Pacific Studies

Vol. 33, No. 1-April 2010

PACIFIC STUDIES

A multidisciplinary journal devoted to the study of the peoples of the Pacific Islands

APRIL 2010

Anthropology
Archaeology
Art History
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PUBLISHED BY
THE JONATHAN NAPELA CENTER FOR HAWAIIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDS STUDIES
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY HAWAI'I
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE POLYNESIAN CULTURAL CENTER

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COVER DESIGN:
Jared Pere, Maori/Hawai'i – *Indigenous Pacific Art Designs*
Anthony Perez, Samoa – *Graphic Design*

PACIFIC STUDIES

Editorial Policy: *Pacific Studies* is published quarterly by The Jonathan Napela Center for Hawaiian and Pacific Islands Studies, Brigham Young University Hawai'i #1979, 55–220 Kulanui Street, Lā'ie, Hawai'i 96762, but responsibility for opinions expressed in the articles rests with the authors alone. Subscription rate is US$40.00 yearly, payable to The Jonathan Napela Center for Hawaiian and Pacific Islands Studies. The Jonathan Napela Center for Hawaiian and Pacific Islands Studies (formerly The Pacific Institute) is an organization funded by Brigham Young University Hawai'i. The Center assists the University in meeting its cultural and educational goals by undertaking a program of teaching, research, and publication. The Center cooperates with other scholarly and research institutions in achieving their objectives. It publishes monographs, produces films, underwrites research, and sponsors conferences on the Pacific Islands.

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This publication is printed on acid-free paper and meets the guidelines for permanence and durability of the Council on Library Resources.

ISSN 0275-3596
ISBN 0-939154-77-3

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LIVING IN THE *QOLIQOLI*: URBAN SQUATTING ON THE FIJI FORESHORE

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Fiji's 2006 coup was partially carried out as a response by Bainimarama to three pieces of legislation debated by the Qarase government. One was the *Qoliqoli* Act. Under the act, rights to the seabed, foreshore, and indigenous fisheries of Fiji would be invested in indigenous landowners. This was a long time in the making and would have recognized the rights of customary owners to coasts and other waterways. The legislation is stalled but may be revived in future as indigenous Fijians demand to have land under their own control. Whether some compromise is ever reached and whether it ever becomes law is still in doubt, but the question of ownership of traditional fishing grounds and rights to the foreshore are likely to rise again in the future. The situation of the urban poor, many of whom live on the *qoliqoli*, is likely to be contentious.

Introduction

FIJI'S *QOLIQOLI* LEGISLATION[1] was intended to right a "historical wrong," whereby under the Deed of Cession of 1874 the signatories (chiefs) gave Fiji unconditionally to Queen Victoria (Baba 2006). Land has since been returned, but such a process was never completed for the qoliqoli, despite regular demands. In essence, if the legislation is ever enacted,[2] it will recognize the rights of indigenous landowners to their coasts but will have implications for all, in particular the urban, coastal poor, many of whom live on the *i-qoliqoli*. Whether the act ever becomes law and how it would be registered is still very much in doubt. The question of ownership of traditional fishing grounds and rights to the foreshore are likely to rise again

in the future, despite the current suspension. Wide consultation and recognition of the situation of the urban poor, particularly informal settlers (often known as squatters), is imperative.

Land and Poverty in Fiji

Recent discussion on Fijian land, land rights, and burgeoning poverty involves the expiry of agricultural leases and the subsequent impact on rural cane farmers, who are largely (but not solely) Indo-Fijians. Other commentary focuses on the migration of dispossessed farmers to urban areas and the impacts on land there, particularly in the mushrooming squatter settlements of the main towns (for example, see Larry Thomas's "Struggling for a Better Living: Squatters in Fiji"), but there has been very little commentary on the possible consequences of returning the qoliqoli to traditional landowners and the implications for the coastal urban poor. Indigenous Fijians own 87.1 percent of Fiji's land, managed by the Native Land Trust Board (NLTB).[3] The qoliqoli, if returned to customary owners, would be managed under a commission, under the Fijian Affairs Board, and the boundaries registered and defined. However, the preference of many indigenous owners would appear to be to take full control of their own resources and make their own decisions. Such views are a strong reaction to what has been perceived to be years of mismanagement and poor stewardship of Fijian land (Raicola 2008).

Fiji's Qoliqoli

The coasts, foreshore, and indigenous fisheries of Fiji have been the subject of a great deal of research and careful practice in attempts to ensure that fisheries resources are managed sustainably. Working with the Department of Fisheries in the Ministry of Fisheries and Forest, and under the Fisheries Act, customary owners are involved in the management of their resources in that they receive goodwill payments for the issuing of licenses and provide voluntary wardens to monitor and protect the qoliqoli (Techera and Troniak 2009: 25–29). Also over the past decade, the very successful LMMA (Locally Managed Marine Areas) Network has become a strong presence in Fiji, working at the community level, teaching monitoring and management skills focused on the near shore resources of coastal communities. The Fiji LMMA coordinates and assists in half of the 410 qoliqoli sites across the country. Essentially the communities manage their resources, as they have always done, and draw on advice and skills from both the local network, which comprises skilled local people, and other wider tropical country connections (for details, see Govan et al. 2008).

The qoliqoli, loosely translated, means fisheries, but it is much more complex than that and includes "any area of seabed or soil under the waters, sand, reef, mangrove swamp, river, stream or wetland."[4] This means that all internal waters, archipelagic waters, territorial seas, and waters within the exclusive economic zone would be subject to the new act and, as such, would include fisheries resources in their broadest sense, including "any water-dwelling plant or animal, at whatever stage of development, and whether alive or dead, and includes all types of eggs of a water-dwelling animal. . ." (Government of Fiji 2006: 4).

The issue with the Qoliqoli Act becomes the problem of tenure and whether it is land or sea. Boydell and Shah (2003, 2) commented on the nature of land "ownership" in Fiji, whereby land is "held by the mataqali and that there is no recognition of customary marine tenure either in a western legal sense or in a traditional communal sense" (Techera and Troniak 2009, 29). Whether the act becomes law, and whether present-day communities would be protected if it did, is much open to debate. Customary law and western legal systems would appear to be incompatible with conservation of resources; thus, the emergence of the LMMA strongly supported at local level still leaves present communities vulnerable to state or privately led development of coastal resources.

There are approximately 386 marine and 25 freshwater areas classified as qoliqoli (Techera and Troniak 2009: 29) contributing to the livelihood of approximately 400,000 customary owners. These are not only traditional fishing grounds as discussed above but also are home to most of Fiji's squatters and many other urban dwellers. How the Qoliqoli Act would deal with these informal areas has not been defined, but the implications, as shall be seen in this paper, are likely to be major for those living in the qoliqoli, particularly if they are not customary owners, which is most often the case.

The Qoliqoli Act

During the life of the Qarase government, the "Blueprint for the protection of Fijian and Rotuman rights" (Government of Fiji 2000) that includes the Qoliqoli Act was promulgated. The act had been under development for about ten years by this time. Essentially the argument for it was that, since independence in 1970 (and indeed before this), there have been attempts to return ownership of the qoliqoli to indigenous owners. In 2006, the act was put before parliament, contributing to the takeover of government by Commodore Bainimarama later that year. There were many concerns including the notion that the act could have privileged a few of the largely

indigenous Fijian population. Hoteliers were said to be up in arms because the development of hotels, not to mention reef and boating tours, would have been threatened.[5] Although the concerns around tourism were given as the main reason for Bainimarama's opposition to the act, this may not be the most important concern. Urban coastal dwellers, especially those who are poor, will be the losers.

Under the Deed of Cession, when Fijian land was given to Queen Victoria (Baledrokadroka 2003, 4), the chiefs of Fiji trusted the Crown to take care of their land and eventually return the land to them. Indeed, under Governor Gordon (Sir Arthur Hamilton-Gordon) and the establishment of the Native Land Commission, land was returned despite opposition from planters, particularly early white settlers. Despite the notion that the qoliqoli, the traditional fishing grounds and water courses of Fiji, were considered by the chiefs to be part of the deal and to be treated the same as land, it was never returned to indigenous ownership.[6] Governor Gordon agreed with chiefs that the land would be returned under native title and strived to have it returned (Colonial Office 1879). Despite Gordon's strong views that Fiji was for the Fijians, whereby he established the Great Council of Chiefs and supported Fijian desire to make decisions concerning their own fortunes, he was unsuccessful during his term as governor as were subsequent governors. For example Des Voeux, an ex-governor tried to have the qoliqoli returned to the indigenous landowner, but there was always opposition from current planters (Baba 2006). The qoliqoli or the coastal land has never been returned to indigenous Fijian landowner control and continues to be owned by the state.

Because the coastal land or the qoliqoli is a very rich food source, which many urban dwellers use and from which many obtain sustenance, it is important to look at the implications of returning this land to indigenous ownership. At present, there are many contradictions in Fiji over future use and development of the qoliqoli. The second half of this paper will look in some detail at these issues.

The Urban Pacific and the Case of Fiji

Pacific peoples are undergoing relatively rapid urbanization (Bryant 1993; Storey 2006), with approximately half of population now urban. Over the next three decades, it is likely that populations will double, and most of this growth will be urban (Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2004). Some towns such as Port Vila in Vanuatu and South Tarawa in Kiribati are both growing rapidly and facing extreme problems of unmanageable urban densities with implications of pressure on land, affordable housing, safe

water, education, and employment, a situation already blatantly apparent in Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, and Fiji. Also, conflict over limited supply of accessible urban land is being seen such as in Tuvalu (Samasoni and Tausi 2004).

In 1993, Cole warned of an almost doomsday scenario in Pacific towns by 2010. Despite commentary that these earlier scenarios painted an unnecessarily negative picture of the Pacific (Hau'ofa 1993), Cole's predictions have come to pass. Unsafe drinking water supplies, polluted lagoons, and massive loss of top soil are current realities across the Pacific, including in urban areas. In all countries, the problem of access to fresh water and decent sanitation continues despite massive infrastructural assistance.

In Fiji, where 53 percent of the population is urban, pressure for the small amount of freehold land is intense, making it unaffordable for low-income housing. Competitive interests for state and native leases make it difficult to find suitable land for housing the poor, and squatters of all ethnicities are becoming more aggressive in their movement onto State land. The Qoliqoli Act, if ever revived, could have implications for the burgeoning urban populations. Some outfall from the act is already apparent in Suva, where squatter settlements on coastal areas are facing rent demands by indigenous owners preparing for foreshore ownership. In some cases, there has been outright removal of inhabitants who have lived in these areas sometimes for generations (Kanakana 2008).

Fiji Poverty and Squatting

Directly related to (but not exclusively) to any discussion on Fiji urban land and the situation of coastal squatters is the issue of poverty. Poverty has been discussed, accepted, and denied for a long time in Fiji, with a range of views on numbers, ethnicities, and geographic location (Barr 1990; Bryant 1992; Narsey 2008). Until recently, the "accepted" statistics ranged somewhere around 11–12 percent of the total Fiji population of 900,000 living as squatters, with between 25 and 33 percent of the total population living in poverty (some say 30–40 percent of households) (Mohanty 2006, 66). By 2010, figures of those in poverty were as high as 40 percent living below the poverty level earning less than F$35 per week (Poverty Eradication Unit 2010).

Hassan (2005) claims that, in the seven years 1996–2003, the squatter population grew by as much as 73 percent, but this figure is difficult to verify.[7] Whatever the imperfect data say, health and social implications for those living in the settlements are significant. Thousands, as much as

53 percent of the population (Lingam 2005, 5), face an intermittent and unclean water supply, yet formal statistics claim that 97.5 percent in urban areas have access to safe drinking water (Fiji National Planning Office 2004, 57). At least 20 percent of households live in "unacceptable" housing, and approximately 15 percent of households live in food poverty (Lingam 2005, 7).

These figures illustrate not only income poverty but lack of alternatives and opportunities for urban dwellers. Lack of access to housing and an unhealthy diet and environment have a direct impact on abilities to learn, work, and participate; thus, people without these things may be considered to be living in poverty (Bryant 1992, 92). Of course, the issue of the qoliqoli does not refer to the poor only, but it most certainly has implications for them because they are vulnerable and likely to be suffering the most from lack of access to urban coastal land, employment, and sustenance.

The increasing numbers of urban dwellers to a predicted 69 percent by 2030 (Mohanty 2006, quoting United Nations 2004) means increasing pressure on urban resources and land. Although there are no current figures that count those living in the coastal areas, it is clear that, in the main towns of Suva, Nadi, and Labasa, the majority of the informal settlements are coastal and abutting waterways. In Suva, it is estimated that 60 percent of squatters live in the Suva-Nausori corridor (Thornton 2009, 885). They are also living in increasingly worsening circumstances.

In the mid-1990s, it was commonly noted that urban inhabitants depended heavily upon their gardens, farms, and fishing for subsistence, with few members of the household working in formal employment (Bryant-Tokalau 1995, 117). Also, there was dependence on informal activities such as gardening and selling vegetables. Thaman commented on the high level of gardening in some of the settlements (Thaman 1995) where it was obvious that households living in peri-urban situations needed cash for necessities such as food, transport, school fees, books, and uniforms as well as traditional and other obligations. Thornton (2009) discusses the increasing tendency to both garden and raise livestock more intensively in these areas as people struggle to sustain themselves. Also, these well-located households are under threat of being moved inland and away from water ways and mangroves as resettlement schemes take effect (Thornton 2009, 890). The future for these "squatting farmers" may well be bleak if they are resettled away from the qoliqoli and easy access to employment and markets.

However, my own research indicates that, as the settlements become more densely established, fewer people are gardening, gathering wood, and farming there. Although it could be predicted that urban gardening is

becoming an even more important means of sustenance, personal observations in River Road, Wailea, and Nanuku (all settlements close to Suva in the 20-km corridor between the city and Nausori town) in 2006–2007 indicate that there simply is no longer sufficient land available for people to garden or keep livestock. Again, this needs to be verified by new urban gardening surveys, but certainly with fishing and harvesting from the sea shore, Indo-Fijian squatters told us that they no longer use these resources, partly because of the cost and difficulty of fishing licenses but also because they face censorship from fish wardens[8] and antagonism as competition for resources in urban areas grows. These observations are supported by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) who also found that the qoliqoli may be less important as a source of livelihoods for squatters of all ethnicities than in earlier years (UNDP 2007, 28).

Attitudes to the Poor

Consecutive governments have attempted to address the issues of poverty, squatting, urbanization, and failures in health, education, and services, but the approaches have been scattered, are often contradictory, and have never explicitly focused on urban coastal areas. For example, although the Laisenia Qarase–led *Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua* (SDL) Coalition Government in 2004 allocated F$56.1 million to address issues of poverty (Parliament of Fiji, Hansard, November 21, 2005), its own ministers were scathing of the poor. The Minister for Women, Social Welfare, and Poverty Alleviation, Adi Asenaca Caucau, made several comments regarding the nature of the poor whom she regarded as people who "actually made a choice to live there and were not driven there by poverty. . ." (editorial, *Fiji Sun*, Thursday, November 20, 2003, quoting the minister's Parliamentary Budget speech, November 19, 2003).

Such contradictory approaches to issues of poverty and squatting were borne out through policy that alternately attempted to remove squatters, support and condemn nongovernment efforts, and upgrade settlements. In 2006, the then Minister of Housing, Adi Caucau, commented, "the more than 10% of the country's population who are forced to survive as squatters are like thieves because they live illegally on someone else's land . . . and police should make every effort to round them up and remove them" (*Fiji Sun*, September 27, 2006).

It was in such a climate that the Qoliqoli Act was drafted. This act, which looks like a positive attempt to restore land and foreshore to the rightful indigenous owners, could have had significant consequences for the poor throughout Fiji but most notably in urban areas. Since its suspension of

the act, the current military government also offers contradictory approaches to the issue of squatting with a range of policies including resettlement to areas further away from Suva (Kikau 2009) and to some apparently genuine concern about poverty, unfortunately negated by housing policies that will benefit only the wealthy and make life more difficult for the poor (Barr 2009, 4). It is in this climate of uncertainty that the qoliqoli should be examined.

The Significance of the Qoliqoli to Urban Areas

The issue, which has not been adequately discussed or even recognized, is how the qoliqoli legislation, whether ever enacted, will impact the urban poor, specifically squatters. Many people have relied to a large extent on gathering from the sea shore, diving, fishing, and recreational use. Urban densities, but also uncertainty, are beginning to have an impact on this use by all ethnicities as ownership of the foreshore is claimed. The legislating of the foreshore into landowner hands will at times lead to conflict and misunderstandings, and this has already occurred to some extent. In Suva, for example, where squatter settlements on coastal areas are growing rapidly, some customary owners are preparing for ownership by demanding rent or outright removal of settlers who have lived in these areas sometimes for generations. Urban settlements that have existed for as long as forty years in mangrove areas around Suva, and where permission to build has been granted by *vakavanua*[9] agreement with landowners through a *sevusevu* or traditional presentation of kava (*piper methysticum*) or a *tabua* (whales tooth), may no longer have security (Kiddle 2009, 23). Younger generations of landowners, seeing the possibility to earn large rents or to use land for other purposes, may terminate long-held agreements. Some of this is happening already, and the impact will be greatest on poorer sections of the community (both indigenous and otherwise) who have limited options.

Although traditional rights to the qoliqoli can be considered to be both fair and just, and fits well with concepts of indigenous rights (Madraiwiwi 2007, 7), it is highly contested and likely to lead to divisions both within indigenous Fijian *mataqali* and other nonindigenous groups, including hoteliers and the large numbers of people living on land that is not traditionally theirs. In Fiji, most land is registered and managed by the NLTB. The process of land registration took place over a lengthy period under British administration and the leadership of Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna who established the NLTB both as a "solution" to providing land for Indo-Fijian farmers and a way of providing income to the indigenous owners and

returning land to those whose land it was. The process was long and not without conflict and disagreement, but eventually land was registered and placed under the NLTB. There continue to be rival claims over this land.

Such a process has never taken place for the qoliqoli, and this is where doubts now arise (Baba 2006). The UNDP, in its 2007 revision of the Fiji Poverty Report, went as far as saying the prospect of resource rights moving from government to community authority was "frightening" for the vulnerable poor (UNDP 2007, 28). This is a major dilemma. Indigenous Fijians regard qoliqoli as theirs, and some say they want it back (but perhaps not with defined boundaries). It is in effect treated as customary land yet is owned by the state.

Qoliqoli and Indigenous Rights

At first sight, the return of the qoliqoli to indigenous people appears to be as it should be with indigenous rights over foreshore and fisheries after being in hands of the state being reaffirmed. Much of Fiji's urban housing, businesses, recreation facilities, and squatters or informal settlers[10] currently reside on the qoliqoli. Urban areas are largely coastal, and despite the removal of many from their traditional land areas, many use the qoliqoli for fishing, gathering shellfish, building, and gardening. There are now more than 180 squatter settlements in Fiji housing somewhere between 80,000 and 100,000 people of mainly Indo-Fijian and indigenous Fijian ethnicity but also from other groups such as i-Kiribati and Solomon islanders[11]. Most communities are ethnically mixed with their common identity being one of poverty, insecurity of tenure, and a desire for housing, land, employment, and education. Many of these settlements are coastal, but others are on watercourses running inland from the sea. These will also come under the Qoliqoli Act. Potentially, if the act is passed, there will be conflict. Already some people have been asked to move from their settlements or to pay fees or are prevented from using the qoliqoli by indigenous owners. Although these incidents are still few, the potential for displacement and uncertainty is large. Just who the real owners are will take a long time to determine, and there will always be disagreement.

Since Bainimarama took power, formal efforts at resettling Fiji's squatters have continued. Some old established settlements, such as Jittu estate in Suva, on land owned by the Methodist church, is being redeveloped, and housing standards and facilities have improved. This has meant the displacement of up to 300 families, many of whom have lived in the area for 30–40 years (Kikau 2009). The Housing Authority has plans to move Suva squatters onto land that is further inland out toward Nausori, but

despite efforts to improve their living conditions, the squatters will then be a very long way from their source of income, subsistence, and networks.

The sheer numbers of squatters involved make it unlikely that all will be adequately resettled or even should be. The legal "ambiguity" (Beall and Fox 2009, 117) of the urban poor makes them vulnerable to exploitation and development, including from governments. Issues of use and ownership over urban land, along with limited access to services and increased likelihood of diseases, are likely to continue. Additionally, whether left where they are now or moved to more isolated settlements, they, like their urban squatting counterparts in poorer communities globally, will continue to be vulnerable to the probable impacts of climate change: flooding, salinization, and lack of access to opportunity.

If Fiji's qoliqoli legislation is ever enacted, the future of urban areas would have to be very carefully considered, and there would need to be consultation with people living in these areas. Because many of the squatter settlements are on the qoliqoli, in reality (if not in legal fact) they are on traditional land. If ownership can be proven to traditional landowners, it would be hoped that, through negotiation and discussion, an arrangement could be made between landowners and settlers. In fact, there has already been some conflict. There have been cases in the capital Suva, for example, where landowners have asked for people to move because the land is theirs and they now want to do something else with it. This includes urban land in Fiji, because much of it is on native lease, and under the NLTB, there is an expiry date. Some settlers have already been relocated because of development of land for industry, factories, or housing. Squatters on the qoliqoli have little security whether they are indigenous Fijian or any of the other ethnicities, and probably even *vakavanua* arrangements will not hold because of their informal nature. The new generations of landowners returning from overseas with money and education and different expectations have less understanding or sympathy for squatters. Chances are that the people will be moved off the area.

Where squatters live has been very important to their survival because many of these people have come from villages or isolated rural settlements where they could largely provide their own food and go fishing. Living in a squatter settlement close to the coast or up a river theoretically provides settlers with a source of food. Where possible, people fish with their own nets, boats, and traps. Women collect shellfish, and there are products available for weaving and other crafts, all a rich source of income for the people in these settlements. If they were not living in these coastal areas, probably they could not survive as well. But with the settlements closer to

main urban areas, the story is not as simple. Overcrowding and legislation now mean that the qoliqoli may no longer be a safe reality for squatters.

Qoliqoli Act "Back on the Table"?

With Bainimarama's stated moves to give everyone an equal chance in Fiji (no racial divisions, one person one vote, etc), but still under military rule, his opposition to the Qoliqoli Act sometimes seems more comprehensible. The opposition to the act was not about dangers to the tourism industry; some say it was about the perceived dangers of ethno-nationalism. This, too, is disputed (Baledrokadroka 2009), and in reality, it is impossible to unravel all the reasoning behind Bainimarama's opposition.

The Ecumenical Centre for Education, Research, and Advocacy (ECREA), in a statement in 2009, commented on SDL party moves to revive both the Qoliqoli and Lands Claim Tribunal Acts despite much more public comment in opposition. The SDL (ECREA claimed) was using the acts to highlight issues of indigenous rights as a way of getting ethnic Fijians and traditional leaders back on side (ECREA 2009). This was at the same time as efforts were underway to revive the Great Council of Chiefs (GCC), which had been suspended by Bainimarama. Although the suspension of the GCC was unprecedented, indeed shocking to many at the time, what has become clear in recent years is that young generations of Fijians are less likely to submit to the authority of the chiefs, believing that autocratic leadership has failed them in their development. Also, as a more educated generation, they want some say in development without necessarily trying to destroy traditional authority. How far this is an accurate reading of the wider Fijian feeling at present is difficult to say. There have always been rumblings from those who wish to dismantle traditional structures, but there are also balanced attempts to understand the needs and changing values of traditional and modern aspects of society (Madraiwiwi 2006: 50–52).

If compromise is not reached and support for chiefs and the traditional structures are viewed as being in danger and in need of "saving," or if there is a wave of ethno-nationalism and then political expediency, it is possible the qoliqoli legislation will be revived. If this happens, people living in the areas or using the qoliqoli for their livelihoods will still have to come to an arrangement with traditional landowners. The urban population is continuing to grow; thus, the pressure on land will continue to be intense. My prediction is that all urban land is going to come under the spotlight in the next few years, but I believe that the Qoliqoli legislation, in particular, is going to have to be dealt with.

Implications for the Poor

It is likely that the issue of indigenous rights, perceived as righting historical wrongs in the return of the qoliqoli to native landowners, will not be given up lightly in Fiji. Indeed, the country may be modernizing, but many of the traditional institutions and beliefs remain. People are inherently conservative and will take time to change and to reach an acceptable balance between traditional institutions and ideas of modern development. Issues of urban housing, fishing rights, tourism, and access to coastal areas are, of course, crucial to Fiji's future development, growth, and stability. Herein lies the dilemma. The poor, particularly the illegal poor, really are under threat in the qoliqoli as UNDP states (2007, 28) because most of the people living there are not traditional landowners with many of the newer arrivals coming from farming backgrounds, from expired cane leases.

As leases continue to expire up until 2028, possibly displacing as many as 75,000 people (Storey 2006, 15), pressures on urban settlements will be very great. In addition, ethnicity is no longer a simple identifier of the urban poor. People are of all ethnicities including at least half who are ethnic Fijians and happy to pay a regular *soli*[12] to landowners. Indo-Fijians recognize that they, too, must do the same if they wish to have some security. In fact, as stated above, such casual arrangements are under threat no matter what the ethnicity of the settler. If people have no historical claim to the land, then they are increasingly regarded as outsiders. If the qoliqoli is ever returned to traditional owners, many poor will lose their homes and livelihoods. Conditions are deteriorating as the new generation of young landowners makes rental demands on settlers leaving little incentive for people to do any improvements to their homes. They have limited places to go.

