Introduction

My first meeting with Mikael Pellondou in 1988 was brief and quite unexpected. My request for a recitation of *Suti Solo do Bina Bane* may have taken him by surprise but he hardly hesitated. His response was immediate. He took little time to reflect or prepare himself before beginning his recitation.

Five years later, on another visit to Rote, I was able to meet Mikael again and once more ask him to recite *Suti Solo do Bina Bane* for me. My second request prompted a similar, immediate response. Unlike Malesi, whose second recitation is significantly different from his first, Mikael’s second recitation, some five years after his first composition for me, produced a version of *Suti Solo do Bina Bane* that was remarkably similar to his first version. The similarity between these two versions provides further understanding of poetic memory and composition.

In presenting this composition, I have divided it at the same junctures as the first composition.
Prefatory Lines

1. *Ita kokolak Bina Bane*  
   We speak of Bina Bane

2. *Ma ita ded'ak Suti Solo*  
   And we talk of Suti Solo

3. *Te hu Bina nai liun*  
   But Bina is in the ocean

4. *Ma Suti nai sain.*  
   And Suti is in the sea.

5. *Hu lae:*  
   Hence they say:

Introduction of the Chief Chant Character

6. *Inaka Fua Bafa*  
   The woman Fua Bafa

7. *Ma fetoka Lole Holu*  
   And the girl Lole Holu

8. *Na-nea pelak*  
   Cares for the maize

   And cares for the millet.

10. *De ana oku boluk tunga seli*  
    She shouts at one side

11. *Ma do se’ek tunga seli*  
    And she screams at one side

12. *Ma bafi na’a tunga seli*  
    And the pig eats at one side

13. *Ma kode ketu tunga seli.*  
    And the monkey plucks at one side.

14. *De faik esa manunin*  
    At a certain day

15. *Do ledok esa mate’ena*  
    Or at a particular time

16. *Boe ma ana teli kokolo ndai*  
    She strings, winding a fishnet

17. *Fo ndai mahamu lilok*  
    A fishnet with a gold-weighted belly

18. *Ma ana ane seseko meti*  
    And she braids, twining a scoop-net

19. *Fo seko matei besik.*  
    A scoop-net with iron-weighted insides.

20. *De neu seko sisi’u enggak*  
    Then she goes to scoop, lifting *enggak* seaweed

    And goes to net fish, overturning rocks.

22. *Ana lipa neu nakanae*  
    She looks around carefully

23. *Ma lefi nala mamula*  
    And glances intently

24. *Neu meti Tefi Noe Mina la*  
    Goes to the tide at Tefi Noe Mina

25. *Tasi Fopo Sandi-kala*  
    The sea at Fopo Sandi-kala

26. *Ma meti Tefi Noe Mina la*  
    And the tide at Tefi Noe Mina

27. *Leu huka papa*  
    *[The sea] shows its shallows*
28. **Ma meti la si’unu.** And the tide begins to ebb.
29. **Ma ana ane seko la** And she braids the scoop-net
30. **Fo seko matei besik** The scoop-net with iron-weighted insides
31. **Ma ana teli kokolo ndai** And she strings, winding the fishnet
32. **Fo ndai mahamu lilok.** The fishnet with a gold-weighted belly.
33. **Tasi la huka papa** The sea shows its shallows
34. **Ma meti la si’unu.** And the tide begins to ebb.
35. **Boe ma ndae ndai neu alun** So she hangs the fishnet over her shoulder
36. **Su seko neu langa.** Balances the scoop-net on her head.

