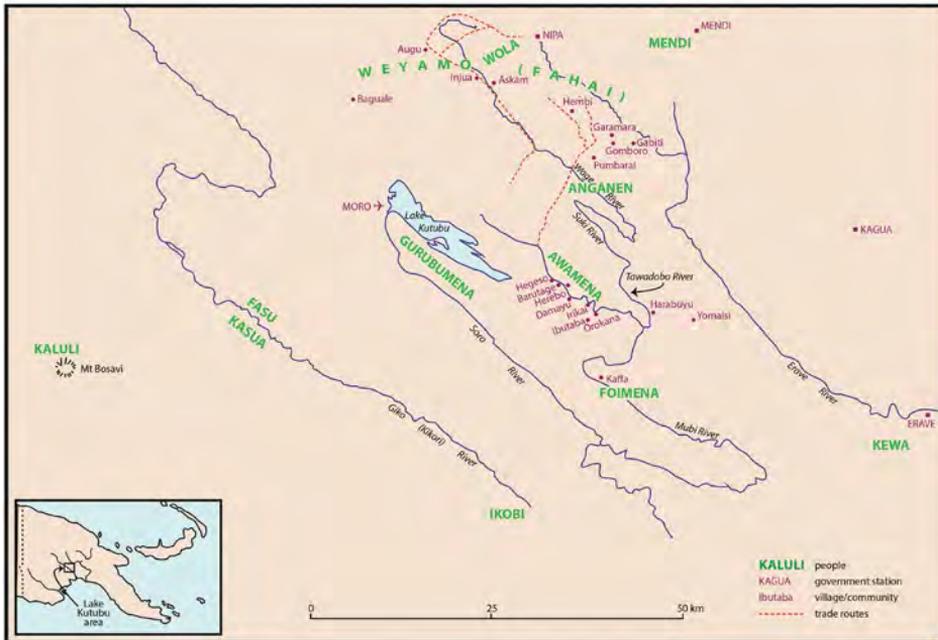


Figure 1: The Foyi and neighbouring peoples.

Source: Based on Weiner 1988a:20 (map 1), 36 (map 2); 1991:23 (map 1-1), 24 (map 1-2).

Foyi songs in the present volume

The song texts and translations in this volume are divided into three sections, based on the genre concerned and gender of the performers involved. I follow this division here.

Women's sago songs (*obedobora*)

A man fells a mature sago tree, 15–20 years after the sucker first appears, and then strips off the outer bark. This completes his involvement in the process. His wife and any female helper make a bench from the bark, so that she may sit at a right angle to the palm. With her knees slightly drawn up, she simultaneously

hits and scrapes the exposed pith with a piece of obsidian hafted into a wooden mallet. She sings *obedobora* songs as she repeatedly lifts her arms, strikes, and scrapes the pith. Although often sung solo, a second woman may echo the sung lines a few beats later, as is the case with sago songs 6–7 in this collection (Weiner 1991:119–20, 134).²

The name *obedobora* ‘obe talk’ comes from the vocables commonly attached to the ends of lines of such songs.³ For example *abu biri-o, obe-u! a’a mae, obe-u* ‘sago mallet, oh, obe-u! make sago quickly, obe-u!’ The Foi consider *obedobora* to be their original poetic medium; men’s *sorohabora* songs are derived from them (ibid. 1988a:131–32; 1991:120).

In the last few lines of her song, the woman may sing the *dawa*, in which the subject of the song is identified and the song is ended. In men’s *sorohabora*, the word ‘*dawa*’ or a variation of it is prominently sung; in sago songs, this subject-revealing section may be absent (Weiner 1991:137–38). For this reason, further information about the *dawa* is given in the discussion of men’s songs below.

The turning on and off of Weiner’s tape recorder made the singers provide a start and finish to their songs and an uninterrupted performance. While the result enabled easier documentation of the genre, the artificiality is also apparent; the normal soundscape is much more complicated:

A more accurate aural image of women’s singing can be obtained by walking through the swamps and pausing to listen to nearby women without actually approaching their sago camps. There, you hear snatches of a refrain, then perhaps a fragment of a wordless falsetto croon, a silence and the strong breathing of heavy exertion, the sound of a baby crying, sometimes the laughing and chatter of two women talking and gossiping as they work together, and through it all, the stop and start of the dull thud of the sago mallet and the wet *thwack!* of the pith-beating stick. (Weiner 1991:153)

Obedobora are work songs, sung by women to urge themselves on to complete the task quickly (Weiner 1991:119–20). But sago songs are also songs of mourning. They are primarily sung to memorialise departed kinsmen:

2 Information about such songs is primarily found in Weiner (1988a:131–35; 1991:116–50). By way of comparison, Kaluli women sing *heyalo* and other song genres while scraping sago (Feld 1981:A2; 1985:B7; 2001:disc 2, nos 2–3), and such songs are also performed at other times of work or relaxation. Kaluli have no specific song form for scraping sago.

3 Other frequent vocables as seen in the corpus of *obedobora* collected here are *owe, owa, oye, eye, and eya* (Weiner 1988a:302, n. 4). Note that such vocables are omitted when *obedobora* are made into *sorohabora*. Another name for *obedobora* is *dima* (Weiner 1991:104; Rule 1993:89). During brief fieldwork in 2013, Hahudi Farobo (from Daga village) explained to us that a generic name for such songs is *kui dima dohora* ‘sago-beating song’. *Obedobora* refers more specifically to songs using *obe* vocables, typical of the area in which Weiner worked (Niles and Gende 2013).

The memory of dead kinsmen is a constant and engaging conceptualization for the Foi; the sound and sights of the forest and the innumerable creeks and rivers where one shared one's life and experience with the departed emerge as poignant evidence of a landscape now rendered empty by the loss of those who quickened it through the significant and 'concernful' acts of living.

Thus, sago melodies [*obedobora*] all begin as mourning songs; though they become thematically more varied, the 'poetics of loss and abandonment' remain a substrate of imagery throughout the entire range of song themes. (Weiner 1991:22)

At a death, mourning songs are sung by women inside the longhouse. The corpse is placed in the centre of the central corridor, surrounded by seated women who huddle over it, caress it, sway towards and away from it, while wailing and shaking rattles. This scene contrasts dramatically with the performance of men's *sorohabora*, described below (Weiner 1991:151–52).

In their sago songs, women sing of their deceased or absent husbands and male kinsmen, immortalising these men as they lived (Weiner 1991:118). Hence, these *obedobora* and the men's *sorohabora* derived from them are considered mourning songs, created to associate the memory of deceased men with the territories they used to frequent. Each song is composed by an individual woman, and she may pass her songs on to her children. These memorial songs trace the geographical and genealogical route of a person's life, the two being considered metaphorically equivalent (ibid.:118, 132, 134–35):

Women, in singing about the deaths and departures of their husbands and male relatives and the mistreatment they bear at the hands of men, contrive to represent the terms of their own feminine alienation from what must often strike them as the fatuity of men's striving. When men appropriate these songs for their own ceremonial purposes, then, they not only give expression to their own feelings of loss and abandonment, they confirm the importance of women's representation of their own male world. (Weiner 1991:146–47)

Figure 2 shows my transcription of lines 10–14 of sago song 2. D is the tonal centre, here the lowest pitch used. Note the closing melodic descent G–E–D, which is often sung on vocables and at a slower pace than the other parts of the text. Indeed, each phrase ends with a descent from C to the tonal centre and lowest pitch (D). Text before this descent is sung between pitches A and C. While the sago pounder provides a pulse at around 41 bpm,⁴ it is irregular as

4 Comparing some of the other sago songs, the sago mallet provides a pulse of around 41–63 bpm. Note also the transcription of a sago song by Cathy O'Sullivan (Weiner 1991:xiv, 148–50).

the time between hits is variable. Because this pulse is so slow, the transcription uses a tempo derived from the rather evenly spaced quarter notes (crotchets) frequently found in the G–E–D figure.

Figure 2 shows a musical transcription of sago song 2, lines 10–14. The transcription is presented in three systems. Each system consists of a vocal line for the 'F singer' and a line for the 'sago mallet'. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 126. The lyrics are: Line 10: 'ka-ma e do-ma-ae e-ye'; Line 11: 'sa-na i-bu-ri hi-r-ma di-bu-re o-wa'; Line 12: 'ne-tu-hi de-e e-ye'; Line 13: 'wi-ma di-u-mo-ro hi-ri-ma di-bu-rya o-wa'; Line 14: 'ka-ma e do-ma-ae e-ye etc.'

Figure 2: Music transcription of sago song 2, lines 10–14 (see  online example 1).

For comparison, a transcription of lines 10–15 of sago song 6, sung by two women, is given in Figure 3. Again, the tonal centre is transcribed as D. The scale used and general shape of the melody is very similar to that used in the solo sago song. In this example, though, lines and their melodic presentations are grouped in threes, and as the first woman sings a line of text, it is partially echoed by the second woman. The first line of such a group has different text each time it is sung; the second line is sung in one of two closely related forms (*na'a ibiba'ae* or *ne ibiba'ae*), and the third line is textually and musically always the same (*eye*). As the first-line text is variable, the second woman usually only sings the end of this line; she sings the second and third lines with the first woman, in a style that is very similar to the Kaluli, simultaneously in-synchrony while out-of-phase (Feld 1988:82), although it is not known to what extent the same performance aesthetics are followed here. Note also that the striking of the women's sago mallets is not in unison. These strikes are only roughly indicated in the transcription.

Figure 3 shows a musical transcription of sago song 6, lines 10-15. The score is in 4/4 time with a tempo marking of quarter note = c. 185. It features two vocal parts (F singer 1 and F singer 2) and a sago mallet part. The lyrics are: 'liu-me-se-se-re-gai-bi-we-ya-'a' and 'ne i-bi-ba-'ae we'. The transcription includes five systems of music with lyrics and a 'etc.' marking at the end.

Figure 3: Music transcription of sago song 6, lines 10–15 (see  online example 6).

I will now consider men’s *sorohabora*, the men’s transformation of women’s *obedobora* for ceremonial performance.

Men’s songs (*sorohabora*)

Men hear women’s sago songs (*obedobora*) when they go tap *kara’o* oil from *Camptosperma brevipetiolata* trees, and at other times when they are walking in the bush (Weiner 1991:153). The men condense and compress the images of the poetry of the women’s songs, just as poetry does to discourse, and dance is the poetic rendition of everyday movement. Thus, ‘poetry, song, and dance are ... different facets of ... the aesthetic embodiment of discourse in its most encompassing, inscriptive sense’ (ibid.:154).

The men say, ‘these songs belong to the women. When we perform our *sorohabora* chants, we are merely imitating the women’ (ibid. 1988a:131–32). Yet, aside from context, the transformation from women’s *obedobora* to men’s *sorohabora* requires various modifications to structure and performance practice.⁵

Men formerly performed *sorohabora* to promote general fertility and ensure success in hunting during *bi’a’a guabora* rites for the inauguration of a new longhouse. *Sorohabora* were performed by men returning with meat to the new longhouse. Each man began to dance as he entered the longhouse. Additionally, *sorohabora* were performed during the night of the pig-kill that celebrated the completion of *bi’a’a guabora* (Weiner 1991:190–93). In the decade including Weiner’s primary fieldwork in Hegeso between 1979 and 1989, *sorohabora* were commonly performed after the completion of ceremonial pig and shell wealth exchanges.