Qoliqoli and Recent Events

If tourism was not the actual issue, then why did Bainimarama really carry out the 2006 coup and then remove the Qoliqoli Act? Obviously the reasons are more complex than can be unraveled here, but some issues may now become clearer. There is little doubt that, had the Qoliqoli Act become law, then life for many of the poor quickly could have become miserable. The fault in this argument is, of course, that, despite the shelving of the act, landowners in some instances are now behaving as though the act were law. This is not new and has always gone on informally. In a perceptive comment in 1994, Overton noted that there were more informal and illegal

land tenure arrangements under the Native Lands Trust Board and the Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Act. Referring to rural land, he suggested that the various *vakavanua* arrangements, whereby tenants and indigenous owners negotiate, were becoming more common and that perhaps some form of legalization of such arrangements would be helpful (Overton 1994, 15). In the urban setting, such arrangements have continued for so long, often across generations, that again it would seem reasonable to consider some sort of formalization of the modern form of customary tenure. Of course, it would be difficult to find agreement among landowners, if indeed the actual owners can be easily identified.

The complexities of the qoliqoli are enormous, and many questions remain. For example, if the area is not returned to customary owners, then what does this mean for indigenous rights? If the act has been stymied in the name of equal rights for all, then is this what is truly happening? Is everyone ever likely to have equal access to land? If it ever happens that the Qoliqoli Act becomes law, or the qoliqoli continues to remain state land, then what might this mean for people currently living there? Already there are plans to relocate squatters away from state land to make way for new developments. Such developments (gated housing complexes, industry, resorts, and sports facilities) are obviously not all designed with public interest in mind; thus, suspicions will remain that, in the name of development, the poor are expendable.

Additional dilemmas involve the views and hopes of many ethnic Fijians. Their fear of losing land rights may be strong; many may not be ready to share land in an equal fashion, but some feel that there are signs under Bainimarama that there is more tolerance.[13] One wonders whether urban Fijians do feel strongly enough about the *vanua* and their chiefs to support return of the qoliqoli, or do they prefer the status quo of *vakavanua* arrangements and the likely future uncertainty? Indigenous Fijians living in urban areas, in mangrove qoliqoli settlements, wonder aloud that, if the qoliqoli is ever returned, then to whom it will go. They know that ownership is uncertain, and there is much concern, for example, about who would define the boundaries and how this would impact those living there. They know full well that land for development will always take priority and that the wealthy and educated would benefit[14] while the rest are alienated when such land becomes a valuable commodity as is already the case with tourism (Waqaisavou 2001).

Communities living in the qoliqoli may be poor and often missing parts of a formal education, but they are in no way ignorant. People talk long into the night about their future. People of all ethnicities frequently discuss around the kava bowl what has gone on before between chiefly clans and

those who amass wealth at the expense of commoners. They know that they have little voice about what developments may take place, and they know they are all vulnerable. If they have no security of tenure, permanent housing, and have to be moved again from their homes in the qoliqoli away from social networks and employment, their future is bleak indeed.

Conclusion

Of course, coastal areas are a target of tourism development, and it was first said that it was the presence of large resorts and the need to encourage continuing investment that led Bainimarama to oppose the Qoliqoli Act, but the significance is far greater than tourism. Resorts are generally not in urban areas, but poor and vulnerable people do live there in growing numbers on the margins of cities such as Suva and Labasa where they can make a living. These people are vulnerable for many reasons. There are not only issues of ownership and the fragility of traditional customary or "consensual" arrangements but also the push for major development and industry as well as middle class housing stock. These, along with climate change and sea level variation as well as other natural disasters such as tsunamis and cyclones, can all mean the loss of urban land and, thus, lack of access to employment, housing, and education for the urban poor.

By elevating the issue of the qoliqoli to the global arena and using it alongside the other act to oppose the pardoning of coup perpetrators to threaten a new coup, Bainimarama must have known what he was doing. He is not an unintelligent man. Indeed, at first, he was regarded by some as moral and good. Also, he is fully aware that Fiji faces a number of current problems including unemployment, poverty, inequality, and a massive increase in squatter settlements and lack of adequate services. These issues will overshadow everything else in the future. It must be hoped that Bainimarama will listen to both the poor and the privileged in planning Fiji's future.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks go to the University of Otago for releasing me to take Research and Study Leave to commence my work on the Fijian Qoliqoli and Squatting. Also, I would like to thank the University of Cambridge, St. Johns College for the generous Overseas Visitors scholarship, which I took up during Lenten Term, 2010, enabling me to spend time in their libraries as well as the National Archives in Kew. Also, my thanks go to the University of Hawai'i, particularly the Center for Pacific Islands Studies, for opening their libraries to me and allowing presentation of my early thoughts on this topic of research. *Vinaka vaka levu.*

NOTES

1. There were three contentious acts: the Reconciliation, Tolerance, and Unity (RTU) Bill; Qoliqoli Act; and the Land Tribunal Bill, all three of which were considered objectionable by the opponents of the 2000 coup. Perhaps the most significant of these has been the RTU bill, which would grant an amnesty to some of those involved or being investigated for involvement in the coup of 2000, including individuals who later became officials within government.

2. The Qoliqoli Act, variously named in Fiji legal literature as both a bill and an act, was opposed by Bainimarama in the name of tourism and has been put on hold.

3. The NLTB administers 28,701 leases. Fifty percent of these are agricultural; 38 percent residential; 6 percent educational, recreational, and religious; 5 percent commercial; and 1 percent industrial (NLTB 2009).

4. Qoliqoli is, according to the proposed act: "... recognized and determined within customary fishing grounds under the Fisheries Act ... and includes any customary fishing grounds reclaimed before or any qoliqoli area reclaimed after the commencement of this Act..." (Government of Fiji 2006, 4).

5. The tourism industry voiced concerns that the act would seriously affect tourism in Fiji. There were instances, even before the act was passed, of Fijians intercepting fishers and foreign tourists at sea and demanding money to allow them to carry on with their journeys (Keith-Reid 2007), but also there were calls for cooperation between landowners and tourism operators, and on the whole cooperation was the order of the day (Wilson 2007).

6. It could be argued that the difference between the land per se, and coastal and inland waters is actually differing perceptions of land and sea under customary law (i.e., possession of water is not as clear [or as possible] as with land), but this is not always clear particularly if indigenous Fijians view their waters in the same way as they view land.

7. Without specific censuses of urban populations and particularly of squatters, these figures should be taken as guesses only. However, it is possible to extrapolate urban growth from SPC 2009, and if anything, the growth in squatting reported appears reasonably accurate (see Bryant-Tokalau 2010).

8. Honorary fish wardens are enabled under the Fisheries Act to check for any violations and to act as enforcers. However, under the law, people may legally fish without a license if they use a hook and line or spear or portable (one person) fish trap (Techera and Troniak 2009: 25–26, quoting the Fisheries Act s.5 (3).

9. Vakavanua generally means "done in the way of the land" or traditionally. Essentially these people, who are of all ethnicities, are "tenants-at-will" on Fijian land but, of course, have no security. Under such arrangements, people may pay an annual fee or *soli* of cash or goods to landowners. Tenants under such arrangements in urban areas are usually grouped with other informal settlers on freehold and state land and are all called squatters in Fiji.

10. In Fiji, the term squatter is used to mean both illegal settlers as well as those who have *vakavanua* permission from landowners. The term informal settler is more accurate although squatter is widely used and understood to encompass a range of settlement types. There is no connotation of settlers being any different from squatters. Both terms are widely used in Fiji to denote people of whichever ethnicity who lack security of tenure. There are no generally accepted Fijian and Hindi terms to denote squatting in the Fiji context. *Vakavanua* is used in some situations (see note ix), but the definition applies to a certain arrangement on indigenous land. The media, the public, and many academics writing before the 1980s tended to use the term squatter to cover all types of informal settlement.

11. It is important to note that there is great diversity within the different ethnicities of Fiji and that, in terms of land politics, the picture is often not as clear cut as some interpretations have led us to believe. Most people living in the informal or squatter settlements face similar issues of insecurity and hardship. Lack of access to fresh water, decent housing, schools, and employment are common to all, as well as vulnerability to eviction is widespread. Divisions are never simple, and location, geographic origins, chiefly structures (and being a commoner), being rich or poor, are as legitimate forms of diversity in Fiji as simplistic racial explanations for people living in the settlements. The dispossessed cane farmers who have swelled settlements in recent times have been victims of indigenous Fijian land claims, but their fate, in the urban settlements, now differs little from ethnic Fijians who have moved to towns for a perceived better life.

12. *Soli* as stated in an earlier footnote is a type of exchange of cash or goods for the purpose of fund raising. In this particular instance, it is in effect a type of lease payment usually around FJD300 per annum.

13. Of course, there is also plenty of evidence of intolerance. A cursory look at blog sites is enough to demonstrate this, but there is no way of placing figures on the levels of tolerance and intolerance.

14. Recent (February 2008) plans to rereserve all native land (87.1 percent of Fiji's land) and subsequent compensation to landowners may bring about additional areas of conflict. It is not yet clear how the dereservation will impact squatters and the qoliqoli because this land currently belongs to the state (*Fiji Times*, February 17, 2008). Questions such as access to the qoliqoli have yet to be resolved and are likely to become even more conflicted if the dereservation of native land does take place.

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ADOLPHE DE PLEVITZ AND SIR ARTHUR HAMILTON GORDON: BRITISH JUSTICE, RACE, AND INDIAN LABOR IN MAURITIUS AND FIJI, 1871–1880

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This paper follows the relationship between the first substantive governor of Fiji, Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon, and Adolphe de Plevitz, a Frenchman by birth, who held strong beliefs about the supremacy of British justice and equality. The setting is two tiny British colonies, Mauritius and Fiji, in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In Fiji Gordon encouraged the importation of indentured Indian workers to develop Queen Victoria's newest colony; yet in Mauritius, his previous posting, he had reluctantly initiated a Royal Commission into the inequitable treatment of Indians who remained on the island after their period of indenture had ended. The catalyst for the Royal Commission, which made Gordon immensely unpopular, was a pamphlet written by Adolphe de Plevitz alleging systemic maltreatment of the Indians. Forced to leave Mauritius and unaware of the governor's antipathy toward him, de Plevitz followed Gordon to Fiji. In the context of tropical labor, race, governance, and ambition, Gordon's character—obdurate, unforgiving, and autocratic—was bound to again clash with de Plevitz's—outspoken, impetuous, and defender of the underdog.

APART FROM EXCEPTIONAL CASES, such as those of William Bligh or Edward Eyre, histories of colonies often overlook the provenance—geographical, political, and psychological—of their protagonists. Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon, as Fiji's first substantive governor, is noted for importing Indian indentured labor to work the sugar cane plantations, yet in his previous appointment as Governor of Mauritius (1871–1874) he had overseen a Royal Commission that found that Indian laborers on that island had been

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treated appallingly by planters, government, and the police; had any semblance of freedom denied them; and, through the rapaciousness of their masters, had been unable to return to their homeland.

The catalyst for this Royal Commission was a petition of over 9,400 signatures of Indian laborers and an inflammatory pamphlet in which the other subject of this paper, Adolphe de Plevitz, publicly and spectacularly criticized the Indian indentured labor system on Mauritius. By doing so de Plevitz had frustrated Gordon's ambition to make his mark on that minuscule Indian Ocean colony. Ever a man to maintain a grudge, Gordon was unlikely to provide a warm welcome for de Plevitz and his young son Richard when they sailed into the harbor of the capital of Fiji on the 300-ton bark, the *Bhering*, in early August 1876, some thirteen months after Gordon took up his post.

Soon after his arrival in Mauritius in February 1871, Gordon had written to his wife, "Send me out any immigration printed papers in my basket . . . or in the drawing room. The immigration system here is a bad one, I should like to mend it before I go."[1] A man of immense self-confidence, Gordon considered himself well qualified to do this, having instituted some minor labor reforms when Governor of Trinidad (1866–1870). He informed the Undersecretary of State for the Colonies that he would shame the Mauritian Legislative Council (half of whom were either planters or had planting connections) into passing reform laws by making unflattering comparisons with Trinidad and with British Guiana, where a Royal Commission had just recommended a far-reaching overhaul of the Indian labor indenture system.[2]

Unhappily, this precarious strategy was undermined by Adolphe de Plevitz. Born in Paris in 1837 of Dutch petty nobility, he had arrived in Mauritius as a twenty-one year old seeking adventure. He found work as a forest ranger in the Woods and Forests Department, but on marriage to a Creole woman, a descendant of the African slaves brought to work the sugar cane fields, he left government service to manage his father-in-law's small plantation in a remote part of the island. There he grew vegetables, coffee, tobacco, and exotic plants such as vanilla. He concerned himself with education for the local children, plans for import–export to Madagascar, and retaining the tree cover on the island, which he argued would preserve the island's rainfall. However he was most affected by the plight of the Indian laborers stranded on the island after their initial period of indenture had expired.

Shortly after slavery was abolished in the British Empire in 1833, Mauritius became the first colony to import indentured labor from India, another great source of seemingly endless manpower. In 1860 the Mauritian

Legislative Council abolished the requirement that the planters pay the workers' return passages and unilaterally extended the contracts of indenture from three to five years. The workers, unable to save for the journey home because their employers charged them excessive rates for food and accommodation and fined them for trivial offenses at work (including two days' pay deducted for every day off sick), often ended their period of indenture owing their master money. The Old Immigrants, as they were called, could re-engage on estates or try to find work for themselves; however there was vast unemployment and overcrowding as more and more cheap indentured labor arrived from India.[3] By 1867 the numbers and mood of the Old Immigrants, now the majority of the island's population, were perceived as a threat to public order and safety. To force them to re-engage, thus controlling their movements and saving the planters the costs of new imports, the Legislative Council passed special laws (never notified to Whitehall as required) that compelled the Old Immigrants, to purchase a costly ticket bearing their photograph and identifying their status. If they wanted to work other than on plantations they had to buy a work license. In order to move between the nine districts of the island, each only a few miles across, they had to obtain a pass endorsed by the police.

de Plevitz's first encounter with the injustices of this system was when he sent seven of his father-in-law's Indian tenants to the police station to update their papers noting he was now manager of the estate. On arrival at the station the men were arrested and locked up. de Plevitz was in court the next morning to argue that they had been complying with the law, not contravening it. He was successful, the case was dismissed, and de Plevitz had found his vocation as advocate for the oppressed. Neglecting his agricultural duties, he wrote petitions to government and appeared in court where he demonstrated a facility to argue and cross-examine not only in English and French but in Hindi. To the consternation of his family, but the gratitude of the Indians, he declared, "When I saw oppression, and ill-treatment lawfully and unlawfully, I said to myself: I shall endeavour to change this one day."[4]

Unemployed Indians were imprisoned as vagrants; indeed in the years 1867 to 1870 nearly one-quarter of the Indian population was sentenced for this offense. Police corruption and brutality were rife. Nevertheless the government-appointed Protector of Immigrants had never exercised his powers to prosecute a planter or police officer. Gordon's first step was to extract from the protector some small promises for change. These were published in the protector's *Annual Report* tabled before the Legislative Council in April 1871. Though he had done nothing overt, rumors were circulating that the Governor was sympathetic to the Indians.

The moment the protector's report became public, de Plevitz drew up a petition for the Old Immigrants in English, French, and a number of Indian languages. It was addressed to Queen Victoria asking her to apply the same laws to those who had finished their period of indenture as to any other of her subjects on the island.[5] Over 9,400 signatures of Indian laborers were on the petition when it was presented to Governor Gordon on June 6, 1871. In his diary the event elicited only the laconic notation, "Received immigrants' petition."[6] Gordon had determined that reform would proceed at his pace, so, leaving Mauritius in an uproar, he engaged in what was to be characteristic behavior: he set sail for his outlying dependency, the Seychelles.

On August 3, impatient for action, de Plevitz published a pamphlet in which he described serious abuses, flagrant infractions of the law, and corrupt processes from recruitment in India to the passing of laws whose sole objective was to protect the past governors' and members of the Mauritian Legislative Council's sources of cheap labor.[7] He sent the pamphlet to Queen Victoria, humanitarian societies in England, and a number of influential people in India.

On return from the Seychelles, Gordon was obliged to publicly defend de Plevitz from a demand signed by 950 worthies that de Plevitz be expelled from the colony for this "wholesale libel upon the Colony at large."[8] Privately, however, Gordon observed that the "restlessness" on the part of Mr. de Plevitz that led him to write the pamphlet "seriously embarrassed" Gordon and rendered "that very difficult of accomplishment, which when I left for Seychelles would have been comparatively easy."[9] This disingenuous statement belied the fact that, given the later reaction by these men to the Royal Commission, it was highly unlikely that Gordon's shaming strategy would have any effect at all on the members of the Legislative Council.

The planters on the Legislative Council demanded the Governor call a Royal Commission to refute the pamphlet's libels against them. Gordon reluctantly agreed; matters were now out of his control. Commissioners Frere and Williamson arrived the following year, their express brief to inquire into the allegations in the pamphlet.[10] They heard evidence for more than fourteen months. Adolphe de Plevitz appeared before them on a daily basis representing the exploited and abused Indians for free. The local press, which reported daily from the Commission, attacked his character at every turn. The police had to be ordered to protect him from the mobs that gathered to hurl abuse and threaten his life.

The Governor too was fearful, but for his dignity. The Commissioners asked him to give evidence, suggesting it offered an ideal public forum in

which to draw comparisons with Trinidad and British Guiana. Gordon, however, was apprehensive about being cross-examined by de Plevitz and William Newton, the lawyer for the planters. Frere reassured him:

> I don't think there is the slightest chance of their doing anything disagreeable . . . The fact of their having been present will give that further value to your evidence which it always gains by the power of being cross-examined . . . But if you cannot overcome your dislike to the lawyer's and Plevitz's presence we will not press an examination.[11]

Placated, Gordon appeared. Foreshadowing his later policy in Fiji, but reassuring no one in Mauritius, he opined that the Indian immigration was of benefit both to workers and planters, provided a close watch could be kept on it.[12] Neither de Plevitz nor Newton cross-examined.

The Royal Commission was daily exposing institutionalized corruption and mistreatment, but the Indians and de Plevitz looked in vain for reform. The influential sectors of the local population, far from being shamed by Gordon's references to other sugar-producing colonies, argued in the press and before the Commission that Gordon was exceeding his executive powers and should be recalled to London.[13] Meanwhile de Plevitz was feted as a hero by the Mauritian Indian laborers,[14] and English humanitarian movements such as the Anti-Slavery Society[15] and the Aborigines' Protection Society.[16]

Shortly after the Royal Commission finished hearing evidence, the Governor again went off on leave, this time to Britain. He was away a year. He reluctantly returned in November 1873, but by June 1874 he had accepted a more congenial posting, Fiji. Three days later, leaving behind the social instability created by the Royal Commission, Gordon quit Mauritius, announcing only that he was visiting the Seychelles. He sailed directly from there to London, and later to Fiji. The new Governor of Mauritius, Sir Arthur Phayre, arrived in March 1875 armed with the Royal Commission's findings that de Plevitz's allegations in the pamphlet had been substantially proved.

This report further inflamed the planters' animosity toward de Plevitz, and without the protection of the Royal Commission and the police he was a marked man. Planters drew lots for the task of beating him. They inscribed the stick used in silver and presented it to its owner, whose fine was paid by public subscription. Squeezed by his many creditors after a hurricane destroyed all his crops, de Plevitz decided to leave the colony and seek a new life elsewhere. Subscription funds were taken up by the Aborigines'

Protection Society, local Indians, and those on the subcontinent. Unaware that Gordon held him responsible for his plans for measured reform in Mauritius going awry, de Plevitz determined to follow the Governor to Fiji.

Governor Gordon in Fiji

Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon was content in his new post. In Britain, Gordon numbered among his friends liberal thinkers such as Charles Kingsley, Samuel Wilberforce, and influential members of the antislavery movement. However, as the youngest son of Lord Aberdeen, a former Prime Minister of Great Britain, Gordon was a product of his background and upbringing. From his first days in Mauritius he had bombarded his friend W.E. Gladstone, the British Prime Minister, with requests for a transfer, since he found confrontation with the Legislative Council distasteful. Indeed when offered the governorship of South Australia he had refused, noting that, "being fond of work (and I fear of authority), I should never be content merely to act at the bidding of my 'responsible advisers'."[17] Therefore when offered Britain's newest colony he had accepted with alacrity. As he wrote to his wife, "the prospect of *founding* a colony has great charm for me."[18]

These contradictions in Gordon's character, which were to shape his policies for land, labor, and governance in Fiji, were described by his Private Secretary in Fiji, A.P. Maudslay:

> A short man, dark, not good looking, careless of his appearance, shortsighted ... Nowhere has he been popular, since he has a very bad manner with strangers, and he is perfectly aware of it and regrets it very much ... He is very determined, and puts aside all opposition when his mind is made up ... He professes to be a thorough liberal, but his aristocratic leanings come out insensibly.[19]

The capital of Gordon's newly established colony was Levuka on the tiny island of Ovalau. Its sharp volcanic peaks rise steeply behind the town; their upper slopes are heavily covered in vegetation. Beach Street, its main road, is virtually the only flat land in the town. From the 1850s Levuka had been settled by European traders and had become an important Pacific trading port, where its inaccessible terrain was a virtue in case of attack. However Levuka was principally chosen as the new capital because it faced Bau, the seat of Cakobau, a powerful chief who had gained supremacy over the

other Fijian chiefs, first by his own force, then with the aid of Europeans who upheld his dominance.

Situated as it was, Levuka was ideally placed as a seat of British government, both for the settlers and Cakobau; as a town, however, it was cramped and somewhat claustrophobic. While the houses on the slopes faced the sea, the pleasant breeze could turn almost without warning to a treacherous gale. The atmosphere was oppressive and lowering.

Gordon's character was not one to tolerate the geographical and social confines of a tiny outpost of Empire like Levuka. He soon tired of administration and set out for broader pastures. His ostensible aim was to subdue the natives after an outbreak of tribal fighting. He spent five months away on Viti Levu, the largest island of the Fiji group, where he camped out, went barefoot, and made the acquaintance of the Fijians whom he admired tremendously. He was especially taken by what he understood to be the essence of Fijian culture, its autocratic rule by regional chiefs, which reminded him of the ancient legal institutions of his ancestors' beloved country, Scotland.[20] Taking clans and chiefs in the eastern part of Viti Levu as a sure sign that Fijian society was evolving toward "civilisation," Gordon created governance structures of indirect rule, the most enduring example of which is the *Bose vaka Turaga*, the "Great Council of Chiefs,"[21] threatened but not abolished by the current regime. Gordon nominated high-ranking hereditary chiefs, both male and female, to advise the executive government on local matters and placed himself at its helm in the role of Paramount Chief representing Her Imperial Majesty Adi Victoria, Queen of Great Britain and its colonies.[22]

The Governor also admired the manly physique of the Fijians and their settled villages, neat gardens, and agricultural use of land—clear indications, according to the legal theorists of the day, of rights over the land.[23] In 1874 a number of chiefs had ceded sovereignty and dominion over the Fiji Islands to the British Crown. This was taken to mean that the Crown held the right to purchase, requisition, or otherwise dispose of the land. However, driven by a firm conviction that his destiny was to protect the Fijians against exploitation, Gordon set up a Lands Claims Commission to hear and settle European claims. Contrary to legal advice that land acquired before the cession was already lost to the Fijians, Gordon declared that all land decisions would be referred to him for executive approval.[24] Underpinning the powers of the Commission was to be a standardized system of Fijian land tenure that Gordon had extrapolated from his limited observations of customary law in the eastern part of Viti Levu.[25] Land was deemed both inalienable and held in common by *mataqali* (variously interpreted as a "tribe," "clan," or "family group"). Like the conclusions Gordon had reached in relation to the role of chiefs, the new law relating to land

ownership bore little resemblance to the reality of complex and diverse processes of customary law across the islands, even in eastern Viti Levu.

Gordon was in his element. Here, his ambitions and character could be given free rein. On exactly the other side of the world from Whitehall, and with virtually untrammeled power, he could initiate the policies that have shaped the political, economic, and ethnographical landscape of today's Fiji. Here there were no difficult members of the Legislative Council to contend with, no Royal Commission, and no Adolphe de Plevitz.

Adolphe de Plevitz Arrives

When, a fortnight after his arrival in August 1876, Adolphe de Plevitz had had no response to his advertisement in the *Fiji Times*—"Gentleman thoroughly conversant with the Cultivation and Manufacture of Sugar, Vanilla and Coffee, wishes an engagement"[26]—he wrote to Government House, Nasova, a mile along Beach Street, requesting an audience with the Governor. Gordon declined to meet him. The Colonial Secretary replied that he was directed by the Governor to inform de Plevitz that if he wished "to make any communication to H.E [His Excellency]. . . . to do so in writing."[27] Undeterred, de Plevitz immediately penned a full account of a scheme to set up an agricultural company to grow sugar and coffee using imported skilled labor from Mauritius. He wrote that 1,200 Creole and Indian Mauritian tradesmen had asked him before he left Mauritius "to pray Your Excellency to allow and assist them to emigrate to this colony."[28] He asked Gordon for "a Crown grant of land upon easy terms," citing promises of capital from Sydney for the company. The Colonial Secretary's reply was curt: a copy of the *Fiji Royal Gazette* with the regulations for land allotment and its prices heavily underscored. Yet even if he had had the money to purchase land, it was unlikely that de Plevitz would have been granted it. As Gordon later confided to Chief Justice Gorrie, he intended "to make the alienation of native land *as difficult as possible*. It is the only condition of any possible *progress* on the part of the natives."[29] As part of this strategy no further land had been granted to any European since Gordon's arrival.

