

## Song and Cosmology on Satawal

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## Song and Cosmology on Satawal

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Aspects of traditional cosmology on Satawal Island in the Central Carolines are examined by analyzing symbolic meanings of song and dance. On Satawal, song and dance are called *pwaay* and are conceived of as inseparable and identical. However, dances are always accompanied by songs, whereas songs are not always accompanied by dances. Songs accompanied by dances are called *pwaay*, and songs without dances include lullabies (*yarhúwérhúwén faan yúnéyún*), lament (*yarhúwérhúwén wenimá*), shamanistic song (*yómwóroyanú*), and song concerning a heroic event (*wuur*). Satawalese song and dance are performed in non-ordinary spatio-temporal settings. The shamanistic song is sung during a healing ritual in which a shaman invites a specific deity (*yanú*) to possess her and to heal illness. Non-ordinary elements of lullabies and laments are analyzed with emphasis on the ambiguous concept of *maan*, which means, in this context, those human beings who have special and non-ordinary attributes. Two special *pwaay*, which are called *yayinéyú* and *yamúúmún wenipwén*, are revealed in their non-ordinary nature by examining the Satawalese concept of space. Unlike *pwaay*, which are sung and danced in rituals or under non-ordinary settings, songs concerning heroic events (*wuur*) are exceptional and can be sung in everyday and ordinary life. However, *wuur* is a polysemous concept, and means not only "song" and "dance" but also "play". The fact that *wuur* is related to "play" inevitably leads to the trichotomy of "sacred", "profane", and "play", instead of the ordinary/non-ordinary dichotomy, which is parallel to the dichotomy of "profane" and "sacred". The analysis based on this trichotomy may clarify symbolic meanings of song and dance on Satawal, and reveal some aspects of traditional cosmology in a Micronesian society.

**Keywords:** sacred, profane, play, ritual, symbolic classification.

### INTRODUCTION

Anthropologists who have worked in Micronesia since the second world war have made relatively little use of song and dance as a major source of information about the societies they have studied. This article examines aspects of traditional cosmology in Micronesia by analyzing symbolic meanings of song and dance on Satawal Island.

Satawal is an isolated coral island located in the center of the Caroline Islands, with a circumference of only 6 km and a population of 500. The main theme of my fieldwork on Satawal was traditional religion and cosmology, and the principal focus was the oral tradition of myths and magical spells. Songs were of only secondary importance in this research. Thus this article has the following three basic limitations: first, the data on which this paper is based are confined to the study of the symbolic meaning of songs on Satawal, and no comparative study was conducted on songs of other Micronesian islands. Second, since I am a specialist in cultural anthropology and not in ethnomusicology, no reference has been made to the musicological aspect of Satawalese songs. Third, Satawal Island became a Trust Territory governed by the United States after World War II. This caused drastic cultural changes and particularly, the mass conversion to Christianity, which occurred in 1953. As a result, traditional religion disappeared and the symbolic meaning of Satawalese songs also underwent remarkable changes. This paper attempts to reconstruct the symbolic meaning of traditional songs, based on data obtained by interviewing elders. The ethnographic present is therefore prior to World War II. The most important informant was Mr. Ewiyong, who was nearly 80 years old.

## SONG AND DANCE

On Satawal, songs are called *pwaay*. This term means both songs and dances, which are conceived of as inseparable and identical.

Dances are always accompanied by songs, whereas songs are not always accompanied by dances. Some songs have dances, and others do not. Songs accompanied by dances are called *pwaay*, but songs not accompanied by dances constitute a different category.

Songs without dances include lullabies, laments, shamanistic songs, and songs concerning a heroic event. A lullaby is called *yarhúwérhúwén faan yúnéyún*, and is sung in order to lullabies to sleep. The lament is called *yarhúwérhúwén wenimá*, and is sung overnight after a person's death. The shamanistic song is called *yómwóroyanú*, and is sung by a group of persons before a shaman becomes possessed by a deity. A song composed to commemorate a heroic event is called *wuur*. These songs describe, for example, the success of ocean voyaging, canoe building, and house building. The heroes of these songs are mostly men and in most cases they are composed by the hero's sisters. *Wuur* also means "dance" and "play". Thus, *wuur* is a polysemous word with several important meanings. The relationship between song and play is described in detail later.

