

How the Missionary got his *Mana*: Charles Elliot Fox and the Power of Name-Exchange in Solomon Islands

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ABSTRACT

Charles Elliot Fox (1878–1977) was one of the Anglican Melanesian Mission’s most emblematic figures, extending its reputation for scholarship and respect for Pacific traditions. Uniquely among the Mission’s European figures, however, Fox is also credited with exceptional powers (mana). Based on archival research and ethnographic fieldwork among the Arosi (Makira, Solomon Islands), I argue that Fox’s name-exchanges with Makirans have contributed in unrecognized ways to his reputation for mana. In so doing, I show how, in contrast with name-exchange in Polynesia, Arosi name-exchange implies the internalization of a gap between ontological categories that renders name-exchange partners two persons in one body, endowed with access to one another’s being and ways. Fox’s writings indicate that he understood this aspect of Arosi name-exchange as a prefiguration of the Christian doctrine of the incarnation. This understanding, in turn, shaped his mission method and motivated his otherwise puzzling claims that he was a Melanesian.

Keywords: Solomon Islands, Makira, Melanesian Mission, Charles E. Fox, name-exchange, friendship, *mana*.

Since 1992 I have been conducting anthropological and historical research in Solomon Islands, a former British Protectorate declared independent in 1978. My chief research collaborators have been the people known as the Arosi, whose home region lies at the north-west end of the island of Makira (formerly, San Cristoval). But before the people of Makira knew me as a student of the Arosi language and way of life, their elders and forebears had known the Rev. Dr Charles Elliot Fox of the Anglican Melanesian Mission.

Fox was born in England in 1878 but immigrated to New Zealand with his parental family in 1884. After earning degrees in geology and theology, he joined the Mission and went in 1902 as a lay teacher to the Mission’s main school, St Barnabas’ College on Norfolk Island. For a short time, family matters compelled him to leave the Mission and return to New Zealand where he was priested in 1906. He then rejoined the Mission and resumed teaching at St Barnabas’ until he was posted to Makira. There, he began a period of work and study that would prove life-(ex)changing.

Between 1911 and 1924 Fox lived almost continuously on Makira, first as headmaster of St Michael’s school (1911–14) at Pamua in the Bauro region, then as sole missionary priest to the Diocese of Melanesia’s San Cristoval and Ulawa District (1915–20), and finally as missionary priest to the smaller, newly created Arosi District (1920–24). Based on these

years among Makirans, Fox not only translated liturgical texts and portions of the New Testament into Arosi, he also produced a unique and lasting body of ethnographic and linguistic scholarship. With the encouragement of anthropologist W. H. R. Rivers, with whom he corresponded after an initial acquaintance in 1908 on board the mission vessel the *Southern Cross*, Fox compiled a variety of manuscript materials: accounts of Makiran social organization and religion, texts and translations of Arosi folktales, and a dictionary and grammar of the Arosi language. He submitted most of this work to the University of New Zealand, which awarded him the D.Litt. in 1922. His ethnographic work and some of the folktales were published in different formats; some portions appeared as entries in the mission journal *The Southern Cross Log*, others as articles and notes in scholarly journals, and some only in the composite monograph, *Threshold of the Pacific* (1924). His Arosi dictionary (Fox 1978) also came to print eventually, while his Arosi grammar and a trove of still unpublished Arosi folktales survive in archival collections.¹

These accomplishments made Fox one of the Melanesian Mission's most emblematic European figures, enhancing its reputation for intellectual industry and enlightened appreciation for many indigenous customs. He also became the Mission's longest serving European (1902–73, with a brief hiatus as noted above). Following his stay on Makira, he resided for extended periods on the islands of Ugi, Guadalcanal, Malaita, and Gela, continuing his studies whenever possible. Over the years he completed dictionaries of the Lau and Gela languages, a history of the Melanesian Mission, two autobiographies, and a short history of Solomon Islands. Fox was typical, in other words, of the Melanesian Mission's atypical interest in and willingness to validate some aspects of pre-colonial Pacific cultures (Hilliard 1978a, 2005; Sohmer 1988; Scott 2007:261–300).²

Uniquely among the leading European figures in the Mission, however, Fox is also credited with extraordinary powers and prophetic insight. He alone among expatriates within the Mission has become known for his *mana*. In the words of Fr Robert Fakafu Santa, who describes himself as a Polynesian born in Melanesia, '[f]or us he was a person of immense *mana*' (2010:5–6; see also Hilliard 1978b:75; 2005:210–11; Whiteman 1983:217).³ Already, in 1973, when arthritis forced Fox to retire to a nursing home in New Zealand, the then Bishop of Melanesia, John Chisholm, acknowledged this Islander perspective in a farewell tribute:

He is a remarkable man in every way – although old he is for ever young – small of stature but big in thought – never accepted a high position of authority even though it was offered several times, and yet had an authority and *mana* unique in the Islands. ... He has always thought as one of them [*i.e.*, Islanders] and enjoys their love and respect – and indeed reverence – for they look on him as a holy man who has supernatural powers. (Chisholm 1973)

Drawing on my own ethnographic and archival research, my aim in this article is to explore and augment what I will show to be an existing assumption in scholarly and eulogizing discourses about Fox. These discourses assume that Fox's reputation for extraordinary powers has its source in a single much-storied event: his name-exchange with Martin Takibaina, a young Arosi man from the village of Heuru. Implicit in these discourses is the idea that Christians – past and present, lay and ordained, indigenous and expatriate – in the Melanesian Mission sphere have seen this event, and the radical participation in village life that it facilitated, as tantamount to an ascetic discipline and Christ-like identification with Melanesians that gave Fox an empowering holiness. Without disputing that this conventional Christian understanding of Fox's power is prevalent, I seek to show that there is more to it.

I present ethnographic evidence for an otherwise overlooked nexus between Fox's name-exchange with Takibaina and his reputation for *mana*. One of my Makiran research interlocutors, Thomas Bea, has constructed an idiosyncratic but revealing theory about how Fox acquired exceptional powers. His theory is informed, I suggest, by the Takibaina-Fox story in ways that index name-exchange itself as a source of *mana*, a means of becoming multiple by internalizing the capacities of others. Bea's ideas about Fox entail a logic whereby name-exchange gave Fox much more than empathy with Melanesians; it changed him ontologically, rendering him two (or more) entities in one. This aspect of being and having what Arosi call a *marahu* – a same-name counterpart – was furthermore not lost on Fox. His letters as well as his ethnographic writing on the term *marahu* – which he glossed as a special type of 'friend' (1978:285) – indicate that Fox came to understand the simultaneous unity and difference imputed to strangers joined in a *marahu* relation as an indigenously intimated of the God-man relation asserted in the Christian doctrine of the incarnation. This understanding, in turn, shaped his missiology and motivated his many – and, to some, puzzling – assertions that he *was* a Melanesian.

This article brings the example of Fox into dialogue with existing literature on name-exchange and other forms of special 'friendship' in the Pacific. From this literature, which has focused mainly on Polynesia, it is possible to derive a consensus that such formalized one-to-one relationships – with or without name-exchange – create extra-kindred links among otherwise presumptively or potentially hostile collectives (Finney 1964; Firth 1936; Gell 1993:174–176; Mead 1977:149–154). Key studies have furthermore demonstrated the importance of such relationships between Islanders and Europeans in early colonial encounters (Oliver 1974:842–850; Smith 2010), including those within Christian missions (Gardner 2012; Young 1977). The present study relates additional data from Island Melanesia to this body of literature. The case of Fox calls attention to significant differences among these Oceanic practices. It raises questions, I will suggest, about what ontological premises may inform such practices for different Islanders in different situations.