While women’s sago songs are usually sung solo, men’s songs are always sung by a pair of men called *soro ira* ‘song tree’.⁶ These men often practise and sing together; consequently, they are very familiar with each other’s performance styles. If the lines of a woman’s *obedobora* are *a b c d*, men in a *soro ira* perform them as $a_1 c_2 b_1 d_2$, with the subscripts showing which member of the pair sings a particular line.⁷ As a result of this alteration, the first two lines (a_1, c_2) produce a couplet that contrasts in content with the couplet produced by the last two lines (b_1, d_2):

The first line of the male-produced couplet describes an image of life: an animal trap in the bush, a spell or myth habitually recited, a canoe moving along the river. It identifies a previous condition of active, moving ‘life-lihood’. The second line offers a contrasting assertion of what has happened to that previously vital condition: an abandoned bush track, a spell forgotten and not passed on to other men, a fallen tree. It offers a view of life’s finality. The couplet form thus quite elementarily juxtaposes the most incisive Foi images of motion and the end of motion, itself the most encompassing image of the transition between vitality and mortality. (Weiner 1991:155; see also, Weiner 1998b)

5 Rule (1993:136) writes *sorohabora* as two words—*soro* ‘song’; *soro ha-* ‘sing a song’; *soro habora* ‘a ceremonial song’—thereby emphasising its relation to the word for ‘song’ (also see Weiner 1991:154). Weiner (pers. comm., 2 Oct 2012) observes that the *-bora* participial ending to *soro ha-* makes a noun out of a verb, hence, *sorohabora* is literally the ‘*soro-ing*’ or ‘*soro making*.’

6 The descriptions from here until the end of the section on men’s *sorohabora* primarily derive from material presented in Weiner (1991:154–59; 1998b; 2001:39–43), supplemented where possible by additional research.

7 In Weiner (1991), compare the presentation of verses as sung on pp. 171–75 (hence, using the notation followed here: $a_1 c_2 b_1 d_2$), with those on pp. 176–81, which keep together each man’s pair of lines ($a_1 b_1 c_2 d_2$). While the former arrangement follows the style of performance, the latter allows better understanding of the poetry. The songs presented there correspond to men’s songs 3, 8, and 10 in the present collection. In this collection, each singer’s pairs of lines are similarly preserved, rather than following the order of those lines during performance.

Men do not sing the 'owe' and 'eye' vocables that frequently end lines in women's sago songs; rather, men sing 'dawa' or a variation of this towards the end of their songs, as described below in more detail.

The men in each *soro ira* pair face each other; their skins bright from *kara'o* tree oil, face paint, and the feathers on their heads (Weiner 1988a:152). Between three and seven *soro ira* make up a *soro ga* 'song base', which sings as a group (Figure 4a).⁸ *Sorohabora* songs typically consist of five verses (the songs in this collection vary between four, five, and six verses), with each verse containing four lines (= two couplets) of text. In a typical performance by the first *soro ira* of a *soro ga*, the first man sings the first line of his couplet (a_1), which descends to the tonal centre (the lowest pitch in the phrase) and is sustained. While this pitch is sustained, his partner then sings the first line of his text (c_2), descending to and sustaining the tonal centre, thereby singing the tonal centre in unison with the first singer. While the second man continues to sustain the tonal centre, the first man then sings the concluding line of his couplet (b_1) and sustains the tonal centre; the second singer then sings his own final line (d_2), descending to the tonal centre and sustaining it with his partner. An 'ululation' or 'bleating' is often sung on the pitch above the tonal centre on each sung descent, but not on the lowest pitch (the tonal centre).⁹ At the end of the verse, both singers sustain the tonal centre in unison for an extended period of time. Note that the contrast of the two male-produced couplets ($a_1, c_2; b_1, d_2$) as described above is also maintained in their sung representation.

8 The *soro ira* is to the *soro ga* as the lineage (*ira* also means 'lineage') is to the clan. The *soro ga* is a miniature version of the clan, men's most important social identity, but not a reflection of it. *Soro ira* and *soro ga* are poetic images of Foi social identities (Weiner 1991:159).

9 In Eunice Loeweke and Jean May's 1960–64 description of Fasu *namo kesa*, they refer to this sound as a 'breathy, quavering vibrato [that] occurs on the second note of the scale' (Chenoweth 2000:187). In Loeweke's accompanying music transcription of *namo kesa*, it is notated with two dots over the note in question (ibid.:188–92). Preliminary spectrographic analysis shows that the 'bleating' in Foi songs is indeed frequency modulation, hence vibrato. In some of the examples considered, there are about 10 pulsations per second, with a variation of about 150 cents from the highest to lowest frequencies. The tonal centre in *sorohabora* songs and in the Fasu example mentioned is the lowest pitch; in both cases, bleating appears to occur only on the pitch immediately above the tonal centre. I appreciate the assistance of Julia Colleen Miller, Philip Rose, and Alan Rumsey for discussion leading towards this initial assessment.

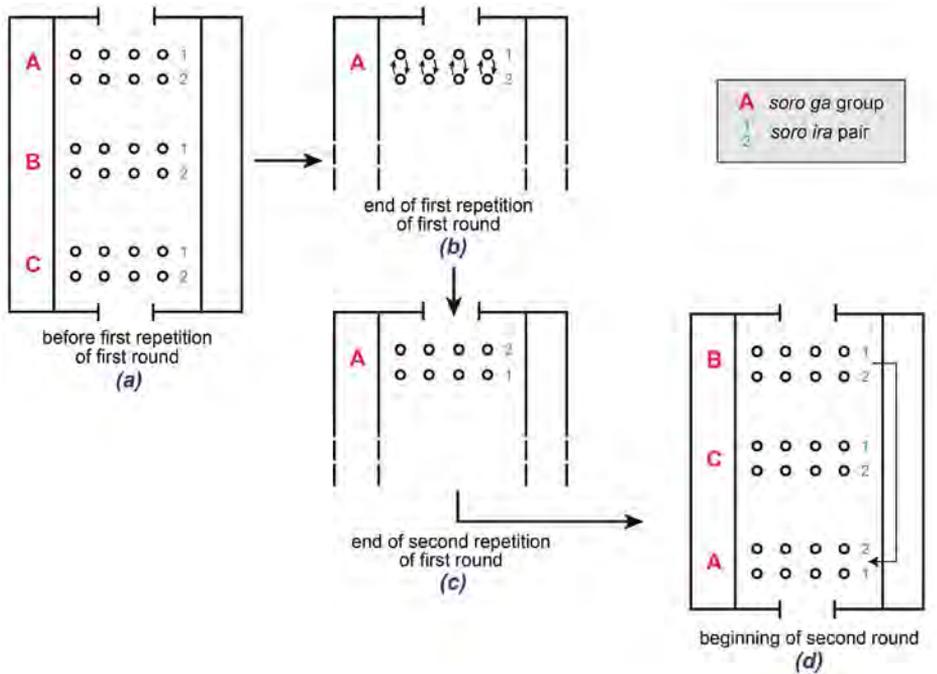


Figure 4: The movement of male singers/dances during *sorohabora*.

Source: Adapted from Weiner 1991:157, fig. 7-1.

At the conclusion of the first pair's first verse, the second *soro ira* performs the first verse of their song in the same manner. After the conclusion of the second pair's first verse, the third pair sings their first verse, and so on until all *soro ira* have performed their first verses. The first *soro ira* now performs their second verse in the same manner, their second verse is followed by the second *soro ira*'s second verse, and so forth. Such alternation continues for all the verses of each *soro ira*'s song. The singing of all verses of each song is one round of singing.

Men dance by bobbing up and down in a steady rhythm, bending at the knees, but keeping their backs straight, during their own singing and while they are waiting to sing.¹⁰ In one hand a man may hold a bundle of arrows (*yaba*) plus a bow (*bi'a*), a spear (*tabu*), or a heavy stick of some kind. These are struck on the floor in time to the bobbing, thus providing a pulse. A man often begins a sung line by strongly stamping his heel down on the first syllable. One or two men in

¹⁰ While the characteristic position of men is standing up, opening up the chest and upper torso, with the arms providing rhythm, that for women is sitting, with an emphasis on closing up of the central body area. Women's singing and wailing takes place in such a position, with their legs bent upwards towards the body (as when making sago) or folded under their buttocks (as when sitting cross-legged next to a corpse in the longhouse) (Weiner 1991:156).

each *soro ga* shake a vessel rattle consisting of dried seeds inside cylindrical seed pods tied together (*gasore*).¹¹ This rattle is shaken to the rhythm of the bobbing and the instruments struck on the floor, all providing a pulse to the singing.

Comparing the pulse of the striking of a woman's mallet as she sings while preparing sago with the pulse of the rattle or other struck object in men's *sorohabora* songs, the former songs are between about 41 and 63 bpm, while the latter are between about 144 and 175 bpm; hence, the pulse of the latter is about two or three times faster than in women's sago songs. Nevertheless, the speed of the sung text in both genres appears to be similar.

Verse 2 of men's song 3 is transcribed in Figure 5. While this is the same song as more fully transcribed by Cathy O'Sullivan (Weiner 1991:176–81), my transcription attempts to show more clearly how the paired singers interact musically. The tonal centre here is transcribed as D. It is always the lowest note in performances. Note how most sung phrases descend to this D, which is then sustained while the other singer sings his next line of text. The length of these sustained final pitches is indicated in seconds in the transcription. (The first singer here neither descends to D on his first line nor sustains any phrase-final final pitch; this is another variation of performance style.) This type of multipart organisation differs considerably from the other genres of Foi music considered here.

Figure 5: Music transcription of men's song 3, verse 2 (see  online example 9).

¹¹ Rule (1993:16, 98) also calls the rattle *gasore*, while Williams (1940–42:149–50; 1977:194) writes *gasoro* and notes that it might be attached to handle—a variation I also observed in 2013. It is very likely that there is a semantic relation between the *soro ga* and the *gasore/gasoro* instrument they play (Weiner, pers. comm., 2 Oct 2012).

The ‘bleated’ note (indicated with a mordent above the note in question in my transcription) is on E and usually directly precedes descent to the tonal centre. The ‘bleating’ is always sung more loudly than other parts of the melody, sometimes significantly so. In further contrast to the accentuated frequency-modulated ‘bleating’ that forms a harmonic major second with the other sung and sustained part, the subsequent unison on D is often sung at a softer volume and is always sung as a stable pitch (i.e. not ‘bleated’). Extended final vowels or vowel vocables are sung on these final pitches of a phrase. Finally, note the extended sustained unison at the end of this verse. While the exact length is, of course, variable, there is always an extended unison at such points.