**The Search for the Ritual Fish**

37. **De neu seko sisi’u enggak** Then she goes to scoop, lifting *enggak* seaweed
38. **Ma neu ndai hubuka batu** And goes to net fish, overturning rocks.
39. **Fo ana ndai sanga Tio Holu** She fishes, seeking a Tio Holu fish
40. **Ma seko sanga Dusu La’e** And scoops, seeking a Dusu La’e fish
41. **Fo ela Tio la holu ao** Tio that embrace one another
42. **Ma Dusu la’e ao.** And Dusu that support one another.
43. **Tè bu ana seko nala lifu esa** But she scoops in one pond
44. **Ma ndai nala lek esa,** And fishes in one pool,
45. **Na, te ta ndai nala Tio** Nah, but she does not fish a Tio
46. **Ma ana ta seko nala Dusu** And she does not scoop a Dusu
47. **Tè seko nala lifu esa** But she scoops in one pond
48. **Na Bina nala lifu esa** Nah, Bina is in that pond
49. **Ma ana ndai nala lek dua** And she fishes in two pools
50. **Na Suti nala lek dua.** Nah, Suti is in the two pools.

**The Initial Dialogue with the Shells**

51. **De ana kokolak** Then she speaks
52. **Ma ana dede’ak:** And she talks:
53. ‘O, au mai seko sanga  
   Dusu La’e dei  
‘Oh, I only come to scoop for a Dusu  
   La’e
54. Ma ndai sanga Tio Holu dei  
And only fish for a Tio Holu
55. Te seko uni o  
But I scoop you up
56. Ma ndai uni o  
And I fish you up
57. Fo soa be ma o nda be?’  
For what purpose and what gain?’
58. Boe ma Bina lole halan  
Then Bina raises his voice
59. Ma Suti a’e dasi na, nae:  
And Suti lifts his words, saying:
60. ‘Seko muni Bina  
‘Scoop up Bina
61. Ndai muni Suti  
Fish up Suti
62. Te Suti ta, dae bena  
Not Suti, but a human being
63. Ma Bina ta, hataboli.’  
And not Bina, but a living being.’
64. Boe ma ana ndai ndano neni Bina  
So she fishes forth, taking Bina
65. Ma seko solu neni Suti.  
And she scoops up, taking Suti.
66. ‘Na kode a ketu betek  
   ‘The monkey plucks the millet
67. Ma bafi bei na’a pelak  
And the pig still eats the maize
68. De na’a bei tolesi  
He eats, but still some remains
69. Ma ketu bei ela.  
And plucks, but there is still some left.
70. Mafa ndendelek  
So remember, do remember
71. Ma masa nenedak  
And recall, do recall
72. Mu sona  
Go, then
73. Pa’a au u ai  
Tie me to the tree
74. Isa au neu batu  
Fasten me to the rock
75. Fo toto-toto no batu  
To knock and knock against the rock
76. Ma bengo-bengo no ai.  
And shake and shake against the tree.
77. Kode tolo mu  
The monkey will run
78. Fo lo ai lai neu  
High into the trees
79. Ma bafi nalai  
And the pig will flee
80. Fo lo nula dale neu.  
Deep into the woods.
81. Sama leo hala ma  
Just as my voice
82. Deta leo dasi ma  
Just like my words
83. Kode ana tolo mu  
The monkey, he will run
84. Ma bafi ana nalai  
And the pig, he will flee
85. De leo nula dale neu  
86. Ma leo ai lai neu.  
87. Boe te pela-lai la fali uma  
88. Ma bete-lai la tuke lo.  
89. Boe ma Bina o fali uma  
90. Ma Suti o tulek lo.’

The Directives to the Shells

The only significant difference in this section from the similar section of the first composition is in the addition of the directive to go with the forest cuckoo bird and the river watercock.1

91. Boe ma ana kokolak  
92. No ina Po’o Pau Ai [Lole Holu]  
93. Ma feto Latu Kai Do [Fua Bafa], nae:  
94. ‘Bo tiango nou  
95. Au sanga tulek ma falik.’  
96. Boe ma nae:  
97. ‘Mu mo se?’  
98. Inak a Fua Bafa  
99. Ma fetok a Lole Holu nae:  
100. ‘Na, mu mo titi’i letek  
101. Ma mu mo kai-hule mok.’  
102. ‘Malole lai ndia  
103. Ma mandak lai ndia.  
104. Tê kai-hule mok  
105. Ndia mesakana nai mok esa