With the *Gazette* came a note advising that it was "unnecessary for H.E. formally to 'allow' immigrants from Mauritius to come to Fiji as he has no power to prevent any person desirous of doing so from entering the Colony."[30] This last comment was no doubt privately expressed with a good deal of regret. As Gordon later wrote to F.W. Chesson, the secretary of the Aborigines' Protection Society in London, "I do not share your feelings for Mr de Plevitz—it is mainly owing to him that matters are in their present unsatisfactory state in Mauritius."[31]

de Plevitz may have had promises of labor from Mauritius, but he had no success for his next scheme—to raise local capital to build sugar mills in Fiji. In September 1876 a committee of twelve men met to consider his prospectus but unanimously rejected it on the grounds that promises of further capital from Sydney were "of too vague a character to be safely relied upon."[32] Shortly afterward, Griffiths, the editor of the *Fiji Times* and one of de Plevitz's supporters, advised him that news had arrived that in Mauritius de Plevitz had supported labor against capital. Griffiths concluded that de Plevitz's plan for agricultural enterprises would not succeed because "capital and philanthropist could not work together."[33]

Gordon Proposes Indian Indentured Labor

Before Gordon left London, members of the antislavery movements had called on him to abolish trafficking in Islander labor whereby local Fijians and Islanders were "blackbirded," captured or inveigled to work for plantation owners in the Pacific (including Australia) virtually as slave labor.[34] Gordon's solution, which fitted with his aspirations to protect the Fijians and allow their social evolution, was that the Fijian government would engage indentured laborers in India, allot them in Fiji under government supervision, and tax the planters one-third the cost of their importation. The government would thus hold the monopoly over Indian indentured labor, setting wages and conditions.[35] In the Governor's first official address to the colonists he put the question, "Is it in your opinion desirable that the Government should undertake the conduct and management of labour from India?" He argued that the labor was cheap and "practically boundless" and that Indians could be indentured for five years plus an additional five years before the planter would be obliged to pay their return passage. Compare this, he said, to "Polynesians" (as Islanders were then called) who had to be returned home after three years.[36] He ignored the Royal Commission, which found that such conditions led to the mistreatment of the Old Immigrants in Mauritius, and set aside his own observations, which were that the high rate of suicide in that colony was "due to nostalgia, or an intense desire to return to India, which they had no means of gratifying."[37] When Gordon's proposal became known to the humanitarian societies in England there was outrage.[38]

The same response, though for different reasons, was received from the Fiji Europeans. They soundly rejected His Excellency's proposal. They were not interested in paying for what could be got for virtually nothing—Islander and Fijian labor. In the *Fiji Times* of August 30, 1876, and elsewhere, the colonists stridently argued their case: Islanders could be "got"

for £3 payable in trade goods, whereas Gordon intended to set the wages of Indians at £6 per annum. Indians saved money rather than spent it and then returned home with the hard cash: therefore employing Islanders had the double advantage of not only being half the price but also of stimulating the flagging economy because the workers would buy, and be paid in, trade goods. By November the planters had presented an alternative scheme—all Fijian men between the ages of fifteen and fifty should be "apprenticed to the planters for 5 years and in consideration of being taught a valuable industry receive no pay during that time."[39]

Gordon appeared blind to the fact that men who could pen such lines were scarcely likely to treat Indians with any greater humanity. Those same forces that led to the exploitation of the Indians in Mauritius were also present in Fiji—greed, access to an unsophisticated workforce who would sign a contract enforcing pitiful wages and terrible conditions when they had no idea where they were going, and the ability of planters to do virtually what they liked far from the eye of the home government and the Anti-Slavery Society.

What motivated Gordon, who had observed ill treatment of Indians elsewhere, to propose their importation to Fiji? Gordon's paramount instruction was that the new colony should be economically self-sufficient, financed by local taxes and duties. This could only be possible by raising taxes on local enterprise, notably tropical agriculture, in particular sugar. Two other personal factors can be considered: his liberal friends had asked him to stop the trafficking in Islander labor, and Gordon wanted to maintain the Fijians in their apparently idyllic state of nature. This latter, however, he had already disrupted by changing the taxation system. On cession to Britain in 1874 each Fijian man had to pay £1 and each woman 4 shillings per annum tax; currency that could only be earned by working on plantations. Gordon believed that a communal tax not only would be more in keeping with Fijian traditional society, but would obviate any need for Fijians to be working on plantations. He decreed that tax would now be paid collectively by villages in the form of cash crops such as copra, cotton, tobacco, maize, and coffee to be grown in the villagers' communal gardens.[40] The policy in fact undermined traditional agriculture since it required more land and time than the previous taxation system and encouraged economic dependence on cash crops. The Fijians declared Gordon a hard master. Nor was it popular with the planters since it cut off a supply of labor, nor with the commodity traders because the Fijians now knew the market price of cash crops. Back in England Sir Charles Dilke, Member of Parliament, deemed it "a new kind of slavery."[41]

Meanwhile in Levuka de Plevitz unsuccessfully tried twice more to see the Governor. On December 28, 1876, humiliated, he wrote to Gordon asking to be considered for any available work. The Governor replied that if de Plevitz had "consulted him before leaving Mauritius he would have dissuaded him from coming to Fiji, that [his] name was now noted as an applicant, but that he was unable to hold out any sanguine hope of the possibility of speedily meeting [his] wishes."[42]

Though de Plevitz had friendly support from others who had arrived from Mauritius after him and obtained government work, they were powerless in the face of Gordon's obduracy. By February 1877 de Plevitz no longer had money for rent, so he set out for Vanua Levu, the second largest island of the Fiji group, with letters of introduction given to him by John Bates Thurston. There he formulated an idea for an industrial school to teach the Fijians trades. This philanthropic plan was supported by Captain Hill, an influential member of the Legislative Council, who wrote enthusiastically to Gordon:

> We white foreigners here owe something to the Fijian people. We absorb their lands, and we may make labourers of them, but we should do something more, we should teach them something.... Creole mechanics could be imported from Mauritius, such as carpenters, sawyers, boat- and ship-builders, engineers ... to [teach] the general principles of agriculture, and at least one trade thoroughly.[43]

Gordon rejected the scheme.

de Plevitz suggested to the recently arrived and now employed Charles Mitchell, who had assisted the Mauritius Royal Commission, that he could be employed in the Immigration Department, where his knowledge of Indian languages and familiarity with labor laws would be an asset.[44] He asked Mitchell to mention this to the Governor, but with no more success than others. Despite this rebuff, de Plevitz wrote at this time to the Secretary of the Aborigines' Protection Society in London that Sir Arthur Gordon was "a man of honor and integrity who possesses the firmness moreover to carry through the laws necessary to protect the weaker classes, caring for the howling of opponents just as little as he would regard the barking of a pack of curs."[45] Whether it amused or distressed Chesson to receive de Plevitz's praise of Gordon and Gordon's low opinion of de Plevitz[46] in the same mail from men who lived not a mile apart on the other side of the world is not recorded.

In September 1877, more than a year after their arrival, Richard de Plevitz, now aged fourteen, found employment in a tailors' shop in Levuka and was able to support his father. However, another four months passed before Gordon finally relented. William Seed, also from the Mauritius Royal Commission, had been made Inspector of Police on his arrival in Fiji. He was permitted to appoint de Plevitz to the police force at the beginning of 1878.[47] de Plevitz was to be sole European police officer to administer Vanua Levu, an island three times the size of Mauritius and half as big as Jamaica. He was given neither house nor horse. Nor was there a lockup, except for a *bure* (a thatched hut) through whose dilapidated walls the prisoners could pass at will. And as he later complained to Seed, he had no copies of the laws he was meant to administer.

A Policeman's Lot . . .

Islander Labor

On arrival on Vanua Levu, de Plevitz found a familiar situation: the ill treatment of plantation laborers. He immediately embarked on a tour of inspection. By March 1878, not three weeks after his arrival, he had penned a lengthy report to Seed noting that he had advised the proprietors to improve the workers' abysmal conditions. As the supervision of labor was not part of a policeman's duties it was not welcome news in Levuka that the sergeant was making recommendations that he did not have the power to implement. Despite orders to the contrary, de Plevitz continued to send reports for two years (copies to the Aborigines' Protection Society), and they continued to be ignored in Levuka, where it was no doubt thought that importing Indian laborers would resolve the issue of the exploitation of Fijian and Islander workers.

The Indians Arrive

On May 14, 1879 the *Leonidas* with 464 indentured laborers, mainly from the United Provinces of India, anchored off Levuka. While the ship was quarantined for ninety days with cases of smallpox, cholera, and dysentery, on shore the press was preparing its welcome. Two days after the *Leonidas* dropped anchor, the *Fiji Argus* gleefully published a report designed to reinforce the prejudices of the planters. Indian laborers, indentured on Réunion (Mauritius's neighboring island) and taken to New Caledonia, were now on offer to planters on Taveuni, the third largest of the Fijian islands. Their services, however, had been categorically refused by the Fijian planters on the grounds that:

> If they were not supplied with everything, they were able to cite section so-and-so of Ordinance No. so-and-so &c and point out requirements of same; but when they commenced to quote decisions of the court in several cases in Mauritius and elsewhere in regard to coolie labor, their employer thought that such intellectual laborers were out of place on a plantation, and so was not sorry to get rid of them. A little learning is a dangerous thing, and may serve to make the services of coolie labor anything but sought after.[48]

The editor's prediction was correct. Of the planters, only Captain Hill took 106 laborers from the *Leonidas*. The rest had to be found work in government service. Enlightened by the Royal Commission and de Plevitz's humanitarian campaign in Mauritius, an appreciation of the rule of law had reached the Pacific. de Plevitz's advocacy in Mauritius had again frustrated Gordon's plans for labor.

The Chippendall Case

In the meantime Fijian and Islander labor continued to be poorly treated, and de Plevitz continued his unwanted reports. In February 1880 Gordon had minuted querulously on a police report that de Plevitz was living at Savusavu on Vanua Levu, contrary to instructions. "Why my orders more than once given that he should come over here remain unattended to I know not."[49] "Over here" was Suva. Levuka and its surrounds had been found too constricted for a capital, and the center of government had moved to the eastern coast of Viti Levu. Gordon was to regret two months later that his order had still not been carried out.

There had been no European magistrate on Vanua Levu for some months when on April 27, 1880, Gordon received a report from de Plevitz, via Seed, that an accusation had been made that one Chippendall, a planter of Nabuni, had kicked an Islander worker and the worker had died. Gordon had previously had dealings with Chippendall, an ex-lieutenant of the Royal Navy, and not formed a good opinion of him. On that occasion he had heard that Chippendall was living with a fourteen-year-old Fijian girl whose husband had demanded her return. In his role as Paramount Chief Gordon had exercised his authority to order the girl back to her husband.

Gordon's nemesis as Governor was about to be precipitated, not by his unpopular policies, but by his personal prejudices. If there was truth in the allegation about the laborer's death, which Gordon was immediately disposed to believe, there were two paths of prosecution: either by the

Immigration Department because the laborer had come from another island group or through a police prosecution presented by the local police officer pursuant to the criminal law. Mistrusting de Plevitz's abilities (though Seed later asserted that de Plevitz would have been "quite equal to the duty required"[50]) and the inexperience of the local temporary magistrate Henry Anson, and fearful that the case might "break down,"[51] Gordon decided on a Crown prosecution by the Immigration Department, contrary to the advice of his Chief Justice, Sir John Gorrie.

On April 29, Anson, the Crown prosecutor Hobday, the government medical officer, the inspector of immigrants, and two special constables arrived on Vanua Levu to take evidence and exhume the body. In a report to his superior de Plevitz gave his opinion that, given the state of the body that had been buried some days previously by other laborers, "it would have been impossible for any medical man to find out" how the laborer died.[52] Nevertheless Hobday ordered de Plevitz to sign an information against Chippendall charging him with murder with malice prepense. Sergeant de Plevitz refused to do so unless he was allowed to read the medical report. Hobday replied it was sufficient that the sergeant had been told the results. With bad grace de Plevitz signed. He was then given a warrant for the arrest of Chippendall and ordered to keep him under house arrest until the committal hearing the next day. That evening Chippendall confided to de Plevitz that the accusation had probably been thought up by a malicious neighbor.

In court the next day the charge was reduced to manslaughter and Chippendall was committed for trial in Suva in July. de Plevitz sent off a report to Seed protesting about the order to sign the information when he had no knowledge of the facts on which it was based. He gave his good opinion of Chippendall and enclosed a map of the property that showed how far the deceased was able to walk after the alleged assault. He hoped that this "would help to render justice."[52] Seed supported the report and passed it on to the Colonial Secretary, whose response was to diagnose Seed "confused" and de Plevitz "irritated." Gordon directed that these opinions be conveyed to Seed "pretty stiffly conveying my entire approval of the course pursued ... de Plevitz to be informed."[53] Gordon had had enough of de Plevitz's reports and ordered his immediate transfer to Suva.

The European settlers were incensed that Chippendall had been ordered to stand trial. They took up a petition, the tenor of which was that no white man should ever be brought to trial for any action whatsoever against an Islander. Reminiscent of events in Mauritius where Gordon had also been accused by the planters of executive interference in judicial matters,[54] the petition demanded an immediate inquiry into Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon's

conduct in the process. Widely signed, it was then forwarded to London to Lord Kimberley, Undersecretary of State for the Colonies. Urged on by a pamphlet published by Chippendall's father, a clergyman, notice was given in the House of Commons of a motion for an inquiry into the case.

The trial opened in Suva in early July 1880, and after hearing the evidence Chief Justice Gorrie acquitted the accused. Kimberley decided against an inquiry but privately admonished Gordon.

Gordon loved his position as Governor of Fiji. However in 1880 the Colonial Office appointed him as Governor of New Zealand. Learning this news from the editor of the *Fiji Times*, who had received the news by cable, Gordon was furious. He sent off a protest to London, but too late, cabled back Kimberley, your post is gazetted, and William Des Voeux is the new Governor of Fiji.

The planters were hysterical with delight on hearing that Gordon was leaving, utterly convinced that it was their intervention that had occasioned the move. In farewelling the colony in November 1880, the main thrust of Gordon's parting speech was a justification of his prosecution of Chippendall.[55] Hisses filled the room. Gordon left the room, and the colony, privately declaring that he was "leaving half my heart behind me in the land over which for more than five years I had been the absolute despot."[56] He was to retain his connections with Fiji through his supervision of native policy in the Pacific as high commissioner for the Western Pacific, a territory from Tonga to New Guinea. Indeed it was on one of his trips back to Fiji that a serious crisis developed in New Zealand's native affairs that led to Gordon's hasty retreat from that colony.

As for de Plevitz, the superintendent of police, William Seed, was to minute on his file shortly before dismissing him from the police force for playing cards and drinking in the Suva Hotel off duty: "In any other capacity Sergeant de Plevitz might be found to answer very well as he is a shrewd sharp and clever man, but as a policeman he is not a success."[57] Nevertheless de Plevitz found a place for himself in the new capital. He acted as an interpreter of Hindi and other languages in the courts, he had a splendid garden from which he sold vegetables, he proposed a cigar-making industry, he imported comestibles, and he sold illicit wine and spirits. He was finally caught smuggling two men's suits from a German ship and sentenced to six months imprisonment in Korolevu jail outside Suva. On his committal his family, except for his youngest daughter who stayed to become a missionary nun, hastily left the colony for Sydney.

de Plevitz had almost served his time, much of it unsupervised as the gardener of the Suva Botanical Gardens, when he asked leave to attend the wedding of his daughter Mary in Sydney. The government accepted the

opportunity with alacrity, minuting on his file that de Plevitz can leave so long as he never comes back. He set sail, not for Sydney, but for New Caledonia. He died in 1893 in the New Hebrides.

Conclusion

Within the limited world of administration of Queen Victoria's colonies characters were bound to meet, clash, and come off second best. Adolphe de Plevitz, restless, impetuous, and defender of the underdog, held the view that migration offered workers the chance of a better life, but that the British Crown had a duty to provide them with the same legal rights and protections as any other of Her Majesty's subjects, regardless of color or provenance. This was an unlikely prospect in nineteenth century colonial life, where every one of Queen Victoria's governors was obliged to face the issue of cheap labor to develop their colony—retaining their position depended on it. Nevertheless it is surprising that Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon, aware of its condemnation by the antislavery movements, and its abuse in Trinidad, British Guiana, and Mauritius, should see indentured labor from India as a solution for the burgeoning colony of Fiji. However, once acquainted with the Fijians and their way of life, Gordon had become obsessed with protecting them from further exploitation. His way of doing so was eccentric, to say the least, in colonial administration.

By the time Gordon's governorship of Fiji had ended, he had determined the course of Fiji's modern history. His insistence on Indian labor had partially met the antislavery movement's concerns about Islander and Fijian labor, but it overlooked the fact that the same human greed infected both. The laborers from India did not immigrate to Fiji, they came on contracts with the intention of returning home. When, as in Mauritius, the planters found ways around paying the agreed wage and declined to pay their return fares, the Indians had no choice but to stay in the Pacific. For them, and their descendants, the denial of access to those rights of equality that de Plevitz had advocated undermined their future security.

NOTES

1 Arthur Hamilton Gordon, *Mauritius: Records of Private and Public Life 1871–1874* (2 vols., Edinburgh 1894), vol. I, p. 41, letter to Lady Gordon, March 8, 1871.

2 Great Britain, *Report of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the Treatment of Immigrants in British Guiana* (2 vols., London 1871).

3 For example, 44,397 Indian laborers arrived in 1859.

4 Mauritius, *Report of the Police Enquiry Commission* (Port Louis 1872), p. 138.

5 Adolphe de Plevitz, *The petition of the old immigrants of Mauritius presented on 6th June 1871, with observations* (Port Louis 1871).

6 Gordon, *Mauritius*, vol. I, p. 95.

7 Adolphe de Plevitz, *A Rare Book* (reprint, Port Louis 1959).

8 Gordon, *Mauritius*, vol. I, p. 305. His reply to the petitioners was reprinted in full in the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* 17:8 (1871), pp. 231 et seq.

9 Gordon, *Mauritius*, vol. I, p. 280, also at p. 358. He similarly blamed Lord Kimberley, the Undersecretary of State for the Colonies, for not authorizing the reform program earlier, at pp. 395 and 465.

10 William Frere had previously sat on the Royal Commission in British Guiana.

11 Gordon, *Mauritius*, vol. II, pp. 12–13.

12 Great Britain, *Report of the Royal Commissioners appointed to enquire into the treatment of Immigrants in Mauritius* (London 1875), evidence of Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon, November 11, 1872.

13 Great Britain, *Report of the Royal Commissioners*, evidence of Sir Virgile Naz, December 17, 1872. In his diary (Gordon, *Mauritius*, vol. I, p. 73) Gordon designated Naz as "a half-breed Indian and negro."

14 And by their descendants, for example, Sookdeo Bissoondoyal, *Fresh light on Adolf von Plevitz* [sic] (Port Louis 1963); Anon, *Remember de Plevitz* (Port Louis 1958).

15 For example, "Mr Adolphe de Plevitz, the hero of Mauritius," *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 19:8 (1875), pp. 196–9; pp. 203–5.

16 *Colonial Intelligencer and Aborigines' Friend* (May 1874), pp. 123–5.

17 Gordon, *Mauritius*, vol. II, p. 68.

18 Gordon, *Mauritius*, letter to Lady Gordon of June 18, 1874, emphasis in the original, vol. II, p. 632.

19 Alfred P. Maudslay, *Life in the Pacific Fifty Years Ago* (London 1930), pp. 82–3.

20 Arthur Hamilton Gordon *Paper on the System of Taxation in force in Fiji, read before the Colonial Institute* (London 1879), p. 197 quoted in Peter France, *The Charter of the Land: Custom and Colonization in Fiji* (Melbourne 1969).

21 It continued as a form of indirect rule until it was suspended by the current regime in April 2007. In 2008 it was reported that the Great Council of Chiefs was ready to reconvene, but at time of writing has not yet done so.

22 *Adi* is a title used by Fijian women of chiefly rank, the equivalent of the *Ratu* title used by male clan chiefs.

23 William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England 1765–9* (reprint, Abingdon 1982). Blackstone's theories were derived from the writings of Emer de Vattel, *Le droit des gens, ou Principes de la loi naturelle, appliqués à la conduite et aux affaires des Nations et des Souverains* (2 vols., London 1758). International law envisaged three situations: land that was apparently "deserted and uncultivated" by its nomadic inhabitants was declared terra nullius and open for possession by a foreign power. However, land that had been gained through conquest in war or that was ceded to the foreign power remained in the hands of the local people until that power exercised its rights of occupancy, which the British Crown did in Fiji through the Deed of Cession.

24 An appeal could be taken from a commission decision to a board that consisted of Gordon, his Chief Justice, and the Commissioner for Native Affairs. France, *The Charter of the Land*, pp. 114–5.

25 France, *The Charter of the Land*.

26 *Fiji Times*, August 12, 1876.

27 Notation by Colonial Secretary dated August 31, 1876 on letter from Adolphe de Plevitz to Governor Gordon (Suva, National Archives of Fiji) CSO Inward Correspondence 1233 of August 25, 1876.

28 Adolphe de Plevitz, letter to Governor Gordon (Suva, National Archives of Fiji), CSO Inward Correspondence, 1221 of August 31, 1876.

29 Arthur Hamilton Gordon, *Fiji: Records of Private and Public Life 1875–1880* (4 vols., Edinburgh 1897–1912), vol. III, p. 469 (emphasis in the original).

30 Alfred P. Maudslay, Acting Colonial Secretary, letter to Adolphe de Plevitz (Suva, National Archives of Fiji), CSO Outwards Correspondence 1014 of September 6, 1876.

31 Arthur Hamilton Gordon to F.W. Chesson, March 20, 1877 (Oxford, Rhodes House) *Anti-Slavery Papers. Letters to the Secretary of the Aborigines' Protection Society, F.W. Chesson*, MSS British Empire, S18. C135/88.

32 *Fiji Times*, September 13, 1876.

33 Adolphe de Plevitz to F.W. Chesson, April 16, 1877 (Oxford, Rhodes House), *Anti-Slavery Papers. Letters to the Secretary of the Aborigines' Protection Society, F.W. Chesson*. MSS British Empire S18. C145/51.

34 The *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 19:7 (1875), pp. 165–7 reported that a deputation from the Aborigines' Protection Society had called on Gordon before he left for Fiji.

35 John D. Kelly and Martha Kaplan, *Represented Communities: Fiji and World Decolonization* (Chicago 2001), pp. 164–5.

36 *Fiji Times*, September 4, 1875.

37 Gordon, *Mauritius*, vol. I, p. 180.

38 For example, in the *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 20:1 (1876), pp. 20–22; 20:3 (1876), pp. 63–4.

39 *Fiji Times*, November 29, 1876.

40 In 1878 this taxation system netted £20,888 for the colony revenue: *Blue Book of Fiji 1878* (London, Public Records Office) CO 459/3.

41 Stephen L. Gwynn, *The Life of the Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Dilke* (2 vols, New York 1917), vol. I, p. 536.

42 Adolphe de Plevitz, letter to F.W. Chesson, April 16, 1877, MSS British Empire S18. C145/51.

43 Gordon, *Fiji*, vol. II, p. 296.

44 Adolphe de Plevitz, letter to his friend, V. Modeliar Rajaruthnam, of Madras, March 1877 (letter copybook in author's possession).

45 Adolphe de Plevitz, letter to F.W. Chesson, April 16, 1877, MSS British Empire, S18. C145/51.

46 Cited above at footnote 31.

47 *Blue Book of Fiji 1878* (London, Public Records Office) CO 459/3.

48 *Fiji Argus*, May 16, 1879.

49 Arthur Hamilton Gordon, notation dated February 24, 1880 on *Report on Police Force for 1879* (Suva, National Archives of Fiji), CSO Inwards Correspondence 303 of February 19, 1880.

50 William Seed, letter to Acting Colonial Secretary (Suva, National Archives of Fiji), CSO Inwards 836 of May 12, 1880.

51 Gordon, *Fiji*, vol. IV, p. 281.

52 Adolphe de Plevitz, report to William Seed dated May 2, 1880 (Suva, National Archives of Fiji), CSO Inwards Correspondence 836 of May 12, 1880, attachment to Seed's letter to the Colonial Secretary.

53 Arthur Hamilton Gordon, notation to the Colonial Secretary dated May 26, 1880 (Suva, National Archives of Fiji), CSO Inwards Correspondence 836 of May 12, 1880.

54 In May 1871 Gordon had appointed the Subprocureur-General (Deputy Attorney General) to act for sixty-seven Indians who had lodged a complaint alleging they had been ill-treated by the owner of Mont Choisy estate.

55 Gordon, *Fiji*, vol. IV, p. 488.

56 Gordon, *Fiji*, vol. IV, p. 505.

57 William Seed, letter to the Colonial Secretary, J.B. Thurston (Suva, National Archives of Fiji) CSO Inwards Correspondence 534 of March 19, 1881.

TAANGAANGA TE PEU RAROTONGA—INVESTIGATING RAROTONGAN CORE VALUES

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This study explored Rarotongan core values that elders in Rarotonga considered might be important for inclusion in a physical education program. To date, there has been no study on Rarotongan core values in physical education. The study of Rarotongan core values will benefit Rarotongan schools in the area of physical education. This will revive some of the cultural traditional practices that have been discouraged. Rarotongan core values will encourage students' participation in physical education. Findings of the study address the needs of a policy that will enhance students' participation in physical education if used in a culturally responsive way.

Introduction

THIS STUDY WAS DESIGNED TO EXPLORE Rarotongan core values. The research question was: What Rarotongan core values are needed to structure a culturally responsive pedagogy for physical education? It was expected that Rarotongan core values play an important part in student engagement and participation of learning in physical education. The research is important because it uncovers important Rarotongan core values that could be incorporated into the physical education program. By interviewing a range of *pa metua* (elders) and senior members of the community who were knowledgeable about education in Rarotonga, it was anticipated that this would lead to an understanding of their perceptions of what constituted Rarotongan core values and their perceptions in terms of the benefits of the core values for improving student engagement in their learning.

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Findings of the study showed that the interviewees conceived Rarotongan core values to be important to students' schooling; they believed the core values could contribute to implementing a curriculum and policy and education of students' learning and engagement if used in a culturally responsive manner.

Method

Participants

Ten community elders, five government officials, and four school administrators participated in the study. These participants were selected because they comprised pa metua who had standing and respect within the community, as well as a range of government officials and administrators who had long-standing careers in education in Rarotonga. This latter group was deemed to possess implicit knowledge about the potential integration of core values in the teaching of physical education. All participants who were approached agreed to be interviewed. For confidentiality, the names of the participants have been preserved for anonymity.