SAINT FOX OF THE ISLANDS

For much of 2006, Mr Benjamin Mononga'i (1943–2008) and Madam Sarah Gede Tanara (b.1953), a married pair of school teachers, were my principal hosts in the Arosi village of Tawatana. Given my situation as Fox's successor in Arosi research, he was a frequent topic of conversation among us. Mr Ben and Madam Sarah both liked to recall that they had met Fox, each on a separate occasion, when they were still at school in the 1960s and Fox had paid a visit. Fox spoke Arosi to them, they said, but to their surprise they found him difficult to understand. For Mr Ben, this made Fox a link to the Arosi past: 'He spoke in old language that we didn't know'. Their regard for the man they call 'Dokta Fokis' is indicated by the name of their first son: Charles Elliot Fox (b.1977). From these hosts and research facilitators I heard the following two Fox tales, among others.

The events in the first story are said to have taken place when Fox was living at Fiu on Malaita (1949–52, see Hilliard 1978a:299). He was living there with two *Tasiu*, or members of the Anglican lay community known as the Melanesian Brotherhood. One *Tasiu* was from Santa Isabel and one was from Makira. The latter was Mr Ben's uncle, John Still Ri'itau of Heuru, who was also his source for the story.⁴ 'Right,' said Mr Ben, 'the thing I want to story is this':

One evening Dr Fox said to the two *Tasiu*, 'Tomorrow we'll go to 'Aoke and I will serve Communion there.' When morning came, the two *Tasiu* went to the

beach and washed and got ready to go and waited for Fox. The Doctor brought out his bag, which had his clothes for the service, and placed it on the table. Then he went back into his room. The two *Tasiu* waited for him in the sitting room; they waited for the Doctor. Time passed, and the sun went up in the sky. It was going towards half past six, and the Doctor's cook came and asked the two of them, 'What are you two waiting for?'

And they replied, 'We're waiting for the Doctor. When he comes out we'll go to 'Aoke to hold Communion.'

His cook asked them, 'What did he say to you two?'

They said, 'He brought his bag out and then went back into his room. And we've been here until now.'

'You two just go. Go, don't wait for him. Take his bag and go to 'Aoke.'

So, the two *Tasiu* took Fox's bag and went along the beach to 'Aoke. When they arrived, the Doctor was already there, and they were amazed: 'When did the Doctor come here?'

When Mr Ben had finished, Madam Sarah said, 'I would also like to tell a short little story about Dr Fox,' and gave this account:

Dr Fox was living out at Taroaniara [on Gela]. That old man smoked, he smoked a pipe. One evening when he had finished smoking, he placed his pipe on the table in his sitting room and went away to sleep. That night a mouse took his pipe.

When the Doctor got up in the morning, he went to look where he had placed his pipe, and the pipe had disappeared. He knew where he had left it, but he couldn't see it.

He asked the person who was his cook, 'Haven't you seen my pipe somewhere? I left it just here last night, and when I went to look for it, it was gone.'

His cook said to him, 'I haven't seen it anywhere.'

Dr Fox said, 'I'm sure a mouse has taken it. I'll write to the mouse to bring back my pipe.'

He sat down at his table and wrote a note like this: 'To you, Mr Mouse. If it was you who took my pipe, I would like it back urgently. Place it back in the place from which you took it. It is just me, Dr Fox, who is writing to you.'

They went to sleep again the next night. Then, when Fox got up in the morning, he went forth and looked on the table, and his pipe was back where he had left it. And the Doctor's cook was very amazed. He saw the note on top of the table and read it. It's a little difficult to understand a person who writes to a mouse and his pipe comes back. His cook was very amazed. The mouse could also read the Doctor's writing and brought back his pipe.

It was no doubt stories such as these that Bishop Chisholm (1973) had in mind when he said of Fox in his farewell tribute that Islanders accord him 'an authority and mana unique in the Islands' and see him as 'a holy man who has supernatural powers'. This describes the perspective of Mr Ben and Madam Sarah very well. For them, Fox's extraordinary abilities were linked to a self-imposed discipline of Christian prayer and devotion. As preface to his account of Fox's invisible departure for 'Aoke, Mr Ben described how his uncle, John Still Ri'itau, and the other *Tasiu* had made what he called in English a 'study' of Fox's ways; they had observed that Fox prayed five times during the night, an exercise they – and Mr Ben – clearly took to be empowering.

The obvious conclusion here would seem to be that Fox has become a popular saint, an inspirational figure whose devout life and remarkable deeds conform to recognizable Christian paradigms. The stories Mr Ben and Madam Sarah told me are typical of those found in the Bible and Christian hagiography. Like Jesus, Fox passes unseen from one place to another and, like St Francis of Assisi, he enjoys communication with animals. Other discourses that constitute his reputation for *mana* likewise point to such familiar antecedents. As Fox (1985:134) wrote, ‘All Malaita men said I could and did walk on the water’; and Mr Ben told me a tale of Fox’s miraculous escape (together with his dog) from a sinking canoe that implied a similar feat. From Ri’itau himself, whom I met on several occasions while visiting Heuru during my 1992–93 fieldwork, I heard claims that Fox performed healings much like those attributed to Jesus and the Apostles. According to Ri’itau, ‘Dr Fox had *mena* [the Arosi variant of *mana*]. He could make blind people see after touching them and praying; he could heal their limbs’ (cf. Matthew 12:9–14; John 9:1–12; Acts 3:1–10).

There are also tales in circulation, modelled implicitly on lessons about the ancient and medieval missionary saints, according to which Fox proved the superiority of his God by out-performing rival powers (Fox 1962:92; Hilliard 2005:211; cf. Tomlinson 2017). I even heard one story in which Fox effectively cursed an Arosi village that refused to convert to Christianity; when the people of Dahui were unreceptive to his preaching, he turned his back against them, allowing ‘a power of the deep sea’ (*adaro ni matawa*) to cause many people there to die of disease (Scott 2007:97–100; cf. Matthew 10:14–15).⁵

Fox’s reputation for *mana* is furthermore widespread throughout the former Melanesian Mission region. On Mota in present-day Vanuatu, for example, Thorgeir Kolshus (personal communication) has encountered a variant of Madam Sarah’s narrative. In the Motese version, however, the pilferer of Fox’s pipe is a hermit crab. Within the former mission sphere, that is to say, Fox has become ‘the most venerated Dr Fox’ (Santa 2010:5), a model of spiritual power whose marvellous works point to God and inspire faith in others.

Among Arosi Anglicans, it must be said, there is little discourse about saints *per se*. Most Anglican churches are named for saints, and the feast day of the saint for which a church is named is celebrated as ‘the day of the church’; but to my knowledge, and in line with foundational Anglican doctrine (Howes and Pascoe 2010:101), Arosi do not pray to saints. Nevertheless, the Anglican Church of Melanesia (ACoM), like other Anglican provinces world-wide, recognizes not only the saints of the ancient pre-Reformation church but also a growing list of regional worthies – both Islander and European – commemorated in its official calendar. Between 1992, when I first went to Arosi, and 2006, when I returned for further research, the number of such figures, described as ‘our own Melanesian saints’, burgeoned, and the 29th of October is now dedicated to ‘Charles Elliot Fox, Missionary Priest and Tasiu’ (Church of Melanesia n.d.:i, xiii).

In keeping with this growing interest in regional saints, moreover, there is a striking work of art inside the Anglican Church of All Saints in Honiara, the capital of Solomon Islands on Guadalcanal. Filling the wall behind the altar is a vivid mural depicting a heavenly company of white-robed and haloed figures surrounded by winged angels. Among these, it is easy to spot Fox at the far left, depicted as he was in later years: short, bespectacled, clean-shaven, and white-haired. Other figures are less distinct, but Terry Brown, a former bishop of Malaita (1996–2008), has identified Stephen Taroaniara (d.1871), the first Solomon Islands martyr, Ini Kopuria (d.1945), the founder of the Melanesian Brotherhood, and John Coleridge Patteson (1827–1871), the martyred first bishop of Melanesia. To quote Brown (personal communication), these figures ‘are saints indeed, all on an equal level with their white robes’.

Curiously, however, what this analysis of Fox as a popular saint ‘on an equal level’ with others highlights is that, even among those set apart as saints within ACoM, Fox

remains set apart. No other European in this company of saints is Fox's equal in *mana*. Something is still missing from this picture that might account for why this European has long differed from all others in the history of the Melanesian Mission.