There are many *pwaay*, or songs accompanied by dances (Table 1). Few were actually composed on Satawal, and it is said that most have been transmitted from other islands.

*Pwaay* consists of three elements, *kkéén*, *kooko* and *poomw*. *Kkéén* means lyrics, *kooko* is melody, and *poomw* means bodily actions.

Table 1. *Pwaay* on Satawal

<i>fayirhóópwut</i>	<i>sópwósópw</i>
<i>kepwakún</i>	<i>súúnúporow</i>
<i>maas</i>	<i>topwunonimwár</i>
<i>nánginap</i>	<i>waafanúw</i>
<i>nánginipiy</i>	<i>yámát</i>
<i>nayúúra</i>	<i>yammaakuf</i>
<i>nguur</i>	<i>yayinéyú</i>
<i>peteráán</i>	<i>yúúmaaw</i>
<i>sápeto</i>	

One of the characteristics of the songs on Satawal is that except for lullabies, none are sung solo. The islanders always sing in chorus. However, there is never a mixed chorus of men and women, and songs are sung either by a group of men or by a group of women. This also applies to dances. This clear division by sex is a basic principle that governs various aspects of the Satawalese society. However, an exceptional case is the *pwaay* called *yámát*, where songs and dances are performed alternately by men and women. The men and women are not, however, mixed during the song or dance: first, the men perform the *pwaay* and then the women perform it in response. This cycle is repeated again and again.

Another feature of Satawalese songs is that no musical instrument is used. On Satawal there are two instruments used for making sound: a trumpet shell and a flute made of coconut leaves. They are not used for musical purposes. The trumpet shell is blown to signal an assembly when a meeting of adult men is being held under the order of the chiefs. It is also used as a means of communication when two or more canoes are on a voyage, or in a ritual for calming storms. The coconut leaf flute is a children's toy, and is never used by adults.

The absence of musical instruments is also pointed out by E. G. Burrows, who conducted research on folk music on Ifaluk Atoll [BURROWS 1958: 9-11]. Hisao Tanabe, in his research on the Truk Islands in 1934, recorded nose flutes as the sole musical instrument [TANABE 1935: 53-54]. Since Satawal is culturally close to the Truk Islands, and the islanders traded with each other by canoe, it is quite likely that in the past the Satawalese also had nose flutes. However, since the nose flute on Truk is made of either bamboo or mangrove and that Satawal has neither bamboo nor mangrove, it would be impossible for nose flutes to be produced on Satawal. Elders also confirm that there were no such things as nose flutes on Satawal. Thus, the Satawal Island can be regarded as a society which traditionally has had no musical instruments. Today, however, imported musical instruments such as guitars, ukuleles and harmonicas are popular primarily among young people.

Dances on Satawal can be classified into two categories: "standing dances" and "sitting dances". There are also dances in which sticks are used. The stick dance performed solely by men, either standing or sitting. Bodily actions in a dance are

Table 2. *Poomw* of Men's Dance

1. <i>faanik</i>	(stepping on the ground)
2. <i>fanapw</i>	(tapping on the armpit with one hand)
3. <i>niferh</i>	(swaying the head from side to side)
4. <i>noopw</i>	(tapping with the palm flats of the hands in folding up and down)
5. <i>piis</i>	(tapping on the thighs with the hands)
6. <i>weey</i>	(tapping with the palm flats of the hands in folding right and left)
7. <i>yammaan</i>	(spreading out the arms)
8. <i>yásáyin</i>	(swaying with the thighs)
9. <i>yónuwonuw</i>	(tapping on the armpits with hands in crossing the arms)

called *poomw*. Those of men's dances are listed in Table 2. However, my data on dances is limited and more detailed research is required.