The first three verses of each song are often about places—the names of mountains, streams, sago swamps, etc.; the last two verses reveal the identity of the man being sung about, the owner of or visitor to the places previously mentioned. Often the man’s non-public name is sung, or perhaps only the clans of his parents (Weiner 1991:137–38); his everyday name is never revealed in songs. These last two verses are called the *dawa* or *dawadobora*, a word that means ‘to cut up (and distribute)’. *Dawa* is the Foi name for the recently imported festival where pork is cut up and given away to mark the end of a ceremonial exchange. In men’s *sorohabora*, the *dawa* of the song ‘cuts off’ the song from the one that follows and ‘gives away’ the name of the deceased man to the public. The actual singing of the word ‘*dawa*’ or ‘*dawabo*’ frequently occurs during these last two verses.

After the singing of one round of songs (i.e. each *soro ira* in the *soro ga* completing all the verses of their songs), each man changes position with his *soro ira* partner (Figures 4b–c). They then repeat the same songs, in the same manner as was done previously. At the end of this repetition of songs, the men stamp their feet vigorously, and the two lines of men in each *soro ga* form a single line and move to the position in the longhouse that was occupied by the *soro ga* adjacent to them. The *soro ga* at one end of the longhouse moves to the other end. In some performances, groups first move from the front to the back of the longhouse and then back again (Figure 4d).

In larger longhouses, 10–12 *soro ga* can participate simultaneously. If there are many pairs of men in a *soro ga*, the number of verses per song may be reduced from five to as few as two in order to allow all songs to be completed during the night.

As dawn approaches, one *soro ira* assumes leadership of all the performers in the longhouse, having either been selected beforehand or chosen during the night. The men now consider themselves one *soro ga*. Each pair will now sing one pair of lines as the performers leave the longhouse and descend to the plaza at sunrise.

Women's *sorohabora*

Women told Weiner that they performed their own *sorohabora* in women's houses while the men were singing in the longhouse, but he never witnessed this during the ceremonial performances he attended. Nevertheless, one night he separately recorded the seven women's *sorohabora* included in this collection. They were all performed by pairs of women. One woman would begin a line and her partner would sing the same line, one beat later—this is quite different from the men's performances where a singer's partner sings a different text at the conclusion of a line. The women's *sorohabora*-performance technique of echoing the text of the first singer is similar to that used by two women to perform a sago song, such as occurs in sago song 6, where Kunuhuaka sings a line that is repeated three beats later by Siyame (cf. Figure 3). In women's *sorohabora* as in the men's, the *owe* and *eye* vocables of sago songs are not sung, but *dawa* verses are included (Weiner 1991:134, 146).

Figure 6 is a transcription of lines 8–11 of the women's *sorohabora* song no. 2. No *gasore* rattle or any other instrument is used to provide a pulse. Aside from the differences between men's and women's performance styles in *sorohabora* noted above, final tonal centres in unison are sustained at length in both genres. However, at the conclusion of these sustained notes, men tend to start the next verse immediately; in women's performances, however, there is a long pause before singing resumes. Lengths of these sustained tonal centres and pauses are indicated in seconds on the transcriptions. Women also do not 'bleat' pitches on the second-lowest pitch as men do.

Relation to other studies of music in Papua New Guinea

With the above introduction to the Foi genres documented in this collection, I will now consider some particularly salient aspects of how this research, particularly on men's *sorohabora*, augments other comparable work in Papua New Guinea. This enables a reader and listener to better appreciate how the Foi relate to their neighbours, and also how this particular study adds to our knowledge of certain types of performance traditions in this country.

♩ = 190

F singer 1
 bi-'a lo-re-re-mo ari vi-ba'ae a - ro vi-ba'ae a - ro 7 sec 6.5 sec

F singer 2
 vi-ba'ae a - ro vi-ba'ae a - ro

bi'a ka'a ra - re - mo vi - ba'ae . a - ro mo-'aye - o 7 sec 7 sec

mo-'a - ye o

a - mena yi - ya kui ke - nege - kui o da - wa 8 sec 6 sec

da - wa - o

a - mena o - ro ye - re - bi o . i - bu - he - o 7 sec

i - ya o

Figure 6: Music transcription of women's *sorohabora* song 2, lines 8–11 (see ♪ online example 14).

A noteworthy aspect of Foi men's *sorohabora* is its indoor performance at night; an outstanding feature of this particular publication is its presentation of Foi song texts. I will consider each of these subjects in turn and consider related work from other parts of the country.

Indoor, nocturnal performances

Nocturnal ceremonial music/dance performances inside longhouses appear to be a key element distinguishing groups that are often felt to be part of the Highlands fringe, that is, groups that are in various ways culturally distinct from those of the main Highlands region.¹² Of course, which groups are core and which are fringe is not always easy to define, nor is it easy to list distinguishing traits (Weiner 1988b; A. Strathern 1988; Hays 1993). Yet, certainly throughout the main Highlands area—stretching from the central parts of Hela, Southern Highlands, Enga, Western Highlands, Jiwaka, Chimbu, and Eastern Highlands

¹² In some areas, there is a mixture of different performance contexts. For example, Kirsch (1987:2) observes that Yongom (Yonggom) dances are differentiated on the basis of their performance inside or outside, during the day or night, and by men or by men and women.

provinces—most music/dance performances by groups take place outside during the day, often in a special area cleared for dancing.¹³ In contrast, among the Foi and other groups, performances are usually inside and at night.¹⁴

There is not a total absence of indoor, nocturnal performances in the main Highlands area. Throughout much of this region from Duna in the west all the way to eastern portions of Eastern Highlands Province, courting activities, frequently involving sitting dances, also take place indoors and at night (e.g. see Stewart and Strathern 2002:29–90). However, courting dances do not have the ceremonial import of the indoor dances performed by the southern ‘fringe’ groups. Furthermore, decorations for courting are also often rather simple, dances are done while seated, and the singing appears to always be a cappella. In contrast, decorations for ceremonial performances inside longhouses are usually elaborate, dancers stand and move to different positions inside the house, and the singing is always accompanied by an instrument, usually a rattle, but sometimes a drum.

Groups neighbouring the Foi to the east and particularly to the west, as well as some located more distantly from them, all perform indoor ceremonial dancing at night, although the details of the performance itself, the decorations, who sings, what instrument is used, etc., may differ. In spite of these variations, however, the contrast of such a genre with the outdoor, daytime performances widely practised in the central part of the Highlands remains striking.

Researchers have written about a number of groups who claim to perform songs and dances originally from the ‘Kutubu area’. While definitely including Foi speakers, the term ‘Kutubu area’ may also include the Fasu, immediately to the west of the Foi. The Fasu are middle men in the borrowing of traits between the Foi and Bosavi groups farther to the west (Weiner 1988a:21). The Fasu perform *namo kesa* ‘essence song’ inside their communal longhouse at night during the final distribution of brideprice to the bride’s relatives, completion of a new longhouse, pig feast, the final moving of a deceased’s bones to a cave, or when the killers of a witch responsible for a death give compensation to the witch’s relatives.¹⁵ In contrast to the Foi *sorohabora*, women do not watch.

13 In spite of the differences between Highlands and Highlands fringe, there can still be appreciation of contrasting traditions. Knauff (1985b:328, pers. comm. from Laurence Goldman) reports that Huli invite contingents of Dugube (their ‘fringe’ neighbours to the south) to stay with them for extended periods of time and perform their rituals. A dance called *hewabi bi* by the Huli ‘appears to derive from the Lake Kutubu region’ and involves large fronds of sago palm worn at the back of the dancers, ‘very reminiscent of Papuan Plateau dancers’ (Goldman 2007:159, table 9.2). Goldman does not mention if any musical instruments are part of such performances, but it would be very interesting if rattles were used as such instruments are otherwise not played in Huli performance.

14 Bruce Knauff identifies common features of rituals in the Strickland–Bosavi region: all-night dances in longhouses, dance costumes, movements, etc. (1985b:324–27), but also considers contrasts. As will be seen from the discussion below, I suggest that this region of commonalities extends over a significantly wider area.

15 A recording of *namo kesa* is found in Niles and Webb (1987:SHP-17).

Men form two rows of three men each, one row facing the other. They bob up and down in dance. Men sing in pairs, with the song being concluded by the naming of a man, his clan lands, and his son. Then the word *rauwaraka* is sung and the dance positions change. A seed rattle called *sorosore* is shaken, and axe handles are tapped on the floor (May and Loeweke 1981:227; Chenoweth 2000:180–203).¹⁶ There are obviously many parallels with the performance of Foi men's *sorohabora*.

Outside the Foi and Fasu area, there are references to two groups who perform dances said to derive from the Kutubu area. Specific information on other groups in the region is generally lacking, rather than being negative.

In the Bosavi area, the Kaluli perform *sabio*.¹⁷ Said to be popular in the Fasu and Foi areas, *sabio* was taught to the Kaluli by Kutubu carriers in the 1950s, particularly during the construction of the Bosavi airstrip. The Kaluli memorised the songs they were taught. As no new *sabio* are composed by the Kaluli, the repertoire is completely fixed and stable, and the texts of the songs are unintelligible to them. *Sabio* is performed in the communal longhouse in the late afternoon or early evening as a prelude to a major all-night ceremony. *Sabio* songs are sung by two or three pairs of men. The members of the pair face each other and sing alternate lines, coming together on a droned 'oooo'.¹⁸ No 'bleating' occurs. The next pair does the same until an entire round is completed. Singers bob up and down in place, shaking the *sologa* seedpod rattle.¹⁹ *Sabio* has apparently not been performed ceremonially since 1969 (Feld 1981:1; 1982:35; 1985:3, 6, 8; 2001:55; 2015).²⁰

16 The most detailed descriptions of Fasu *namo kesa* and a dance called *kawari* are by Eunice Loeweke and Jean May in Chenoweth (2000:180–203); however, these descriptions are not kept separate from one another, but appear to alternate with each paragraph in their article, often making it challenging to know which performance is being described. I believe I have resolved this problem, but apologise in advance if I have erred. Tone markings on Fasu words, although included in May and Loeweke's Fasu dictionary (1981), have been omitted here.

17 Numerous commercial recordings of *sabio* have been released by Feld (1981:B2; 1985:B10; 2001:disc 3, nos 17–18).

18 The description here closely follows the Kaluli duet performance of *sabio* (Feld 2001:disc 3, no. 17). The first two lines sung by a pair consistently only descend to the second-lowest pitch; in subsequent lines, the descent is to the tonal centre (i.e. the lowest pitch). The quartet performance (Feld 2001:disc 3, no. 18) further illustrates these characteristics, but the second pair of performers more immediately echoes each other's lines, rather than singing during the sustained pitches. Such a multipart texture appears to have more similarities with other Kaluli genres.

19 Although the Kaluli *sologa* rattle (cf. Kasua *sogola*) is also used in the performance of genres deriving from outside the Kutubu region (e.g. *iwo*: and *heyalo*), note the phonetic resemblance of the word to *soro ga*, the Foi name for the group of paired men who sing *sorohabora*. See also n. 11 for the relation of this word to the Foi rattle (*gasore/gasoro*).