FOX'S 'PLUNGE' AS ASCETIC DISCIPLINE

Either directly or indirectly, ecclesiastic and academic commentators – both Pacific Islander and expatriate – have pointed to Fox's name-exchange with Takibaina as the *sine qua non* behind the popular view of Fox as a person of *mana*. In a much-cited letter dated 8 July 1920 (e.g., Hilliard 1978a:195; Jones 2008:204; Santa 2010:46; Whiteman 1983:215), Fox describes this venture:

Well, last January I made up my mind to try life as a Melanesian and I took the plunge. I performed *haimarahuda* with Martin Taki; that is to say we exchanged possessions. I went into his house and he into mine, and except a few private mementos of friends I kept nothing, e.g. got an old razor for my Gillette (still have), lost my pipes, hat, shoes, clothes, European food, cooking utensils, tobacco, gun, money (including that in the bank £40) etc. On the other hand I gained the aforesaid razor, sufficient clothes, 2/6, a clay pipe, a yam garden, various coconut trees and property in land. We also exchanged names....Thenceforth I lived entirely on native food, never wore hat or shoes, smoked village tobacco when I could get it & so on....At Heuru I was completely adopted as a native of the place, worked with them on the Govt roads, was written down by the Govt as belonging to there....I have been treated by Melanesians as a Melanesian and learnt many things. But sometimes I have been very hungry, and having no medicines or bandages, sometimes I have had ulcers and been ill. (Fox quoted in Durrad n.d.:15–16)

Owing in part to Fox's own privileging of it in his autobiographical writings (1962:48–9; 1985:69–71), this story of his name-exchange with Takibaina is one of the best known aspects of his life, recounted or alluded to in all significant assessments of his work and character. A reading of this literature quickly identifies recurrent phrases and concepts that both presuppose and stand for this episode. Wherever it is said of Fox that he 'lived as a Melanesian' (Davidson n.d.:10; Whiteman 1983:215; see also Chisholm 1973; Garrett 1992:348; Oroj 2016:194, n.6; Palmer 1985:v), or sought to understand Melanesians 'from within' (Hilliard 1978a:195; 2005:210, 211), or 'identified' and 'empathized' with Melanesians (Whiteman 1983:214–217; see also Garrett 1992:70, 348; Santa 2010), such phrases and concepts at once depend on and condense the Takibaina-Fox name-exchange episode. Accordingly, wherever such phrases and concepts are invoked in juxtaposition with references to Fox's alleged *mana*, such associations subtly posit a causal link between the Takibaina-Fox name-exchange and the stories that circulate about Fox's special abilities. An explanation is mooted: Pacific Islanders have ascribed these abilities to Fox owing to something remarkable he achieved or acquired through the plunge into Melanesian life that his relationship with Takibaina initiated.

Although Fox's name-exchange with Takibaina came early in his career and impinged on him intensively for only a few years, it has become iconic of Fox as someone who, in imitation of Christ, set aside a privileged distance (divine transcendence in the case of Christ, white separateness in the case of Fox) and lived with those positioned by others in

categories and spaces marked as inferior (*cf.* Garrett 1992:349). Picking up on a subtext in many of Fox's own self-representations (1962:99; 1985:61), commentators have invoked the Takibaina-Fox name-exchange, or the language that indexes it, in ways that cast it as a form of asceticism engaged in to the point of suffering. Owing, I suggest, to this perceived ascetic dimension to the plunge, commentators have often drawn a straight line from it to Fox's first period of membership in the Melanesian Brotherhood (1932–43). During this phase of his life he declined positions of authority and subordinated himself to the Melanesian leaders of the order. These two intervals in Fox's life have thus been presented as two halves of a consistent whole. Darrell Whiteman (1983:215–216), for example, metaphorizes Fox's life as Takibaina and his life as a Brother as two 'steps' in a process of 'identification' with Melanesians. And here is how the first Melanesian Archbishop of Melanesia, Norman Palmer, described Fox shortly after the latter's death:

he was humble and obedient in his service for the Lord – living like a Melanesian in a village life – learning the languages of the people, their culture and traditions – joined the simplicity of the Melanesian Brotherhood and took the vows of poverty, obedience and celibacy. (Palmer 1978)

Church-based and scholarly discourses alike link this ascetic life, epitomized in the name-exchange episode, to Fox's reputation for *mana*. Anglican clerics have suggested that Fox's life as a Melanesian gave him 'uncanny insight into Melanesian thought forms' (Chisholm 1973) and even 'extraordinary insight of [*sic*] certain events before they took place' (Palmer 1985:v). Such insight, it is intimated, was no ordinary knowledge, but a manifestation of holiness – holiness arising from his humble solidarity with Melanesians. Academics, for their part, have suggested that, by living as a Melanesian, Fox 'transcended his culture' (Hilliard 2005:211), was the Mission's 'greatest outsider/insider' among Pacific Islanders (Moore 2017:196), and 'became as much of a Melanesian as a European could become' (Whiteman 1983:217). The consensus within critical studies is that he achieved a level of understanding that set him apart from all other missionaries and Europeans as the great 'empathizer' (Whiteman 1983:214). In both sets of discourses, there is an indirect inference that Islanders have seen Fox's assumption of their social position and his insight into their point of view as something phenomenal in a European. So exceptional was Fox's plunge into Melanesian life, according to this logic, it marked him as 'a person of immense *mana*' (Santa 2010:5).

Arguably, then, these ecclesiastic and academic discourses have answered the question, What set Fox apart as a saint among saints? They suggest that Fox's immersion in the Melanesian way of life was a uniquely extreme form of ascetic discipline, a prodigious Christ-like renunciation of privilege that Islanders have seen as both a sign and a source of empowerment. These discourses ascribe to Islanders a reasoning analogous to that of Mr Ben, who linked Fox's powers to his discipline of praying five times during the night; they imply that Islanders in general suppose that Fox's life with them – singular as it was for a European at that time – was an act of Christ-like obedience to God and love for them so exceptional it evinced and accrued tremendous spiritual gifts.

This makes good Christian hagiographic sense, yet my own field research with Arosi leads me to propose that something is still missing from this picture – something to do with Arosi understandings of name-exchange itself. Before turning to this line of analysis, however, I first foreground the life of Martin Takibaina, the man who became Charles Elliot Fox.

MARTIN TAKIBAINA (d.1921)

Read on its own, as it has been, Fox's 1920 plunge letter can lead to the supposition that his radical engagement in Arosi life was the missionary's initiative alone; but this may be a misapprehension. More than two years earlier, while Fox was based at Raubero, the headquarters in Bauro of the Mission's San Cristoval and Ulawa District, he wrote to Rivers: 'Did I tell you that Takibaina the son of the late chief at Heuru wrote me a note asking me to exchange names, so I am a member of the Araha clan now *when I am in Arosi*' (Fox 1918, emphasis added). As elsewhere in Oceania, it was the Pacific Islander, it seems, who sought name-exchange alliance with a European (*e.g.*, Coombe 1911:162; Smith 2010:100–103). Likewise, as elsewhere in Oceania, the Pacific Islander in question enjoyed chiefly prestige (*e.g.*, Gell 1993:176; Mead 1977:149–154). Takibaina was the son of chief David Bo'orauaniara, a figure whose acceptance of the Mission had facilitated the foundation of an important base at Heuru (Fox 1924:130; Scott 2014:69). The fact that Fox says he made up his mind 'to try life as a Melanesian' only in January 1920 is readily explained: it was then that Fox was put in charge of the Mission's newly created Arosi District. Fox thus had to move from Raubero in Bauro and base himself mainly in Arosi. This new situation afforded him the possibility of living out more fully the terms of his pre-existing *marahu* relationship with Takibaina.