Measures

All participants were interviewed to obtain their views about what constituted core values within the Rarotongan context. They took part in a semistructured interview because it enabled the participants to direct the interview and to share their experiences in their own way. The semistructured method does not confine the interviews to a set format but allows the interviewees freedom to express their views and to lead the interview in directions that are important to them (Maykut and Morehouse 1994). The prompts that were used to initiate and promote the interview were:

> Kia Orana e meitaki maata no teia atianga kia komakoma taua no runga i taku e anoano nei ite kite. [*Thank you very much papa for this opportunity to interview you. Your wisdom and knowledge is important to this research. I hope that we learn from each other.*] Te mea mua e papa me ka tika iakoe kia komakoma taua no runga ite oonu'anga ta tatou akaaereanga no te peu apii ta tatou e utu'utu nei ite apii anga i te tamariki kia riro te reira ei apii ia atu ki te tamariki no runga ite apii pae kopapa. [*First papa, please tell me what Rarotongan core values you consider would be needed to structure a teaching lesson for physical education . . . please explain*

to me why you think the core values you have chosen would benefit Rarotongan students' learning and engagement in physical education.]

Procedure

Consent for this study was gained from the University of Auckland Human Ethics Committee (ref. 2006/457). Each interview took approximately one hour. I conducted the interview in a friendly manner and with understanding of, and respect for, the participants' background. I recorded some core values in my notebook to discuss with the interviewees such as *ngakau maru* (humility), *kauraro* (respect), and *taokotai* (cooperation). I used the prompts above to guide the participants so that I could understand their perspectives of Rarotongan core values, what it was that the participants thought was needed to incorporate culturally responsive pedagogy into physical education, and how this may assist student engagement in classroom learning. The interviews were digitally recorded and were conducted in a comfortable place and at a time chosen by the participant. The interview process was conducted with cultural sensitivity. Cultural issues pertaining to reciprocity and respect were a significant part of the interview. Tapes were transcribed with participants each receiving a copy of the transcribed data; this allowed them to identify any omissions and to alter any errors in transcription. Participants were assured that their details would not be published or revealed to anyone and that they would remain anonymous.

Data Analysis

An ethnographic approach was used to gain access into the community being researched. Following collection and transcription of the data, they were analyzed inductively through an initial process of "open coding." I coded each page of the transcribed notes. At the top of each page of the transcript, I color-coded the interviewee and recorded the data source, date of interview, and page number. I categorized my written notes that dealt with the participants' interviews (Maykut and Morehouse 1994; Patton 1990, 2002). I labelled the data for theoretical concepts, classified them under single words or phrases, and then compared them (Maykut and Morehouse 1994). From these coded themes, I was able to identify the core values that the interviewees identified as underpinning culturally responsive physical education in Rarotongan secondary schools. Six core values were consistently identified by the pa metua. These were:

tāueue (participation), *angaanga taokotai* (cooperation), *akatano* (discipline), *angaanga oire kapiti* (community involvement), *te reo Maori Kuki Airani* (Maori Cook Island language), and *auora* (physical and spiritual well-being).

Results

The findings in relation to each core value are presented below.

Core Value 1: Tāueue (Participation and Engagement). In the course of the interview, SA1 revealed how tāueue is valued inclusively and culturally. She said the following:

> ... I couldn't speak for others ... but participation from a Cook Island perspective is about tāueue, *akamaroiroi* [strength], and *akakoromaki* [patience]. This is the kind of participation and engagement we should be encouraging in our students. I also perceive participation and engagement as a form of *irinakianga* [self-belief], *akaketaketa* [becoming strong], *ngakau aroa* [having a loving heart], *noa* [caring], *ako* [teaching and learning], *ōparapara* [movement], ngakau maru, and *putuputu 'anga okotai* [inclusive teaching] and that which involves a student's cultural background, special needs, and disability in the learning process... (ID[SA1]/ 19.2.07, p.4).

Tāueue has various meanings. CE6 highlighted akakoromaki, which is one of the components of tāueue. He said:

> ... When I was growing up in Mauke but now live in Rarotonga, akakoromaki helped me survive as a child growing up even though life was difficult. We survived by fishing in the ocean and growing crops for food. Once a week, the boat arrived from Rarotonga with supplies of corned beef and flour ... my parents looked forward to these days when the boat came. Akakoromaki disciplined me. I had to make sacrifices to help my parents at a younger age... (IT[CE6]/13.2.07, p.6).

The data above showed that akakoromaki was a challenge and difficult to learn. Another value that was aligned to tāueue was akamaroiroi. GO5 said akamaroiroi helped her to stay focused in her participation in sport. She stated: "... Akamaroiroi, as I remember it when I was growing up, meant a lot to me. At home, my parents' akamaroiroi allowed me to have the

strength to do well in sports and physical education. Now [that] I am a mother with my own children, I continue to foster akamaroiroi in kids to tāueue in their sports activities. . ." (ID[GO5/23.03.07, p.8).

The data showed that akamaroiroi could be very useful to help student encouragement and motivation in physical education. Further, SA2 shared how tāueue played an important part in his school, particularly in sports, physical education, and recreation. He added:

> . . . Private schools value tāueue. It also means *ngakau toa* [strong heart]. Tāueue in physical education . . . I don't think there is a real issue with that when it comes to sporting events. On the local scene . . . we encourage our students to tāueue in athletics as well. When it comes to those events, our students akamaroiroi and ako other students to have ngakau toa in their life. . . (IG[SA2]/15.02.07, p.7).

Ngakau toa was an important part of learning physical education and sports. Still, SA4 explained that ngakau toa also motivated students to develop enthusiasm and excitement in participating in physical education. He stated: ". . . The value of ngakau toa is important to teaching. I believe ngakau toa is essential to my well-being because it helps me to be strong and overcome my trials and challenges. My students at this school need to learn why ngakau toa is important to them. . ." (IA[SA4]/16.03.07, p.9).

The participants believed that ngakau toa helped students to have the courage and faith to overcome the challenges they experienced each day. Furthermore, CE5 said ngakau toa also encouraged students to ako. Ako is another pillar of tāueue. He stated:

> . . . Ako means teaching, listening, and humility. I remember a time my teacher said, this was in the 1960s . . . my teacher told me that if I didn't listen to her my life would be miserable. From that day, I listened to her until I got married and began having children. My parents taught me the value of ako and I continued to teach my kids the value of ako. I want to tell you we need ako in our family life as well as in education. . . (IT[CE5]/26.02.07, p.2).

Tāueue are one of the values that could help Cook Island students to become engaged and be motivated to participate in physical education. Furthermore, this could also help teachers to look at this Cook Island core value as a pathway to encourage students to engage in developing relationships and to involve themselves more fully in physical education.

Core Value 2: Angaanga Taokotai (Cooperation). Angaanga taokotai is another core value that can help students overcome their fears and failures. A Rarotongan pa metua said: "... angaanga taokotai would help students to engage in their learning skills and to overcome their shyness..." (IC[CE8]/1.04.07, p.6).

CE8 believed that the core value angaanga taokotai could benefit students by helping them to overcome their fears and become confident when engaging with others. Nevertheless, SA3 pointed out students develop skills from engaging as a team: "... Students learn to support and work together as a team; at the same time, they encourage each other to become engaged in various activities at school. They learn to get to know each other socially by interacting..." (IA[SA3]/15.02.07, p.5).

Further, GO2 stated: "... the core values of the Ministry of Education are quality, accessibility, and equity; this could be useful in physical education. The school has never implemented these values in physical education..." (IT[GO2]/26.02.07, p.2).

These values of quality, accessibility, and equity could be relevant in developing a culturally responsive pedagogy to support and engage students to learn and to respect their peers.

Conversely, GO5 told her story of why angaanga taokotai was not supported in the schools and with her former employers. She said:

> ... At the moment, we don't have people cooperating. That is why our program was not going to be successful. If only the Ministry of Education were cooperating with the schools, maybe we could become a better school. In doing so, teachers and students would be more cooperative and confident in their physical education programs. The second thing is that there is no status in the school for physical education. It is not considered a core subject but an option, and we don't have any trained teachers ... they really focus on senior level not Year 9 and [Year] 10, and of course if you don't focus on your Year 9 and Year 10, by the time they get to level one, learning becomes difficult at NCEA level. How could students learn to engage if the school is not cooperating together...? (ID[GO5]/26.02.07, p.8).

It appeared this participant did not believe that angaanga taokotai was well supported by the Ministry of Education or the schools. This could be a problem in student learning of participation and engagement in the future and is already evident in the schools.

However, CE8 described how other values related to the core value of angaanga taokotai. She said:

> ... What people really need to know is that Rarotongans always need special characteristics like ngakau maru, *ngakau akaaka* [being down to earth], and ngakau toa if there is to be angaanga taokotai even though it is difficult. What is the heart of Rarotonga that we can all trust? In that way, we are developing necessary skills to move our country together as one nation. My view is that there is no real heart for the people of Rarotonga. How can our kids have a good heart if there is no angaanga taokotai...? (IC[CE8]/1.03.07, p.6).

The values of ngakau maru and ngakau toa in relation to *angaanga kapiti* (cooperation) could possibly encourage students to succeed in schooling regardless of their differences. SA4 explained to me in a different manner which characteristics were important for angaanga taokotai. He indicated:

> ... [It] is not about who makes the most money or what title you hold, whether it is a Prime Minister or a politician. Perhaps [it] is working together regardless of ethnic backgrounds. Being able to get along, put up with each other, and strive to build a nation with oneness. Only when this is accomplished ... would Cook Islanders once again become a nation with pride and integrity... (IS[SA4]/16/02.07, p.3).

Core Value 3: Akarongo te tamariki or Akatano (Discipline). Akatano plays a role in teaching students to use appropriate behaviors and show respect to their peers. CE8 suggested why achieving discipline was difficult in the schools. She said: "... No discipline and the children are left at home by themselves. Parents are working more hours ... leaving their children at home unsupervised. This is why discipline is a big problem in the schools..." (IC[CE8]/1.03.07, p.9).

According to the interviewee, akatano was one of the more difficult values to teach the students. Students who were not disciplined could have problematic issues in learning later on. Similarly, CO1 reported:

> ... Discipline, I guess, is an important learning tool for teachers as well as for students. Today student discipline is an issue in the schools in Rarotonga. Students attending school have brought with them the behavior, attitude, and problems from home into

> the classroom. These issues should be dealt with at home. Discipline is also to help students to stay focused, to participate, maintain, and sustain the value of becoming a better person. If students do not see the significance of discipline in learning, it will not make them a better learner in the classroom... (IJ[GO1]/12.02.07, p.10).

Hence, akatano can be seen as an important value in Rarotongan education. Similarly, CE2 stated how important discipline was in the family. He said:

> ... Te tuaanga ote peu kia apii ia ki roto ite oraanga mapu e pera katoa te angaanga vaerua kia manuia to ratou oraanga me ki ia ratou ite vaerua tapu. Ko teia ta te atua kia ka inangaro kia tamau tatou ite apii kia riro tatou ei tamariki vaerua meitaki... (IN[CE2]/7.02.07, p.12). [*Discipline needs to be taught in the lives of our youth and young single adults so that families and children can learn to develop unity. To work together and share spiritual blessing with each other at all times. This is what God wants them to do so they can learn to become good disciples of God.*]

The participant highlighted that students could become disciplined if parents engage closely alongside their children.

From the perspective of most of the participants quoted above, it appears that, although they believed discipline should be a family responsibility, many seemed to be neglecting this responsibility. Hence, for schools, discipline had become an important component of helping students engage in teaching and learning.

Core Value 4: Angaanga Oire Kapiti (Community Involvement). The elders who identified the value angaanga oire kapiti believed this would benefit the school and the community as long as they worked in partnership to achieve educational goals. For example, SA1 outlined how communities and schools could come together to get the best outcome for students. He indicated:

> ... The school values the community. Community brings a spirit of kindness and knowledge that is astounding ... loving for parents who want their children to succeed in life ... giving students the opportunity to learn about their cultural tradition ... to explore who they are by valuing the knowledge of the past ... how they come to know their essence ... values represented in the

> community lead to student who would one day become the leaders of tomorrow... (ID [SA1]/19.2.07, p.10).

However, SA3 proposed that one of the ways to encourage angaanga oire kapiti was for the community and school to engage together in sharing their expertise.

> I encourage teachers that, if there were some skills they are not very good at, to please go to the people in the community [who] could do a good job teaching, and physical education is an example of that, and we don't have qualified teachers [who] can teach sport. I asked the Cook Islands Sports National Olympic Committee (CISNOC) to come teach sports skills to our students... (IA[SA3]/15.02.07, p.7).

Hence, the success of the community and school depends on how partnership programs are put in place for the students to engage in their learning. Therefore, GO3 said: "... Children come from the community to the schools, and they take what they have learned in the school back into the community..." (II[G03]/12.02.07, p.14).

Children are the future leaders of Rarotonga. What they learn in the community and at school can develop their leadership skills in the future. Yet, CE1 suggested that community projects play an important part in helping Cook Islanders not to give up their cultural values but to hold on to their cultural identity. He said: "... The community is united; it helps younger people in their education such as in teaching the language, dances, culture, helping support children to learn, and not fragmenting nor pulling each other down..." (IJ[CE1]/16.03.07, p.2).

The community and school could both be successful if the younger ones were molded through good education, education that recognized the value of both participants: the school and the community.

A proverb that relates to this point of view was suggested during an interview with CE9 who explained:

> ... An Aitutaki proverb, "... *Te uu* (parrot fish) will go out and they always go back to where their heart is and where they were brought up. That is, the man with a heart and of the people. I can sit back and say 'where has it all gone' when you think about it, it [is a] way of saying how they were brought up..." (IT[CE9]/1.03.07, p.8).

This proverb reflects the lifestyle of Rarotongan culture, both historical and contemporary. Cook Islanders are changing today, and the children are influenced by the *papaa* (Western) culture. The future of their culture lies in Rarotonga maintaining their heritage helping communities and schools to become more proactive and to motivate students to engage in learning cultural traditions. For cultural responsiveness to become effective, the Rarotongan community needs to play an important part in helping teachers engage students in learning and becoming culturally involved.

Core Value 5: Te Reo Maori Kuki Airani (Maori Cook Island Language). The pa metua who identified te reo Maori Kuki Airani as a core value agreed that Maori language needed to be actively used in the schools. Consequently, GO4 would rather have te reo Maori Kuki Airani taught in every school in Rarotonga but suggested it would be very difficult to start unless the government officials and teachers cooperated. He said:

> . . . Te akaruke nei tatou ito tatou reo. Tetai basileira kare o ratou peu ete reo kare tereira ite basileia. No reira kia inangaro ia tatou kia akakeu ia tereira. Kua irinaki raoki au e manga marama taku e aere nei au kua akakite mai te repoti ate UNESCO akataka mai i roto ite rima mataiti kia manuia e mete matutu nei rai to tatou reo. . . (IJ[G04]/4.02.07, p.14). [*We are ignoring our Cook Island language. If a nation doesn't value its own cultural language, it is not a nation. We need to develop and encourage our Maori language teachers and parents to teach their own children about Maori Cook Island language at home and also at school. I will be happy if, in five years time, the reports of UNESCO show that our language is becoming strong.*]

With te reo Maori KuKi Airani being so important, GO5 confirmed that te reo Maori KuKi Airani should also be recognized in the physical education program. He stated: ". . . We have traditional games and sports in physical education that were played by our ancestors. Te reo Maori Kuki Airani is important for our children to learn, but this is not happening in physical education. . ." (1D[G05]/26.02.07, p.10).

However, the revival of te reo Maori Kuki Airani in the schools has not been successful. Sadly, CE4 indicated that, in the next five to ten years, the Cook Island language will no longer be the national language. She said:

> . . . The reason for that is because Cook Islanders are being influenced by outside sources, which are detrimental to the Cook Island culture. Te reo Maori Kuki Airani is like a vessel being directed in the right place. If the vessel is not functioning well, the language

> will eventually die out, which we are seeing happening today... (IM[CE4/]12.02.07, p.4).

Hence, te reo Maori Kuki Airani was considered important to the land and cultural heritage and to the way in which these were interconnected. Similarly, CE6 reaffirmed why the values of te reo Maori Kuki Airani were important in the physical education program. He said:

> ... Apii ite tatau no atu e tatau papaa ana koe. Ka tatau Maori te puapii kia koe e ka akapera koe me tatau kite tangata, No reira te au apinga katoatoa ite apii i tera tuatau e reo Maori paurua. Ta tatou apii oki i teia ra te iti (limited) ua atu ara te reo Maori ite Kuki Airani tikai. Te mataku nei au ko te ngaro to tatou reo. Kua aere te peapa kite orometua kia puapii sabati ite akakite kia ratou e kia akamaroiroi ia ta tatou tamariki ite reo. Ko te Cook Islands tetai iti tangata e paruparu nei to ratou reo. te reo kote katu mata tereira ote basileia koia oki ia Rarotonga nei ko te tango ote hasileia ko tera taku tuatua i aere... (IR[CE6]/13.02.07, p.10). [*Learn to read in Maori, and it does not matter if you read in English. When the teacher reads in Maori, that is the way students should read to each other. Our reading in Maori is limited, and we need to encourage our kids and parents to read in Maori to their children at home and wherever. I am scared that we are going to lose our Maori language. The announcement has gone to the Ministers of each church to encourage Ministers to speak in Maori. We Cook Islanders are weak when it comes to the language. The language is the eye of our nation.*]

The elders confirmed that te reo Maori Kuki Airani was unique and was important to education particularly and, in relation to this article, to physical education. This is interconnected with auora.

Core Value 6: Auora (Developing of the Physical and the Spiritual). From the perspectives of the pa metua, auora is important to Rarotongan life. *Au* means physical well-being and *ora* means spiritual well-being. These two components play an important part in students' engagement in learning and participation in physical education. In a similar way, Hāuora forms a core element of the New Zealand Health and Physical Education Curriculum (1999). The core value of physical and spiritual well-being was, not surprisingly, also considered essential for teachers to teach in a culturally responsive manner. Thus, CE6 explained how auora influenced the well-being of his life in the Cook Islands and how this could also be influential in contemporary society. He said:

> . . . [L]ife was fabulous. We were fit and healthy. We worked hard clearing our gardens, feeding the animals like pigs and chickens in the morning. Before we went to school, we prayed. After school, we worked hard in the plantation, fishing, weaving, arts and crafts, and so forth. At night time, we prayed. I felt this fabulous chicken skin running through my arms at that time. My parents told me that was a good sign. These were the best times of my life. Today I hardly see those kinds of physical work in the home. I think our children need to understand our physical well-being and the kind of life we lived as a child. Today my children have their own mind. They don't listen to stories and experience. No wonder they don't finish school on a high level. . . (IR[CE6]/13.02.07, p.9).

Auora was the focal point of learning to participate in various cultural practices. Understanding auora could help students to become self-reliant and to take responsibility for what was offered in the learning environment and to share the knowledge with others. Aligned with auora is *pitoenua* (connectivity or the umbilical cord). This is a representation of the meaning of spiritual and physical well-being. In physical education, the physical education teacher and students need to be attached to enable learning to be constructive and meaningful to be able to develop auora in the students. Hence, GO5 explained why pitoenua was important to the learning of culture. He said: ". . . The pitoenua represents our identity and cultural values. This is an element that we should be proud of because pitoenua is not about us, but it is about our culture, heritage, and the ways we live our lifestyle. . ." (ID[G05]/26.02.07, p.13).

Hence, pitoenua is about developing relationships between the students and the teacher in understanding student identity and cultural background.

Discussion

The core values identified in the study consisted of tāueue, angaanga taokotai, akatano, angaanga oire kapiti, te reo Maori Kuki Airani, and auora. There were positive feelings about the core values that the participants highlighted in this study. These core values were considered pertinent to the educational development of culturally responsive pedagogy for physical education in Rarotonga. The participants believed that the core values could revive some of the cultural knowledge and values that have been lost and enhance student engagement in classroom learning.

One of the ways to help learners engage in their learning effectively in physical education is to facilitate teaching and modelling (Kirk 2004). Kirk and Tinning (2002) have both indicated that physical education is socially constructed and knowledge is shared between one another. The core values identified by the participants were associated with students' engagement and creation of knowledge, thinking, solving problems, and developing good relationships with the teacher and peers. This could help students become better learners. Samu (2006) proposed that, in the Pacific education world view, and this can also be perceived from a Rarotongan perspective, core values were useful and could enable students to engage socially and interactively with each other and, thus, gain confidence in both themselves and their peers. There is no doubt, according to Samu, that, by having students engage together in smaller groups, their learning becomes more effective and cooperative. In support of this, Taumoefolau (1998) suggested that Tongan core values such as *faka'apa'apa* (respect), *'ofa* (love), *fetokoni'aki* (mutual helpfulness), *tauhi vā* (looking after relationships) are important core values, and this may also be aligned to Rarotongan core values because it is vital for students to become more confident and reliable and to become active learners.

The influence of the core values could help to stimulate an interest in students' engagement of learning and culture. The core values could also cultivate a sense of identity within culture, school, and community. Thus, they promote schools with strong ties to the community and help learners become engaged as they began to build their self-collective and cultural identity within an environment of pedagogical excellence (Dei 2008). Jonassen (2003) indicated that cultural value was based on the principle of *inangaro* (love) that came from the heart of the teacher to the students. This could help students gain trust in their peers and eventually achieve their educational goals. The core values identified in the current study could be used to develop student learners' engagement in a physical education program that was culturally responsive to students' needs.

Conclusion

The core values identified by the pa metua in this study could underpin culturally responsive teaching in physical education. The participants considered these values to be important for students' learning and believed they could improve students' participation and engagement in physical education as well as benefit physical education teachers by promoting them as culturally responsive practitioners.

Promoting these core values could foster students' learning about cultural practices and could also minimize unfavorable student attitudes

and behavior toward cultural practices and, thus, increase their engagement in physical education. In addition, Rarotongans would be encouraged to revive some of the cultural practices that have not previously been taught in the school or in the physical education program. Having the core values taught in the classroom could help teachers to understand a student's background and identity and could also develop physical education teacher confidence in understanding the cultural learning of Rarotonga such that eventually teachers would become culturally responsive to help students engage better in their learning.

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BOOK REVIEW FORUM

Kirsch, Stuart. *Reverse Anthropology: Indigenous Analysis of Social and Environmental Relations in New Guinea*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2006. Pp. 296. 2 figures, 2 illustrations, 2 maps. ISBN 0804753415 (cloth), US$60.00; ISBN 0804753423 (paper), US$23.95.

West, Paige. 2006. *Conservation Is Our Government Now: The Politics of Ecology in Papua New Guinea*. Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 2006. Pp. 352. 25 illustrations. ISBN 978-0-8223-3712-6 (cloth), US$89.95; ISBN 978-0-8223-3749-2 (paper), US$24.95.

Review: JILL NASH
PROFESSOR EMERITA, BUFFALO STATE COLLEGE

THE BOOKS REVIEWED HERE both concern local Papua New Guinean attitudes toward outsider projects. These projects involve novel uses of what in Western parlance is the "natural environment," but is perhaps better thought of by local people as the world of everything—their landscapes and surroundings. Both books refer to the bird of paradise, the contemplation of which points in many directions: historical connections, both global and personal, and a beautiful, naturalized and threatened world. Each book claims to be a "different kind of ethnography," illustrating distinct anthropological approaches of either "reverse anthropology" or transnational/multisited ethnography. Finally, each book comes to an end without directly taking on the subject of desire for and lack of money—there is not enough, it is unequally distributed, and there is no good way to get it. Of course, the books deal with many other interesting subjects, but I will confine my comments to those I have listed above.

In Kirsch's book, outsiders play the part of destroyers of the Yonggom world; they polluted the Yonggom world almost by carelessness, it seems, when the tailings dam at Ok Tedi collapsed and chemically tainted sands were introduced into the river. The Yonggom on the opposite side of the border between West Papua and Papua New Guinea (known as the Muyu) assumed the status of refuges in Papua New Guinea when they lost their homeland after fleeing Indonesian violence, *transmigrasi*, and resource extraction. In West's book, it is local people—the Gimi—who are positioned (by outsiders) as a destructive threat, and who therefore must be discouraged somehow from using their world. A bargain was struck with conservationist nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and a large piece of Gimi forest was set aside from ordinary uses for biological research. In return, the Gimi believe they were promised "development," which in their view has yet to appear. West explains the views of NGOs and in short, the two sides do not see eye-to-eye.

The question arises as to how people will cope without having access to their world. Gimi, for their part, are willing to give up their old life if a new and better one with wages and services eventuates instead. But so far it has not. Yonggom have been the apparent beneficiaries of part of a large out-of-court settlement for tailings damage which pledged a seemingly large amount of money. With time, it has become evident that however large the figure appears to be, it is not enough to conclude the matter satisfactorily. In fact, and this may be significant, it is only in Western kinds of thinking that relationships can be ended at all. In Papua New Guinea they tend to go on forever. Thus, both the damage and the flawed payment are species of "unrequited reciprocity," an outcome of human interaction which dehumanizes the losing partner in Yonggum thinking.

So both books convey a similar message of discontent, but for different reasons. The Yonggom have gotten things they do not want (a ruined river, flooded gardens, and insufficient financial compensation), and the Gimi are not going to get what they want (wages and services, i.e., development) from conservation. The coup de grâce for the Yonggom is the science that says the river will not recover its pristine state until an estimated hundreds of years after mining ceases. Therefore, local people are actually forced to support continuing mining and continuing pollution so that money for future payments will be earned. Living off lawsuits or pollution compensation is an increasingly significant side-effect of mining in Papua New Guinea. Indeed, there is some indication that people have given up on the environment. Rex Dagi and Alex Maun, the plaintiffs in the case against mining, say that the landscape no longer matters, since the river has destroyed everything that was meaningful in terms of travel, stories, and events (Kirsch 2000).