## SONG AND RITUAL

No Satawalese song or dance can usually be performed under just ordinary circumstances in any place at any time. They must be performed in non-ordinary spatio-temporal settings.

The shamanistic song is sung during a ritual in which a shaman invites a specific *yanú* to possess her. The Satawalese term *yanú* means "superhuman being", or "deity". There are roughly two categories of *yanú*: *yanúfir* and *yanúpwut*. *Fir* means "good", and *pwut* means "bad". Therefore, these can be literally translated into "benevolent deity" and "malevolent deity". It is believed that the *yanúfir* brings good fortune to human beings and that *yanúpwut* brings misfortune.

On Satawal, a shaman is called *wanuanú*. Since *waa* means "canoe", *wanuanú* is translated as "the canoe of a superhuman being" or "the vehicle of a deity". *Yanú* which possess the shaman are usually the souls of dead relatives. The shamanistic ritual is performed when someone becomes ill, the cause of which is a bad *yanú* depriving the human being of his/her soul. The soul is called *ngón*, and the islanders believe that souls live in human bodies. When a person is deprived of his/her soul by a bad *yanú*, he/she becomes ill or goes crazy. The shamanistic ritual is performed to gain assistance from a good *yanú*, in order to recover the lost soul. At the beginning of a healing ritual the shamanistic song is sung by a group, and then the *yanú* is invited to possess the shaman.

On Satawal, illness is called *semwaay*. *Se* is a prefix of negation, and *mwaay* is an abbreviated form of the word *mwanwaay*, which means "well". Thus, *semwaay* means "not well". The Satawalese people believe that all illness is caused by *yanú*. It is mostly caused by bad *yanú*, but occasionally by good *yanú*. A good *yanú* causes illness as a form of punishment when people do not observe taboos imposed on them by that *yanú*. A good example is that of the *yanú* of the breadfruit tree,

which are classified as good *yanú*, but which sometimes cause illness. The breadfruit tree is valuable for building canoes and houses. The islanders are only allowed to fell the tree during a specified period of the year, and are requested to perform a ritual prior to felling it. They believe that illness is caused by the *yanú* of the breadfruit tree when this taboo is ignored. A healing ritual is conducted immediately whenever someone becomes ill. Dances are performed during this healing ritual. One such dance for illness caused by the *yanú* of the breadfruit tree is called *pwaay ni yasaf*. *Yasaf* means "frigate bird", so that *pwaay ni yasaf* literally means "the dance of frigate birds". Frigate birds are associated with the *yanú* of the breadfruit tree, since they are believed to bring breadfruit from a mythical island, which is governed by the *yanú* of the breadfruit tree. The participants in the healing ritual ought to dance as if they were frigate birds while praying for the person's recovery. After the dancing, a magical medicine is administered to the patient.

Songs and dances are performed in settings other than these rituals. One *pwaay*, called *yayinéyú*, is performed on the occasion of a large catch of fish. More precisely, this *pwaay* is performed when the islanders obtain a large catch by a special fishing method used when driftwood is sighted off shore. Because plankton adheres to the driftwood, large schools of fish follow it. When the men return to the island with a large catch, before their canoes can enter the pass, they must stop in front of the reef, where they perform a *pwaay* while keeping their canoes stationary. According to the Satawalese concept of space, the sea is divided into the island's "reef" which they call *neeset* and the "ocean" which they call *neemetaw* [ISHIMORI 1985a: 178-180]. Of these two, *neeset* is incorporated into the domestic or ordinary space of the islanders, whereas *neemetaw* is regarded as non-domestic or non-ordinary space. *Neeset* is the area inside the reef which is often utilized in everyday life. By contrast, *neemetaw* is an area which cannot be reached without using an out-rigger canoe, and is regarded by the islanders as a space controlled by *yanú*. The fact that *yayinéyú* celebrating a big catch of fish must be performed not in *neeset* but in *neemetaw* suggests that *pwaay* must be performed not in an ordinary space but in the non-ordinary space. Furthermore, this *pwaay* involves many obscene words and bodily actions which are prohibited in everyday life. Judging from these facts, *yayinéyú* can be regarded as non-ordinary song and dance. Due to the non-ordinary nature of this *pwaay*, the taboo which ordinarily prohibits obscenity is lifted [ISHIMORI 1987].