1 In lines 92–93, Mikael refers to Po’o Pau Ai//Latu Kai Do where he should have referred to Fua Bafa//Lole Holu. This was a mistake that was immediately recognised. I have not altered the text, if only to emphasise that poets can make ‘mistakes’ in their compositions.
106. Ma ndia mesakana nai letek esa  And it is all alone on the hill
107. De au kokolak o se  So with whom will I speak
108. Ma au dede'ak o se  And with whom will I talk
109. Sama leo Lole Holu  [Someone] just like Lole Holu
110. Ma sama leo Fua Bafa?'  And just like Fua Bafa?’
111. Boe ma nae:  So she says:
112. ‘Na, mu mo dini ana na’u.’  ‘Nah, go with the dini grass.’
113. ‘Te dini ana na’u  ‘But the dini grass
114. Leo timu lama tua dulu  When the east monsoon grows great in the east
115. Ma se lama dilu do lama sesu  It will bend or break
116. Neu kalena ma neu bu’una,  At this head and at its joint,
117. Na, au kokolak o se  Then with whom will I speak
118. Ma au dede'ak o se?'  And with whom will I talk?’
119. Boe ma nae:  So she says:
120. ‘Mu mo pila kumea letek  ‘Go with the red kumea grass on the hill
121. Ma mu mo nggeo kuku telas.’  And go with the black kuku shrub in the forest.’
122. ‘Te timu lama tua dulu na  ‘But when the east monsoon grows great in the east
123. Ma fak lama nalu langa na  And the west monsoon lengthens at the head
124. Se pila kumea letek  The red kumea grass on the hill
125. Do nggeo kuku telas  Or the black kuku shrub in the forest
126. Se lama dilu neu bu’un  Will bend at its heavy joints
127. Ma lama sesu neu kalen,  And will break at its heavy head,
128. Na, au kokolak o se  Nah, then with whom will I speak
129. Ma au dede’ak o se  And with whom will I talk
130. Sama leo Lole Holu  [Someone] just like Lole Holu
131. Ma deta leo Fua Bafa?’  And exactly like Fua Bafa?’
132. Boe ma ana lole hala na neu  So she raises her voice
133. Ma ana a’e dasi no neu, nae:  And lifts her words, saying:
134. ‘Na, o mu mo se  ‘Nah, with whom will you go
135. *Fo sama leo au bai*  
[Someone] just like me

136. *Do deta leo au bai?’*  
Or exactly like me?’

137. *Boe ma nae:*  
Then she says:

138. *’Na, mu mo doa lasi anakala’*  
‘Nah, go with the tiny forest cuckoos

139. *Ma mu mo koloba’o le anakala.’*  
And go with the little river watercocks.’

140. *’Malole lai na*  
‘Such things are good there

141. *Ma mandak lai ndia.’*  
And such things are proper there.’

142. *Lafada ma ladasi, lae:*  
They speak and they talk, saying:

143. *’Doa lasi ana-kala*  
‘[When] the tiny forest cuckoos

144. *Bedoa tunga lasi*  
Sing *doa-doa* through the forest

145. *Na udan tunga tunga lasi*  
As the rain follows through the forest

146. *Ma kolo bao le ana-kala*  
And the little river watercocks

147. *Beba’o tunga le*  
Sing *bāo-bāo* along the river

148. *Na fa tunga tunga le,*  
As the current follows along the river,

149. *Au dede’ak o se*  
With whom will I speak

150. *Ma dede’ak o se?’*  
And with whom will I speak?’

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The Directive to Return to the Sea

151. *Boe ma nae:*  
So she says:

152. *’Mu mo ina Po’o Pau Ai la’*  
‘Go with the woman Po’o Pau Ai

153. *Ma feto Latu Kai Do la*  
And with the girl Latu Kai Do

154. *Nai le [bi]bifan*  
At the river’s lip

155. *Ma nai oli tatain.’*  
And the estuary’s edge.’

156. *Boe ma Bina a’e dasi na neu*  
So Bina lifts his words

157. *Ma Suti lole hala a neu ma nae:*  
And Suti raises his voice and says:

158. *’Bo senango nou*  
‘Oh dear friend

159. *Ma bo tiango nou*  
And oh dear companion

160. *Malole lai ndia*  
Such things are good there

161. *Ma mandak lai na,*  
And such things are proper right there.