Regrettably, what this *marahu* relationship meant to Martin Takibaina and how it (ex)changed his life remains the occluded story here. His life as Fox was short-lived. Of his death in 1921 Fox wrote:

Martin Taki died on April 19 after 4 days of pneumonia and thus came to an end the deepest and strongest friendship of my life. In all that passed between us there is nothing I regret. I thought at first it would be easier to go [from Arosi] but on the contrary his death drew us closely together. To them I have, as it were, taken his place. All Arosi calls me Martin Taki and considers me the brother of Aitora. (Fox quoted in Durrad n.d.:17; cf. Fox 1962:47–50; 1985:70)⁶

Apart from this, Fox wrote surprisingly little about his friend. The time is overdue, therefore, to pause and collect what I have been able to learn about him. What follows is based on oral traditions I heard during my 1992–93 fieldwork with Arosi, correlated with the sparse mentions of him in the records left by Fox and the Mission.

Takibaina entered the Mission record in 1909 when Robert Paley Wilson (1909:63) reported the death of chief Bo'orauaniara and observed: 'Martin Take [*sic*], his son, who is still quite young, will succeed to the chieftainship.' In 1993 Samuel Ha'aheuru, a son of Takibaina's brother Aitora, told me: 'Takibaina was schooled at Norfolk Island and that is where he met Fox.' A remark by Florence Coombe may place Takibaina on Norfolk Island during the time when Fox was teaching there. Around 1910, Coombe, also a teacher at Norfolk Island, wrote of him: 'Martin Taki is one of our most promising cricketers at the present time' (1911:230).⁷

He is next mentioned by Mission sources in an account by Fox of a circuit Fox made of Makira on the *Southern Cross* in 1916. Regarding a stop at Heuru, Fox notes: 'we picked up Martin Taki and his wife, going to Norfolk Island, where Martin is to work as a carpenter' (1917b:12). Elsewhere Fox (1917a) indicates that this was a return to Norfolk Island for Takibaina. By all accounts, therefore, the acquaintance between Takibaina and Fox antedated their name-exchange by some years.

Several Arosi with whom I worked, including Ha'aheuru and George Huruani (1911–2010), knew that Takibaina had been a carpenter. These same men also said that he

had spent time at Siota (Gela), and this seems likely given his trade. Around 1919–20 the Mission was moving its headquarters, including many of its timber buildings, from Norfolk Island to Siota; this was a large project for which they would have employed skilled carpenters like Takibaina. These work-related travels appear to have taken him away from the role of chief. Regarding Takibaina's 1916 trip to Norfolk Island, Fox comments: 'Martin Taki, from whom much was hoped as chief, has decided to go again to Norfolk Island as a carpenter' (Fox 1917a:23), and in a 1919 article Fox describes Takibaina's brother Aitora as 'the present chief' at Heuru (Fox 1919:104).⁸

Concerning Takibaina's family, I heard conflicting accounts regarding the names of his mother, wife, and children and I met no one who claimed to be his direct descendant. He was remembered in the 1990s not only for his name-exchange with Fox but also for having settled Dick Inioana, a man of Fijian and Malaitan parentage he met on Norfolk Island, at Heuru. When Fox took the plunge and came to live at Heuru, the four men – Takibaina, Aitora, Inioana, and Fox – lived closely and worked together. According to Fox (1985:70), Takibaina developed the pneumonia that killed him while working on a nearby plantation. By 1923, his survivors had placed a marker on his grave bearing the name Charles Fox (*Northern Advocate* 1923:6).

FOX AS KAKAMORA AND PROPHET OF MAKIRA

The following material from my fieldwork supports but also complexifies the assumption that the Takibaina-Fox name-exchange is central to Fox's reputation for *mana*. Thomas Bea has constructed a speculative account of how Fox acquired his special powers that constitutes, I suggest, an imaginative transformation of the story of Fox's name-exchange with Takibaina. Here, I show how his account condenses this story with a second element of the Fox mythology: the fact that Fox's Arosi friends gave him the additional name of Kakamora. This conflation of namings confirms the wider intuition that Fox's acquisition of power coincided with his receipt of a name. For Bea, however, what Fox acquired was neither a holiness nor an empathy that made him almost Melanesian. What he got was something called a *kakamora* stone, an object that made him, more specifically, Makiran.

Bea's theory that Fox got his *mana* from a *kakamora* stone is clearly an innovative elaboration of Fox's longstanding reputation for special abilities; like a variety of early 21st century theories, narratives, and ideas among Makirans that I have analysed elsewhere (Scott 2014, 2016), it is indicative of the gradual emergence of an island-wide Makiran identity within Solomon Islands. Recognizing this novelty, my contention will be that, as the creative transformation of a tradition, Bea's theory actually renders the importance of name-exchange *per se* in Fox's reputation more legible to analysis than the ecclesiastic and academic discourses discussed above.

Thomas Bea was born in 1966. He was raised a Roman Catholic in the Kahua region of Makira, but he is married to an Arosi woman and has converted to Anglicanism. Having studied business at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji, he settled at Kirakira, the administrative centre of Makira/Ulawa Province, where he worked as the secretary of a shipping and development company. I met and interviewed Bea in two separate contexts: first in Honiara in July 2003, and again at Kirakira in June 2006.

On both occasions Bea was eager to talk about Fox. Almost immediately, upon our introduction in 2003 by a mutual friend, he asked me whether I thought Fox was, as he put it in English, 'extraordinary'. He then asked whether I thought Fox had 'changed' when he came to the Solomons and proceeded to answer his own question in the affirmative. He said that when Fox came to Makira 'he got a power...he got the common denominator'.

As he explained again in 2006, he meant by this that Fox obtained the quintessential power of Makira through an object known as a *kakamora* stone. *Kakamora*, according to updated traditions about them, are small, hairy, cave-dwelling quasi-humans who preserve the original language and ways (*kastom*) of Makira and enjoy superhuman capacities – such as powers of invisibility, shape-shifting, mind-reading, and teleportation. Some Makirans say, moreover, that the power of a *kakamora* is concentrated in a removable stone lodged in its armpit. Bea speculates that, by acquiring such a stone, Fox gained not only the fabulous abilities of the *kakamora* but also mastery over their language and their knowledge of the ancient true ways of Makira. In Bea's thinking, in other words, it was by virtue of this stone that Fox came to understand the Arosi language, rituals, and magic he wrote about in his books.

To account for how Fox might have got hold of a *kakamora* stone, Bea imagines what he calls a 'fiction', a hypothetical scenario. Observing that Fox 'learned the language of Makira and understood the attitude of Makirans', Bea proposed that,

Maybe when he moved around he asked lots of chiefs and people, 'What is a *kakamora*?' And then he'd expand on this interview and he'd get the idea about *kakamora*. And he'd get to the heart of the problem and he probably concentrated on one chief and gave him tea and tobacco.

'Chief, now tell me, what are your *kakamora*?'

The chief motioned, 'Hey, Doctor, behind the village we have a cave where grandfather grabbed one.'

Then the chief storied how that man held the *kakamora*, and they took out the power belonging to him – a stone. ... Perhaps this chief gave [Fox] this stone.

Bea's 'fiction' is informed by his knowledge of Fox's books, especially Fox's autobiography, *Kakamora* (1962). It displays, I submit, at least three transformations indicative of its constitution as a variant of Fox's own accounts of his name-exchange with 'a young chief named Takibaina' (1962:48). First, whereas Fox's accounts describe an exchange of names as well as goods, Bea's 'fiction' tells only of an exchange of objects, seemingly displacing names from the narrative. Second, whereas Fox's accounts always emphasize that it was by virtue of his 'status' as Takibaina that he gained his knowledge of Arosi language, customs, and 'ways of thought' (1962:49), Bea's 'fiction' foregrounds the object Fox received – the *kakamora* stone – as that which gave him access, not only to everyday Makiran experience, but also to the autochthonous language, *kastom*, and powers of the *kakamora* and the essential disposition he calls 'the attitude of Makirans'. The stone stands as a mythic substitute for the name as that which indigenizes Fox. Third, this transformation of the Takibaina-Fox name-exchange is simultaneously a transformation of yet another account of how Fox acquired a Makiran name. Fox relates that, owing to his diminutive stature, his Arosi friends gave him the name Kakamora (1962:23). In Bea's 'fiction', therefore, the *kakamora* stone stands, I suggest, as a substitute not only for the name Takibaina but also for the name Kakamora. This posits an analogy between a *kakamora* stone and the name Kakamora; both, this analogy implies, give a person access to the capacities of the *kakamora* as the original true Makirans. The stone thus brings the two namings together as variant versions of how Fox became, like a *kakamora*, a locus and extension of the power of the island itself.