Both authors refer to the bird of paradise as a key to their stories. The bird of paradise motif points to many things: the centuries-old trade in bird skins from New Guinea and the Moluccas to Europe and then the Neo-Europes, and the naturalizing of the exotic world of Papua New Guinea. We may juxtapose the local use of feathers in adornment for religious practices with Neo-European hats, which were adornment of another kind advertising gender and class. Not only historical connections are evoked, but personal ones: Kirsch's ancestor worked in a millinery shop in New York. Western concern for the slaughter of birds led to some of the earliest conservationist societies with global concerns. Birds of paradise make Gimi think of their family's past; scientists see the bird and think of future loss. The bird is the natural environment, while the paradise is the virgin world where despoliation is imminent. The bird of paradise also belongs in New York, the city that has everything in the world. It can be a fund-raiser—something elites should care about—or a window display to sell shoes.

Kirsch is a scholar-advocate. In addition to his work on Papua New Guinea mining gone awry, he has conducted other studies of world-destruction, notably advocacy for Marshall Islanders at the Nuclear Claims Tribunal. In the work under review, he relies on materials from his doctoral research in the 1980s, and subsequent visits in the next decade. Kirsch has been inspired by Roy Wagner's take on cargo cult, which he has called "reverse anthropology." Indeed, the phrase has a place of honor as the title of Kirsch's book. According to Wagner, reverse anthropology is a play on anthropology's task, and is the interpretative counterpart to the study of culture. Cargo cult is the application of indigenous thinking to the vexing problem of Western culture—how white people get so many material goods so seemingly effortlessly.

Since Yonggom do not have an articulated version of how they might think of Western life, Kirsch regards their myths and their ideas about sorcery and other behaviors as holding the key: he calls them analysis. To me, analysis has to be somewhat more self-conscious and involves taking actions apart; this is not what Yonggom appear to do, but rather what Kirsch does. He takes the way people behave and what happens in their important myths to be social analysis.

The recurrent theme he sees in myths and behaviors has to do with "unrequited reciprocity." In Yonggom, it is dehumanizing and can cause creditors (so to speak) to become animals or sorcerers. Although massive pollution was requited by a large financial settlement, as Kirsch wrote in a paper on partial victory in 2000, it is not sufficient money to make things okay again (Kirsch 2000). The problem is now "unrequited."

I would hazard a guess that unrequited reciprocity is apt to be the grounds for bad feelings in many parts of the world. Certainly there are similarities to default or tort in Western law. But for Yonggom, there has surely never been a customary action which is comparable to the total destruction of the traditional environment: there is no way to reciprocate; all acts toward that end will be insufficient and therefore "unrequitable." Since the Western economy does not operate by reciprocity, there are many acceptable ways of settling difficulties (bankruptcy, write-offs, bail-outs, damages, etc.). Our laws allow severance of responsibility, which is why we in the West have to get over things rather than resolve them, and why many of us have been convinced that enough money is good enough.

Gimi are dissatisfied with the "development" that has occurred, and NGOs have hurt feelings that people are neither grateful nor willing to work for free. Gimi have not gotten rich or adequately been provided with public services, and the conservationists think the Gimi are greedy and importunate. Gimi wanted to turn caring for the forest into an income stream for all people. They envisioned winning something like monetary awards (e.g., a grant from the Japanese government is mentioned), for their effort or forbearance and considered it unjust that the money, in this case, went to the NGO office in Goroka. There are claims that photos of the forest and its animals had been sold overseas for millions of *kina*. They are disappointed rather than encouraged by small successes. Indeed, West shows that the amounts earned from "conservation" activities—being guides to biologists and assistants, providing labor and food, and making net bags—are small compared to income from coffee production. But she also details unappreciated improvements by NGOs.

The conservationists and the Gimi disagree on important implicit understandings as well. Gimi are willing to give up the "past," but retain ideas of exchange and the desire to enter into relationships with conservationists. Outsiders want Gimi to "develop" by doing things by themselves, not in partnership with white people.

Gimi were first convinced that religion would bring development when the Seventh Day Adventists arrived. Conservation came next, with plans to regulate hunting, to set aside some land, to have committees, to make up rules, and to get development. Now, some evolués, like Mr. Kayaguna, a well-respected local entrepreneur who has lived through the various stages of promises, favor gold mining as the catalyst to development. West mentions that people threaten to invite oil drilling as well.

West's book deals with the difficulties of conducting transnational and multisited work. Her book describes the scene at Crater Mountain with its large cast of characters and geographical and temporal reaches. She studied not just the Gimi, but the scientists and NGOs as well. It is evident that

multisited studies involve rather different sorts of data. Instead of the sense of immediacy of eating a sweet potato for breakfast or witnessing a brawl, there may be acronyms and abbreviations which take more than a page to list. This sort of research could be called "multicultural," if that phrase had not already been taken to mean something rather different. There are difficulties in conveying the NGO/conservationist position, due to numerous workers and organizations over many years. Gimi believe they all promised development. There is much in West's book to show how at ease she felt with the Gimi and they with her, but some NGOs thought West's opinions meant she "wanted conservation to fail." This suggests conducting multisited work is a difficult balancing act.

Although this term "multisited" is often presented as something new, I would be more inclined to say that it is an old anthropological given. Things outside of indigenous culture and society were simply not foregrounded in previous ethnographic writing. This suppressed presence of outsiders may have contributed to degree of a sympathy and identification with local people that was oftentimes unreflective for having been unacknowledged. I recall in my first fieldwork of more than 40 years ago times of most intense discomfort in the presence of local white people. They expected you to share their little jokes about the cussedness of the natives, and yet these outsiders were strongly attractive for their possession of a kind of Western comfort—for example, hot showers, cold beers, discourse in the English language, even the ability to obliviously be themselves. I came to see some as exotically wound up in their own views of things, and as obstinately ignorant of local ways of doing things, as any so-called cargo cultist. I even half-seriously asked my graduate adviser if I could write about the "expatriates" instead of the "indigenes," in the language of the day. The indigenes had come to seem utterly normal and unproblematic to me compared to the expatriates.

In conclusion, I would raise one last subject: money and how to get it. The place of money in the white world was of interest when I did my first fieldwork. People wondered if every human transaction that white people make involves money. I was asked if we had to pay my mother when we went to visit her. A tertiary school student was certain that we would get rich off of our monographs. But recently, people wanted more than discussion: they want to get some money from me. In 2000, I was charged a special "white" price for the sweet potato and Coca-Cola I bought at a food kiosk in Buka. I was quoted a higher price at the waterfront for my boat trip down the west side of Bougainville (my mentor intervened on my behalf so I paid the same as everyone else). In the village, my ex-husband's namesake asked me to send him a certain kind of shirt. The president of the local government council rather forcefully told me to get him a grant.

I was asked to fund a primary school building for 4,000 kina and presented with a detailed prospectus or proposal, with all the sums estimated.

In Melanesia, cargo cult is a venerable element in any discussion of money, material wealth, the West, and local aspirations. Numerous versions of cargo cult have been documented for more than one hundred years. Accusations of cargo cult mentality have become an insult that white people use to dismiss Gimi concerns. By contrast, as noted above, Kirsch, following Wagner, maintains that cargo cult could be a reasonable framework for understanding capitalist economy from the Papua New Guinea standpoint. In the case of the Yonggom, Kirsch extends this idea to develop a related point of view.

In a very broad sense, cargo cult, or cargo cult mentality, might mean that white people have money, and there has got to be a way to get some of it (Macintyre and Foale 2004). In Papua New Guinea, people have dabbled in cargo cult, pyramid schemes, and even have given away their irreplaceable worlds of everything to mining and logging, but nothing has worked. A subtext in both these books is the idea that people of Papua New Guinea, if they follow instructions from those in the know, have been told that they will be able to make money and will receive services such as roads, airports, schools, and health care. This, as has been amply attested, has simply not happened and seems, in fact, not to be true. Is the real cargo cult the idea that there could be "development"?

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Reverse Anthropology: Indigenous Analysis of Social and Environmental Relations in New Guinea by Stuart Kirsch and *Conservation Is Our Government Now: The Politics of Ecology in Papua New Guinea* by Paige

West are exemplary ethnographies of contemporary research in Papua New Guinea. In their respective works, Kirsch and West offer nuanced analyses of frontier development practices, the state and the people with whom they work, as well as reflect seriously on their role in the events that unfold. Kirsch focuses on Yonggom speakers as they confront both the Ok Tedi mine and the Indonesian state (where they are known as the Muyu). The former successfully pursued a lawsuit against the mine, while the latter are political refugees living in settlement camps on the Papua New Guinean side of the border. West examines the struggles around the establishment of the Crater Mountain Wildlife Management Area and the involvement of multinational environmental nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), scientists and volunteers in Gimi lives. Topically not only do these works reflect contemporary concerns in Melanesian ethnography, they also explore the concerns of Papua New Guineans. Both offer us insights into global processes and local ideation. Both trace the historical and contemporary entanglements of communities with multinational forces. Both ground the analyses in rich ethnographic detail, while attending to the nuances of local agencies. And both have been reviewed quite a few times and, therefore, following brief summaries I turn my attention to a few points of discussion.

While offering it as an experiment in shifting authoritative perspectives from outsider/academic/Western to indigenous modes of analysis (in the tradition of Roy Wagner and Marilyn Strathern), Kirsch's *Reverse Anthropology* retains important elements of more conventional approaches. His focus on local perspectives is not novel in contemporary ethnography, but the explicit use of this as an organizing principle to understand changes in a global context is an important contribution. In some ways it is akin to Bashkow's *The Meaning of Whitemen* (2006), where indigenous perspectives on race and whiteness serve as a *modus operandi* for understanding modernity and change. But what I find striking in the Yonggom case detailed by Kirsch is that while social relations are central to their analytical perspective, there is a great deal of variability in the forms of indigenous analysis. Kirsch recognizes that indigenous analysis is contextual, changing and creative, mirroring the analytical approaches of ethnographies written on places like Papua New Guinea.

The introductory chapter contextualizes the experiences of Muyu as refugees from Indonesia and of Yonggom as victims of environmental catastrophe associated with the failed Ok Tedi Mine's tailing dam. Throughout, Kirsch seeks to "make explicit" how Muyu and Yonggom "comprehend and learn from their engagements with capital, the state and global forces that might have been expected to overwhelm them" (Kirsch 2006, 5). Subsequent chapters pursue this objective, examining social histories, relations with the

environment, exchange as a form of social analysis, sorcery, and male cult rituals. These chapters offer distinctions between Yonggom and Western frames of reference, but they also afford Kirsch ample opportunity to describe Yonggom practices. Kirsch offers details that experts in Pacific ethnography will appreciate, while layering it with shifts in perspective that demand we see these details through a Yonggom epistemology.

While implicit throughout, the final two chapters direct our attention to the specific experiences of the Muyu as political refugees and the Yonggom as they respond to the Ok Tedi Mine. The significance of indigenous modes of analysis is made clear as Muyu refugees deploy divination to "translate" political conflict "into a more familiar form by focusing on the consequences of political violence for their own social relations" (Kirsch 2006, 161). Through divination, Muyu understand their exposure to sorcery from occupying Yonggom lands, and the possibility of political violence by the Indonesian state. Likewise, Yonggom understandings of a riverine system inundated with silt and waste rock as well as hazardous chemicals reveals local modes for framing such destruction through mourning practices and a shared sense of loss. Land is intimately connected with the biographies of specific persons (of both the living and the dead), so much so that their well-being is contingent upon the state of the land. As a result, land is mourned when it is scarred with absences and inundated with the wastes of industrial mining. However, Kirsch reminds us that hybrid forms emerge from within indigenous understandings of these novel and changing contexts. I was struck by the rather simple example of bird songs and auto engines: when confronted with a fleet of vehicles Yonggom informants could detail the make and even specific vehicle by its "call" in the same way that they distinguish birds (ibid., 197). Indigenous ways of knowing do indeed inform how they engage with transformation wrought onto the landscape, even when we might question the value of these new entanglements.

West examines that other realm which has been ubiquitous in Papua New Guinean development practices: conservation. While there have been a number of dissertations which dealt at some level with conservation projects in the young nation (e.g., David Elllis, Jamon Halvaksz, Flip Van Helden, John Wagner), this is one of the first monographs to analyze this form of development practice in Papua New Guinea (but see also Van Helden 2002). But to focus on the conservation element elides the wider contribution of this ethnography to understanding political ecology in a Pacific context. Like Kirsch, this is an ethnography of globalization, values and the flow of ideas between places. With equal attention to environmental NGOs and her own positionality, West traces the pathways through

which Gimi resources become entangled in Western ideas of nature and culture. Furthermore, Gimi are not viewed as passive recipients of the global. As Errington and Gewertz (2004) highlight in their examination of the development of the Ramu Sugar factory in Madang Province, Papua New Guineans are not just subject to these flows, but also fully participate in their management at some level. But West shows us how these projects also take on a life of their own, propelling places in directions that none of the stakeholders recognize.

In this well titled ethnography, West is interested in the dialogic networks of stakeholder who "make" places like Crater Mountain. Furthermore, she highlights how the mutually constitutive practices of conservation as development likewise make and remake the various constituencies involved. West examines the historical constitution of the project, its articulation with Western narratives of environmentalism and biological research, as well as relations among the Gimi people of Maimafu village, all the while attending to the making of place. Like *Reverse Anthropology*, rich details of Gimi lives are elaborated upon as they imaginatively engage with introduced perspectives. While Gimi forms of analysis are taken seriously, they are not the only ones offered in her critiques of Western "conservation as development." Instead, West follows on what Crapanzano calls a "continual dialogue" which makes both the ethnographer and their subjects through practices of representation (cited in West 2006, xvii). In doing so, she also reflects upon her relations with both Gimi villagers and employees of environmental NGOs. This leads West to a larger point about representations, whether created by local communities, environmentalists or anthropologists: Crater Mountain, Maimafu, New York, etc. are places that are both real and imagined—real in that people live there, imagined in that as spaces produced by multiple stakeholders they come to lack locally meaningful frames of reference. Crater Mountain, it is argued, is a real place, but one that is understood through multiple frames of analysis—indigenous, ethnographic, scientific, environmental, governmental, etc. It is subject to multiple fantasies of development, or perhaps in the case of environmentalists, fantasies of conservation.

While both of these have been well received and reviewed elsewhere, I would like to focus the rest of my discussion here on a few points of comparison. First, both Kirsch and West emphasize contemporary practices and the localization of global resource regimes. Notably, *Conservation Is Our Government Now* and *Reverse Anthropology* speak to long traditions within Pacific ethnography which focus on emergent economies and global connections (i.e., Belshaw 1956; Finney 1973; Errington and Gewertz 2004;

Gewertz and Errington 1999; Hyndman 1994; Sexton 1986; etc.). However, they do so in ways that emphasize local knowledge production and the flow of ideas to and from Gimi and Yonggom places. These counter movements are important. In spite of both Gimi and Yonggom speakers being dismissed by other global agents, West and Kirsch call our attention to how small communities can make a difference in their own lives and in the lives of others. For example, as a locally shaped political protest movement, Yonggom responses to Ok Tedi are well known throughout Papua New Guinea. The success of their court case against the mine, though negatively received by the government of Papua New Guinea, was often mentioned during my research among Biangai living in the village of Winima who are stakeholders of the Hidden Valley Gold Mine in Morobe Province. Biangai felt that these were not just localized ways of menacing the mine (c.f. Filer 1998), but had wider ramifications for mining throughout Papua New Guinea by making companies more responsive to local needs. And likewise, for Biangai trying to organize a conservation area near the village of Elauru, Crater Mountain was one of the models which they looked to for guidance. The fact that they viewed Crater Mountain in the delocalized imagined form and not the real one experienced by Gimi highlights the value of West's analysis. Thus, within these ethnographies we gain not only knowledge of Gimi and Yonggom speaking peoples and their practices, Kirsch and West also reveal dynamics that are central to many Melanesian communities.

Secondly, while illuminating local understandings, Kirsch and West offer distinct theoretical perspectives in arriving at this position. In *Reverse Anthropology*, Kirsch seeks to reverse the roles of power in constructing his representation through an emphasis on indigenous modes of analysis as discussed above. For Kirsch, the approach is one of moving indigenous ways of knowing to the center (cf. Smith 1999). While he admits his work is uneven in this regard (with a chapter devoted to more conventional ethnography and history), the effort to write from within an indigenous mode of analysis is greatly appreciated. What Kirsch means by this is best enumerated in his discussion of unrequited reciprocity, which focuses on the interpersonal qualities of what has been traditionally termed negative reciprocity. Among Yonggom speakers, the failure to fulfill reciprocal obligations can result in sorcery accusations. As a mode of indigenous analysis this is extended to the failure of the mine to compensate Yonggom for loss. In their view, the mine is indeed a bad exchange partner, and perhaps can expect to be treated like a sorcerer caught in the act. At a certain level, unrequited reciprocity is the central problematic in all Papua New Guinea

development projects (consider contributions to Filer 1999; West and Macintyre 2006). Kirsch directs us towards appreciating Yonggom perspectives, but we come to also see the limits of our understanding as he must guide readers through a great deal of ethnographic and historical framing in order to digest this indigenous analysis.

West offers us a similar perspective, though she differentiates among Western modes of analysis as well as Gimi ones. For West, the analytical perspective moves back and forth, as with Kirsch, but with a different degree of intentionality. West asks us to understand Crater Mountain as a space made through the dialogue of Gimi *and* Western conservationists. Furthermore, in the creation of Crater Mountain, she examines different scales and types of Western discourses (anthropological, environmentalist, scientific, etc.) as well as explores the nuances of Gimi understandings. Multiple perspectives are given voice in the "continual dialogue" revealing points of agreement and disagreement. Throughout, the ethnography turns on these contrasts as conflicts within the Crater Mountain project propel the narrative. For example, Gimi speaking peoples are simultaneously viewed as central to the image of conservation efforts and as threats to this same environment. They are imagined as knowledgeable and ignorant of its nuances (West 2006, 180). With some irony, their knowledge is disregarded, their histories are silenced and their ability to analyze "local social and environmental relations" (ibid., 181) is not valued in the practices through which conservationists produce this space. In spite of these clear power differentials, West illuminates how Gimi speakers continually imagine a future that appropriates these discourses to make conservation as development about relationships. As a result multiple truths are brought together to make Crater Mountain all that it is.

But given the focus of both ethnographers on local understandings, one wonders if recent work theorizing indigenous epistemologies in the Pacific would be of benefit (i.e., Gegeo 2001; Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo 2001, 2002; Smith 1999; Thaman 2003). As Thaman notes, there has to be a consideration of what constitutes truth within the creation of knowledge of and about Pacific peoples. For Thaman, there are multiple truths which are reached through distinctive ways of knowing. Both Kirsch and West address these concerns implicitly, but there is opportunity within these texts (and many others) to engage with scholars of Pacific ancestry as well as the Pacific peoples that are the subjects of ethnography. How might indigenous forms of analysis speak to what Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo (2001) call "indigenous epistemologies," or can we find insight into the dialogical making of place in Smith's (1999) call for decentering Western perspectives and centering Pacific ones? Are these ethnographies examples of how

Westerners can engage with these concerns? While we attend to indigenous modes of analysis, should we not also attend to indigenous modes of scholarship? It is a question that I ask of myself as well, and find my own work to be lacking (Halvaksz 2007).

A final point of interest speaks to what these ethnographies reveal about the state of development in Papua New Guinea and the revaluation of resources that results from these varied development regimes. While the rhetoric of the state and agents of development (Ok Tedi, Biodiversity Conservation Network, World Wildlife Fund, etc.) fuel anticipatory moments and imaginative agency of Papua New Guineans, they also perpetuate problems. Both authors highlight the revaluation of places and things in light of the distinctive forms of globalization active in their respective field sites. Birds, land, relationships, women's labor, gardening, compensation, etc. are each subject to commodification and revaluation. For example, West details how harpy eagles come to be associated with scientific and ecotourism. While retaining value for Gimi myths and stories, "there is now always the potential for them to be valued in ways that are tied to the market and to the hierarchy of value into which they have been placed by actors from outside of Maimafu" (West 2006, 212) and in such a monetized context they are drained of their localized social meaning.

The revaluation of places and things is especially poignant in both ethnographies with respect to land. For example, both Muyu and Yonggom live in a landscape that has been altered beyond recognition. For Kirsch, the changes wrought onto the land are painful and Yonggom lives are transformed as silt fills the river, forcing from its banks, spilling toxic waste across landscapes once valued for gardening and associated with the biography of specific persons. Kirsch tells us "Memories previously anchored to the landscape have lost their mooring" (2006, 189), and thus any compensation will always be unrequited; never enough to overcome the loss.

What we gain from West's approach is an understanding of the land as it becomes conservation; as a space made through the dialogue of Gimi speakers and Western conservationists. As an environment subject to the ideals of Western conservation, landscapes are revalued and commodified in the same manner as the harpy eagles and other items subject to impersonal exchanges between researchers-as-strangers and their Gimi guides. When discovering a nesting harpy, questions of who owns the tree erase multiple claims on the land, multiple justification of property rights and ultimately social relations among contemporary members of the community (West 2006, 197). Through her ethnography, we can anticipate the struggle at Crater Mountain and the eventual decline of relations between Western environmentalists and their Gimi counterparts. Being prescient here is not

something that West would be excited about, but her analysis of how this social space was produced reveals contradictions in perception that make this outcome understandable, if disappointing. Land is fundamental to the lives of Papua New Guineans in both cases. While the kinds of transformation of place differ dramatically (environmental destruction versus the making of a conservation area), reading these ethnographies together highlights the ways in which landscapes, land rights and the relations maintained through them are disentangled.

While offering some sense of the future, through Yonggom modes of analysis and Gimi agencies and imagination one wonders if there is a place for hope in these marginalized frontiers? Kirsch suggests that Yonggom perceive change through "hybrid possibilities and new opportunities to pursue their own agendas" (2006, 213), and West points to a perpetual effort to make the contradictory spaces of development and spaces of conservation. Imagination is central to this dynamic and the hybrid forms imagined for the conservation effort offers some possibilities. But in both cases, what hope is there? How can Gimi, Muyu and Yonggom communities make their imagined worlds real?

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Remapping New Guinea

New Guinea is one of the ur-sites for the production of anthropological and ecological knowledge. From Alfred Russel Wallace through Jared Diamond, the staggering biological and cultural diversity of the island has been presented as a function of its unique natural qualities. Works by the likes of Marilyn Strathern and Aletta Biersack have challenged this reductionist formula, drawing attention to the dialectical relationship between nature and culture. These critical works have done much to situate accounts of New Guinea's nature within the sociohistorical context of its production. And yet they have been less effective at displacing notions of New Guinea as a self-contained parable of evolutionary outcomes that dominate popular notions of the island. Inhabitants of the island, both human and nonhuman, remain compelled to articulate their claims according to the familiar axes of nature and culture used to locate New Guinea within the popular imagination. It is on this terrain that inhabitants of New Guinea are compelled to articulate themselves to researchers, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and other "outsiders." In order to become subjects of political concern, the people, plants, and animals of New Guinea must render themselves legible within this grid of intelligibility used to produce them as objects of research.

None of these problems are reasons *not* to write about New Guinea. Instead, they inform a daunting political and intellectual agenda for research that is simultaneously alert to the historical and social processes through which New Guinea has been produced as an object of research and the forms of knowledge and power that construction makes possible (Wainwright 2005). Two books by Stuart Kirsch and Paige West take up this challenge. Both are grounded by long-running political commitments to the people with whom they have done their research. Kirsch's account draws from nearly two decades of political engagement with the Yonggom peoples' struggles with the devastating effects of the Ok Tedi mine and the arbitrary political division of the island into independent Papua New Guinea and Indonesian-controlled Irian Jaya. His use of the term "West Papua New Guinea" for "Irian Jaya" follows through on those commitments, positioning his work within long-running struggles for independence in which the subjects of his text are involved. West's text is informed by a similar depth of political commitment. Instead of fighting environmental destruction, however, her account engages a complex and overlapping set of efforts to preserve nature in the Crater Mountain Wildlife Management Area. Both

authors present richly detailed ethnographic accounts of the places where they have done their research, exploring the ways in which those places have been produced, contested, and maintained through multifaceted relations between human and nonhuman elements. Both use ethnography to make the voices of the people with whom they have lived and conducted research heard by a larger audience, fusing their respective political commitments with scholarly inquiry. Their situated accounts of conservation, mining, and political struggle challenge prevailing concepts and categories uses to locate New Guinea. Their respective efforts raise thorny questions. What are the merits of "applied" or "activist" research with regard to transforming development practices? Of what relevance are they to on-the-ground political mobilizations? Under what conditions is it possible to call something "indigenous knowledge"? What does that knowledge contribute to how societies make sense of capitalism? Or does that knowledge, particularly when presented in terms of ethnography, simply provide a more nuanced understanding about how indigenous peoples are subjected to capitalism?

Both texts offer rewarding possibilities for engaging these questions, particularly with regard to their efforts to produce understandings of New Guinea that provide greater space for grasping the political stakes of the struggles they describe. In both accounts, New Guinea emerges as a dense site of interconnections between villagers and capitalism, birds and conservationists, scientific inquiry and political struggle. Together they contribute to a political ecology attuned more to historical and geographical processes of exchange and contestation than to evolution and cultural isolates, providing a critical "vocabulary for describing, first of all, ecological variability and, second, the dynamics of those interchanges" (Biersack 2006, 25). The New Guinea(s) they describe come to life as sites that bind New York conservationists and transnational mining corporations with people living in seemingly remote and isolated places, supplanting the distance that underlies hegemonic understandings of that relationship with intricate, ethnographic accounts of their mutual constitution. In this review, I situate both texts within recent works in political ecology through engaging their respective treatments of space and place. Building on both authors' efforts to describe "New Guinea" as a space that has been historically constructed, this review addresses the importance of historicizing their respective inquiries by assessing their contributions to political ecology.