162. *De au kokolak o ina Po’o Pau Ai la*  
I will speak with the woman Po’o Pau Ai
The Brief Return to the Sea

168. **Boe ma besak tasi mai**
Now the sea comes in

169. **De nala oli dale.**
And enters the estuary.

170. **Boe ma Bina ana bonu boa**
Bina, he floats like *boa* wood

171. **Ma Suti ana ele piko**
And Suti, he bobs like *piko* wood

172. **De ana ele piko leo liun**
He bobs into the ocean

173. **Ma ana bonu boa leo sain neu.**
And he floats off into the sea.

174. **Të seko-ma nai liun do sain**
As it happens in the ocean or sea

175. **Laka-doto kokolo**
It is as lively as a *kokolo* bird

176. **Ma laka-se bebengu,**
And as noisy as horses’ bells,

177. **Të hu ana ta bubuluk**
But he is not aware

178. **Do ana ta nalelak.**
Or he does not know.

179. **Seko-ma ala be’e Lipe la**
As it happens, they perform at the *Lipe* feast

180. **Ma ala doi dosa**
And they are suffering

181. **Leme liun do sain.**
In the ocean and the sea.

182. **De ina liu-kala**
The women of the ocean

183. **Ma feto sai-kala**
And the girls of the sea

184. **Ala foti ma leno lai sain.**
They dance and turn in the sea.

185. **De dae sopuka ta lapu**
Fine dust does not fly

186. **Ma batu lutu la ta pela.**
And small stones do not rise/dance.

187. **Besak ka Bina Bane no Suti Solo**
Now Bina Bane or Suti Solo

188. **Ala pela nggangafu aon**
They dance, swaying their bodies

189. **Ma leno sosodo aon.**
And they turn, shuffling their feet.

190. **Boe ma dae sopuka lapu**
Fine dust flies
7. VERSION VI FROM THE DOMAIN OF TERMANU

191. *Ma batu lutu la pela.* And small stones rise.
192. *Boe ma ina liu-kala* The women of the ocean
193. *Do feto sai-kala* Or girls of the sea
194. *Lahala ma lae.* 'Wah.'
195. *De lae: 'Beuk Suti Solo boe* They say: 'Something new for Suti Solo
196. *Do fe’ek Bina Bane boe.* Or something strange for Bina Bane.’

The Return to Rote

197. *De Bina nama toko isi* So Bina throws forth his insides
198. *Ma Suti nama edo nggi.* And Suti puts forth his pods.
199. *Boe ma ana bi’i* He is fearful
200. *Do ana mae.* Or he is ashamed.
201. *Boe ma ana tolu mu sasali* He flees forth quickly
202. *Ma nalai lelena.* And he rushes forth hastily.
203. *De ana tolo mu* He flees
204. *De leo Dela Muli neu* To Dela Muli [Dela in the West]
205. *Ma nalai* And rushes
206. *De leo Ana Iko neu.* To Ana Iko [Ana at the Tail].
207. *De ana nduku Ana Iko* He arrives at Ana Iko
208. *Ana losa Dela Muli.* He reaches Dela Muli.
209. *Boe ma neu tongo senan* He goes to meet a friend
210. *Ma neu nda tian* And goes to encounter a companion
211. *Fo neu nda tia na nai* Goes to meet a companion at Dela Muli. *Dela Muli.*
212. *Boe ma nae:* He says:
213. *‘Bo tiango nou* 'Oh dear companion
214. *Seko-ma nggolok nai ia.* As it happens the village is here.
215. *Boe ma taduk nai ia boe.’* The settlement is here too.’
216. *Boe ma nae:* So she says:
217. *‘Leo do mapa lasa meme ia* ‘Stay and remain here
218. *Te o mai nda au.* You have come to meet me.
219. *De ita dua senak* Let the two of us be friends
220. *Ma ita dua tiak.* And let the two of us be companions.
Composition Analysis: Mikael’s Versions I and II and Seu Ba’i’s Recitation