For Bea, Fox's powers were not ambient but specific to Makira, literally grounded in a distinctive Makiran ontology. Bea thus credits Fox with the same amazing powers of unseen mobility he and others ascribe to the uniquely Makiran *kakamora*. He had heard stories, he

said, about how Fox, and even his dog, could be in two places at once or travel spontaneously from one location to another.

One time [Fox] said he was in his house, but he actually attended the funeral of his sister or mother in England. How could he do this? Another story: Fox left his dog in Honiara when he was going back to Taroaniara. But the dog was waiting for him when he arrived. How did that dog get from A to B?

Bea furthermore regards Fox as someone who, like the primordial and prescient *kakamora*, had a timeless perspective on all things Makiran. He therefore approaches Fox's books as repositories of encrypted messages about the nature and future of the island. During one of our conversations, he resorted several times to a notebook into which he had copied assertions from Fox's writings that he takes to be prophetic.

On page eighty-seven of *Kakamora*, he noted, Fox glosses the indigenous names of two islands to the south of Makira as meaning Big and Little Mu (*i.e.*, Rennell and Bellona). This, he argued, was Fox's way of intimating that Makira is a remnant of the lost continent of Mu described in the works of James Churchward. Having accessed Churchward's ideas through the Internet, Bea hypothesises that the Garden of Eden was on Makira and that the *kakamora* are a race of immortal prelapsarian beings. The language and *kastom* of the *kakamora* are, therefore, the perfect Adamic language and the peaceful Edenic way of life.

According to Bea, Fox also predicted that, although Makirans have 'spoiled' this ideal way of life, it will one day be restored, causing Makira to gain benevolent ascendancy over the whole of Solomon Islands. As he explained to me:

Fox saw the future, but put it in parcels and proverbs. That's how we [Makirans] do it. You need to use glasses of Makira to dig out what Fox parcelled inside [his books]. You can't use an English lens.

When I asked for examples, Bea suggested that the word 'threshold' in the title *Threshold of the Pacific* is a 'clue' referring to

a point at which the Pacific will turn. When our *kastom* will come alive, then the Pacific will turn.... This means Makira will be more powerful in military ways, or on the side of development.

Through the figure of Fox, Bea additionally appropriates for Makira the special powers often ascribed to the Melanesian Brothers. Membership in this community, which is modelled in part on European monasticism, normally entails short-term vows to remain unmarried, receive no pay, and obey chosen Head Brothers. Within the former Melanesian Mission region, the Brothers have long enjoyed a reputation as holy men whose religious discipline endows them with special *mana*, and many stories circulate about their miraculous successes in healing, divining the presence of sorcery, and exorcizing malevolent powers (Kolshus 2007:258–262; Macdonald-Milne 2003; Taylor 2010:436–437; Whiteley 2015:31–32). Bea infers, however, that the Brothers' powers derive more from Fox than from their consecrated way of life. He sees Fox as the true spiritual founder of the Brotherhood and supposes that Fox mediated to the Brothers some of the Makiran knowledge and power he acquired from the *kakamora* stone. Via this transference of power, he hypothesizes, the Brothers perform their miraculous healings and exorcisms using the Makiran 'charms' – the incantations requisite to pre-Christian healing and magical techniques – documented by Fox. 'I think he Christianized them,' he told me, 'and the Melanesian Brothers use them.' More generally, however, Bea

posits a kind of para-apostolic succession of Makiran power, passed on from Fox to the Brothers, that transforms them ontologically.

Now, the people who want to become Brothers come from lots of islands, but then their attitude changes as soon as they join and it looks like they have the attitude of a Makiran. They become Makiranized.⁹

If, as I have argued, the *kakamora* stone in Bea's 'fiction' takes the place of two names at once – Takibaina and Kakamora – and condenses them into a tangible object that changed and empowered Fox, such a transformation would seem to indicate that names and name-sharing relations can change and empower a person (*cf.* Leenhardt 1979:156). Accordingly, Bea's 'fiction' recommends attending to name-exchange *per se* as a previously under-interrogated aspect of Fox's plunge and why that episode appears to underpin his reputation for *mana*.

NAME-EXCHANGE AND THE *MANA* OF MULTIPLICITY

Overlooked in the literature about Fox is the fact that Takibaina was not his first name-exchange partner. Before Takibaina's overture in 1918, Fox had exchanged names with a youth called Gafuafaro (also Gafuavaro) and had begun a study of the relationship Makirans know as *marahu* (also *marafu*). In 1912, while headmaster of St Michael's, Fox wrote to Rivers:

I have exchanged names with the son of the Rafurafu [village] chief a mile away. I, sir, am Gafuavaro or Waiiau and I am definitely related not only to everyone here whom I must address correctly, but to bush people 50 miles away. This is to become *marahu* to a person. I am his *marahu(na)* & all his coconuts belong to me as much as to him. We exchanged presents. The people call me Gafuavaro. (Gafuavaro [Fox] 1912)

In a 1919 article, later incorporated into *Threshold*, Fox lays out his understanding of *marahu* as he encountered it in Bauro. He offers four definitions of the term: '(1) a namesake, (2) one with whom a man exchanges names, (3) one with whom he exchanges wives, (4) a friend' (Fox 1919:138; *cf.* 1924:54). The third kind of *marahu*, he says, 'is seldom seen nowadays'. The first and fourth forms are 'common', but the second is, in his view, 'the most interesting'. He reports that, '[m]ost natives, one is told, have a *marahu* in this [second] sense', but the only example he provides is from the legendary past – 'the famous case of Karani, of Santa Anna [*sic*], who became "Moto", exchanging names with the Wango chief who became "Karani"' (1919:138).¹⁰ To illustrate the consequences of such a tie, Fox describes his exchange with Gafuafaro and observes: 'A *marahu* is a close friend with whom one is on terms of great freedom...and is a means of adoption for a foreigner' (1919:139).

In *Threshold* itself, Fox includes otherwise unpublished material on the term *ha'imarahuda* that his correspondence with Rivers suggests he learned about at Heuru (Fox 1916). He defines *ha'imarahuda* in terms virtually synonymous with Bauro *marahu* type 2, but adds that a person may also enter into the *ha'imarahuda* relationship with an animal, a tree, or even an object:

The same term *ha'imarahuda* is used of the relation of a man and a tree, a stone, a pool of water, a star, or an animal....In the case of animals, I have only heard of

two with whom the bond is often formed – the shark and the *hada* (hawk)... These sacred sharks are the *marahu* of living men, not sharks in which ghosts live. (Fox 1924:266–267)

Fox clearly took the Bauro and Arosi practices to be essentially similar. I cannot comment on Bauro, past or present; but in light of my own research in Arosi, I would argue that Fox's account of same-name relationships lacks attention to a key distinction my work with Arosi has taught me to appreciate. Cast in my own analytical terms, Arosi distinguishes between (1) intra-lineal same-name relations, which elicit pre-existing intrinsic connections among persons, places, and things, and (2) extra-lineal same-name relations, which form and internalize new external connections among persons, places, and things (*cf.* Scott 2007:195–199).

Arosi say that a matrilineal category – which includes not only living and deceased humans but also ancestral land and sea and many non-human constituents such as stones, trees, snakes, birds, and sharks – is 'just one'. The constituents of such a category are taken to be ontologically consubstantial, forming what we might call a microcosmic monism. Within this small-scale monism, naming practices serve to differentiate persons and things over against underlying unity of being. Thus, a same-name relationship within a matrilineal category (typically a namesake relation between a living person and a deceased ancestor whose name may already index a shark, particular nut trees, a gardening area, *etc.*) elicits the intrinsic identity of the pair involved but does so in order further to differentiate the pair as a single entity over against the remainder of the category. This defines the living person as one endowed with the position and powers of the deceased namesake.