Another *pwaay*, which is similar to *yayinéyú*, is called *yamúúmún wenipwén*. This type of *pwaay* is performed by women working in a taro patch for the purpose of seducing the men engaged in their work in a nearby coconut field. Since the aim of this *pwaay* is to provoke men into love-making, it contains many obscene words which are strictly prohibited in everyday life. The lifting of the usual taboo in this *pwaay* is also related to the place where it is performed, as in the case of *yayinéyú*. According to the Satawalese concept of space, the island is divided into *neemaan* and *neewan*. While *neemaan* means the residential area where houses are built, *neewan* means the inland area where the coconut field and taro patch are

located. The islanders regard the former as domestic or ordinary space whereas they regard the latter as non-domestic or non-ordinary space. The fact that *yamúúmún wenipwén* is performed in the non-ordinary space suggests that this *pwaay* is non-ordinary song and dance.

Another song and dance containing obscene words is the one performed when welcoming men who have come to visit Satawal from neighbouring island. The visitors to the island stay in a canoe house. Several days after their arrival, the women of the island perform the welcome dance for them. Women bring them food and then stand in a row in front of the canoe house to perform the welcoming song and dance. The song sung on this occasion contains many obscene words to provoke the visitors [SUDO 1980: 1032]. Since visitors are outsiders, the use of obscene words normally prohibited in ordinary life is tolerated.

There is yet another occasion for which *pwaay* is performed. This type of *pwaay* is performed intensively during a fixed period of time determined by the chiefs of the island. During this time, people are prohibited from trespassing on *neewan* (the inland area) where the taro patch, breadfruit trees and coconut field are located. Since Satawal Island is a small coral island with extremely infertile soil and poor food resources, this ban is issued in order to conserve the limited resources. This ban is called *merhang*, and during this period the islanders are forced to behave in a collective manner. They are prohibited from entering *neewan*, the only exception being when the chiefs order a young man to blow a trumpet shell. The chiefs have the trumpet shell blown twice a day (at around noon and at four o'clock in the afternoon). When the islanders hear this sound, they go to a bathing spot in *neewan* to bathe. When the trumpet shell is blown again about an hour later, they must go home immediately. If one remains in the taro patch or the coconut field after the shell is blown for the second time, he/she will be punished by the chiefs. However, people are allowed to harvest taros once every three days even during this *merhang* period, but they are forced to act collectively. Thus, various activities of the islanders' ordinary life are severely restricted during *merhang*. Interestingly, the non-ordinary period of *merhang* provides a golden opportunity for *pwaay*. Throughout the *merhang* period, the islanders assemble every night in a canoe house to perform *pwaay*. There are eight canoe houses (*wutt*) on the island. The adult men belong to any one of them, and always share daily activities with the other members of the same *wutt*. For example, when going fishing, repairing canoes, or constructing or repairing houses, the members of the same *wutt* work together. In the course of the islanders' ordinary life it is taboo for women to enter or even approach the *wutt*. Therefore, the *wutt* is the symbol of the men's world (a space from which women are strictly excluded). During the *merhang* period, however, this taboo is lifted to permit women to enter the *wutt* to perform *pwaay*. Under the non-ordinary circumstance of *merhang*, the taboo of ordinary daily life is lifted.

The Satawalese have lullabies and laments, as well as various types of *pwaay*. On Satawal, both lullabies and laments are included in the same category, *yarhúwérhúw*. *Ya* is a causative prefix, and *rhúwérhúw* means "to cry". Liter-

ally translated, it means “to have someone cry”. However, only with regard to the two verbs: *rúwérhúw* and *má*, meaning “to cry” and “to die” respectively, the addition of the prefix transforms the meanings from “to have someone cry” and “to have someone die” into “to do something for a crying person” and “to do something for a dying person”, respectively. Accordingly, in the case of a lullaby, the term means “to fondle a crying baby by singing a lullaby”. Likewise, in the case of a lament, the term means “to console people crying over the dead by singing a lament”. In this sense, both lullabies and laments are considered to belong to the same category.