The immediate point of comparison for this version of *Suti Solo do Bina Bane* is Mikael’s first version. The two compositions are nearly the same length. Version I has 224 lines; version II 222 lines. Both versions include the repetition and rephrasing of particular passages. Version I is based on a repertoire of 75 dyadic sets; version II has 79 sets. The two versions have 59 sets in common—in both cases, 75 per cent or more of their dyadic repertoire. Version I shares 38 sets with Seu Ba’i’s composition while version II—largely because of the inclusion of the directive that refers to the ‘forest cuckoo and river watercock’—shares 42 sets with Seu Ba’i. The compositional links among these various recitations are considerable.

Although both of Mikael’s recitations are similar and share a majority of sets in common, the composition arrangement of these two versions—the sequence of lines one to another—is more complex. The general succession of the narrative is much the same but particular lines, couplet lines and sometimes longer passages follow different sequences. Seeming similarity masks a good deal of compositional difference. Table 2 provides a concordance of corresponding lines in the two versions and allows for closer scrutiny of the specifics of composition.

Table 2: A Concordance of Corresponding Lines in the Two Versions of *Suti Solo do Bina Bane* by Mikael Pellondou

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<th>Mikael Pellondou II</th>
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### 7. VERSION VI FROM THE DOMAIN OF TERMANU

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124 – 125 <> 109 – 110
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128 – 131 <> 115 – 116
132 – 133 <> 60 – 61
134 – 135 <> 135 – 136
151 – 155 <> 161 – 162 + 165 – 166
160 – 161 <> 171 – 172
166 – 167 <> 161 – 162
170 – 171 <> 179 – 180
179 <> 186
181 <> 187
182 – 183 <> 189 – 190
185 – 186 <> 194 – [195]
188 – 189 <> 197 – 198
190 – 191 <> 199 – 200
195 – 200 <> 204 – 208
It is probably best to compare some of the longer passages in the two versions before focusing on particular lines and couplets. Thus, near the beginning of both compositions, there is a sequence of eight lines that are virtually identical.

### Passage 1

#### Version I

10. *Boe te inaka Fua Bafa*  
   So the woman Fua Bafa  
11. *Ma fetoka Lole Holu*  
   And the girl Lole Holu  
12. *Na-nea pelak*  
   Cares for maize  
13. *Ma na-nea betek*  
   And cares for millet  
14. *De ana oko boluk tunga seli*  
   She shouts on one side  
15. *Ma ana do-se’ek tumga seli*  
   And she screams at one side  
16. *Ma bafi na’a tumga seli*  
   And the pig eats on one side  
17. *Ma kode ketu tumga seli.*  
   And the monkey plucks at one side.

#### Version II

6. *Inaka Fua Bafa*  
   The woman Fua Bafa  
7. *Ma fetoka Lole Holu*  
   And the girl Lole Holu  
8. *Na-nea pelak*  
   Cares for the maize  
   And cares for the millet.  
10. *De ana oku boluk tumga seli*  
   She shouts at one side  
11. *Ma do se’ek tumga seli*  
   And she screams at one side  
12. *Ma bafi na’a tumga seli*  
   And the pig eats at one side  
13. *Ma kode ketu tumga seli.*  
   And the monkey plucks at one side.
Except for the use of different connectives—*boe te* at the beginning of Version I and the optional use of the pronoun *ana* in line 14 of Version I—these two passages are identical both in their use of dyadic sets and in the order or sequence of lines. One could speculate that these lines constitute a personal routine or extended formula that allows Mikael to begin his recitation on a secure basis.

After this passage, the compositions diverge. In Version I, Mikael has Fua Bafa//Lole Holu ponder how she can prevent the monkey and pig from eating her crops. It is only after this that she takes up her fishing net and goes to the sea. In Version II, Mikael launches immediately into the fishing sequence.

Another early passage of some 12 lines in Version I can be compared with similar lines in Version II. However, the corresponding lines in Version II do not form a single sequence nor do they appear in the same order as in Version I.