In contrast, Arosi say that a matrilineal category can become 'entangled' (*haikawikawi*) with other categories through diverse means of interrelationship (*e.g.*, through a namesake relation between a person and a non-matrilineal ancestor or name-exchange with someone from elsewhere). Without these entanglements, each matrilineal category would be an ontological isolate. Thus, a same-name relationship between persons instantiating different categories establishes a new link (typically one among several different kinds of link) between those two categories. In a living person, this internalizes an external relationship.¹¹

Today, Arosi still understand the word *marahu(na)* to mean a namesake or, less commonly, a friend; and the verb they almost always use to describe the act of naming, *ha'amarahu*, literally means to make someone *marahu*. As in Fox's day, it remains quite common for Arosi to have a *marahu* in the sense of a deceased ancestral namesake, either intra-lineal or extra-lineal. The mutual 'sending out' of ancestral names between intermarried matrilineages is a prevalent mode of entanglement.¹² In general, moreover, Arosi continue to understand names as more than nominal, as able to elicit intrinsic or form external connections between persons, places, and things (Scott 2007:195–199). This is especially evident, for example, with respect to names said to have been borne by 'shark-men' (*sae baba'ewa'a*), men who in pre-Christian times had been placed in namesake relations with particular ancestral sharks. It is now widely presumed that anyone, even a committed Christian, who has been given such a name inevitably co-exists in a sympathetic bond with his namesake's shark. The shark is said to protect him of its own accord, and if he chose to he could cultivate his power (*mena*) with the shark by making offerings at its shrine. But he is also vulnerable to injuries suffered by the shark. A well-known recent case is that of Mr Ben's brother, Gordon Hidawawa, whose second name is that of a documented pre-Christian shark-man (Fox 1924:232); people told me that the lip cancer Hida developed was owing to his shark having been hooked in the mouth by fishermen. Similarly, anyone given

the name of an ancestral shark itself acquires the same protection and perils of sympathy with that shark.¹³

All of that said, Fox's claim that, in the early 20th century, most Makirans had a *marahu* – in the sense of a living human partner in *ha'imarahuda* – requires qualification.

I never heard of a case of intra-lineal name-exchange between living Arosi. In fact, Arosi generally avoid any situation that would confer the same ancestral name on more than one living person. Within a category, to have two living bearers of the same name would be to undermine the power of the name to precipitate difference from categorical identity of being. Strategies exist, therefore, for giving a particular ancestor more than one living namesake without using the exact same name twice. A nickname attached to the ancestor may be given instead of the name already in use, or a variation on the name may be innovated by extrapolating and building differently on a sense unit within the original name. An ancestral name may be parsed, in other words, to further parse a matrilineal category.

I likewise never heard of a *recent* case of extra-lineal name-exchange between two living Arosi, or between a living Arosi and a living non-Arosi. That said, it is indubitable that such relationships existed in the past. As Fox's accounts highlight, however, extra-lineal name-exchange can give strangers access not only to a wide array of one's resources and privileges but also to one's very being. It seems likely, therefore, that such arrangements would have been tightly controlled and limited in pre-colonial times. Those who did exchange names were probably leaders who served as what Sidney Mead (1977), in a study of the southeast Solomons, terms 'managers' in the staging of reciprocal long-distance visits, undertaken for trade, feasting, performances, and the arrangement of marriages. Such visits required that managers acting for the communities in question first enter into a 'same name' relationship. This entailed an initial exchange of shell valuables and resulted in a lasting 'bond of friendship' (Mead 1977:149–154). Probably, the cases that Fox cites – those of Moto and Karani and the history of the name Takibaina (see note 10) – were of this extra-lineal type, as were his own adventures in *ha'imarahuda*. This mode of *marahu* friendship was primarily a way of making relations where none were taken as given. It was an act of internalizing others, transforming presumptively dangerous strangers into hospitable kin. For this reason, Fox's claim that it was widespread may have been justified when he made it. The arrival of European strangers in Solomon Islands, plus the creation of contexts such as plantations and mission schools that brought Islanders from different places together, may have temporarily intensified this mode of relationship in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Undeniably, it begins to look as though the *ha'imarahuda* relationship as Fox knew it was fundamentally the same as the well-documented name-exchange practices of Polynesia. Alfred Gell, for example, writing about the Marquesas Islands based on 19th century sources, says:

Exchanging names was the normal practice for those who wished to maintain social relationships outside their own immediate community: specialist craftsmen, for instance, who needed to travel from place to place in search of patrons, needed a complete network of name-exchangees, whose identity (i.e. kinship affiliations, wife, children, possessions, etc.) they assumed for the duration of their visit to some foreign valley, in return for extending the same kinds of favours to their opposite number when it was his turn to go travelling.... [A] man with an extended network of name-exchange partners was, in effect, a multiple person: in Edinburgh he was Angus; in Birmingham, Neville; in London, Albert. (1993:175–176)

In these Britannic terms Gell conveys the sense in which name-exchange facilitated travel, transforming distant places full of potentially hostile strangers into alternative homes full of relatives (see also Finney 1964). Such polynymy made one multi-local – not only able to move freely but always present in more than one place at once by virtue of one’s ‘same name’ partners (*cf.* Mead 1977:150).

Fox’s correspondence with Rivers reveals that he benefitted from his *marahu* relationship with Waiiau Gafuafaro in precisely these terms. In a letter dated 16 November 1916 – four years after this first name-exchange – he describes having crossed Bauro to the south coast of the island on foot and having spent ten days enjoying the hospitality to which being Waiiau entitled him: ‘I took no food etc. on the Haununu trip, lived like a Melanesian (and was called Waiiau) the whole time’ (Waiiau Gafuafaro [Fox] 1916). Moreover, he does not appear to have relinquished his identity as Waiiau when he acquired his identity as Takibaina (Fox 1919:138); he was Waiiau in Bauro and Takibaina in Arosi.¹⁴ People I knew in Arosi who understand themselves to be part of Takibaina’s multi-generational kindred were able to name for me specific individuals within this kindred with whom Fox stayed whenever he left Heuru to tour Arosi during his years as district priest. According to Casper Kaukeni (1936–2013) of Tawatana, this network continued to serve Fox many years after the plunge. Casper told me that his mother’s father, Shem Usunwara, referred to Fox as ‘my brother’ (*do’oragu*) when Fox revisited Arosi in 1948. ‘When Fox came to Tawatana,’ said Casper, who had been about twelve years old at the time, ‘he stayed with Shem and Horimaetoro, and Shem told me: “You speak of him as Takibaina”.’ Fox discovered and used the power of name-exchange almost as an ‘open-sesame’ (*cf.* Leenhardt 1979:156).

The obvious similarities here between the Marquesan and Makiran situations seem to recommend the conclusion that all forms of Pacific name-exchange are ways of overcoming difference in order to open pathways for diverse forms of traffic and that nothing more need or can be said about them. Despite these obvious similarities, however, there is also a significant non-obvious difference: a difference between the differences that these different name-exchange practices overcome.

A closer reading of Gell’s analysis of name-exchange in the Marquesas facilitates explication of this contrast. Gell points out that the indigenous cosmologies of Central-Eastern Polynesia, including that of the Marquesas, posit a cosmos that was ‘originally one’ (1995:21). Cosmogonic myths in these contexts imply that everything that comes into being remains ontologically consubstantial, despite processes of differentiation. The cosmos, according to these myths, is what we might call a macrocosmic monism. Turning to the topic of Marquesan naming practices, Gell argues that naming in the Marquesas serves to figure and reconfigure differences over against the ‘merging’ effect of generic categories and, ultimately, of generic being at the macrocosmic scale. Naming, Gell says, is part of a Marquesan ‘passion for subdivision and differentiation’ necessitated by the presumption of underlying identity of being (1993:174). In contrast, however, Marquesan name-exchange is about abrogating these hard-won distinctions; ‘[n]ame-exchange annulled differences’ (1993:176). In name-exchange, underlying unity is allowed to flow again between two persons, but only so as – quite literally – to identify the pair involved as a single entity, over against all others.