It is necessary to scrutinize the relationship between lullabies and laments with reference to their non-ordinary nature. First, laments are non-ordinary songs since they are sung as part of a funeral ritual. When a person dies the women continuously sing laments throughout the night while crying over the dead. Next morning the corpse is buried in the ground or sunk at sea. The lament constitutes an essential part of the funeral ritual, and can be regarded as a non-ordinary song in this regard. On the contrary, lullabies are ordinarily sung in everyday life, and lack the non-ordinary element. However, further analysis of these songs from a different viewpoint reveals why both lullabies and laments are classified in the same category, called *yarhúwérhúw*.

On Satawal, a “baby” is termed *manikón* and “the dead” are called *manimá*. It should be noted that both are classified in the same category of *maan* (*man* is an abbreviated form). The term *maan* is polysemous, and has at least three meanings [AKIMICHI 1981: 73–75]. First, *maan* is a generic name denoting animals including human beings. Second, *maan* is a generic name denoting animals other than human beings. In this case, “human beings” are referred to as *yáremas*. Third, *maan* may mean human beings with special attributes. In this case, such human beings are described in the form: *maan* + A (where A is the term denoting the special attribute of that human being). Applying this third meaning, a “baby” is termed *manikón* and “the dead” are termed *manimá*. The syllable *kón* in *manikón* means “to lie”, and *má* in *manimá* means “dead”. In other words, *manikón* means a baby who only lies as opposed to an ordinary human who can stand and walk; and *manimá* means a “dead” person as opposed to a “living” person. Similarly, a “crazy person” is termed *manimmang*, a “woman during menstruation” is termed *manipeyitákenó*, and a “pregnant women” is termed *manuwuupw*. They are all classified in the same category of *maan*, as are babies and the dead, because of their non-ordinary attributes [ISHIMORI 1985b].

Many taboos are imposed on people belonging to this *maan* category because they have an ambiguous character as *yáremas* (“human being”) and *maan* (“animal”). This ambiguous relationship is shown in Fig. 1. As Edmund Leach pointed out, ambiguous categories attract maximum interest and are most prone to taboos [LEACH 1973: 221–234].

Thus, the baby and the dead are the beings symbolizing the “beginning” and “end” of the life of human beings. They both have an ambiguous character, and



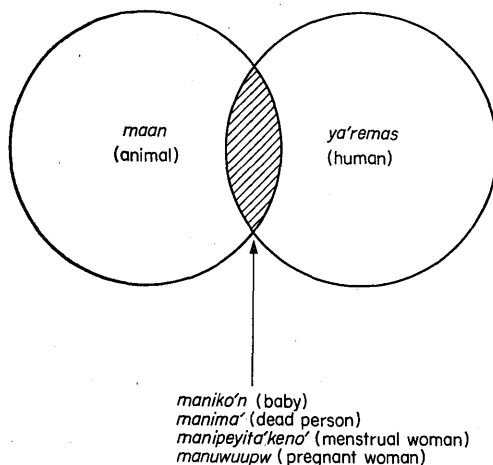


Figure 1. Relationship of *maan* and *yáremas*

are non-ordinary beings, having strong ties with *yanú*. Therefore, it can be concluded that for this reason lullabies and laments are conceived by the Satawalese as belonging to the same category of *yarhúwérhúw*.

### SONG AND PLAY

Songs and dances such as *pwaay* are only sung and danced in rituals or under non-ordinary settings. However, *wuur*, or songs concerning heroic events, are exceptional, and can be sung in everyday life. Here, attention must be drawn to the fact that the term *wuur* is polysemous. *Wuur* means not only "song" and "dance" but also "play". The latter is the original meaning of *wuur*.

For children, *wuur* means "play", such as a competition where children stand on their hands and try to keep that posture for as long as possible, as well as "play" similar to tag.