**Passage 2**

**Version I**

A

32. *De ana lipa naka nanae*  
   She looks around carefully

33. *Ma ana lelu nala mumula.*  
   And she glances intently.

34. *De tasi Fopo Sandika*  
   The sea at Fopo Sandika

35. *Ma meti Tefi Noe Mina*  
   And the tide at Tefi Noe Mina

36. *Tasi la huka papa*  
   The sea shows its shallows

37. *Ma meti la si’unu.*  
   And the tide begins to ebb.

B

38. *Boe ma neu seko sisi’u engga*  
   She goes to scoop, lifting *enggak* seaweed

39. *Ma neu ndai hubuka batu,*  
   And goes to fish, overturning rocks,

40. *Neu seko sanga Dusu La’e*  
   Goes to scoop in search of a Dusu La’e

41. *Ma neu ndai sanga Tio Holu*  
   And goes to fish in search of a Tio Holu

42. *Fo Dusu la la’e ao*  
   For Dusu fish that support one another

43. *Ma Tio la holu ao.*  
   The Tio fish that embrace one another.
Version II

A
20. *De neu seko sisi’u enggak* Then she goes to scoop, lifting
enggak seaweed
21. *Ma neu ndai huhuka batu.* And goes to fish, overturning rocks.
22. *Ana lipa neu nakanae* She looks around carefully
23. *Ma lelu nala mumula* And glances intently
24. *Neu meti Tefi Noe Mina la* Goes to the tide at Tefi Noe Mina
25. *Tasi Fopo Sandi-Kala* The sea at Fopo Sandi-Kala
26. *Ma meti Tefi Noe Mina la* And the tide at Tefi Noe Mina
27. *Leu huka papa* [The sea] shows its shallows
28. *Ma meti la si’unu.* And the tide begins to ebb.
...
33. *Tasi la huka papa* The sea shows its shallows
34. *Ma meti la si’unu.* And the tide begins to ebb.

B
37. *De neu seko sisi’u enggak* Then she goes to scoop, lifting
enggak seaweed
38. *Ma neu ndai huhuka batu.* And goes to fish, overturning rocks.
39. *Fo ana ndai sanga Tio Holu* She fishes, seeking a Tio Holu fish
40. *Ma seko sanga Dusu La’e* And scoops, seeking a Dusu La’e fish
41. *Fo ela Tio la holu ao* Tio that embrace each other
42. *Ma Dusu la’e ao.* And Dusu that support each other.

If one takes the sequence of lines in Version I as a starting point, the first
six lines (32–37) correspond to six of the last seven lines (22–28) in the
sequence in Version II. Both sequences use exactly the same dyadic sets in
the same order as follows:

| 32/22  | lipa – nae |
| 33/23  | lelu – mula |
| 34/25  | tasi – [name: Fopo Sandika] |
| 35/26  | meti – [name: Tefi Noe Mina] |
| 36/27  | tasi – huka-papa |
| 37/28  | meti – si’unu |
There are, however, a number of compositional differences, six of which are notable. 1) There is a difference in line 22 (Version II) where a verbal, non-reduplicated *neu nakanae* is used instead of the reduplicated *naka nanae* in line 32, as in Version I. 2) Line 24 is an (unnecessary) insertion, which is made redundant by the repetition in line 26. 3) The place names in lines 24–26 are given in plural form (*la* or *kala*) in Version II, but singular form in Version I. This is a permissible feature of Rotenese parallel poetry where dyadic characters are cited as often in singular as in plural form, with some poets using a singular form as a contrastive pair with a plural form. 4) The noun *tasi* (‘sea’) is omitted but clearly implied in line 27 of Version II. 5) In Version II, lines 27 and 28 are repeated as lines 33 and 34. 6) Also in Version II, lines 20 and 21 are repeated as lines 37 and 38.

As a result, lines 38–43 in Version I correspond to lines 37–42 in Version II. Although the lines regarding the Tio and Dusu are in reverse order, in terms of the use of dyadic sets, these lines are the same. The varied evidence of these two versions of *Suti Solo do Bina Bane* shows the formulaic continuity in the compositional capabilities of the poet Mikael Pellondou.