From this discussion, the import of my intervention should now be evident: Marquesan name-exchange is formally analogous to Arosi intra-lineal namesake relations but not to Arosi extra-lineal name-exchange. In fact, there is nothing analogous to Arosi extra-lineal anything in the Marquesan cosmology. This is because the Marquesan cosmos is analogous to one all-encompassing lineage category with no outside. Unlike the Arosi cosmos, with its many autonomous categories, the Marquesan cosmos knows no absolute, radical ontological gaps between things; its differences are made not given. Gell’s analysis enables us to see

that, whereas name-exchange in Arosi bridges an original gap between categories in order to achieve an external relation, name-exchange in the Marquesas obviates an achieved boundary in order to elicit and reframe intrinsic identity. And this difference points to another: the multiplicity acquired via name-exchange in these two contexts is not the same multiplicity. Marquesan name-exchange overcomes difference by dissolving it, allowing for a less limited, more capacious conjoined agency. But Arosi name-exchange overcomes difference while maintaining it. Arosi name-exchange does not do away with the ontological gap between categories; rather, it relocates that gap within each name-exchange partner, making each internally plural. Both modes of name-exchange and both kinds of multiplicity augment a person's *mana* and mobility, only differently.

FOX'S *MARAHU* MISSION METHOD

As Fox himself liked to note, other Europeans had exchanged names with Solomon Islanders before him. In both his autobiographies, when describing his name-exchange with Takibaina, Fox identifies John Coleridge Patteson (1827–71), first Bishop of Melanesia, and a certain Archdeacon Harper as his predecessors in the practice (Fox 1962:48; 1985:69–70). Writing to Sir Douglas Robb concerning the first European exploration of the Solomons in 1568, he also makes a point of observing that Alvaro de Mendaña, the leader of the expedition, exchanged names on Santa Isabel with a 'chief' called Bileban-Arra (Fox 1968).

Clearly, Fox was not unique as a European who exchanged names with Solomon Islanders; he even tried to increase awareness of these antecedents. I conclude, therefore, with evidence that a key element of what distinguished Fox as a man of *mana* was his theological commitment to what might be called his *marahu* mission method. There is warrant, I suggest, for supposing that Fox discerned a parallel between the ontological multiplicity implied in the *ha'imarahuda* relation and the ontological multiplicity of Christ according to the doctrine of the incarnation. This led him to pursue name-exchange with Solomon Islanders as an ontological as well as a social and moral imitation of Christ and to proclaim himself a Solomon Islander.

The earliest evidence for Fox's theological interest in the *ha'imarahuda* relationship resides in a 1918 letter to Rivers. Fox tells Rivers what lessons he impresses on the indigenous teachers in his training:

I have taught them what a splendid foundation the old ideas of the people are on which to build our new ones, e.g. the identity of men and animals after death and even in life, and similar Christian teaching as to God; the heathen baptisms and ours; the *marauhu* seclusion [*i.e.*, the preparation of boys for initiation into the sacred company of bonito fishermen] and our schools....They had the idea that the Jewish passover etc. were preparation for Christianity, but I teach them that the customs and thoughts of these people were *their* preparation and intended to be so. (Fox 1918, emphasis original)

The relevant information here is that, for Fox, 'the old ideas' concerning 'the identity of men and animals after death and even in life' are 'a splendid foundation...on which to build...similar Christian teaching as to God'. The Christian teaching he had in mind, I submit, is the doctrine of the incarnation.

The phrase 'the identity of men and animals after death and even in life' refers to two different 'old ideas' in which Fox saw different refigurations of the incarnation.

The first idea, still prevalent today, is that the *adaro* – the life-force of a person – remains a social agent after a person's death and can appear as any number of things. Translating *adaro* as 'soul' and 'ghost', Fox wrote of this idea:

Natives of San Cristoval firmly believe in the continued existence of the soul after death....After death a great many ghosts become *incarnate* in animals....When the souls of the dead dwell in animals, the animals are endowed with human understanding, and may aid the living. (Fox and Drew 1915:161–163, emphasis added)

From his choice of words in this ethnographic account, we can infer how Fox might have used this idea to teach his teachers. He probably suggested that, when their ancestors had said that an *adaro* becomes an animal who aids the living, they had anticipated what the Bible reveals, namely that God became incarnate as Jesus in order to live among us and help us.

The idea that animals may be what Fox calls 'incarnations' of the dead can, but need not always, intersect with same-name relations (*e.g.*, the animal in question, if identified, may be referred to by the name of the deceased; *cf.* Codrington 1891:179). Yet Fox juxtaposes this idea to a second that unequivocally entails name-exchange. This second idea, indexed by the words 'and even in life', in which Fox also saw something similar to the doctrine of the incarnation, can only be the idea that it is possible for humans to perform *ha'imarahuda* with nonhumans, especially sharks. As in his letter to Rivers (Fox 1918), in *Threshold* he discusses these two ideas together:

That *adaro* sometimes went into sharks there is plenty of evidence to prove, just as they found a home in the turtle, the skate, and the octopus. But the were-shark of Ulawa and San Cristoval seems to be a different thing.... For the were-shark is called the *marahu* of the man. The shark-man and the were-shark perform *ha'imarahuda*, and what they exchange is their souls. (1924:231)

In this case, on the foundation of the Makiran concept of the shark-man, Fox sought to build the new idea of the 'God-man'. If, Fox seems to have reasoned, Makirans already thought that a man could become multiple, in the sense of internally plural – fully himself and fully a shark (or a stone or another man) – then they were primed to receive the idea that God had become multiple in Christ, fully human and fully divine.

In 1920 Fox contributed an article to *The Southern Cross Log* entitled 'The Melanesian Point of View' in which he elaborated the parallels he perceived between what he had described to Rivers as 'the heathen baptisms and ours'. This article reveals that, by this time, Fox was bringing his ethnological studies of Makira into dialogue with at least one specific theological work on the incarnation. He concludes the article with a quotation from E. L. Strong's *Lectures on the Incarnation of God* (1920), implying that the quoted text resonates strongly with Makiran ideas about life-giving waters.¹⁵

If Fox found resonances between Makiran ideas about water and Strong's language about baptism, it is safe to infer, I propose, that he likewise found resonances between Makiran ideas about same-name friendship and Strong's language about the incarnation. According to Strong the bond of love between two friends can produce a 'double consciousness' that prepares human beings to understand the 'two natures' that God assumed by becoming human.

I can love a person so much that I can enter into his thoughts.... I can have a double consciousness – my own and my friend's.... I am, therefore, in a position to

receive the revelation that God is the Being who has this power in its perfection...: that He so loved man as to become man Himself. ... [W]hereas I sometimes have two distinct consciousnesses – my own and the friend's whom I love – because I can love a little, He, God, the perfection of love, can have and has two consciousnesses, the divine and human, each perfect and distinct, so that He is man as truly as He is God. (Strong 1920:67–68)

From Fox's first-hand experiences and reflections on this kind of theology, a deeply personal incarnational missiology emerged. He came to understand his *marahu* friendship with Takibaina and his plunge into Arosi life as imitation of Christ in two ways. He not only emulated Christ as suffering servant; by virtue of his *ha'imarahuda* with Takibaina, he did so within an encompassing emulation of Christ as an ontologically double being. This *marahu* mission method entailed an ontological claim: just as God had literally become a man in the person of Christ, so Fox asserted that he had literally become a Melanesian.