Looking at Birds-of-Paradise: Critical Ontologies of Nature

The field of political ecology today confronts a set of ontological challenges. While some critics have argue that the field has lost all sense of "ecology"

and "politics" as discrete topics of inquiry, others have set about questioning the stability of those terms by way of getting at underlying assumptions about the difference between nature and society. Both Kirsch and West grapple with this latter question as a fundamental part of their respective efforts to question the assumptions used to locate New Guinea within the Western imagination. This approach raises a fundamentally ontological set of questions about how the context for studies in political ecology is defined. The facts of New Guinean nature and culture are not to be found in scholarly accounts and on maps. Rather, both authors draw attention to the materiality of New Guinea through the singularity of the moment in which it is experienced and interpreted in terms of systematic "worldview." New Guinea is constantly in a state of becoming, a space constructed through interactions between its remarkable fauna and conservationists, between indigenous peoples and researchers. By treating the facts not as they are but in terms of how they have come to be, both texts elaborate a critical ontology that interlaces dominant understandings of New Guinea with possibilities for thinking otherwise. In contrast with more explicitly postcolonial approaches to this task that focus on discourse and texts, Kirsch and West ground their accounts in empirical observations as a means to introduce alternative interpretations of familiar objects. In both texts, empiricism provides a material basis for bringing other possible relationships and ways of being into view.

Intriguingly, birds-of-paradise figure prominently in the introductions of both texts. The birds' fame is not unwarranted. Their iridescent plumage and elaborate mating displays are striking, creating a spectacle around which multiple perspectives converge, entangling disparate sets of social relations and blurring the distinction between human and nature. As objects of nature, birds-of-paradise have long been a focus of Euro-American imagination. By Kirsch's account, this fascination traces back to 1522, when the only ship to survive the Magellan voyage returned bearing five skins of the bird and a cargo of cloves (Kirsch 2006: 28–29). So spectacular were the skins that they elicited three centuries' worth of speculation, shaping European imaginations of the world. It was not until Alfred Wallace described the birds in their "natural habitat" in 1857 that more was known about their habits and traits. And yet, by then, as Kirsch argues, the bird had been so shaped by European imagination as to irredeemably shade any account of its natural history. As such, descriptions of the birds' habits could only build on the fetish of its plumage, adding detail to an image of New Guinea already well established in the Euro-American geographical imagination. As Kirsch notes, specimens of the bird were assembled in metropolitan museums together with skulls from headhunting missions and

other artifacts compiled as evidence of New Guinea's primeval state of nature and culture (Kirsch 2006, 27).

Kirsch's attempt to challenge that geographical imagination casts the birds as mediating relationships between the Yonggom and Euro-Americans, drawing on Yonggom understandings of the bird as a powerful historical agent. Two images are contrasted. The first is an advertisement from a 1912 British women's fashion magazine showing a woman wearing a hat adorned with yellow bird-of-paradise plumes. The second is a 1989 photo by the author of two Yonggom men preparing for a *yok* performance in which they will effectively become the bird, adorning themselves with feather and body paint before performing a dance that mimics the birds' elaborate courtship display. The reader is invited to see in these juxtaposed images the uses of birds-of-paradise for "comparable forms of self-decoration." These images, the text argues, were never before juxtaposed, their deliberate separation perpetuating "assumptions about cultural difference, geographic distance and historical independence that remain central to Euro-American imagination of New Guinea" (Kirsch 2006, 37). This point is further drawn in contrast to the ways in which the bird is a historical actor "by eliciting Euro-American interests in science, and later in fashion and commerce, birds of paradise attracted outsiders to the region and mediated their interactions with the Yonggom" (Kirsch 2006, 54). The text's claim to present a "reverse anthropology" hinges on these two related points. First, we are asked to see in the birds an embedded set of social relations obscured by their fetishization as an object of scientific study and fashion. Second, we are asked to see them as agents themselves, engaging in a running debate about the agency of nature spurred on by the late Val Plumwood, among others (Head 2007). This second point is a key aspect of Yonggom analysis, engaging the nonhuman as historical actors. Following on the book's claim to use "indigenous analysis" to challenge anthropological categories and concepts and open up new political possibilities, seeing the birds as agents opens up a rich realm of communication between the human and nonhuman that structures Yonggom knowledge.

West also enlists birds-of-paradise to introduce her text. In her account, the bird-of-paradise acts as an object whose movement helps both constitute and mediate complex social networks. The bird-of-paradise in her text appears not on women's hats or on the bodies of highland dancers but instead in a Madison Avenue storefront and on the pages of *The New Yorker* magazine. Like Kirsch, she describes how in each appearance the bird is abstracted from the relationships that brought it to New York. At the same time, the images are used to bring New Guinea, as it were, to New York, inserting it into the daily life of the metropolis as a commodity.

The juxtaposition is well captured in *The New Yorker* article that describes a reception hosted at a posh midtown Manhattan hotel by Wildlife Conservation International, a part of the New York Zoological Society (now better known as the Wildlife Conservation Society). The short article introduces the reader to "Wildlife Conservation International, the island of New Guinea, birds of paradise, and an ethnolinguistic group known as 'the Gimi'" through a narrative of an invitation to a talk on conservation efforts in Papua New Guinea (West 2006, 1). The juxtaposition that West is after appears in the text of the invitation quoted in the article, counterposing the scientific observation of the bird-of-paradise as "one of the last of a spectacular species" with a local Gimi guide's vision of "the spirit of his ancestor." Where Kirsch uses his juxtaposition of images to bring a set of hidden exchange relations into view, West uses the juxtaposition to introduce the tangled connections between "New York and New Guinea, conservation and development, and birds of paradise and commodities" (West 2006, 4). West's focus on relationships introduces a sophisticated Marxist analysis as opposed to a distinctly indigenous form, introducing her approach to understanding the production of space through social relations.

Their respective uses of birds-of-paradise serves at least two important analytical and methodological purposes that contribute to a critical ontology. First, it blurs the distinction between nature and culture, presenting the relationship between people and birds as an open-ended zone of cognition. This blurring is not entirely new. With specific reference to birds-of-paradise, Jared Diamond characterizes their showy displays as a form of risky behavior akin to adolescent human boys' "fast driving or consuming danger drugs" in order to attract mates (Diamond 1992, 199).[1] This sort of functionalism—behavior as function of biological imperatives—defines the kind of sociobiology that New Guinea is often used to illustrate. Still, Kirsch draws a similar connection between Yonggom dancers and metropolitan women in the early twentieth century, claiming that they all use "the sublime beauty of the plumes and the rhythmic nature of the dance to contribute to the desired effect of seduction" (Kirsch 2006, 37). Unlike Diamond, Kirsch is quick to point out that this attraction is not biologically determined. Instead, the specific uses of the plumes by birds and people varies speaks to different notions of beauty and social relations (Kirsch 2006: 226–27n17,18). In contrast with Diamond's functionalism, Kirsch presents us with an open-ended set of performances whose interpretation helps constitute the difference in relationships between Yonggom, metropolitan society, and birds. Ecology here characterizes a range of interactions between nature and culture, describing a set of emergent properties

rather than providing an explanation of their differences. In West's account, ecology plays a similar role in bringing together a seemingly disparate set of political elements rather than providing a rationale for their alignment.

This approach breaks with the "prehistoric ontology of modernity" that draws a hard and fast distinction between nature and culture (Raffles 2002, 209n9). Put differently, if objects of study are historically produced then the study of their constitution must also historicize the forms of inquiry that they have made possible (Biersack 2006, 19; Wainwright 2005). This critical ontological approach avoids the circularity of arguments that political ecology is neither sufficiently political nor ecological by raising key questions about how the "political" and the "ecological" are mutually constituted as categories of analysis. Instead of seeking out a definitive definition of either, this approach draws attention to the interplay between categories, advancing a relational approach that remains materially grounded (Raffles 2002; Braun 2002; Kosek 2006). The historical constitution of "New Guinea," "the Highlands," "wildlife management areas," and the "forest" as spaces must therefore be accounted for. Failure to do so concedes the most fundamental point of contention in struggles over resources, namely, where they occur, as geographer Joel Wainwright notes elsewhere. Like "nature" and "culture," "space is a problem to be explained, and not a scale of analysis to be embraced" (Wainwright 2005, 1034). West takes this task up through engaging debates in geography about the "production of space" described below. Reading conservation as development, West demonstrates how the objects targeted by conservation are constituted through interactions between villagers, conservationists, researchers, and state officials. Without denying the materiality of the nature constituted through those interactions, West's analysis is not empirically confined. By showing how nature is multiply produced and contested, she illustrates the diversity of ways in which "nature" comes into being relationally through interactions between humans and nonhumans alike. Her analysis rejects any approach to conservation (or development) that takes nature as a fixed category whose boundaries can be neatly demarcated and instead forces an engagement with how those practices bring a heterogeneous array of natures into being (Braun 2008).

Kirsch's account takes a different route to rethinking nature that turns to practices and concepts that people in a given locale use to make sense of nature. Like West, his is also a relational approach, reviving a line of inquiry that traces back to similarly themed works in environmental anthropology. Norman Whitten's (1985) *Sicuanga Runa* and Phillipe Descola's (1996) *Spears of Twilight* come to mind for their earlier attempts to describe indigenous understandings of the environment that exceed Euro-American

notions of "nature" as the basis for far-reaching reconsiderations of development and conservation. Kirsch's text compellingly returns to that question, here revived as the basis for understanding how Yonggom people perceive of and engage with the transformations brought about by the Ok Tedi Mine. The steady stream of sediment spewed forth by the mine is thus cast in terms of its effects on a nature that is always already profoundly formed by Yonggom practices.

Taking this critical ontological approach is tricky business, particularly when it comes to such foundational categories as nature and culture. Too often, a critical approach to one becomes overly reliant on an uncritical use of the other. If the sociobiologists have been too quick to reduce culture to a function of nature, approaches to nature as socially constructed are no less prone to making equally reductive arguments about the importance of culture. Kirsch's claim to doing a "reverse anthropology" attempts to rectify this tendency by exploring how mining has both affected Yonggom peoples' conception of the world and transformed it. This approach importantly steps outside of conventional assessments of mining's impacts on a previously defined environment, exploring how both concepts are constituted relationally by Yonggom people. For all its innovation, this approach replaces an essentialist understanding of nature with an equally essentialist notion of culture. Indigeneity is thus regarded as an already constituted category that exists prior to its entanglement with the Ok Tedi mine, to say nothing of its relationship to anthropology. This has the effect of packaging his rich descriptions of Yonggom practices within a category easily digested by anthropologically trained readers. The result is an all-too-familiar ontology that bounds Yonggom understanding in terms of familiar forms of difference. Seeing birds as agents requires tuning into the enchantment of place, the powers of sorcery, and mythical encounters—all themes explored in subsequent chapters of the book. Each denotes a recognizable form of indigeneity intended to both underscore the alterity of Yonggom understandings and render them legible to a Western audience as indigenous peoples. Using sorcery, place, and myth to index Yonggom knowledge thus circumscribes analysis within the familiar contours of indigeneity. The strength of Kirsch's argument for seeing birds-of-paradise as historical agents is thus structured according to all-too-familiar understandings of indigenous knowledge, with the effect—most likely unintended—of giving the bird's agency outside the structure of Yonggom understandings. The effect is one of opening the door to a different understanding of nature, only to constrain it by an eminently colonial distinction—indigeneity—that is no less firmly embedded in the constitution of modernity.

West's use of the birds-of-paradise strikes a different tone here, attending to the spatial and temporal coconstitution of nature and culture that are at once resolutely material and relational (Raffles 2002, 209n9). Her reluctance to assign the birds' agency harks back to a dialectical approach to nature and culture that avoids the oppositional structure that humanist approaches often invoke. West studiously avoids assigning "the Gimi" the stability of meaning that their identification as indigenous peoples would afford. One might see this as undermining any chance of Gimi villagers presenting themselves as "indigenous" in the terms that Kirsch sets forth. This is a possible reading, though it is arguably a limited one. For part of what is at stake is precisely a matter of ontology, of seeing "the Gimi" not as bounded by familiar markers of difference but rather as a heterogeneous entity that is always in the process of becoming. West effects a similarly destabilizing move on notions of the "political" and the "ecological," blurring the boundaries between nature and culture without falling back into the crude functionalism that both she and Kirsch oppose. At the same time, even a dialectical approach assigns a certain stability to the concepts that describe its poles. The dialectic codifies a struggle, fashioning from its confrontation a logic that promises a "reconciled truth" and the constitution of a universal human subject (Foucault 2003: 58–59). Kirsch's emphasis on indigenous modes of analysis is instructive insofar as it presents an alternative metaphysics grounded in Yonggom experience and analysis. A critical ontology does this, engaging the materiality of the world not as something that already exists but instead through its experience, opening up dynamic modes of cognition that allow for the development of alternative metaphysical frameworks. This kind of critical ontology, grounded at once in the material reality of birds, people, trees, and so forth and yet attuned to the very different ways in which they are experienced relationally, forms a cornerstone of a "critical natural history" (Raffles 2005). Such a task moves toward addressing "New Guinea" as a problematic of its own, a place constituted through multiple historical and spatial processes and thus never just a background for other kinds of activities.

Spectral Demarcations: Space, Place, and Scale

The differences of approach between Kirsch and West are all the more notable in their respective treatments of space and place. Like Arturo Escobar (2001, 2009), Kirsch argues for a defense of place against assertions of Indonesian sovereignty and the encroachment of mining activity for entirely sensible political reasons. Building on the kind of critical ontology approach described above, the starting points for his accounts are material—a plume from a bird-of-paradise, a skull housed in a museum, a

wooden shield. Placed within the context of their production by Yonggom people, however, these empirical elements take on very different meanings, articulating what Kirsch describes as a "sense of place" revealed by ritual and magic (Kirsch 2006, 76). Like Escobar, Kirsch claims that an engagement with Yonggom sense of place provides the basis for critically reassessing the practice of anthropology in tandem with advancing the cause of social movements. In those struggles lies the possibility for alternative forms of power and knowledge. Kirsch's insistence that we take those forms of knowledge on their own terms is one of the book's strongest points.

Kirsch's intention belies a familiar scholarly desire to integrate culturally specific forms of understanding with dominant debates within the discipline of anthropology through ethnography. Through explaining a set of explicitly cultural understandings, his application of indigenous modes of analysis seeks to contribute to our—a scholarly, Anglophone audience—understanding of Yonggom lives. This formulation bears a familiar assumption: through our better understanding of Yonggom analysis—especially where it disrupts more familiar anthropological understandings—we might better appreciate their struggles with modernity. As Kirsch would have it, there exists a certain continuity of thought and action that connects initiation ceremonies with taking the mining companies to court that pivots on Yonggom understandings of reciprocity. Kirsch's description of how Yonggom desires for reciprocity with the mining company are "unrequited" is particularly compelling, elaborating on a series of creative reworkings of tradition that arise when Yonggom forms of analysis are pushed to their limits. And yet Kirsch's sensitivity to indigenous modes of analysis here strains against the form of the text in a number of ways. He certainly elicits the sympathies of the reader for Yonggom struggles—who cannot be moved by descriptions of mine tailings literally burying peoples' lives in mud? But how are we to reciprocate on that relationship if the translation performed by Kirsch heels to the familiar tug of explaining them to us, conveying through text a "sense of place" to his readers?

Though Kirsch works admirably to give Yonggom analysis its due, the text is framed according to a rather conventional understanding of politics. The introduction presents, in succession, sections on "The People," "Senses of Place," "The Refugees," and "The Mine," complete with a locator map. Each section introduces the characters in the book in rather conventional terms, categorizing them by ethnolinguistic grouping, demography, geology, and so on. This bow to convention is understandable. For Euro-American readers, it helps locate the study within a familiar epistemological frame. Such an effort is arguably necessary to delivering on the text's claim to establish the importance of Yonggom analysis to anthropological debates.

In this regard, it complements his extensive work as a political ally of the people he studies, using his academic credentials to vouch for Yonggom political claims. Yet, by using Yonggom modes of analysis to subvert anthropological conventions, their alterity is reinscribed. In spite of Kirsch's claims to a novel approach, the text ultimately repeats many of the dilemmas found in earlier works in cultural ecology that made indigenous knowledge of the environment a central concern. Kirsch's effort to present a Yonggom worldview ultimately renders them vulnerable to being assimilated within Western desires to witness that alterity by way of becoming more tolerant and accepting of those differences. For all that is interesting about that alterity, at the end of the text it appears that it does precious little to make the Yonggom any less vulnerable to transnational mining companies and the military apparatus of the Indonesian state. Instead, the Yonggom are once again located according to the very axes of cultural difference and physical distance that Kirsch seeks to disrupt.

This is not to say that being indigenous is without meaning—Kirsch's political commitments inform his sense of the term's immediate utility to Yonggom people for rendering their claims legible before courts, international development agencies, and transnational activist networks. As a concept, indigeneity delimits the terrain in which both "traditional" and "modern" are mutually constituted as meaningful categories. Kirsch's argument about the importance of "indigenous modes of analysis" is well taken, but at some level it also limits engagement with what might be more properly termed *Yonggom* forms of analysis. Indeed, some of the more compelling parts of his book are those that engage the ways in which Yonggom forms of analysis fail to be sufficiently "indigenous," circumscribing the effectiveness of certain political strategies. Kirsch addresses this gap in a passage describing Yonggom interpretations of bringing claims for compensation against the mining company. The legal strategy of taking the mining company to court productively interweaves state-sanctioned forms of justice with Yonggom emphasis on reciprocity, allowing the Yonggom to cast the mining company as a single entity that can be addressed through relations of reciprocity. That those efforts go "unrequited," as Kirsch notes, underscores Yonggom peoples' distinctive interpretation of the events, leading them to bring more compensatory claims that effectively curtail mining activity. And yet at the same time, those claims have made the Yonggom vulnerable to challenges that they care more about money than about the land in question, a charge that effectively questions the legitimacy of their indigeneity. Equating Yonggom identity with being indigenous confuses a key distinction between the literal use of the term to describe a historically and geographically situated form of knowledge and

its more conventional use to describe a broader engagement with colonialism. Kirsch addresses the question of how "Yonggom" identity relationally comes into being too briefly in his account of identity formation among the Yonggom-speaking Muyu "refugees" from Indonesian-controlled Irian Jaya. Rather than assuming the structural stability of indigeneity as a means of identifying differences, it seems to me that the political relevance of the term has to be taken up in light of how its meaning is produced. This approach has to begin with a critique of indigeneity's "sedentary metaphysics" expressed in terms of an essential link to place and instead engage with how the space of indigeneity is constituted (Li 2000).

This tension should be familiar to anyone who has attempted a similar balance between political engagement, scholarly critique, and intimate relations with the erstwhile subjects of study (Hale 2006). In spite of the text's attempt to have readers see and think otherwise, the framing effectively subverts the ensuing analysis to the familiar binary of inside/outside. It makes it possible for a reader to appreciate Yonggom struggles in terms of the defense of place. But it also limits Kirsch's efforts to understand Yonggom struggles in relational terms by hewing closely to a kind of metastructure of inside/outside. This shortcoming is hardly unique to Kirsch's text. Geographers have devoted much ink to dissecting the analytical salience of place—but those debates are not referenced here. Reading more geographers is not the solution to this dilemma (why replicate disciplinary divides?). Rather, the point is to open up a more ecumenical, even antidisciplinary, discussion of place (among other things).

The treatment of space in West's text provides a striking contrast. In her case, place is not something whose meaning can be sensed, nor is it unilaterally made by any single party. Rather, place serves as a location where a "complex constellation of social relations intersect," to borrow Doreen Massey's turn of phrase. West does not engage Massey directly in the text, but her ethnography of conservation in the Crater Mountain Wildlife Management Area elaborates Massey's call for a "progressive sense of place" adequate to grasping the translocal qualities of the relationships described *and* contributing to an understanding of how "place" can be a political project (Massey 1994: 151–52). Massey's arguments draw critically on Henri Lefebvre's (1991) notion of space as socially produced, a concept that West demonstrates (also drawing on Lefebvre) through her descriptions of how Gimi villagers, NGOs, research scientists, and state officials, among others, have produced the Crater Mountain Wildlife Management Area through their complex and often unruly interactions. West also importantly extends her inquiry to include relationships with nonhumans. In West's account, there is no inherent, endogenous Gimi understanding of

place that defines the essence of what Crater Mountain is (or ought to be). Rather, that meaning is defined *relationally* through *processes* that draw together *multiple* identities and histories. The uniqueness of Crater Mountain as a place derives *from* these interactions as opposed to deriving from its inherent qualities. There is no inside of these interactions that is not simultaneously vulnerable to being pushed outside and excluded from those interactions. The discussion of Harpy Eagle conservation efforts in Chapter 6 compellingly makes this point. Like Kirsch, West gives ample time to Gimi modes of analysis, introducing the eagle to us through its relationships with villagers. Conservationists in turn rely on the intimate relationships between individual villagers and the birds to locate nests and target areas for special management that ultimately threaten villagers' relationships with the bird, turning it into a commodity whose symbolic value as an icon of the forest displaces villagers' ability to maintain their own relationships with the bird. There is no essential meaning of place—as forest, as eagle habitat, or even as village territory—to be defended here. West's emphasis on the relationships between eagles, villagers, and researchers, among others, underscores how space is produced through the interaction of multiple, contested notions of nature and culture.

Part of the difference between West's and Kirsch's accounts can be attributed to the very different political situations in which they are intervening. The Ok Tedi and Fly River basins are undergoing a process of radical physical transformation such that the possibilities for sustaining Yonggom livelihoods, to say nothing of birds-of-paradise, sago palms, and other nonhuman life forms, are severely constrained if not altogether annihilated. By contrast, the Crater Mountain Wildlife Management Area remains a place of "pure possibility." That is not to say that those relationships (and the potential they represent) are not vulnerable to displacement and disruption—they are. But it is to say that the threats are less catastrophic and thus leave open the possibilities for engaging creatively in processes of place making as West sees herself doing that are much more constrained in Kirsch's case. But West's account does offer a more nuanced attention to place as a political project through its emphasis on relationality that leaves ample room for assessing how relations to capitalism, the West, nature, and so on will vary considerably from place to place.

This leaves a number of questions unanswered, particularly with regard to space. Both Kirsch and West describe colonized spaces of nature and culture as multiply contested. However, neither author does much with the possibility of multiple spatialities that intersect and overlap. As described above, Kirsch's emphasis on Yonggom modes of analysis to a certain extent reinscribes the familiar binary between indigenous and modern identities in space. West more directly engages multiplicity through her refusal to

draw such distinctions, particularly when it comes to matters of time. She employs multiple tenses throughout the book to "illustrate different understandings and experiences of the past, the present, and the future to show that in daily life there is a constant slippage between the past, present, and future in both discourses and actions" (West 2006, 255). This is smart textual strategy. But when it comes to space, West is much more complacent with the notions of local, regional, and global scales. Her treatment of scale as an object of inquiry rather than as a problem to be explained is puzzling. In her initial discussion of scale, she acknowledges that Maimafu villagers do not see these scales as "vertical or all encompassing" before going on to say that villagers "'jump scale' all the time" (West 2006, 10). The phrase "jumping scale" comes from geographer Neil Smith (1992). West uses it here uncritically, without regard to critiques of the concept that call into question its production and ontological assumptions (Brenner 2001; Marston et al. 2005). In spite of her claims to deliver a multiscaled and multisited ethnography cognizant of the "agency at or within each scale," it remains a book that is very much about Papua New Guinea as particular scale of analysis. A series of locator maps in the introduction reinforces this impression. In the maps, Crater Mountain Wildlife Management Area is depicted as nested within a Papua New Guinea that in turn floats in isolation surrounded by a grayscale sea. (Curiously, Irian Jaya/West Papua New Guinea is not depicted in the map at all, its would-be location depicted as the same color as the surrounding sea.) The text concedes a certain critical realism that runs counter to its efforts to critique how it is that Papua New Guinea becomes an object of research.

Ideas of Order: Ethnography

This raises one final point about both texts. Is ethnography up to the task of accomplishing the tasks set forth in each book? For all their respective critiques of capital and nature as dominant terms that obfuscate relations that are far from monolithic, does not culture—*ethnos*—offer similar cover? Do ethnographies by definition make culture into a system, producing their own forms of reason and authority as well as the objects of their inquiry? Is there a way to engage with the materiality of a given locale without presenting it nomothetically? Hugh Raffles's (2002) magnificent *In Amazonia* is one example of how new forms of analysis require new genres of writing. Michael Taussig's corpus charts a similar path. One might counter that neither Taussig's nor Raffle's works are as *politically* effective in the sense that West's and Kirsch's works are. And yet shouldn't the task of critical studies of this sort be precisely to question our notion of what the political is?

Both Kirsch and West are clear about their motivations for writing ethnographies. For both, it represents an effort to carry forward the intimate entanglements of field research into scholarly production, making the relational qualities of knowledge production the central focus of their accounts. The gift of a shield and a *bilum* in Kirsch's and West's respective accounts embodies the kind of relationality that they seek to foreground in their texts. In Kirsch's case, the shield presented to him as a gift by villagers bears a head carved in his likeness. Initially frustrated by this feature as detracting from the authenticity of the shield as an artifact, Kirsch saws off the head of the shield in an act that mimics colonial tropes of tribal headhunting. Kirsch later rejoins the head with the shield, using it as an object that "conveys the message that we [anthropologist and villagers] are mutually a part of each others' lives" (Kirsch 2006, 53). In a similar fashion, West narrates a woman's gifting of a bilum to her. Simultaneously imbued with the initiation rites for women and value as commodity for sale to tourists, West reads the gift of the bilum first in terms of its Gimi significance as extending the relationship between mother and soon to be married daughter. It is only later when men from the village demand the return of the bilum for violating the terms of producing them for sale to tourists that West is forced to reconsider. Like Kirsch's shield, West's bilum becomes a kind of boundary object on which multiple meanings and social relations inflect. In ethnographic terms, their respective conclusions are eloquent if not overdetermined. What else can a gift be if not the materialization of an exchange relationship? And yet by locating both objects within a systematic accounting of exchange relationships, what other possibilities are foreclosed? Might not both gifts have also been about appropriating the symbolic power of the outside anthropologists into their villagers' forms of analysis and power? For the reader, this is a question without an answer. At the same time, it reproduces the notion that a "native point of view" always includes intellectuals who would interpret it as such. This dynamic is founded on a relationship that takes culture as something ontologically given and there to be studied by anthropologists, as much as it generates intellectuals who reflect on that exchange. This is what ethnography makes possible, but at what point does ethnography as a form of representation and genre of writing preclude other forms of critique? Obviously, I am in no position to pronounce whether the respective frameworks and disciplinary traditions employed by these two texts are sufficient for challenging the conventions that they seek to displace. What both texts do accomplish—and here West's book is much better read—is to line out some of the difficulties of trying to both render a text legible within its disciplinary grid of intelligibility *and* push readers to think of the those categories otherwise.