20 In the performance of Foi *sorohabora*, the first singer completes his line of text before the second singer begins his own. Although the Kaluli are imitating a language they do not understand in their performance of *sabio*, they maintain this distinctive relationship between voices, even though it is quite different from their performance style in all other genres of Kaluli music (Feld 2015), where the second voice more closely follows the first (resulting in a texture more similar to what is found in Foi *sago* songs sung by two men and female *sorohabora*). The tempo of *sabio* is also considerably faster than that of other Kaluli genres. In spite of these

In Western Province, even further to the west, the Kamula perform *sabra*, which they also claim originated in the Kutubu area. Here again, between six and 14 dancers form two lines that face each other. Singing is done by pairs of men, one after the other. Songs consist mostly of placenames. Singing may cause some of the audience members to cry (Wood 1982:3, 340, n. 8).

Although descriptions of these dances are by different authors and some information is unavailable, certain features appear to recur among the Foi *sorohabora*, Fasu *namo kesa*, Kaluli *sabio*, and Kamula *sabra*. In addition to the performance of such dances at night and in the longhouse, these elements include men standing in two parallel rows; men facing their partners as they sing in pairs, alternating lines, but singing together on a final, sustained pitch; men bobbing up and down in dance, shaking seedpod rattles.

Numerous indoor, nocturnal dances in the region also occur, but they are not described as originating from Kutubu. Not surprisingly, the more distant they are from the Kutubu area, the more they seem to deviate from the forms found there (cf. Knauft 1985b:326)—for example, difference in the details of who sings, in what kind of groups, what instruments are used, the focus of poetry, etc. And, the Foi and Fasu also perform other dances than the ones described above that fit this description as well. In the remainder of this section, I will attempt to highlight some of these relationships.

Both the Fasu and Foi perform *kawari*, which is said to have originated from the Kaluli *gisalo* and travelled to Kasua speakers and then on to the Fasu and Foi (May and Loeweke 1981:106; Weiner 1988a:22; Chenoweth 2000:180–203).²¹ While the Kaluli have a number of song/dance forms, as discussed below, they claim that only *gisalo* originated with them. Certain features of *gisalo* are very similar to the Foi *sorohabora* and Fasu *namo kesa*, but differences are also apparent. Distinctively, the Kaluli *gisalo* uses a *sob* rattle of bivalve shells suspended on a string (Kasua *palo*); the rattle is bounced on the floor of the longhouse by the solo male dancer. The all-night *gisalo* ceremonies are performed by guests for their hosts. The singer attempts to move listeners to tears through the poetic images of loss and abandonment that he constructs while dancing

and other differences, Kaluli still describe the interaction of the paired voices and rattles as *duluğu ganalan* ‘lift-up-over sounding’ (ibid.). Further subtleties in the difference between the interaction of the two voices in Foi, Fasu, and Kaluli examples are also evident in the material available, but in all three areas, the sustained tonal centre is at a lower volume, often with a crescendo towards the end. The pronounced ‘bleating’ in Foi performance appears less pronounced in the available Fasu recordings, and totally absent in Kaluli. Scales between the three groups also appear to be mostly comparable. While these are only preliminary observations, it is obvious that many fruitful stylistic comparisons are worth pursuing.

21 Up until 2013, Kasua groups have performed at three Kundu and Digaso Festivals (2011, 2012, and 2013). In 2013, one of their groups performed *gisalo*, with other groups performing different dances. Hahudi Farobo, one of the organisers of the festival and someone intimately involved in promoting Foi culture, explained that he has discouraged the performance of such a dance by the Foi (where it is called *kawari* or *agiri*) because it is imported from another area (Niles and Gende 2013).

along the corridor of the longhouse. Initially singing and dancing in place, as he completes the *mo*: ('trunk' or refrain) section of the song, he moves to the opposite end of the longhouse where he faces the chorus and dances in place again, singing the concluding *dun* ('branches' or verses) section of the song, while the chorus echoes his singing. At the end of the song, the dancer turns around and performs the entire song again, first singing and dancing alone in place, returning back down the longhouse corridor to face the other chorus, and completing the song with their accompaniment. When overcome with sadness, members of the audience burst into tears and loud wails, grab resin torches, and jam the flames into the dancer's shoulder, resulting in mass whooping from the crowd, along with stamping feet and snapping bow strings, while the dancer continues singing (Feld 2001:58–62; also see, Feld 1982; E. L. Schieffelin 1968).

For the Fasu *kawari*, however, the *kawi aroa* rattle used consists of dried crayfish pincers, suspended from a flexible branch, which is inserted in the back of a dancer's belt. The Kaluli *degegado* (Kasua *somasuba*) is also such an instrument, but it is used in the performance of *iwo*:, *ko:luba*, and *ilib kuwo*: dances, not *gisalo*. The Foi of Lake Kutubu (Gurubumena) obtained the costume associated with Kaluli *gisalo* from the Fasu and refer to the burning of the dancers as *siri kebora* 'resin burning; scar-making burning'; however, the dance did not travel further east to other Foi (Weiner 1988a:22).

Women may watch the Fasu *kawari*; the middle partition separating the women's end of the longhouse from the men's is removed, so that the men can dance the full length. Men again sing in pairs, facing their partners. The same phrase of one singer is repeated by his partner. As the texts are borrowed from the Kasua, they are unintelligible to most listeners. Dancers are not burnt, and other participants sit at one end of the longhouse and separately sing *sia* (Chenoweth 2000:181, 185–86, 202).

The performance of Fasu *kawari* is preceded by *akiri*, the playing of *roko* drums and *kawi aroa* crayfish-claw rattles by two to four men, but without singing. They stomp up the steps of the longhouse at night, parade down the centre aisle, and sit on the men's side. One man then stands, selects his partner, and the *kawari* performance begins. The *auape keraka* drum-beating dance is also performed for healing a sick person (May and Loeweke 1981:10, 22, 106, 202; Chenoweth 2000:186).

A comparable drum dance appears to be the Foi *samoga* or *usanega*, performed during the Usane Habora ceremony to cure sickness. Here, two types of *sa'o* drum are used—with a 'fishtail' end²² (*sa'o fare*) and with a round end (*sa'o gauwage* or *sa'o doibu/duibu*)—with a crayfish-claw rattle and without singing

22 Foi call this end *sa'o fare gesa*, with *gesa* referring to the fork of a tree or a support pole (Williams 1940–42:149; Rule 1993:99). Also compare the similar nomenclature among the Rumu (Petterson 1999:90).

(Rule 1993:16, 133; Weiner 1995:101, 112–13).²³ Williams (1940–42:149; 1977:193–94) suggested that this ceremony arrived from the southeast, perhaps bringing the drum along with it, where previously seedpod rattles would have been used.

Aspects of these performances appear in different combinations throughout the regions to the west and southwest.

The Kaluli *gisalo* is also reported to have been adopted by the Aemili (Aimele) as *gisala*, from whom the Kamula long ago borrowed what they call *kisama* (Crawford 1981:58–59 (Photos 31–34); Wood 1982:3, 329–38). Additionally, the Etoro (Edolo) *kāsa* has relations with the Kaluli *gisalo* (E. L. Schieffelin 1976:193, n. 4) and the Gebusi (Gobasi) *kosaym*,²⁴ particularly the common usage of a shell rattle bounced on the longhouse floor and similarities between the names, suggest a close relation with the Kaluli form (Knauft 1985a:416, n. 1).²⁵ Moving northwards, the Samo *kosaman* involves male dancers with a rattle of black palm leaves and streamers placed in the dancers' belts. Singing is by men and women (Shaw 1975:231–32). And the Bedamini (Beami) *gosei* involves male dancers and one or more male choruses; the leader of the chorus sings about recent events, and the chorus repeats each verse. The dancers move back and forth in the middle of the longhouse, and emotional listeners may burn the dancers' backs (Sørum 1980:278; 1982:46).²⁶

Drum dances also occur among the Kaluli, where they are called *ilib kuwo*; the dance is said to originate from south of Mount Bosavi.²⁷ Dancers play *ilib*

23 Outside, diurnal dance performances with drums by Foi and Fasu performers are now features of the Kundu and Digaso Festival, held annually since 2011. The festivals are supported by Oil Search Limited and other organisations to promote local traditions. Groups from the Mount Bosavi area, Samberigi, Huli, Enga, and Goaribari have also participated (National 2012). While *kundu* is, of course, the Tok Pisin word for 'drum', *digaso* and *kara'o* are Foi words for the tree oil so valued in trade by groups to the north (Rule 1993:89); cf. Fasu *tikiaso* (May and Loeweke 1981:247).

24 Where names of languages as found in the most recent version of *Ethnologue* (M. P. Lewis et al. 2013) differ from usage in the ethnographic source being considered, the *Ethnologue* names are placed in parentheses; hence, 'Etoro' and 'Gebusi' appear in the sources cited, while 'Edolo' and 'Gobasi' are used in *Ethnologue*. Where no parenthetical additions are found, the names in both sources are the same. I have followed this practice so that the locations of the various groups mentioned can be easily located on the maps found in *Ethnologue*, a resource freely available on the Internet (<http://www.ethnologue.com/>).

25 Gebusi (Gobasi) may also burn their dancers, but it is not a prominent part of their performances (Knauft 1985b:335, n. 13). Although he does not name the genre but does mention the singing being performed by women, Knauft (1985b:324–25) appears to compare Kaluli *gisalo* with Gebusi *gigobra* (danced by men with drums and crayfish-claw rattles), rather than with Gebusi *kosaym* (danced by men with a rattle bounced on the floor), even though the latter seems to be more similar to *gisalo* in some aspects. This illustrates how features differentiating genres in one area may be less distinctive in another.

26 See Niles and Webb (1987:WP-10) for a recording involving the performance of *gosei* or *kosei* (two decorated singers sing face to face with *sobo* bivalve shell rattles struck on the floor; cf. Knauft 1985b:329–30), a male chorus (*gosege*) sitting to the side that responds to the text sung by the main pair, and women separately singing *lawine sagorobo hadigibi* songs.