Why is a "song" concerning heroic events related to "play"? The answer can be found in the spatio-temporal setting in which *wuur* is sung. *Wuur* is primarily sung by male adults. However, they are not allowed to sing this song at any time or in any place. The men sing *wuur* when they drink coconut toddy in a group after finishing the day's work. In other words, *wuur* is sung during a feast of coconut toddy which is held after the men are released from their ordinary work, and this feast can be interpreted as "play". In this sense, *wuur* is cognized as belonging to the same category as "play".

The term *wuur* has another important meaning denoting one of the island's major events. This is a song and dance contest between two groups of female adults. On Satawal there are two villages: the north village and the south village. Women residing in these two villages get together on a predetermined date, and hold the song and dance contest. As the date draws near, the women practise hard.

On the day of the contest they powder their entire body with turmeric and adorn themselves with ornaments made of young coconut leaves. They then gather in front of the *wuut* located in the center of the village where the contest is held. One group of women belonging to one village then stands facing that of the other village, and for two to three hours they are engaged in a competition of song and dance. The male islanders do not participate in the *wuur*, but become an active audience, shouting to enliven the *wuur*. This audience surrounds the women.

No public judgment is made regarding the superiority of either of the groups' songs and dances at the end of the *wuur*. However, because the performance of a particular woman will be inevitably talked about by the villagers among themselves, every woman practises *wuur* seriously.

In this regard, it is worth noting that the Satawalese intentionally avoid open competition in their daily life, since it would be self-defeating on a small, resourceless coral island. In view of this, the *wuur* event is exceptional. It is interesting that this event is given the status of *wuur* (that is, "play") to prevent conflict after the women of the two villages openly compete with each other in song and dance.

In summary, *wuur* can be interpreted as song and dance related to "play", whereas *pwaay* is song and dance performed in rituals or under non-ordinary circumstances. However, *wuur* and *pwaay* are more clearly discriminated because *wuur* is song and dance composed by human beings, whereas *pwaay* is thought of as not being composed by or for human beings, but as being created by and for *yanú*, or superhuman beings.

The Satawalese term meaning "to compose a song" is *kkapwúng*. The original meaning of this term is "to learn". Therefore, *pwaay* suggests that it is not composed by human beings under their own free will but is learned from *yanú*. How then do human beings learn songs and dances from *yanú*? The Satawalese say that when a shaman is possessed by a deity, they can learn songs and dances by watching her mouth and bodily actions. In this way, many different types of *pwaay* and shamanistic songs have been learned from *yanú*.

By contrast, songs and dances performed during *wuur* have been composed by female adults specifically for that event. Likewise, *wuur* as songs concerning heroic events are primarily composed by the sisters of the men for whom the songs were devoted. The verb describing the act of creating these *wuur* is *féeri*, which has the general meaning of "to make".

Thus, *pwaay* and shamanistic songs are songs and dances created by *yanú* and which have been taught to human beings through shamans. They are songs and dances to be performed for the sake of *yanú*. On the other hand, the songs and dances called *wuur* are created by and for human beings and performed for their own sake. *Wuur* is classified as "play" in that it is performed by people during their leisure time.

## SONG AND LANGUAGE

An attempt has been made to show that on Satawal all songs and dances other than *wuur* are performed in ritualistic contexts or under non-ordinary circumstances. The same also applies to "language".

Before the islanders were collectively converted to Christianity in 1953, various kinds of rituals had been conducted on Satawal. There were, for example, rituals to calm storms, rituals to heal illnesses, rituals to call bonitos, rituals to call breadfruits, and so on. The ritual language used on these occasions was different from ordinary language.

The language used in ordinary life is termed *kepas*, whereas ritual language is termed *roong* [ISHIMORI 1980, 1985a]. These two are clearly distinguished. *Roong* is the language taught to human beings by *yanú* to enable them to communicate with *yanú* in rituals, whereas *kepas* is the language created by human beings for mutual communication. In other words, *kepas* is an ordinary language, and *roong* is a non-ordinary language.