Crucially, however, just as God, according to the doctrine of the incarnation, assumed a human nature in the person of Christ without abandoning an existing divine one, Fox assumed the personhood of Takibaina, the Melanesian, without abandoning the existing personhood of Fox, the European. Whereas Christ was two natures in one person, Fox was two persons as one body and comported himself as such. While living in Arosi as Takibaina, he continued to perform the priestly duties of the Rev. Fox, acted as artefact collector for the Otago Museum, and produced his scholarly works under the name of Fox. The simultaneity of this multiplicity is especially evident in a letter he wrote, eight months after taking the plunge, to District Officer J.C. Barley. In a European voice, addressing another European, he reports on 'native opinion' and refers to Makirans as 'they'. Yet he signs the letter Takibaina (Takibaina [Fox] 1920). In his post-Makiran years, furthermore, Fox exchanged names with two more Solomon Islanders, one on Malaita and one on Gela (Fox n.d.:81), thus extending his Melanesian multiplicity.

There is no doubt that, in some of his letters to Europeans, Fox wrote about his name-exchanges with a jocularly that might seem to suggest he did not take their ontological implications seriously. Yet, it seems equally clear that he was earnest when, for example, he addressed a Solomons readership using the inclusive 'we' (Fox 1967), or when, in his retirement to New Zealand, he repeatedly told visitors, 'I am a Solomon Islander!', 'I am a Melanesian' (Whiteman 1983:216; Young 1978; see also Fox 1985:125). This latter claim so perturbed Darrell Whiteman that he felt compelled to seek confirmation or denial from Solomon Islanders. Denial came from Bishop Dudley Tuti, who nevertheless conceded that Fox 'came closer than any other European missionary we have known to truly understanding us and being one of us' (in Whiteman 1983:216, but see Palmer 1977; cf. Jones 2008:204). European scholarship has tended to defer to this opinion. But people I know in Arosi might beg to differ. If Whiteman was perplexed at how Fox could claim to be a Melanesian, some Arosi were perplexed at how Fox could fail ultimately to return home to them. Regarding his departure after his 1948 visit, Casper Kaukeni said, 'People could not understand why Fox was going to live in Taroaniara [on Gela] and not here in Arosi. The people here wanted him to settle and die on Makira.'¹⁶

But if my analysis apprehends something of Fox's views, he did not see being European and being Melanesian as mutually exclusive. He too presupposed a difference between Europeans and Melanesians. What distinguished his position was that he sought neither to exaggerate nor deny this difference, but to be it. More than once he stated that he valued the medallion of the Melanesian Brotherhood, given to him when he was invited to re-join the Brotherhood in 1975, above the CBE, given to him by the Queen in 1974 (Macdonald-Milne 2003:255; Young 1978). This, I suggest, was because the former signified to him that at least some people recognized him as a *Melanesian* Brother. It meant that the message in his

marahu mission method – that he was a living parable of the multiplicity of Christ – had been accepted by some. The fact that many people, like Mr Benjamin Mononga'i, Madam Sarah Gede Tanara, and John Still Ri'itau have credited Fox with extraordinary powers, or asked, like Thomas Bea, whether something changed him when he came to the Solomons, may be another indicator of his success at enacting the *mana* of *marahu* multiplicity.

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NOTES

1. For a nearly complete bibliography of Fox's works, see Edridge 1985.
2. The Melanesian Mission began in 1849 under George Augustus Selwyn (1809–78), the first Bishop of New Zealand, and lasted until 1975 when the Church of Melanesia became an independent Anglican Province. In Fox's day it comprised much of present-day Solomon Islands and northern Vanuatu. Renamed the Anglican Church of Melanesia (ACoM) in 2008, it now comprises eight dioceses located across the nation-states of Solomon Islands and Vanuatu and the French territory of New Caledonia.
3. Applied to Fox, the term *mana* seems to mean something like 'spiritual power'. On the longstanding anthropological debate about whether *mana* is best understood as a verb (to be efficacious) or a noun (efficacious power), or both, see Kolshus 2013; Oroï 2016; Tomlinson 2006.
4. Ri'itau was a Melanesian Brother from 1943 to 1958; for more about him, see Macdonald-Milne 2003:154–155.
5. For Arosi understandings of the capacity of persons and things with *mena* to be dangerous, see Oroï 2016 (cf. Jones 2008:100–101, 158–162; Whiteman 1983:339).
6. Tragically, a death like Takibaina's from colonially introduced disease was not unusual at this time on Makira (cf. Scott 2007:82–88). To my knowledge, no one has ever suggested that Takibaina's name-exchange with Fox had anything to do with his death or that his death impinged negatively on Arosi perceptions of Fox.
7. It is possible, however, that Coombe observed Takibaina in his home setting when she visited Heuru.
8. Fox makes little reference to the fact that his name-exchange with Takibaina made him a chief, stating only that '[m]any native problems were brought for me to decide' (1962:49; cf. 1918). During my fieldwork, I encountered no Arosi discourses about Fox as a chief. On the changing nature of Arosi chiefship in the early twentieth century, see Scott 2007:75–82.
9. Bea's positioning of Fox as spiritual founder of the Brotherhood is probably based on his reading of *Kakamora* (1962:67). In 1916, while Fox was based at Raubero, he organized a small band of indigenous missionaries who became known as the St Aidan's Fellowship or Brotherhood (Scott, forthcoming). Fox himself suggests a direct continuity between this earlier initiative on Makira and the Melanesian Brotherhood.
10. In a later publication Fox says that his adopted name, Takibaina, entered Arosi through a similar name-exchange in the past. A chief by this name from the neighbouring island of Ulawa (Takipaina in the Ulawa language) had exchanged names with an Arosi chief to form 'a firm friendship' (1962:48) between the two areas.
11. Elsewhere I have theorized these non-Cartesian pluralist premises of Arosi cosmology as what I call poly-ontology, see Scott 2007.
12. A good example of this can be seen in the name Takibaina itself, according to Fox (1924:302). This name placed Takibaina/Fox in an extra-lineal namesake relationship with an antecedent Takibaina who had been

- the father of David Bo'orauaniara. This namesake relationship gave Takibaina/Fox access to land belonging to the earlier Takibaina's matrilineage.
13. The shark-man tradition may supply the logic, I suggest, whereby the receiving of a stone (taken from the armpit of a *kakamora*) comes to stand for the receiving of two names (Takibaina and Kakamora) in Bea's 'fiction'. In pre-Christian times, the making of a boy into a shark-man entailed two elements: placing the boy in a same-name relation, either with a shark or with a previous shark-man, and giving him a shark-stone (*hau ba'ewa*), an object, said literally *to be* the shark (*ba'ewa*), through which the new shark-man would influence his shark. There is, furthermore, an Arosi verb, *bwaeni*, which means 'to hold under the arm' or 'to make someone into a shark-man' (Fox 1978:115). I was told that, in order to initiate a shark-boy, an existing shark-man would clasp a child (usually his son) together with the shark – in its stone form – under his arm (cf. Fox 1918, 1962:65).
 14. The details I know about Waiau Gafuafaro are even fewer than those I have learned about Martin Takibaina. His father, the chief of Raturafu village, was called Mono (Fox 1913:183). Fox (1910:54; see also 1924:59) explains that Waiau was an additional name given to Gafuafaro because he had been a sickly baby. A man named Waiau had recently died, and his name was given to the infant in order to strengthen it with the powers of the dead namesake (cf. Scott 2007:197). The publication date of this information, 1910, combined with a later reference to Norfolk Island in relation to this double naming (Fox 1913:183), prompts the inference that, like Takibaina, Gafuafaro was a student there and met Fox in that context.
 15. Hilliard (2005:200–202) has shown that the Melanesian Mission was deeply informed by the incarnationalism of 'liberal Catholicism' (in the tradition of Tractarianism), which taught that there was a partial revelation in every non-Christian religion that found its fulfilment in the perfect revelation of the incarnation. Strong was associated with this movement.
 16. Other Arosi think of Fox as having stayed 'a lifetime' (Oroi 2016:194, n. 6) despite having relocated within the Solomons, and in many ways Fox did continue to abide in Arosi, e.g., through a placename he innovated (Tawaro'a, at Hagaura village), people who were named after him, gifts he sent after he left for Taroaniara, etc.

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