Conclusion

Both Kirsch and West have produced fine pieces of work that are admirable in many ways. The level of detail, conceptual, and methodological innovation in both texts deserves to be widely engaged. At yet at the same time, both works present the reader with considerable uncertainty, standing with one foot firmly planted in the intellectual debates that they speak to while asking the reader to see the possibilities for thinking (and being) otherwise. Can those possibilities be grasped with novel interpretations that still hew to familiar notions of place, cultural difference, space, and environment? Or do they require new categories and concepts of their own? The postcolonialists have argued affirmatively in the case of this last question, drawing attention to the ways in which words shape understandings of the world that invariably have material consequences. The task, in other words, is less about fleshing out the details of understanding in terms of inescapably colonial categories of indigeneity and nature than it is about charting the contours of those categories, taking stock of their constraints and possibilities. Setting aside the need to define such terms makes it possible to grasp, both intellectually and politically, the spatially and temporally dynamic ways in which those categories are constituted, contested, and experienced. Both Kirsch and West have made serious contributions to this project. Read together, their contrasting analytics make for a rewarding exchange that signals their respective contributions to the field of political ecology.

NOTE

1. See Louis Proyect's commentary on Diamond and sociobiology at http://louisproyect.wordpress.com/2009/05/12/jared-diamond-the-new-yorker-magazine-and-blood-feuds-in-png-conclusion (accessed October 1, 2009).

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***Reverse Anthropology* Redux**

I first went to Papua New Guinea with an interest in questions of meaning, but by the time I returned, such concerns had been eclipsed by power in anthropological discourse. Writing about the West Papuan refugee crisis and working with the Yonggom on their campaign against the Ok Tedi mine pushed me to consider the relationship between meaning and power. I wanted to know whether culture still mattered in the context of such great power disparities. Did the rituals, myth, and magic through which the Yonggom view daily life and social relations have any bearing on these issues? Did their understandings of the world, and more importantly, their

analysis of events, shape their political projects? My conclusion was affirmative, that questions of meaning were at the heart of these political struggles and essential to how they were carried out.

The resulting monograph extends Roy Wagner's (1981) original insight into Melanesian cargo cults as an indigenous mode of engaging with colonialism and the capitalist world system as well as the interpretive counterpart to the anthropological study of culture. In *Reverse Anthropology*, I show how indigenous analysis has shaped Yonggom responses to events from first contact, to pollution from mining, and to the threat of political violence. In other words, their ritual, myth, and magic not only address quotidian concerns, but also provide them with the means to analyze the larger transformations associated with their incorporation into the nation-state and the global economy.

In his thoughtful contribution to this book review forum, geographer Joe Bryan makes two interesting observations about ethnographic knowledge production. First, he is concerned with how ethnographies "make culture into a system, producing their own forms of reason and authority as well as the objects of inquiry." This critique of ethnography and the limits of the culture concept has been circulating within anthropology since the 1990s. Although sympathetic to his concerns, I do not agree that the problem can be resolved through additional experimentation in textual forms of representation. Instead, I propose a more radical response in which we rethink the ethnographic project by focusing on how our subjects analyze their own worlds. What are the questions they ask? What forms does analysis take in their societies? How do they make sense of and act on globalization, capitalism, and other relationships between societies? We've always had one anthropology with multiple subjects; what would happen if we started with multiple anthropologies? This was the question I began to examine in *Reverse Anthropology*. In his contribution to this forum, Jamon Halvaksz comments approvingly on the flexibility of this approach in contrast to Bryan's concerns about the reification of culture: "What I find striking in the Yonggom case detailed by Kirsch is that while social relations are central to their analytical perspective, there is a great deal of variability in the forms of indigenous analysis. Kirsch recognizes that indigenous analysis is contextual, changing, and creative, mirroring the analytical approaches of ethnographies written on places like Papua New Guinea." Halvaksz also notes that "hybrid forms emerge from within indigenous understandings of these novel and changing contexts."

Bryan's second question is concerned with the political possibilities of ethnography, including the ability to "question our notion of what the political is." He asks rhetorically: "At what point does ethnography as a form of representation and genre preclude other forms of critique?" I think

the answer to his question lies in the recognition that there is always an outside to texts. Ethnography is only one of many possible forms taken by conversations among anthropologists and the people with whom they work. The political significance of ethnographic writing also varies according to the reader and the context; elsewhere I describe how Yonggom activists and their lawyers made use of my writing in their struggle against the mining company (Kirsch 2001a, 2002). I remember interviewing a BHP (Broken Hill Proprietary, Ltd.) executive in his office on the thirty-sixth floor of a skyscraper high above the streets of Melbourne; when he opened the bottom drawer of his desk, he had all my essays neatly filed, each with a trail of fax numbers at the top mapping the journeys they traveled before reaching him. In thinking about the political potential of ethnography, I am also reminded of Faye Ginsburg's (1997, 140) call for anthropologists to expand their use of reflexivity beyond our texts, affecting "how we understand our work, strategically, as a mode of social action and intervention, in relation and collaboration with the projects of those we study." She also argues that scholarship can help to "constitute and expand the discursive space" in which those political projects develop (Ginsburg 1997, 140). This perspective is especially relevant for the study of social movements, which seek to make power more visible and thus potentially more negotiable (Melucci 1998, 429). I would add that ethnographic accounts of social movements is to examine the constraints on their efficacy, as I discuss in *Reverse Anthropology*.

Since its publication in 2006, several anthropologists have begun to reflect on the possibilities of writing reverse anthropologies, in the plural (Mentore 2010; Ramos, unpubl. data; Geismar, unpubl. data). Some of this work builds on the project of perspectivism as advanced by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (1998), in which he takes perspectivism beyond the realm of ontology and worldview to make philosophical claims about the existence of multiple worlds, each dependent on one's perspective, in contrast to cultural relativism, which asserts that there is only one world but multiple interpretations of it. This suggests that anthropology, like shamanism, is a way of moving across these perspectives, and thereby affords anthropologists the ability to see multiple worlds. In other words, anthropology itself is a kind of perspectivism. This raises the question of whether we should be doing anthropology as it has been done in the past (analyzing how others see our shared world) as opposed to doing reverse anthropology (examining how people analyze their *own* world, and its interaction with other worlds). Writing about the Amazon, Alcida Ramos (unpubl. data) argues for what she calls *ecumenical anthropology*, which takes its cue from reverse anthropology:

> Taken to [its] last consequences . . . Kirsch's [work] in New Guinea in the twenty-first century lead[s] us to conclude that we must acknowledge indigenous epistemologies in their own right and recognize that they occupy the same theoretical niche as anthropological epistemology. In other words, native theories should no longer be treated as mere commodities to feed the industry of academic ideas. To take the Indians seriously is to grant them the intellectual space to which they are entitled.

Not only would an ecumenical anthropology provide new understandings of indigenous epistemologies, theories, and modes of analysis, but it would also provide access to alternative perspectives on a range of political and economic questions that link these different worlds, including the operation of capital, legal systems, state power, economic systems, and so forth. How might these engagements offer a fresh vantage point on globalization? How might they challenge ordinarily solidified conceptions about law, property, personhood, environmental issues, and so forth? What would a commitment to reverse anthropology or ecumenical anthropology mean for the discipline more broadly?

I am grateful for the opportunity to discuss these issues as well as the other points raised by the reviewers in this forum. I begin by addressing Jill Nash's concern that neither of the books considered here directly address concerns about money in Papua New Guinea. I also consider the relationship between questions about money and unrequited reciprocity, cargo cults, and development. The second set of questions has to do with environmental politics in Papua New Guinea. Here briefly I consider why there isn't greater overlap between Paige West's (2006) *Conservation Is Our Government Now*, which is also discussed in this forum, and my own work. The next topic is globalization, since *Reverse Anthropology* was also conceived as a way of writing about the global without relying on imperial categories (Coronil 1996). Then I turn to questions about the concept of indigeneity, both the work it accomplishes and the assumptions that accompany its application. I also discuss two challenges to the project of reverse anthropology: the question whether the Yonggom are really doing analysis in the examples I provide, and whether invoking categories such as magic necessarily reinforces the savage slot (Trouillot 1991) or can challenge hegemonic assumptions about other ways of knowing the world. Finally, I conclude by emphasizing the optimistic and hopeful elements of the book.

Throughout my response, I invoke recent events in Papua New Guinea, including debates about compensation, new struggles over mining and

development, and what social relations along the Ok Tedi River are like today. I also want to emphasize connections beyond the region. I am writing this response in the midst of the British Petroleum (BP) oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, which feels like déjà vu to me. A story in today's media coverage reads: "Gulf residents mourn disaster." One person says of the pollution along the coast: "It breaks my heart." Others talk about feelings of sadness and loss. A politician gets choked up and begins to cry in the middle of his testimony. Signs posted by people living along the Gulf coast ask: "BP, how should I feed my family?" Their responses are all too familiar, and when considered in relation to the experiences of the people living downstream from the Ok Tedi mine, they suggest grounds for comparison in addition to the questions I have raised about cultural difference. In the following discussion, I refer to the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and other relevant events to indicate the broader significance of the issues discussed here.

Money

Nash emphasizes the need for additional attention to "the desire for and lack of money: there is not enough, it is unequally distributed, and there is no good way to get it." It seems like the demand for money in Papua New Guinea is increasing. However, we can trace the history of this demand from the shell money pyramid schemes along the border in the 1950s to national pyramid schemes involving high-ranking government officials in the 1990s, to current excitement about *moni bilong sky*, proposed cash payments to preserve the rain forests through carbon trading (Wood 2010).[1] In their desire for money, Melanesians are vulnerable to caricature and criticism as cargo cultists, but given the runaway economic speculation that led to the collapse of the American financial markets in 2008, it may not be so easy to determine who the real cargo cultists are (see Lindstrom 1993). Indeed, Nash suggests that development may actually be a cargo cult.

Nash's observations also raise the question whether cultural models are needed to explain money in Papua New Guinea. One factor that makes money in Melanesia such an interesting subject is the absence of a tradition of accumulation. Giving has been the general path toward social status in the region. But Nash is correct that the anthropological literature has paid more attention to how cash is incorporated into traditional exchange practices than to how capitalism may be transforming Melanesian social relations. The shift from giving to accumulation has not necessarily been a smooth transition, since wealth historically brought with it increased

vulnerability to sorcery and other threats. However, new values associated with the rise of capitalism in Melanesia in which profit and accumulation are increasingly normalized and even valorized have significant consequences for the egalitarian ethos that once prevailed in so many contexts, although as I discuss in the conclusion, exceptions remain.

Nash links her comments about money to observations concerning social relations. She notes that Euro-American "laws allow severance of responsibility, which is why we in the West have to get over things rather than resolve them, and why many of us have been convinced that enough money is good enough." The question whether there can ever be enough money for everyone also occurs in the critique of cargo cults and their utopian expectations, which ignore the difference between relative ("I have more money than x has") and absolute distinctions ("I have enough money"). Studies in the United States have shown that most Americans tend to want a little more money than they have, although when they do have more they are neither happier nor more satisfied with their economic standing. Whether Melanesians are pursuing the same things as Americans when they seek more money is another interesting question. Jamon Halvaksz argues that "'unrequited reciprocity' is the central problematic in all Papua New Guinea development projects," which to me suggests that the social relationships formed in the development process may be as important as money itself, although in these contexts the approval of social relationships may be inseparable from the financial benefits they receive.

Regarding compensation payments in Papua New Guinea, Nash observes that "however large the figure appears to be, it is not enough to conclude the matter satisfactorily." She attributes this to how Melanesians treat social relations. Elsewhere I have argued that although Melanesians are inclined to form longer networks when identifying chains of liability and responsibility, they also shorten social networks when it behooves them (Kirsch 2001b), and restricting who receives monetary compensation from a fixed source is an important political and economic strategy (Bainton 2009). Nash's point that compensation payments may be treated as "one-off" by Euro-Americans but understood by Melanesians as the start of longer-term relationships is a key element in the misunderstandings between the conservationists and the Gimi that West (2006) describes. But questions about the divisibility of large numbers arise in many other contexts as well. There was a telling example of this in today's *New York Times* in which the United States announced the identification of mineral deposits in Afghanistan worth one trillion dollars. Afghan journalists calculated that this would mean $34,000 for each of the 29 million Afghanis (Risen 2010). But this is flawed accounting. Even if the ore can be extracted in a timely fashion, this is better thought of as one trillion dollars minus construction and operating costs,

wages, royalties, profits, and taxes, and then divided by perhaps twenty years of production.[2] The numbers shrink rapidly in significance, suggesting that some of the questions about money in Papua New Guinea are also general questions about the divisibility and distribution of wealth.

Environment

The larger questions about the environment raised in this review forum bring me up short on my commitment to perspectivism. For me, the environment is one of the points at which different perspectives and ontologies must come together. This seems to be a weak spot in contemporary environmental anthropology, in which the environment is too frequently reduced to texts all the way down—no real trees, turtles, birds, oil plumes, etc. I remember hearing Roy Rappaport give a lecture on environmental anthropology when I first arrived at the University of Michigan in which he described humans as the only species to inhabit a world constructed of meaning but no less bound by the laws of nature than any other species. Recognition of this doubled relationship is one of the foundational insights of environmental anthropology.

This is also the point at which I would have expected more common ground between *Reverse Anthropology* and Paige West's (2006) *Conservation Is Our Government Now*. Although there is much to learn from her ethnography, West does not situate the conservation project she studies within the larger context of environmental issues in Papua New Guinea. Across the country, there is a strong correlation between human population densities and the decline of wildlife species, especially marsupials and birds. This is especially true in the Highlands. The population of Papua New Guinea has nearly doubled since political independence in 1975. The area of the country affected by logging and mining projects has exponentially increased. A number of animal species and habitats are under pressure from development. Yet West surprisingly fails to link the motives of the conservationists she studies to these environmental trends.

A related concern is that we do not learn very much about how the Gimi conceptualize these threats to their forests and animals.[3] We are told that some of the Gimi do not comprehend the possibility of loss given that all living things "go back to the ancestral forest, the reserve for matter" (West 2006, xvi). For others, however, the ability to attract development or the desire to keep the village safe outweighs potential concerns about the environment (West 2006, xvi). We do not really see the kinds of complex engagement with these issues that have become commonplace in Papua New Guinea. Most of the people I have interviewed in Papua New Guinea are increasingly aware of the problematic trade-offs between economic

development and environmental protection. Certainly the people living downstream from the Ok Tedi mine have a clear understanding of what they have lost as a result of pollution from the mine. Perhaps it takes a direct encounter with environmental disaster, or at the very least regular exposure to these issues through the media, to produce this kind of awareness. Yet in my work in the Lakekamu River Basin studying a conservation and development project similar to the one West describes, the largest group of people in the area support conservation of the forest because they realize their livelihood depends on continued access to natural resources (Kirsch 1997). Similarly, concerns about the environmental impact of submarine tailings disposal on the Rai Coast near Madang from a nickel and cobalt mine in the Highlands have prompted numerous objections, including the following letter to the editor printed in the *Post Courier* of Papua New Guinea on June 17, 2010:

> The Government says the mine will bring development. Yes, but what kind of development? A few roads and bridges in exchange for hell? How about the widespread pollution and environmental damage? The mine will not go on forever. Our people will live on their land and fish the seas forever. When the mine closes and [the mining company] leaves PNG, what will happen to the people who will be unable to garden on their land and fish in the seas? . . . What is amazing is the failure by the Government to appreciate that the landowners are not against the mine. . . . They simply don't want tailings to be dumped into the sea (Saina 2010).

It is not clear why there should be such differences in these matters between West and the rest. Anthropologists need to pay greater attention to how Papua New Guineans debate environmental issues—academics, public intellectuals, politicians, businessmen, and villagers. In this regard, Halvaksz notes intriguingly how "Yonggom responses to Ok Tedi are well-known throughout PNG." He goes on to say that the Biangai also knew about the situation at Crater Mountain, albeit not as experienced by the Gimi, but in "delocalized imagined form." I would like to know more about how such accounts travel in Papua New Guinea, and how people draw on them when contemplating the relationship between development and the environment (see Tsing's [2005, 227] discussion of "activist packages").

Finally, Nash also remarks that BHP "polluted the Yonggom world almost by carelessness, it seems," which I think comes close to the heart of the matter. The casualness with which corporations like BP and BHP respond to the catastrophes they cause continues to be shocking. As recently as 2001, more than fifteen years after production began at the Ok

Tedi mine, and after nearly one billion metric tons of tailings had been discharged into local rivers, the mining company still claimed to be conducting research on viable alternatives to riverine tailings disposal. Hopefully by the time this review appears in print the oil will have stopped flowing into the Gulf of Mexico at the rate of more than one *Exxon Valdez* per week. However, much like the situation downstream from the Ok Tedi mine, we know that the environmental problems along the Gulf coast will continue to grow worse as the oil seeps into fragile local ecosystems.

Globalization

Jamon Halvaksz endorses the use of local perspectives "as an organizing principle to understand change in a global context." This challenges the default assumption that questions about globalization require cosmopolitan answers, most notably the specialized knowledge of educated, mobile individuals, including anthropologists. By now people in virtually every nook and cranny of the world system express concerns about how the global economy not only produces and circulates goods and ideas but also reproduces inequality and generates new forms of risk and harm (Benson and Kirsch 2010). Everywhere in the world people are by necessity developing their own perspectives on globalization regardless of whether they have access to information flows one might assume are essential for a comprehensive understanding of how these processes operate. One element of the study of globalization must be the study of these perspectives and how they are formulated, including their critiques of globalization. It is not because the Yonggom are outside of the global economy and history that they have valuable insights about these processes, but because we participate in a shared world.

Striking a balance between what Halvaksz calls "insights into global processes and local ideation" meant that some information was left out of *Reverse Anthropology*. For example, I did not describe how the Arab oil embargo of 1973 led many petroleum companies to diversify their portfolios, resulting in Amoco's acquisition of a 30 percent stake in the original Ok Tedi mine. In the mid-1980s, the company reversed its investment policy and tried to sell its shares in the project. It found no takers but subsequently divested from the project in 1993 as it was becoming increasingly clear that the mine would cause significant environmental damage. The sale price has never been publically disclosed but was rumored to be nominal in return for a waiver of environmental liabilities. I could also have included the story of the American metals trader who became concerned about the stories he was hearing about the Ok Tedi mine, briefly visited the town of

Daru at the mouth of the Fly River, and subsequently helped part of the contingent from the Ok Tedi and Fly rivers that traveled to the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 to arrange follow-up meetings with a group of environmental nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) based in Washington, D.C. At the top of their agenda was whether the NGOs would agree to promote an American boycott against Amoco given its ownership stake in the Ok Tedi mine. However, the NGOs concluded they would have a difficult time convincing American consumers to boycott a petroleum company that was a minority investor in a copper mine in a country with limited recognition in the United States. My decision not to discuss these events was intended to keep the focus of the book on events familiar to the Yonggom, rather than the much larger chain of events surrounding the Ok Tedi case.

Several reviewers have pointed out that *Reverse Anthropology* more closely resembles a conventional ethnographic text than acknowledged. To these critics the fact that the Yonggom live in a remote, rural location means that the text is more Malinowskian than postmodern. But I was trying to show how such places are constituted in very different ways than Malinowski represented the Trobriand Islands. This is signaled in the first sentence of chapter one, which riffs on Malinowski's (1922, 4) famous invitation: "Imagine yourself suddenly set down . . . along a tropical beach close to a native village, while the launch or dinghy which has brought you sails away out of sight," asserting that ethnographic fieldwork is about separation and difference. In contrast, *Reverse Anthropology* begins by calling the reader to imagine a set of artifacts that connect people and places; they reveal a history of relationships and interaction. Focusing on these interconnections is essential to writing ethnography in an era of increasing globalization. I see *Reverse Anthropology* as contributing to contemporary experiments in the ethnography of the global by examining what a particular constellation of events looks like from one particular set of perspectives in one particular corner of the world. It is representative in the sense that that the global is the cumulative juxtaposition of such perspectives. Most anthropologists would agree that this is a project we should not give up on, that we have to understand globalization from a multiplicity of places and perspectives.

Indigeneity

I appreciate Bryan's observation that not clearly distinguishing between Yonggom and the indigenous risks confusion. His objection is that "indigeneity here is taken as an already constituted category that exists prior to its entanglement with the Ok Tedi mine, to say nothing of its relationship to

anthropology," and consequently "bounds Yonggom understanding in terms of familiar forms of existence." Let me begin by responding to Bryan's first objection, of the need to politically and historically situate the concept of indigeneity, to which I assent, and discuss his criticism of the "sedentary metaphysics" of indigeneity in the section on magic below.

The term indigenous has remained contentious among anthropologists even as it has expanded in use and significance outside the academy. From the recent passage of the United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to the activities of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and to the recent policies of the World Bank and other multilateral organizations, indigeneity is now an established political and legal status. I recall a conversation with a prominent World Bank official who asked me during a quiet moment at a conference where all the new indigenous peoples were coming from. I replied, only partly tongue-in-cheek, that the World Bank had helped to create them through policy mandates concerned with indigenous rights. In Nepal, for example, non-Hindu groups previously classified by the state as low-ranking caste groups are increasingly claiming rights as indigenous peoples while the state composes its new constitution (Janak Rai, personal communication, 2010), even though Asia, like Africa, is one of the regions in which the concept of indigeneity is regarded as especially problematic. This does not, however, stop people in these regions from identifying as indigenous.

From the vantage point of my own field site, the inconsistencies in the application of the category indigenous have always been evident. The Yonggom are spilt by the border between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia, where they are known as Muyu. West of the border, they are recognized as indigenous. But in Papua New Guinea, which was never a settler state, which is governed by the autochthonous population, and in which traditional land claims cover more than 95 percent of the territory, the only peoples recognized as indigenous by the United Nations are from Bougainville, where there was a rebellion against the state in the late 1980s. So a Yonggom friend who grew up in a village split by the border but moved to Papua New Guinea in the 1970s would not be considered indigenous, whereas his cousin who grew up in the same village but then relocated to another village a few kilometers to the west in Indonesia is unproblematically regarded as indigenous.

The term indigenous had not entered the local vocabulary when I began fieldwork in 1986, but it came into use through their campaign against the mine. In this period, representatives of the Yonggom met with Aboriginal Australians who identify as indigenous, they met self-identified indigenous peoples from around the world at the Rio Earth Summit, and one of the

Yonggom leaders of the campaign against the Ok Tedi mine spent several weeks living with members of the Denne First Nation in the Northwest Territories of Canada. In their travels, they came to see the category indigenous as both applicable to their situation and politically potent.

The Yonggom have their own way to define the term; for them, it signifies their differences from Euro-Americans. In particular, the Yonggom see themselves and other indigenous peoples as speaking their own languages rather than the language of the state. They live among and look after their kin. They reside primarily in rural areas. Wage labor supplements more traditional forms of subsistence production. In contrast, Euro-Americans are mobile. The language of the state is often their mother tongue. They may not look after their kin (see Bashkow 2006). They tend to be more at home in urban areas, where they buy their food in stores, than living off the land. But the key difference for the Yonggom is that Euro-Americans control the most important means of production, the factories. This observation was already evident in some of the earliest Muyu cargo cults, which instead of seeking commodities, demanded factories for the production of tools, cloth, and money. The Yonggom see themselves as indigenous because they are not members of the industrialized nations that control the global economy. There are both economic and environmental consequences of this divide. The category has proven to be a productive way for the Yonggom to frame important issues in their campaigns against the mine and for political independence in West Papua, to align themselves with peoples who occupy a similar political and economic niche and may face comparable threats, and to forge political alliances. It would be interesting to learn whether the Biangai and Nagovisi with whom Halvaksz and Nash work, as well as other Papua New Guineans, identify as indigenous and how they conceptualize the category.

My use of the term indigenous in *Reverse Anthropology* was deliberate. One of the risks of the term is its potentially homogenizing effects, especially the risk of eliding differences among peoples as they reimagine themselves in opposition to Euro-Americans in what Nicholas Thomas (1992) described as the inversion of tradition, or what James Carrier (1992) referred to as Occidentalization. For example, it is commonly claimed that indigenous peoples organize property collectively in contrast to Euro-American legal systems, which focus on individual property rights. However, anthropologists since Malinowski (1935) have recognized that land rights in the Trobriand Islands and elsewhere in Melanesia are composed of a combination of individual and collective rights. There are other claims about difference which ought to be challenged as well, such as the attribution of tradition to indigenous peoples and innovation to Euro-Americans (Strathern

and Hirsch 2004). The point I wanted to make by using the term indigenous in *Reverse Anthropology* was the need to attend to the ethnographic particulars of indigenous movements. It is not the case that the Yonggom were fighting for the same things, by the same strategies, and with the same understandings as other indigenous movements. A key objective of the book was to provide an ethnographically specific account of a lifeworld under threat but which nonetheless became the basis of indigenous activism. But I did not want to ignore the important connections between indigenous movements either, from the interaction of their leaders at conferences, to the overlapping of networks of NGOs, and to the common pool of legal precedents that empower them. The failure to identify Yonggom activism as indigenous would also ignore or deny the comparative possibilities of my account.