The same is also true of "narratives". On Satawal, there are two terms denoting "narrative". One is *tittinnap* and the other is *fiyóng*, which are clearly distinguished. The former refers to a narrative which describes the act of a living person, whereas the latter refers to a narrative describing the act of *yanú* or a person who has died and has become *yanú*. In other words, *tittinnap* is an ordinary narrative, and *fiyóng* is a non-ordinary narrative. With regard to songs and dances, it has already been stated that *pwaay* is performed in a ritualistic or non-ordinary context, whereas *wuur* is performed in an ordinary context. Table 3 classifies "songs", "dances", "languages" and "narratives" using the ordinary/non-ordinary dichotomy. Thus, Satawal can be considered a society in which there is a clear distinction between ordinary and non-ordinary with respect to "songs", "dances", "languages" and "narratives".

## SACRED, PROFANE AND PLAY

Various aspects of the symbolic meaning of song and dance on Satawal have been analyzed with special reference to the ordinary/non-ordinary dichotomy. However, their profound meaning cannot be elucidated in terms of the ordinary/non-ordinary dichotomy alone. In concluding this paper, the final summary should be given from a slightly different perspective.

Table 3. Dichotomy of Ordinary/Non-ordinary

	ordinary	non-ordinary
language	<i>kepas</i>	<i>roong</i>
narrative	<i>tittinnap</i>	<i>fiyóng</i>
song & dance	<i>wuur</i>	<i>pwaay</i>

It has been explained so far that *pwaay* is song and dance bestowed on humans by *yanú* and is related to *yanú* or their human equivalent, whereas *wuur* is composed by women and has no relationship to *yanú*. To put it differently, *pwaay*, shamanistic songs, lullabies and laments can be regarded as “sacred” songs and dances, and *wuur* as “profane” songs and dances.

It should be noted, however, that *wuur* as “profane” song and dance is synonymous with “play”. Roger Caillois, in following the great work of Johan Huizinga, added “play” as a third category to the conventionally accepted dichotomy of “sacred” and “profane”, and stressed its importance [CAILLOIS 1973]. Ordinary activities not directly related to superhuman beings but which are indispensable to men’s survival are defined as “profane”, and non-ordinary activities relating to superhuman beings are defined as “sacred”. “Play” is different from “sacred” because it has no connection with superhuman beings. However, it is also different from “profane” because it is not an ordinary activity indispensable to men’s survival.

Based on the trichotomy of “sacred”, “profane” and “play”, song and dance on Satawal can be summarized as follows: first, *pwaay*, shamanistic songs, lullabies and laments are “sacred” songs and dances because they are related to *yanú*, or superhuman beings, or their human equivalent. Regarding “profane”, it is worth noting that song and dance are rarely performed during ordinary activities indispensable to the islanders’ daily life, such as fishing, cooking, loincloth weaving and canoe building. In other words, there is no direct connection between “profane” activities and song and dance on Satawal Island.

Finally, there are several points to be made related to the subject of “play”. First, *wuur*, a song concerning a heroic event, is composed by a woman, commemorating the deed of her brother. This *wuur* is sung by a group of men drinking coconut toddy after their day’s work. Another *wuur* is when all the women on the island get together to compete in song and dance. The common element of these two types of *wuur* is that neither of them is directly related to a task indispensable to the islanders’ survival. Furthermore, neither of them is related to superhuman beings. Thus, these *wuur* can be regarded as “playful” songs and dances.

Another important aspect of “play” is obscenity. *Yayinéyú*, *yamúúmún* *wenipwén*, and dances welcoming visitors from neighbouring islands contain obscene words and bodily action. Such words and action are normally prohibited in everyday life. These songs and dances cannot be classified as “profane” simply because they contain obscene words normally prohibited during the course of “profane” life. Nor can they be regarded as “sacred” songs and dances, because obscene words are prohibited during rituals and other “sacred” activities. Therefore, songs and dances in which obscene words are used should be regarded as “play”.

It can be concluded that song and dance on Satawal are intimately connected with “sacred” and “play”, whereas they are not directly related to “profane”.

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