27 An origin to the south of Mount Bosavi might lend strength to the Kamula claim for originating such a dance, as discussed later in the main text.

drums with *degegado* crayfish-claw rattles, but do not sing, as a prelude to all-night *ko:luba*, *heyalo*, or *gisalo* ceremonies (Feld 1981:1; 2001:55, 62–63).²⁸ Kasua *irigino* drums are played with *sogola* seedpod rattles (Niles and Gende 2013). The Kamula consider their *woiyo* ‘drum’ dance to be their own creation, in contrast to other dances they perform, such as *sabra* and *kisama*. It too is performed with a crayfish-claw rattle and without singing (Crawford 1981:59–61 (Photos 35, 38); Wood 1982:224, 317–29). Knauft (1985a:258, 416, n. 1; 2005:68) reports the similar Gebusi (Gobasi) *gigobra*, performed with *duo* drum²⁹ and *dias moliar* crayfish-claw rattle; women separately sing *hayay* songs to the men’s drumming and dancing.³⁰ The Samo *hobola* is a curing dance for which the male dancer plays the *duwon* drum and inserts a crayfish-claw rattle into his belt. Women sing as the dancer moves around the sick person (Shaw 1975:226, 230–31, 296–304; National Arts School [1986?]).³¹ Finally, the Bedamini (Beami) *gafoi* or *kafoi* is performed by a male dancer with an *iribu* drum. Here the dancer is surrounded by two or three female dancers with rattles (Sørum 1980:278; 1982:46, 51–52).³²

Albert G. van Beek (pers. comm. (24 Dec 2003), as cited in Craig 2010:191–92) notes the association of *kafoi* with the final stage of the boys’ initiation ceremony (*goy lèègi*), where an earlier type of drum (shorter, with a ‘cubic-formed’ distal end) was replaced in the late 1960s with the longer slender one used by the Samo when playing of the former did not have the desired effect following a number of earthquakes and landslides. The distal ends of both types of drums are carved to represent crocodile jaws. A properly tuned drum produces the voice of Awamuni—the cultural hero who gave the Bedamuni (Beami) their cultural identity—calling *a-ta* ‘father-son’. Van Beek also notes the out-of-phase drumming of performers and the similarity of decorations to Kaluli *gisalo* dancers: ‘like the Kaluli know drum performances, the Bedamuni know song performances, but the cultural importance is inverted.’

28 Recordings of Kaluli *ilib kuwo*: can be found on Feld (1985:B12; 2001:disc 3, no. 6) and Niles and Webb (1987:SHP-14).

29 Knauft (2005:91) reports that Gebusi (Gobasi) males conclude their initiation by dancing with drums for the first time. Kamula males must undergo a certain rite to drum, lest the noise of their playing would scare away game (Wood 1982:247). Further to the west, among Telefol speakers and other Min groups, males in their twenties learn how to drum at the fifth of seven stages of initiation, called *wotban*. While the drum (*wot*) itself is not secret, knowledge to play it is learned through ritual, where the relation of the instrument, its playing, and its sound to cultural heroes, taro, death, maggots, decay, and fertility can only be taught through initiation (Brumbaugh 1979:240–41, 368–75; 1990).

30 For a recording of women’s *hayay* singing while men drum, see Knauft (2012). Other recordings from the Nomad area, including the Gebusi (Gobasi) and Kubo can be found on Huguët (1992:tr. 2–3) and a release by Oméga Studio (1981?:B1).

31 During Samo *kandila* initiation, Shaw (1975:250) reports a rattle of crayfish claws attached to vine or bark string that hits the floor when the dancer bends his knees—apparently a cross between the rattle that is bounced on the floor with one that is put in the back of dancers’ belts in other areas. Here the bobbing dance is also taught to initiates as a part of their initiation (Shaw 1975:264; 1982:423).

32 For a recording of *kafoi* or *gafoi*, see Niles and Webb (1987:WP-11); a decorated male dancer with *iribu* drum and *korokiti* crayfish-claw rattle perform *kafoi* while two young girls practise their dance and the singing of *siokoi*. The performance is to heal the headache of the man seated before them.

There are even parallels with core Highlands groups. The Huli *komia* is performed by two drumming dancers, but without singing. It is performed for drought fertility rites (*gaiya tege*)—perhaps considered another type of sickness—in which the dancers jump over the *ali damba* cult fence (Goldman 2007:159, Table 9.2). There are obviously many similarities and variations in these traditions over quite a wide area.

In the cases discussed so far, the Kutubu area has been stated as the origin for certain dances or certain dances performed by the Foi or Fasu are said to have origins elsewhere. Aside from these links, however, the inside performance of nocturnal dance ceremonies has much wider distribution.

To the southeast of the Foi, among the Polopa (Folopa), hosts sing and dance in their men's house at night prior to competitive pig-feasting, daring their guests to come and be overwhelmed by their largesse. On the day of the event itself, hosts and guests alternate in dancing in the men's house until the next morning when the bulk of the pork is cooked and given to the guests. Raiding parties also dance, drum, and sing in the men's house at night to taunt their enemies (D. J. J. Brown 1979:714–15, 721).³³

Among South Kewa- or Erave-speaking groups to the east of the Foi, the *rupale* dance is performed inside the communal men's house (*tapanda*) at night, preceding and during pig-kills.³⁴ Women and children can enter the men's house at this time. Singing with rattles, men form groups of four to six,³⁵ enter the house through the veranda, and trample the floor of the house in unison upon their entrance. Marching along the main central corridor (*pukama*), they reach the first fireplace and form two rows of two or three abreast. A leader sings a phrase, and the others in the group join afterwards, with the final vowel being a sustained *o*. After 10 seconds of silence, there is a single repetition

33 Nocturnal indoor dance performances appear to be absent among the Daribi (Dadibi), to the east of the Polopa (Folopa). Dances performed during Wagner's fieldwork there were said to have origins to the east (Gimi), northeast (Gumine (Golin)), or west (Bāria (Wiru, East Kewa, or Foraba (Folopa))) reaching the Daribi in the mid-1930s (Wagner 1967:6–7; 1972:80–84, 164–65). While the Angan Baruya further to the east sing *daata* inside initiates' houses, there is no dance.

34 The following description is taken from LeRoy's work in Koiari; other descriptions of performances of *rupale* (or *tupale*) are given by Josephides (1982:45–46, 79–84) and MacDonald (1991:100–102), who worked primarily in Aka and Mararoko, respectively—all part of the Erave language area. Noteworthy differences from LeRoy's description are included here in footnotes. A recording of *rupale* is presented by Niles and Webb (1987:SHP-7), where the singing is accompanied by *sekeseke* rattles—dried seeds enclosed in a sewn, rectangular pandanus covering.

35 Josephides (1982:46) also notes men carrying axes and that there are four men in a group; MacDonald (1991:100–101) agrees and says men strike *usaane* drums as well, and observes that *rupale* may also be performed outdoors, in which case four or six men stand abreast. Note that the name of the drum here is very similar to the name of the Usane Habora ceremony the Foi perform to cure sickness, perhaps lending credence to Williams's claim that the Foi ceremony arrived with the drum from the southeast (1940–42:149; 1977:193–94).

of the same note.³⁶ The same song is then repeated with some variations, a second song follows, and it is also repeated. The group then marches to the second pair of fireplaces and sings the same songs there; their place at the first fireplace is taken by a second group, and then a third, etc. When a group has sung at all the fireplaces, it exits the house through the back, prepares two new songs, and enters again through the front to sing at the first fireplace again. This simultaneous singing of songs by different groups, movement between fireplaces, and the entry/exit of groups continues throughout the night (LeRoy 1978:53–54, 70, n. 2). Full decorations for such a performance are called *kewa au*, ‘decorations of the southerners’ (Josephides 1982:45), perhaps a reference to the similarities of such performances with fringe groups to the south.

For the West Kewa, Franklin (1978:389) notes the performance of songs in memory of the dead with a shuffling dance back and forth along the inside corridor of men’s house. And LeRoy (1985:95) reports that West Kewa *yasa*, like Erave *rupale*, takes place at night so that ghosts can hear them; in both regions, songs contain messages to the dead and the living.

Now moving to the west of the Foi and Fasu, nocturnal longhouse performances are reported for the Kasua, Kaluli, and Etoro (Edolo), as noted above. In addition to the *gisalo*, *sabio*, and *ilib kuwo*: discussed above, Kaluli also perform *iwo*:, *heyalo*:, and *ko:luba*, all of which were adopted from groups ranging from the southeast to southwest of Mount Bosavi (Feld 1981:1; 1982:35; 1985:3–8; 2001:55, 63–67; B. B. Schieffelin and Feld 1998:72, 89; E. L. Schieffelin 1976:225–29).³⁷

Across the border with Western Province, indoor, night-time performances are reported among the Bedamini (Beami) *gosei*; Gebusi (Gobasi) *kosaym*; and Samo *kosaman*, as reported above; Awini (Aekyom) *sia* (Depew 1983:5–10);³⁸ Yonggom *kibirat*, *yok*, *urumanop*, *ame’op*, *wod*, *ondan*, and *aip* (Kirsch 1987:2–3);³⁹ Kauwol (Faiwol) *yoron vinum*;⁴⁰ Ngalum *oksang*;⁴¹ and the Kamula *sabra*, as described above.

36 The Koiari villagers with whom LeRoy worked claimed this repetition was their innovation (LeRoy 1978:54).

37 For recordings of Kaluli ceremonial genres, see Feld (1981:B1–3; 1985:B8, 10; 2001:disc 3) and Niles and Webb (1987:SHP-13–14, 16).

38 See Niles and Webb (1987:WP-8) for a recording involving men in two groups, with *kosiai* rattles of seeds suspended from a cane frame in the back of their bark belts, their group singing and dancing punctuated with solo dancing and drumming. Women sit at the side.

39 See Niles and Webb (1987:WP-12) for a recording of a *kibirat* performance to determine the identity of the person who has caused an illness.

40 See Niles and Webb (1987:WP-13) for a recording involving dancing in a twisting line inside the house, with men singing in alternation with the snapping of bowstrings and *fotfot* whistling, made on inhalation.

41 Abmisibil, Bonai (both Ngalum), and Okbap (Ketengban) dance houses have springy floors and belong to several village communities (Simon 1993:170–71, CD 6, It. 1–3). See Niles and Webb (1987:WP-18) for a recording of *amsang*, performed by men singing and dancing while holding at their backs *yaso* rattles made of fronds from the *bot* tree. This recording was made of a visiting group. While they appear to have been Ngalum speakers, this identification is not definite.

Further south in Western Province, ceremonial nocturnal performances still occur in some longhouses, but they seem to be increasingly concerned with initiation, the presentation of secret knowledge, etc. This appears to be true for dances such as those presently or formerly found among the Gogodala (Crawford 1981:176, 253–56, 274–83)⁴² and Kiwai (Southern Kiwai), such as, *wete*, *madia*, *maure moguru*, *ganu*, *baiduo*, *mado*, *gama mutu*, *barari*, *upipoo*, *asasi*, etc., performed in the *darimo* ‘men’s house’ or *moto* ‘communal houses’, often involving drumming men in two rows, with women, boys, and girls singing, but some of these dances may also be performed outside and during the day (Beaver 1920:180; Riley 1925:40–44, 47; Landtman 1927:351, 408–20).

This trend seems to continue eastwards into Gulf Province. For example, among Morigi speakers on the western banks of the Turama River, dances were associated with headhunting and the display of skulls on *agibe* boards in the longhouse. *Mipa* and *barari* are performed nocturnally, but there are also indoor *diurnal* performances. Paired dancers are led by warriors with drums, their wives, then bachelors who can carry drums but have not passed a certain stage of initiation, then bachelors who have not killed a bush pig and consequently cannot play drums, with the lines ending with warriors and their wives again (Austen 1936). Among Kerewo speakers to the east, similar indoor dances called *gibumamu* are performed with drums (Austen 1934).

