

## **Historicities as modes of becoming in Ambonwari, Papua New Guinea**

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### ABSTRACT

Historicities among the Karawari-speaking Ambonwari of Papua New Guinea are highly selective, emphasising connection between past, present and future. Without this connection, which is experienced as lived reality, historicities would not exist. They need temporal thickness, which is best exemplified in group, person and gender specific ways of doing things. In my paper I look at a practice of a woman giving food to her brothers and fathers, and a man to his sister and wife. The practice has its origin in a debt, called *kunaypa* ‘a splinter of sago leaf’s stem’ that sticks out, which came about as a consequence of ancient misconducts. As a ‘concept’ *kunaypa* refers to a story and a practice, to thinking, feeling and doing, and is as a rule filled with social and moral connotation. Although experienced as cosmological identification and authentication in the present, I argue, historicities need to be oriented towards somebody or something and are driven by the future. Therefore, historicities, embedded in beings and things and doings and sayings, are modes of becoming. When a radically different future is desired, however, certain beings, things, doings and sayings need to be abandoned, suppressed or modified, as if a desired ‘novelty’ has already been part of people’s own mode of becoming.