From at least the Koriki (Purari) and further eastwards, communal longhouses were absent, but men’s longhouses existed. However, most performances did not appear to take place inside these longhouses; instead, masked dancers dramatically emerged from them during the day. For the Koriki (Purari), masked *gopi* dancers were accompanied by singing and drumming from men seated at the front of the *ravi* longhouse (Williams 1924:171, 173). Among the Oroko, the masked *hevehe* dancers themselves played drums. While women were not allowed into the longhouses, upon emergence from the longhouse, each masked dancer was met by its own group of adoring females who danced with it in the village plaza and down to the beach over a period of a month. Such ceremonial cycles took between one and three decades to complete. Similar forms appeared among groups further to the east as well (Williams 1939:145, 152–55; 1940:357–58; Welsch 2006:11–12, 23).

Such similarities with groups to the south, but also involving significant contrasts, are perhaps to be expected as groups such as the Foi are ‘culturally coastal peoples who have moved north and have settled in the southern fringe of the New Guinea Central Highlands’ (Weiner 1988b:3). Andrew Strathern also writes of ‘longhouse culture’ moving from the south to the north (1988:196).

42 See Niles and Webb (1987:WP-6) for a recording in which the singing and dancing is accompanied by striking the distal end of the *sololo* split-bamboo rattle against the longhouse floor during *aida* initiation.

While the affinities with groups to the south are clear, indoor dances, sometimes at night, are also reported for some groups on the northern fringe of the Highlands, such as the Kalam *smiy* where men sing inside and reveal esoteric knowledge to initiates, while women beat drums and dance around the house (Bulmer 1967:13; Grove 1978:17), Hewa *yap mofau* performed in a new house before the inhabitants move in (Steadman 1971:55, 76, 108–10), and Awiakay *kaunjambi* all-night performances of spirits singing through male performers (Hoenigman in prep.).⁴³ While performances take place inside some Sepik spirit houses, these often represent or create the voice of spirits, frequently using instruments; such performances can be heard, but not seen, by the uninitiated, and are associated with the presentation of secret knowledge, initiation, and aspects of male ceremonial life—see, for example, descriptions for the Iatmul (Wassmann 1991; Spearritt and Wassmann 1996), Ambonwari (Tabriak) (Telban 1998; 2008), and Waxei (Watakataui) (Yamada 1997).

Across the border and into the Indonesian province of Papua, the Eipomek appear to only perform outside, but the Kapauku (Ekagi) construct an *ema* dance house during pig festivals when nocturnal dancing takes place (Pospisil 1963:72–76). Among the Konda Valley Dani (Western Dani), courting parties take place that somewhat resemble the nocturnal indoor activities in parts of the Papua New Guinea Highlands, but it seems that song and dance are absent (O'Brien 1969a:212, 349–50, 383–85; 1969b:212). Hence, while indoor performances may be found, many aspects of their performance are quite different from my concern here.

After this consideration of some of the distinctive aspects of the performance of Foi ceremonial dance and song and its relation to other groups in the region, I turn now to a focus on the collection itself and the texts it contains.

A collection of song texts in the original language and in translation is significant in itself. While spoken stories are often published in translation and rarely in the original language (except in specialised linguistic studies), vernacular song texts and their translations are frequent components of many ethnographic studies. This suggests that there is something special about these texts. Songs are sung poetry, that is, their texts are in a language that is somehow different from normal speech. For a knowledgeable listener, these texts also tend to encapsulate important aspects of culture. Here I am interested in what makes sung language different from normal speech.

43 Awiakay speakers number about 300 and live in Kanjimei village, East Sepik Province. Although presently not included in *Ethnologue* (M. P. Lewis et al. 2013), their language belongs to the Arafundi group (Hoenigman in prep.).

In the following sections I consider two features of this volume that are of relevance to more general studies of Papua New Guinea song.⁴⁴

Collections of song texts for sociocultural revelations

Researchers frequently discuss song texts as part of more general ethnographic accounts. Indeed, it would seem that most Papua New Guinea ethnographies contain at least a few song texts. While publications focused on music would naturally be assumed to make use of such texts—such as Stella’s monograph on the Banoni (Bannoni) (1990) and Feld’s on the Kaluli (1982)—songs are actually cited in a much wider range of works.

Song texts often encapsulate or provide insights into various sociocultural concerns, such as Fortune’s frequent use of Dobu songs throughout the main text of his book and in an appendix (1932). Or the publications may consider

44 For the following discussion of poetry, I consulted about 150 articles, theses, and books in the Music Archive of the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies. While not exhaustive, and generally omitting sources consisting solely of texts and translations without significant commentary (e.g. Brash and Krauth 1973; Helfert and Holdsworth 1974), the sources below cover a good range of materials and serve as an introduction to this subject. In order to keep the main text here as uncluttered as possible, I have avoided detailed referencing except where discussing specific issues in more detail. Apart from a few initial sources of general discussion, the groups and the references I have consulted are listed here under the conventional four geographical regions of Papua New Guinea: *General discussion* (Niles 2011b; Niles and Rumsey 2011; Webb and Niles 1990); *Highlands region*: Baruya (Niles and Webb 1987:EHP-8); Benabena (Young 1968); Daribi (Dadibi) (Wagner 1972); Duna (Gillespie 2010; Gillespie and San Roque 2011; Kendoli 2011; Niles and Rumsey 2011; Sollis 2010; 2011; A. Strathern and Stewart 2011); Enga (Talyaga 1973; 1974; 1975; Gibbs 2001; 2011; Niles and Rumsey 2011); Erave (LeRoy 1978; Josephides 1982); Golin (Donohoe 1987); Huli (Pugh-Kitingan 1981; Lomas 2011); Ialibu (Imbongu) (Kerema 1976?); Ipili (Ingemann 1968; 2011; Borchard and Gibbs 2011); Kalam (Pawley and Bulmer 2011); Kaluli (E. L. Schieffelin 1976; Feld 1978; 1982; 1985; 1990; 2001); Karinj (Angal Heneng) (Reithofer 2011); Ku Waru (Bo-Ung) (Rumsey 2001; 2007; 2011; Niles 2007; 2011a; Niles and Rumsey 2011); Kuman (Whiteman 1965; Bergmann 1971; Gende 1998); Kyaka (Koyati 1979); Melpa (A. Strathern 1974; G. Strathern and Strathern 1985; A. Strathern and Stewart 2005; 2011; Niles 2007; 2011a; 2011b; Niles and Rumsey 2011); North Wahgi (Luzbetak 1954); Usarufa (Chenoweth 1979); Wahgi (Jimben 1984); West Kewa (Franklin 1970; 1978); Wiru (Paia and Strathern 1977); *Momase region*: Alambak (Coulter 2007); Awiakay (Hoenigman in prep.); Boiken (Boikin) (Niles 2000); Central Buang (Mapos Buang) (Hooley 1987; Chenoweth and Hooley 2010); Gnau (G. Lewis 1980); Iatmul (Bateson 1932; Wassmann 1982; 1988; 1991); Irumu (Tuma-Irumu) (Kelsey 1993); Jabêm or Yabim (Yabem) (Pöch 1905; Zahn 1996); Kairiru (Niles 2000); Karesau (Kairiru) (Schmidt 2009); Karawari (Tabriak) (Telban 2008); Manambu (Harrison 1982; 1986; Aikhenvald 2014); Mapos Buang (Sankoff 1977); Maring (Rappaport 1968); Monumbo (Pöch 1905; Vormann 1911; Graf 1950; Niles 2000); Nekgini (Reigle 1995; 2001); Sissano (Niles 2000); Tifal (Roberts 1996; 2014); Tumleo (Niles 2000); various parts of Morobe province (Neuhaus 1911); Waxei (Watakataui) (Yamada 1997); Wovan (Haruai) (Flanagan 1983); *Southern region*: Binandere (Waiko 1984; 1991; 1995; 1982); Bwaidoga (Bwaidoka) (Jenness and Ballantyne 1926–29; 1928); Dobu (Fortune 1932); Gebusi (Gobasi) (Knauft 1985a; 1985b); Gizra (Gizrra) (Laba et al. 1980); Keraki (Nambo) (Williams 1936); Kilivila (Baldwin 1945; 1950; Kasaipwalova 1978; Kasaipwalova and Beier 1978a; 1978b; 1979; Senft 1999; 2011); Kiwai (Southern Kiwai) (Landtman 1913; 1927); Koita (Koitabu) (Niles 2000); Korafe (Korafe-Yegha) (James 1978); Koriki (Purari) (Williams 1924); Motu (Barton 1910); Okena (Korafe-Yegha or Ewage-Notu) (Niles 2000); Orokolo (Williams 1940); Suau (Cooper 1975); Toaripi (H. A. Brown 1968); Wagawaga (Seligman 1910); *Islands region*: Akara (Lele) (Laba et al. 1980); Baining (Qaqet) (Aerts and Hesse 1979; Fajans 1985); Banoni (Bannoni) (Stella 1990); Buin (Terei) (Thurnwald 1912; 1936; 1941; Laycock 1969a; 1969b; 1969c; 1970; 1972; Oliver-Berg 1979); Kaulong (Goodale 1995; Drüppel 2009; Niles 2009); Lak (Siar-Lak) (Wolfram 2007); Mandak (Madak) (Clay 1986); Takū (Takuu) (Moyle 2007); Tolai (Kuanua) (Laba et al. 1980); *Western New Guinea*: Central Asmat (Voorhoeve 1977); Eipomek (Simon 1978; Heeschen 1990; Simon 1993).

some aspect particularly well presented through song texts. Publications in which song texts are a major focus include studies by Baldwin (1945; 1950) and Senft (2011) on the language and interpretation of Kilivila songs; Ingemann (1968) on the structure of Ipili courting songs; Franklin (1970) and LeRoy (1978) on the metaphors used in West Kewa and Erave song, respectively; Hooley (1987) on the poetic transformations of Central Buang (Mapos Buang) song texts; Wassmann's detailed consideration of Iatmul mythopoetic ceremonial songs (1982; 1988; 1991); and Rumsey's explorations of Ku Waru (Bo-Ung) sung tales, *tom yaya kange* (2001; 2005; 2007; 2010; 2011), a form having characteristics of both songs and storytelling.

Weiner's exploration of the texts presented in this volume was published separately as *The Empty Place* (1991). As such, it straddles the category mentioned above along with publications that appear to be primarily meant as simply collections of song texts, usually appearing in the original language and in translation. Notes in such collections comment on various aspects of the songs presented, such as performance contexts, dance movements, origins, poetry, performance style, etc.⁴⁵ Such collections, often consisting of dozens of songs, are well represented for the following languages, moving out from the Foi area (collections containing more than 100 songs are noted): Enga (Talyaga 1973; 1975; Gibbs 2001); Ialibu (Imbongu) (Kerema 1976?); Kyaka (Koyati 1979), containing 123 songs; Kewa (Erave) (Josephides 1982); Wiru (Paia and Strathern 1977); Melpa (A. Strathern 1974; G. Strathern and Strathern 1985); Tifal (Roberts 1996; 2014), with 200 songs and music transcriptions; Kilivila (Kasaipwalova 1978; Kasaipwalova and Beier 1978a; 1978b; 1979); Bwaidoga (Bwaidoka) (Jeness and Ballantyne 1926–29; 1928), containing 144 songs and incantations; and Buin (Terei) (Thurnwald 1912), with 130 songs. Perhaps most similar to Weiner's volumes is the consideration of Manambu love songs by Harrison (1982; 1986): 21 song texts, translations, and summaries are preceded by a lengthy consideration of the genre, its structure, and the circumstances of its performance.

As such, Weiner's work on Foi songs well complements the work of others in exploring the importance of sung texts to ethnography in Papua New Guinea.

45 Michael Webb and I have published a collection of traditional song texts and translations, accompanied by cassettes of the songs, which is meant to be used in schools, *Oi Singing bilong Ples* (Webb and Niles 1990). Although not the focus of my introduction, a comparable collection of stringband songs, meant to be used by people wanting to learn to play guitar, is *Riwain! Papua New Guinea Pop Songs* (Webb and Niles 1986). A collection of transcriptions and translations of Akara (Lele), Tolai (Kuanua), and Gizra (Gizra) texts from Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies recordings is found in Laba et al. (1980).

Poetic devices of song

Weiner's discussion of the poetic language used in Foi songs is scattered throughout *The Empty Place*. He considers various devices that are used in Foi sung performances that distinguish those texts from everyday language; hence, he is concerned with the poetic expression found in Foi songs. These devices include parallelism, metaphor, poetic vocabulary, the construction of a map based upon the places mentioned in a song, phonological features reflecting motion and space, and 'hidden' names used to identify the subject of a song.

While a detailed consideration of Papua New Guinea song poetry is not appropriate here, the following overview of some of the poetic devices used is meant to assist readers interested in understanding how the Foi examples relate to other groups in the country. For what is probably the most detailed consideration of the song poetry of any one group, see Feld's writings on the Kaluli (especially, Feld 1982:130–62).

Poetic language

In almost every source that discusses Papua New Guinea song texts, mention is made of the use of poetic language, either in reference to individual words or longer parts of the text. These might be words from specialised or less familiar vocabulary;⁴⁶ an archaic version of the present language; another dialect or language (perhaps, thereby, suggesting origin, trade, purchase, or prestige); the language of spirits or ghosts; or newly created words as the result of word taboos. Sometimes such poetic usage can be readily understood, but more often it appears to challenge and entice listeners.

This usage differs from that described in the following section for vocables in that the latter are not suggested to be from another language, but simply to fill out a line, hence they often fulfil a formal, musical function; there is no consideration of them having meaning aside from a functional one. Certain vocables might be associated with specific genres, but they are generally regarded as filler, necessary to complete a song, but not endowed with any other meaning.

Foi use poetic designations to reference villages (Weiner 1991:162), and the use of the 'hidden name' used to identify the subject in the *dawa* of *sorohabora* could also be considered poetic language.⁴⁷ Additionally, Duna poetry makes

46 Metaphorical meanings of everyday words are not considered here, but in the following section concerning modifications.

47 Weiner (1991:19–20) contrasts spells and songs. A spell's efficacy is related to its rote memorisation and recital, with the words often in esoteric language; whereas a song is always an individual composition in generally accessible language, attempting to rend an emotion or interior state in terms of a concrete object or sensual experience. Furthermore, the song evokes, but the spell does not. While the song produces direct emotional response, the spell seeks pragmatic transformation.

extensive use of *kēiyaka*, glossed by researchers as ‘praise names’, special poetic terms that are used in *pikono* sung tales, often resulting in parallelism (see below) (Gillespie and San Roque 2011), and the Central Asmat use *arcer* (everyday speech) and *ta-poman* (poetic word or metaphor) in songs, with some of the latter terms coming from inland areas, but the origins of most are unknown (Voorhoeve 1977). What may be untranslatable to one researcher at one moment in time, may prove decipherable by someone else later, such as the Iatmul texts Bateson thought were in a shaman’s language subsequently being clarified through the diligent, meticulous research of Wassmann (Bateson 1932:403–4, 407; Wassmann 1991:63–64, 230). While there are many statements by researchers that an archaic form of language is being used, it does not appear that historical linguists have attempted to validate such claims. In their songs, Trobriand Islanders use a variety of Kilivila language they call *biga baloma* ‘speech of the spirits of the dead’ or *biga tommwaya* ‘old peoples’ speech’. They are convinced that it is language of the spirits of the dead in the Tuma underworld and that it is an archaic variety of Kilivila; only a few elders still know the meanings of such songs (Senft 2011:43–48).

Modifications to sung texts in the learning process also bring about changes to song texts, particularly when the learners are not fluent in the original language of the song. Gunnar Landtman relates how Southern Kiwai speakers imitated a song they heard at Budji, an Agob-speaking village, eventually quite distorting the original text:

they simply copy the dances and words, but, in spite of their natural cleverness in mimicry, both tunes and words must get more or less changed, still more so the interpretation which they may give to the songs. (Landtman 1927:423)

Neuhauss (1911:388) makes a similar observation about how the words of a song change when performers do not know the language they are singing in. Although specifically mentioning the Ka-iwa (Iwal) of Morobe province, he intends his remarks to be relevant over a much wider area. Indeed, writers had been noting the unintelligibility of song texts to their singers in the Morobe and Madang area for over two decades (e.g. Schmidt-Ernsthausen 1890:232; Pöch 1905).

Manambu *namai* love songs consist of two nearly identical stanzas (*apək*), the first in Manambu, the second in the western dialect of Iatmul, a language the singers are fluent in (Harrison 1982:18).⁴⁸ Kaluli *gisalo* makes extensive use of words,

48 According to Aikhenvald (2014), Manambu women refer to the second verse of their *namay* as using wording considered the ‘shadowy’ register or ‘the other side’ (*agəkem* ‘on the (other) side of two’). While many of these words in the ‘shadowy’ register derive from Iatmul, others may derive from Manambu itself as antonyms or more generalised terms being used for specific ones.

lines, or whole texts from the Sonia language to their west (E. L. Schieffelin 1976:178; Feld 1982:139–42, 152). In all areas, while the use of such language appears to make the texts more poetic, listeners differ in their ability to understand them. Even though the words of a song may not be completely understood, listeners are often adept at trying to interpret them anyway.

For the Gnao, song words are thought to be from ancestors, and the general sense of each verse is known, but words often differ from what is used now. For example, the word *simarei* in song is translated as ‘it flares’, but in everyday language the word *mərərə’a* has such a meaning. While the words are said to be archaic, song verses can be interpreted because words resemble those in neighbouring languages or even in Tok Pisin, and the names of places and persons are recognisable, but often distorted through much syllable repetition and drawing out (G. Lewis 1980:41, n. 1, 59). A fascinating discussion of such meanings and how they relate to the important question of the order of performance of around 150 songs in a Gnao song cycle is also presented by Gilbert Lewis (ibid.:60–61).

As songs are sung in unison by a group of performers in many regions, songs must be learned by the group, regardless of their intelligibility. Yet even if the meaning of the text remains generally unknown to performers, the numerous rehearsals and performances of such songs generate other meanings among the individuals who perform and who observe. Among the Lak (Siar-Lak) of southern New Ireland, this feeling is intensified as a result of the long periods of fasting and isolation necessary for performance, hence the ‘opening lines of [such] a song are responded to by a barrage of weeping from the audience as they recall poignant associations generated by narratively “meaningless” lyrics’ (Wolffram 2007:185).

Awiakay *kaunjambi* texts contain parts identifiable as everyday Awiakay, an untranslatable ‘spirit language’, neighbouring languages (some related to Awiakay, others not), and archaic language (Hoenigman in prep.).

The Gebusi (Gobasi) like the songs of their Bedamini (Beami) neighbours, although few Gebusi are fluent enough in that language to understand the poetry of songs. Rather, Gebusi react to the ‘visual and raw auditory sensation of Bedamini performance, rather than to its discursive meaning’ (Knauff 1985b:329).

Vocables

A distinction was made in the preceding discussion between a song entirely of or containing words in a poetic or unknown language, on the one hand, and the use of vocables or ‘nonsense syllables’, on the other. The former might be described by performers as being in an archaic or different language, but the

latter is often described as syllables added to fill out a melody. These vocables typically appear at the end of lines of sung text as lengthened or added vowels. More lengthy sequences of vocables may be used to fill in a text that does not fully accommodate a melody or as an entire section of the song, and may often be called a ‘chorus’ or ‘refrain’ by the author writing about them. Such vocables are particularly important where a repetitive metric system is important, such as in the Mount Hagen area. Vocables may also completely replace the ‘meaningful’ text in statements of the melody. In many of these uses, they are an essential structural component of song.

Lengthened or added vowels at the end of a line of text are found in many different parts of the country. Although frequently associated with the Highlands area, entire lines or verses of vocables are also found in areas as diverse as Jabêm (Yabem), Irumu (Tuma-Irumu), Gnau, Alambalak, Central Buang (Mapos Buang), Kaulong, and Akara (Lele). For example, Drüppel notes how in Kaulong songs, ‘strings of lexically-meaningful words are interrupted by strings of vocables. These too are learned and are an integral, non-interchangeable part of the song’ (2009:124). Chenoweth observes that Usarufa vocables ‘beautify the words of a song’ (1979:90). Baruya *daata*⁴⁹ consist of three sections: *daimaata* (vocables sung to establish the melody, repeated an indefinite number of times), *daluya* (addition of text to melody, repeated an indefinite number of times), and *daimaata* (as before, but sung only once to conclude the song).

What is then striking about the Foi texts presented here is the relative absence of such non-lexical syllables—Foi song texts appear to be predominantly in the language of everyday discourse. Other comparable examples are not so commonly reported, although Fortune stresses the absence of ‘meaningless word[s]’ in Dobu songs (1932:255). And, as in the Iatmul case cited above, but also true for Central Asmat songs (Voorhoeve 1977:27, n. 26), seemingly incomprehensible songs might actually be translatable.

Yet the contrast between texts of vocables and of other languages is not quite so easily maintained as it can sometimes be difficult to differentiate the two. Generally, melodies sung to vowels with few consonants unequivocally tend to be vocables, but it is also possible to imagine words sung in a language not understood by the performers gradually becoming distorted (as in the Landtman story above), so that a text in a different language finally becomes vocables. And certainly ‘nonsense’ syllables sung during the sixth and final stage of Wovan (Haruai) initiation (*aime*) are loaded with meaning for participants and onlookers alike (Flanagan 1983:217).

49 See Niles and Webb (1987:EHP-8) for a recording performed by males sitting in the initiate’s house.

Repetition

Although not often identified, songs frequently involve strict repetition of words, phrases, or lines. Additionally, of course, whole songs are often repeated in the course of the same or different performances. As this deviates from normal speech, I also consider it a poetic device. Repetition has been reported from such widely separated groups as Enga, Wiru, Benabena, Southern Kiwai, Central Buang (Mapos Bunag), and Baining (Qaqet).

Parallelism

In my usage here, parallelism is related to repetition, but instead of being a strict repetition, it involves change. Rumsey (1995:108; 2007:261) describes parallelism as ‘the ordered interplay of repetition and variation’; it is a very common poetic feature found in all regions of Papua New Guinea (Niles 2011b:70–72, 413–14, 496–97; Niles and Rumsey 2011:13, n. 9) and throughout the world (Jakobson 1960; Fox 1977). For Papua New Guinea song texts, parallelism (also called substitution), most frequently involves the change of one or more words in the repetition of a line or lines. For example, in the opening of a Iatmul song where pairs of totemic names are sung:

–m kan wana nyan-a –i–e
kumbui Kumbuindemini- a-la –i–e, –e–e
kan wuna mbaandi-a –i–e
kumbui Kwalimbangimeli- –i–e, –e–e

You my child,
you flying fox Kumbuindemini;
you my novice,
you flying fox Kwalimbangimeli. (Wassmann 1991:3–4)

Comparable mythic references are also found among Manambu *namai* in what purport to be the more mundane songs of failed relationships (Harrison 1982; 1986).

Foi songs use parallelism extensively, as can be seen in looking at the song texts in this volume.⁵⁰ For example, in this excerpt of lexical and semantic parallelism from men’s song 38:

nomo ira fiwa dera
forabi’ae
nomo ira furabo dera
foramaibi’ae

50 Also note the semantic parallelism of Foi magic spells (Weiner 1991:16–17) and Ambonwari (Tabriak) songs (Telban 2008:227).

nomo kosa'a buru ga merabe
kigiboba'a
nomo ira furubu ga merabe
aodoboba'a

My *fiwa* tree there
 Has fallen by itself
 My *furabo* tree there
 Has fallen down

My harbour near the base of the *kosa'a buru* tree
 The forest has reclaimed it
 My harbour near the base of the *furubu* tree
 The bush has obliterated it

Some of the most extensive uses of parallelism are found in Kaulong songs of West New Britain where the initial 'chorus listing' of a song enumerates names or objects having the lowest level of appreciation; each repeat of a line substitutes a different name or object, ending with that most highly regarded (Drüppel 2009:126; also see, Niles 2009:xvii–xviii). As described above, the Duna use of *kēiyaka* also results in parallelism, as does Central Asmat use of *arcer* and *ta-poman*.

Grammatical parallelism has also been described by Rumsey for Ku Waru (Bo-Ung) *tom yaya kange* performances. Here, distinctive grammatical structures, not words, are repeated in subsequent lines (Rumsey 2007:263–64).

Modification

Song texts may also be modified versions of normal spoken language. Such modifications can be phonological, grammatical, or semantic.

At a phonological level, vowels or consonants may be altered from their everyday values. As noted by Telban (2008:219) for the Ambonwari (Tabriak), but certainly very widely applicable, the words of a song may be 'merely indicated and not fully articulated', thereby setting them apart from everyday language and adding to their esoteric nature. That is, sounds are altered simply through singing. Chenoweth (1979:97) notes the 'broader phonetic range in singing than in speaking' for Usarufa. In Takū (Takuu) songs, an *a* often changes to *o*, so that *vaka* 'canoe' becomes *voko*, and *ava* 'channel' becomes *ovo* (Moyle 2007:174). In Central Asmat songs, voiceless consonants become voiced, and some stops become fricatives ($p > \beta$; $k > \gamma$) (Voorhoeve 1977:35, n. 7). Laycock (1969c) notes the use of archaic morphology in Buin (Terei) songs.

Vowels are often lengthened or added to the final word, thereby overlapping with the vocables discussed above. But syllables may also be added mid-word, such as in Central Buang (Mapos Buang) modifications *verup* > *veröörup* ‘come up’ (Hooley 1987:76).

Some of the most elaborate word transformations have been described for Buin (Terei) songs (Laycock 1969c:6–13), where two syllables are added to the first or last two syllables of a normal word, creating a form suitable for songs; or the two syllables from a normal word might be reduplicated. For example: *kugunia* > *niakoto* ‘Venus’; *maikuna* > *kunapiŋ* ‘dog’; *kamuai* > *kamukamu* ‘man’s name’. Other transformations are also possible. Brown (1968:iii) remarks how words can be divided between musical phrases, and Roberts (1996; 2014) notes the alteration of words to fit melodies.

Phonemes, syllables, or words can also be deleted, all contributing to the ‘telegraphic brevity’ of Daribi (Dadibi) *bqria* dance songs and laments (Wagner 1972:80), an apt description also applicable to many other traditions.

The deletion of words, of course, overlaps with modifications at the grammatical level. The texts of West Kewa songs, for example, have shortened verbs, with many tenses and aspects deleted, thereby making the actor obscure and possibly obliterating subject, location, and goal markers (Franklin 1978:392). Rumsey (2007:261) observes the use of shorter syntactic units in Ku Waru (Bo-Ung) sung tales. Often, however, written descriptions of grammatical modifications are less precise, with authors noting an unspecific type of poetic grammar or grammatical changes.

Semantic modification concerns words taking on new meanings or interpretations. Such use of metaphors in song texts is used by the Foi (e.g. Weiner 1988a:126; 1991:19, 28; 1998a) and is widely reported for Papua New Guinea. As LeRoy (1978:71, n. 6) stresses, a metaphorical language is not a different one, but is constructed from everyday language. Understanding such meanings is often challenging to listeners who lack special knowledge about poetic usage.⁵¹ Furthermore, in those areas requiring initiation to different types of knowledge, secret subjects may also be sung about publicly, hidden by metaphors that make their meaning inaccessible to those without the requisite knowledge.

Sound-play

By ‘sound-play’ I refer to various ways the sounds of words are combined in song texts. Examples of the general similarity between the vowels of words

51 Weiner (1991:28) contrasts the images in poetry with those in dream interpretation. While the latter are standardised, poetic images are individually created, so their interpretation is dependent upon the knowledge of the creating poet.

(assonance) or consonants of words (consonance; with alliteration being a subtype) are occasionally noted, but not frequently. For example, the pairing of words such as *eklka / maklka*, *röngim / rongan*, *rarla / marla*, *nginouö / minouö*, and *ekita / ronggeta* in Melpa songs (A. Strathern and Stewart 2005:208–9). The Foi use of phonological features reflecting motion and space might also be included here (Weiner 1991:80–87).

Rhyme—similar sounds at the end of words or lines—while used occasionally in *obedobora* and *sorohabora*, is generally rare in Foi song (Weiner 1991:134, 170). This also seems to be true for most other groups in Papua New Guinea, with few exceptions.

What can be considered another type of sound-play, onomatopoeia or phonaesthesia, is an important aspect of Kaluli song composition, as reported by Feld (1978:15–16; 1982:144–50).

Mapping

Finally, the mapping of places mentioned in a song is of great importance for the Foi (Weiner 1998a:105–6) and the Kaluli (Feld 1978:15–16; 1982:150–56), but also for groups such as the Gnau (G. Lewis 1980:59–67). Weiner observes that ‘Mountain Papuan’ peoples, such as the Kaluli and Foi, poetically depict genealogical relationships as spatial ones between place names (1988b:23). Ayamo place names figure prominently in Foi songs as they evoke pleasant memories of hunting during the wet season. Yet as they are removed from the Mubi Valley, they are also associated with death (Weiner 1991:114). Kaluli songs map out lands, waters, and trees of significance to their hosts. These images of loss and abandonment move them to tears and they burn with a torch the dancer responsible for evoking their grief (Feld 1985:3).

In contrast, the place names in Gebusi (Gobasi) songs are rarely of the hosts’ lands, rather they are of distant places felt to be ideal for secret encounters and sexual trysts. Gebusi respond to these songs sung by women not with weeping and burning, but with

an enthusiastic and bawdy expression of sexual vitality. Hosts and visitors joke hilariously, fantasizing how they will bring to fruition the sexual scenario evoked by the beautiful dancer and the women’s seductive songs. (Knauff 1985b:325)

While this overview of poetic devices has been very brief and deserves to be fleshed out elsewhere, it describes some of the ways in which texts become sung poetry for the Foi and other groups in Papua New Guinea.

Closing and acknowledgements

I hope that these introductory remarks will be of assistance to someone wanting to understand more about the Foi songs presented in this volume. In particular, I have tried to bring together some details about the contexts of their performance, their relation to other genres in the region, the importance of song texts to anthropological studies, and the poetry of song in the Papua New Guinea area.

I also hope that this book, in combination with other writings by Weiner, will help reveal the importance of understanding Foi traditional modes of expression. As contemporary Papua New Guinea faces many challenges and some people feel that traditional beliefs hinder the nation on the path towards development, this study strongly reconfirms the importance of understanding such creativity. This book celebrates Foi traditional knowledge and the wonderful, full, and complex world that is revealed in song.

James Weiner sent me an initial draft of his manuscript in 1995. I was initially enthusiastic about its possible publication, but suggested he expand the introduction to more widely consider song traditions in the country. In retrospect, I realise that that was probably a rather scary, off-putting response, no doubt contributing to the manuscript lying dormant for a long stretch of time. Early in 2012, his manuscript and the insights it contained still haunted me. I felt that it must be made more widely available, so I contacted James to see if he was still interested in pursuing its publication. Happily, it was also something that remained important to him, so we began to work together to bring it to its present form, with me taking on the task of expansion I originally suggested he do: considering other song traditions, song collections, and the sung poetry of songs as part of an introduction to the songs. I very much appreciate James's continuing enthusiasm for these songs and his desire to publish them, even after two decades. It has been a pleasure to collaborate with him.

Other individuals and organisations have enabled this project to proceed. In addition to providing the research environment necessary to work on this book, the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies enabled Edward Gende and me to observe and document the Kundu and Digaso Festival and to experience some aspects of Foi music and dance first-hand, especially with Hahudi Farobo as our gracious and expert guide and teacher.

In my position as Research Associate in the Department of Anthropology, School of Culture, History, and Language, College of Asia and the Pacific at The Australian National University, I have had access to the wonderful electronic resources available through their libraries. I also appreciate comments by Steven

Feld in reconfirming and expanding my understanding about how Bosavi *sabio* relates to other Kaluli genres stylistically. David Gardiner and Emily Tinker at ANU Press have greatly assisted in the production of this book.

Weiner's research materials are deposited in The Australian National University Archives (Series 432: <http://archivescollection.anu.edu.au/index.php/james-f-weiners-cassettes>). Nick Thieberger at the Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures (PARADISEC) kindly arranged the digitisation of Weiner's recordings, so that a representative sample could be made available for this publication. Weiner's full collection of digitised recordings can be found at: <http://catalog.paradisec.org.au/repository/JW1>.

I am most grateful for the support from all concerned.

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