Analysis

Nash objects to my use of the term analysis, which she suggests, "has to be somewhat more self-conscious and involves taking actions apart; that is not what Yonggom appear to do . . ." She suggests that analysis involves a particular kind of intentionality that is missing in the Yonggom examples I provide. Although I do not think anthropologists would want to restrict the practice of analysis to Euro-Americans, we have a hard time identifying what analysis looks like in other societies if it does not take the forms we anticipate. The argument that exchange operates as a mode of analysis is useful to consider and does not need to be exoticizing if we consider the American ritual of buying a house, which generally involves a series of negotiations conducted by middlemen known as brokers, in which the buyer makes an offer, the owner makes a counteroffer, and so forth until a price is agreed upon. The house has no price until this process is complete. These procedures analyze the market, i.e., what a buyer is willing to pay and what a seller is willing to accept in return for the property. Although exchange in Papua New Guinea analyzes social relationships rather than market prices, we can see both examples of exchange as modes of analysis.

The question whether analysis is more conscious or intentional may be misstated. We are used to thinking of analysis as separate from action rather than intertwined with it. I think one of the problems in the anthropological understanding of ritual was that if anthropologists could not find a particular form of intentionality that was separable from action, it was assumed that the rationale for the ritual was unconscious. The separation of action from intentionality also led to the naturalization of ritual, the claim that

it had an adaptive function. I would argue that analysis and action can co-occur, as they do when we negotiate the price of a house. This misrecognition can have troubling consequences if it is assumed that where we might analyze others only act.

Magic

Bryan also objects to the translation of Yonggom concepts into conventional anthropological vocabulary: "Using sorcery, place, and myth to index Yonggom knowledge thus circumscribes analysis with the familiar contours of indigeneity." This is the "sedentary metaphysics" of indigeneity to which he refers. He argues that the "Yonggom are once again located according to the very axes of cultural difference and physical distance that Kirsch seeks to disrupt." But consider the example of magic. I recognize that there is an argument to be made for dispensing with the concept altogether. After all, there is no word in the Yonggom language equivalent to the general category of magic. There are only particular examples of what we might call magic: objects that attract animals to hunters, love spells to entice a desired partner, secret names of things which have the capacity to change the outcome of events, and so forth. These are referred to by their Yonggom names or occasionally in English as power or magic. I could have stopped my ethnography here, but my objective was to challenge how Euro-Americans think about these practices and magic in general.

Anthropologists are well aware of the two contradictory registers for myth, as something false and as a narrative genre concerned with fundamental truths. In the case of magic, however, we are less likely to acknowledge the possibility of truth or insight. This has not always been the case. In the Roman era, magic and science were both regarded as powerful and efficacious ways of knowing and doing things in the world. The key difference was that science was based on forms of learning associated with authority and power, whereas magic was generally seen as immoral and potentially dangerous to those in power (Ager 2010). The loss of faith in the power of magic comes about through modernity. In *Reverse Anthropology*, I wanted to recuperate the possibility that magic can provide insight into the world, rather than restrict the concept to the reductive sense of the professional magician who performs tricks that deceive the audience.

To accomplish this goal, I needed to go beyond most anthropological analyses of magic by showing how magic provides a means to understand and engage with the world. Take the example of magic spells that facilitate communication between humans and animals. In *Reverse Anthropology*,

I argued that this enables the Yonggom to conceptualize certain kinds of relationships between people and animals through the landscapes they share. These relationships are often left out of Euro-American paradigms about development (which devalue the environment) and conservation (which often view the environment as emptied out of humans). There is also a striking parallel between these perspectives and contemporary thinking about natural species as historical actors with a kind of agency, known as actants in the language of actor network theory. The question "does magic work?" is not the right question; rather, the more important question is: "what does magic allow people to see?" It is impossible to have this conversation at the appropriate level of generality without using the term magic. My intention was not to reinscribe Yonggom alterity but to challenge misunderstandings of magic and impoverished assumptions about other ways of knowing the world.

Conclusion

Halvaksz concludes his review with a poignant question, asking whether there is a "place for hope in these marginalized frontiers?" Similarly, Nash asks "how people will cope without having access to their world." Questions about the continuity of Yonggom lifeworlds in the context of such dramatic destruction and change are ever present in my work, including their concerns about cultural loss and the lives of the *aman dana* (children of the future). The Ok Tedi River now runs gray like the color of cement dust. The moonscape along both sides of the river can only support a handful of plant and tree species, none of which has any practical value or cultural significance.

Yet as Halvaksz reminds us, it is important to attend to hopeful signs as well. Ulrich Beck has commented on how quickly the human experience of disaster becomes routinized. During my last visit to the village, I was encouraged to see the continuity of important Yonggom values under conditions that might seem antithetical to their success. The importance of egalitarian social relations among the Yonggom was brought home to me during my very first visit to the village in 1986, when I was told: "When we have food, you'll have food; but when we're hungry, you'll be hungry, too." People did not buy or sell food in the village except for pork; food was always shared. Yet there is now a small market in the village which allows the people living there to redistribute money from those who earn wages to those who have no cash income. The rules that preserved equality (sharing food rather than buying and selling it) were broken to maintain the continued possibility of equality.[3] I was also reassured that people in the

village still share food with each other, still clear land for widows to make their gardens, and still look after each other. In spite of their material circumstances, there is much to remain hopeful for.

I want to conclude by returning to the question of politics. Although the campaign against the Ok Tedi mine came too late to save the river, it has changed the nature of debates about mining in Papua New Guinea and internationally. It is not usually appropriate to evaluate the success of social movements in monetary terms, but current economic figures suggest that the trust fund established by BHP Billiton when it left Papua New Guinea in 2001 will earn $1 billion by the time the mine closes. This is more than the courts required Exxon to pay in damages for the *Valdez* oil spill but only a fraction of what BP has set aside for the oil spill in the Gulf—although of course, the Yonggom and their neighbors did not have hundreds of television cameras telling their story or the support of a powerful American president. Similarly, there have been significant changes in West Papuan resistance to the Indonesian state. During the 1990s, West Papuan leaders began to articulate their political concerns in the discourse of human rights, reinterpret their struggle for *merdeka* (freedom) in terms of social justice, and call for demilitarization of the province (Kirsch 2010). Writing about the Yonggom and their experiences helps us to understand what these conflicts are about. Learning how people make sense of their experiences is one of the contributions anthropologists can make to politics; it was also the basis of the role I have played in the legal proceedings against the mining company and has provided me with experiences that have enabled me to work on other engaged projects concerning indigenous land rights and the environment. Finally, I would argue for the importance of looking beyond familiar assumptions and modes of analysis in the social sciences to consider alternative ways of thinking about these problems. I find Yonggom claims about pollution being a form of social relationship, and their critique of the mobility of capital and corporate refusal to take responsibility for the long-term environmental consequences of their operations (Kirsch 2008) to be as applicable to BP and its oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico as they are downstream along the Ok Tedi River.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks to the book review editor and Joe Bryan, Jamon Halvaksz, Jill Nash, and Paige West for the opportunity to participate in this exchange of ideas. I am grateful for the hospitality of the Max Planck Institute for Ethnology in Halle, Germany, where I wrote the first draft of this essay while a volcanic refugee. I also thank Michael Wood for his helpful comments, and Haidy Geismar for an engaging discussion of perspectivism.

NOTES

1. In Papua New Guinea, where conflicts of interest are often seen as opportunities rather than impediments, it is entirely possible for a block of land to be simultaneously allocated for a logging concession *and* set aside as a carbon sink (Wood 2010).

2. This calculation also excludes the externalized costs of mining, including social and environmental impacts.

3. See Zimmer (1986) on Gende card playing and the redistribution of money.

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Introduction

Conservation Is Our Government Now: The Politics of Ecology in Papua New Guinea is my first book. After reading these reviews, I am amazed and flattered by the careful, critical, and insightful readings that scholars who I respect have given my work. Additionally, it is an honor for my work to be reviewed, again, with Stuart Kirsch's book (see Macintyre 2007). His *Reverse Anthropology* is an extraordinary book that makes a substantial contribution both to anthropology and to the ethnography of New Guinea (see West 2007). In the spirit of the *Pacific Studies* Book Review Forum,

I will use the reviews of *Conservation Is Our Government Now* to raise some questions I feel should be at the center of scholarly discussions in anthropology and related fields. I will address three points made by Bryan, Halvaksz, and Nash and use them to begin to enumerate three pertinent scholarly debates.

Issues of Scale and Problems with Political Ecology

Joe Bryan argues that I am "complacent with the notions of local, regional, and global scales" and that I treat "scale as an object of inquiry rather than as a problem to be explained." At times in the text, I do use the scalular terms to make my point, for instance: "the Crater Mountain Wildlife Management Area is the product of a series of local, national, and transnational exchanges between individuals and institutions" (West 2006:36). However, the use of these terms does not mean I take these articulations of scale to be "objects of inquiry." My use of scalular terms reflects Sayer's (2005) argument that scale is both a way of seeing the world and as a set of ontological propositions about the world. The fluid boundary between these two aspects of scale intrigues me, and it underlies one of the purposes of my book, which is to take part in the growing discussion of "connections between seemingly 'local' sites and 'global,' or 'transnational,' processes" (West 2006:xixi). For me, then, scale is, in fact, one of the central problems to be explained.

The scales that are produced (in part) by, and that work to produce, the Crater Mountain Wildlife Management Area come to be thought of as real through processes similar to the ones I describe for the other ontological propositions that I examine throughout the book ("nature," "culture," "forests," "Crater Mountain," "the Gimi"). The pertinent scalar terms range from "village" and "the Lufa District" at one extreme to "the Pacific" and "the Asia-Pacific Region" at the other. As terms, they represent cartographic forms of scale-making that have particular histories and uses. For instance, at various times, they are assumed, by external actors such as American ecologists and internal actors such as Papua New Guinean ecologists, to be vertical and encompassing articulations of the progression from the local and internal-regional to the national and external-regional (see Gupta and Ferguson 2002).

I spend some time in the text laying out the ways in which "Maimafu" as "village" comes to be space and place and how it is scaled as "the local" (see especially West 2006: 10–12, 94–95). Related to this, I show how the people who live there are taken to be at the bottom of these vertical and encompassed scales and how this shapes the ways other people perceive

and evaluate their opinions, needs, and desires. Of course, Gimi peoples do not always see scale in the same way as their interlocutors, and I employ Neil Smith's notion of "jumping scale" to show how Gimi work within external social systems in ways that confound and upset conservation ecologists, activists, and practitioners as well as government officials and others (West 2006:27). From this, it is clear that the Gimi and Australian biologists, for example, take as true differing ontological propositions of scale and their different sociopolitical and institutional arrangements of relationships and obligations. Of course, these differences are not of solely intellectual interest. That is because the propositions of scale of Gimi peoples' interlocutors are deployed by powerful actors, agencies, and institutions to bring a particular world into being, the one that accords with these propositions and their corollaries (see Carrier 1998; Lefebvre 1991; Said 1978).

Bryan is right to point out that I employ scalar language, a use that reflects the extent to which I draw on theoretical work in political ecology. Bryan's comments about scale, together with my own work, have pushed me to think carefully about the way political ecology sees the world. In particular, I wonder about the ontological assumptions of political ecology and whether the scalular thinking inherent in both political economy and ecology make it difficult for political ecologists to take seriously the ontological and epistemological propositions made by the people with whom they ostensibly work.

In a paper that came out a few months before *Conservation Is Our Government Now*, I argue that political ecology, like all institutions that produce knowledge about other people, is a set of translation practices (West 2005a:632). Moreover, because it is grounded in a very long history of the production of knowledge-as-power (Foucault 1970, 1972), political ecology's translation practices are likely to have a particular orientation. Many of us who think of ourselves as political ecologists would like to imagine that our field, because it is at the epistemic margins of various disciplines, is a potential site for radical thought and practice, but Bryan's comments about scale and my work make me reconsider this, a reconsideration made more compelling by Kirsch's insistence that we engage in "reverse anthropology" (Kirsch 2006).[1]

Political ecology grew out of radical critiques of a kind of "blame the victim" approach to environmental degradation (see Blaikie and Brookfield 1987). Anthropologists, geographers, and ecologists working in rural areas having extreme environmental change confronted conservation-and-development practitioners and research economists who blamed local people for that change. Early political ecology clearly laid out, in case after

case, that much undesirable environmental change was the result of political and economic forces that seemed to be beyond the control, or even the awareness, of those local people. These early works were enhanced in the 1990s and early 2000s by work that took seriously postcolonial and poststructuralist critique, notions of power and discourse, and new examinations of western philosophical texts in cultural studies (Biersack 1999).

In the course of its development, however, three things seemed to happen to contemporary political ecology. First, it forgot some of its roots in cultural anthropology and moved away from careful ethnographic description (see West 2006:41, 2005a,b). Second, it continued, like the very work to which it was a reaction, to fail to take indigenous scholarship and philosophy seriously. Third, it uncritically incorporated the scaled notions inherent in ecology, geography, anthropology, and political economy. These three things are related. I will return to the first two in my discussion of Halvaksz's comments below, but for now I will focus on the third.

In geography, scale begins with issues of cartography and the relational sizes of spaces featured on maps, which were tools for representation and analysis that allowed for them to make generalizations and explain phenomena. However, these representations came to be taken as real and used to organize social, political, and economic life. In other words, the scaled vision of the world as represented on maps became a shared vision of how the world really is. Once people, especially powerful people, started to act as though those representations were real, their actions made them real (see Carrier 1998).

Scale in political economy has a similar history, which is linked to the use of scale in anthropology. Used to understand the spatial relations between political and economic institutions and the spatial distribution of particular kinds of economic systems, it fed into the creation of scaled anthropological ideas about social organization, political relations, and economic institutions. One manifestation of this is the way anthropologists scaled the world through their analyses of "bands," "tribes," "chiefdoms," and "states," which linked cartographic scale with notions of complexity, progress, and vertical social evolution. Although most anthropologists now reject these ideas, they have become inherent in much political, economic, development, and conservation thinking today.

In ecology, even though scientists only began using terms such as "hierarchy theory" and "spatial scale" in the 1970s, scaled thinking by ecologists is part of the very beginnings of the discipline (Schneider 2001:547). Scaled ideas about how biological systems are organized are inherent in all biology (cell, tissue, organ, organism) and organized in hierarchical structures in all

ecology (species, populations, communities, ecosystems, landscapes). This is extended, especially in landscape ecology, to include scaled ideas about "composition," "structure," and "pattern" (the spatio-relational formations of those hierarchical structures).

These four disciplines brought particular scales into being for the purpose of analysis, and their scales have come to be taken for granted by conservation and development practitioners, economists, and others. Many anthropologists, geographers, and cultural studies specialists have spent a long time arguing against the epistemological and ontological propositions these scales contain when they shift from being convenient analytical tools to being statements of reality. However, those efforts have not stopped political ecologists from incorporating those scales and their assumptions. They now face the consequences.

Engagement the Work of Indigenous Scholars, Indigenous Philosophy, and Thick Ethnography

Jamon Halvaksz raises an important point when he asks why I did not attend more to engaging the work of indigenous scholars. He wonders "if recent work theorizing indigenous epistemologies in the Pacific would be of benefit" to my analysis and asks, "while we attend to indigenous modes of analysis, shouldn't we also attend to indigenous modes of scholarship?" My answers are Yes and Yes. In other work that is focused specifically on Gimi epistemology (West 2005a, 2009a,b), I do draw on indigenous scholarship, especially on Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo's work on "indigenous epistemology" ("a cultural group's ways of theorizing knowledge"; Gegeo 2001:491; Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo 2001). In more recent work on Gimi philosophy (West 2009c,d,e), I have engaged the work of other indigenous scholars who grapple with questions of epistemology, ontology, and indigenous philosophy (see Ka'ili 2005, 2008; Nabobo-Baba 2006; Māhina 1993, 2002; Smith 1999; Teaiwa 2001; Tengan 2005).

In my new research project, I am trying to work through the relationship between Euro-American understandings about coastal areas and indigenous philosophies of space and place (West 2009a,b), drawing particularly on the work of 'Okusitino Māhina (1993, 2002), Tevita O Ka'ili (2005, 2008), and Epeli Hau'ofa (1998). That project focuses on tourist understandings of Papua New Guineans and their surroundings and asks on what ontological propositions they are based, how they endure, and what their ecological, social, economic, and political consequences are. As part of this, I am considering the larger question of how outsiders' external productions of space in coastal areas intertwine with the philosophies of the people who

live there who are concerned with the earth, the sea, the past, and the present.

In a similar vein, I have been thinking about how Gimi might theorize the production of space differently than have some of the European and American scholars I drew on in my book (especially Harvey 1989; Lefebvre 1991; Smith 1991, 1996). Lefebvre proposed a triad of dialectically related categories for spatial production: (1) spatial practice, the practices and actions of a society that "secrete" the society's space (Lefebvre 1991:38); (2) representations of space, how a society "conceptualizes" space through science, planning, technology, and its other knowledge-producing social forms (1991: 38–39); and (3) representational spaces, "space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols" (1991:38). The question for me became, how well does this scheme fit Gimi understandings of sociospatial production? After several further visits to Papua New Guinea and after considering the work of some of my Pacific islander colleagues (see Gegeo 2001; Ka'ili 2005; Māhina 2002) and other colleagues (see Halvaksz and Young Leslie 2008; Jacka 2003; Kirsch 2006; Knauft 1994; Robbins 2003, 2004), I concluded that Gimi sociospatial production can be only partially theorized using Lefebvre, Harvey, and Smith. Presently Gimi produce space through the processes outlined by Lefebvre, but that appears to be the consequence of their engagements with their interlocutors, national and international institutions and agencies, and their associated structures of hierarchy and power. Historically, however, Gimi made the world through social relations between people and between people and plants, animals, the animate physical features of their surroundings (things such as rocks, streams, and caves) and their ancestors (see West 2005, 2009d, n.d.). Looking back on *Conservation Is Our Government Now*, I wish I had spent more time relating Gimi forms of sociospatial production to other indigenous ways of such production. If I had turned to my indigenous colleagues earlier, I might have done this.

In turning to my indigenous colleagues when thinking about sociospatial production, I have learned that indigenously specific theories of space, place, and time can tell us about broader processes such as transnationalism and the crafting of personhood and subjectivity in the context of migration and social change (two of the other goals I had in the book). For example, Māhina (2002), in a paper on Tongan philosophies of "mind," shows that both "time" and "space" are socially made and that they derive from particular culturally specific understandings of the natural, mental, and social realms. In other words, he uses the Tongan concepts of *tā* and *vā* (time and space) to develop a nuanced theory of the relationship between nature, mind, and society. Ka'ili (2005) expands Māhina's work by using vā (as

social space) to understand how Tongans make and are made by transnational relationships. He highlights the genealogical aspects of vā and the exchanges that are necessitated by vā and shows that these Tongan concepts can help us to understand the transnational more broadly. Both of these scholars use indigenous philosophy to understand the processes we think of as "globalization" and the ways in which Tongans become Tongans, "indigenous," and "Pacific Islanders," in a contemporary world.

Other indigenous Pacific scholars are using indigenous philosophy to interrogate indigeneity as subjectivity. Diaz argues that, "the study of native politics as it is led by an emergent Native Feminist critique of indigeneity, with indigeneity being defined as both an ontological and an analytical category, one that takes seriously the specificity of indigenous claims to space and place via genealogy and other discursive and non-discursive modalities, and to query their possibilities for politicized historical and cultural studies in general" (Diaz 2008:3). Gegeo (2001) examines the concept of indigeneity and asks whether it is space, place, identity, or all of the above. With this, he examines how indigeneity and "authenticity" are navigated during migration, conflict, and transnational relations. Kauanui (2008) and Tengan (2008) both examine the historical processes by which native Hawaiians and their authenticity has been produced. Tengan focuses on the social process by which native masculinity is made as lacking and aberrant by colonial and national discourses and then remade by native men who are seeking to dispel stereotypes of "easy-going, happy-go-lucky nature children" and troubled alcoholics (Tengan 2008:52). Kauanui focuses on the legal process by which "blood quantum" politics come to define who is native enough, or authentic enough, and shows that claims of authenticity always turn on particular histories of power-knowledge (Kauanui 2008). These scholars raise questions about how people come to be subjects and agents, and this is most certainly a site of critical inquiry that is lacking in political ecology. Although political ecology has been obsessed with what people do in the world, it has not focused enough on how people are "in the world" or how people "make the world." More sustained engagement with indigenous scholarship would push political ecology to undertake both of these tasks.

Political ecology has also failed to attend adequately to how indigenous and native peoples develop and deploy their own methodologies for understanding the world. In fixating on "indigenous knowledge" as a thing to be learned by anthropologists, we have failed to see that we can learn from indigenous philosophy.[2] For example, the peoples who have historically inhabited and who continue to inhabit the island New Guinea, with settlement beginning in about 40,000 B.P (Matisso-Smith and Robins 2004), have unique understandings of the life cycles (birth, life, death, and the

afterlife) and the existence of humans, animals, and plants, as well as aquatic, terrestrial, and geographic features of their surroundings. These understandings are distributed based on language group affiliation. Although there may be some similarities between neighboring and related, language groups (for example between Gimi and their Fore neighbors) each group has a unique philosophy of life and existence. These are more than ways of "knowing" or "understanding" the world, and they are most certainly not "culture" (an ontological proposition made by early anthropologists that still plagues our discipline). They are philosophical propositions that are based on knowledge, and the knowledge they are based on is acquired through both a priori and a posteriori methodologies. A priori knowledge is knowledge that is held independently or prior to material experience, whereas a posteriori knowledge is knowledge that is known through material experiences. For Gimi, knowledge gained from myths and ancient clan-history stories would be a priori, and knowledge gained from spending time in forests and observing plants, animals, and landscape features would be a posteriori. Gimi act in the world in ways that are consistent with the knowledge gained from these methodologies. These methods also allow Gimi to theorize (and here I mean to produce theory) about the world.

The Problem of Money, Unrequited Reciprocity, and Neoliberal Economists

Jill Nash asks why I don't attend more to the issue of money and the fact that Gimi need it to live and want it to participate in "development." She connects this to a discussion of unrequited reciprocity. For me, this raises questions about Gimi theorizing and explanatory practice. One of the major things that concerns them is the problematic relationship between their interlocutors and appropriate exchange relations.

Many people who come to Papua New Guinea, whether to conduct research, do conservation-as-development, or undertake business ventures, fail to act in socially appropriate ways. Because Gimi see that people become human through reciprocity and exchange, they see such in-comers as less than or different from human. Like many Papua New Guineans, Gimi people try to induce these in-comers to act appropriately. When their more subtle attempts fail, they resort to blunter means, like openly asking for things or, when it is appropriate, demanding compensation. These attempts to get outsiders to behave properly lead to endless criticism by conservation-actors, business people (national and expatriate), and some scholars.

Often, the result is the invocation of another concept that started as a useful analytical device but became reified, culture. Echoing Rostow's (1960) old argument in *The Stages of Economic Growth*, some hold that the natural resources in the country mean that people in Papua New Guinea should be well-off, but they are not because "the country's resources are inefficiently exploited and badly distributed, as a result of a highly dysfunctional political system" (Fukuyama 2007:2). This unfortunate state of affairs is said to reflect a "lack of fit" between European institutions necessary for proper government and the "underlying society" (Fukuyama 2007:3, 9). For Fukuyama, as it was for Rostow, the faulty element of that underlying society is "culture," the major barrier to economic development, exemplified in Papua New Guinea by compensation claims and indigenous systems of land tenure. Similarly, Gosarevski, Hughes, and Windybank (2004:136) argue that communal land ownership creates "barriers ... to savings, investment, and productivity." These critics echo an old solution to the old problem of culture, the imposition of Western systems of private property (Gosarevski, Hughes, and Windybank 2004:141).

Like Rostow a half century before them, these people ignore the ways that structural factors, especially a country's position in the global economy, can impoverish a country and its people. And also like Rostow, these critics see the practices that concern them as hindrances to progress rather than as reasonable and appropriate ways to be properly human and to engage in proper relationships with others.

However old and discredited these argument may be, they are potent, as indicated by recent changes to Papua New Guinea's Environment Act. Those changes make it almost impossible for landowners to go to court to stop resource-extraction companies from destroying their environment, abusing labor, or exploiting landowners. Those changes were made because of pressure by China's Metallurgical Construction Corp (MCC), which invested $1.5 billion into the Ramu nickel mine.[3] The mine is huge and hugely controversial, and its development was hindered by the success of landowners in their attempt to get a court injunction to halt the construction of a pipeline that would send mine wastes into the Madang Lagoon, seriously damaging a site of astonishing biological diversity that is extraordinarily productive in terms of local subsistence and economic development. This leads to a bizarre state of affairs: The changes to the act that adhere to the critics' arguments about Papua New Guinea culture will end up impoverishing the very people these critics want to see enriched. Without attending to the ways in which economists and development practitioners use antiquated concepts from anthropology, and thereby attending to the history of anthropology, political ecology cannot begin to understand the ways the contemporary lives of the people with whom we work.

Conclusion

Political ecology, the form of scholarship with which I most identify, can learn from the critiques of my work offered by Bryan, Halvaksz, and Nash. I hope that with this response I have shown some directions in which political ecology might move in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I wish to thank James G. Carrier and Lisa Uperesa for helpful comments and suggestions.

NOTES

1. For a cogent discussion of the margins at which radical thought might happen and where Papua New Guinea and anthropology fit as sites for radical thought, see Knauft 1994.

2. For what is still the most insightful critique of the politics of comparing indigenous knowledge and scientific knowledge, see Agrawal 1995.

3. See http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/png-law-to-shield-resource-giants-from-litigation/story-e6frg8zx-1225874201579 (accessed on June 20, 2010).

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2009e Towards a theory of uneven development in the natural sciences. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Washington, DC.

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REVIEW

Cluny Macpherson and La'avasa Macpherson. *The Warm Winds of Change. Globalisation in Contemporary Samoa*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2009. Pp. 224. ISBN 971869404451. US$45.00 paper.

Reviewed by *Unasa Leulu Felise Va'a*

Cluny and La'avasa Macpherson's book on social change in Samoa is an excellent read, well structured and full of helpful anecdotes based largely on the authors' own experiences in Samoa and among migrants in New Zealand. Central to the thesis is the idea that Samoan society has been undergoing social change since the earliest contacts with Europeans as a result of the impact of the Western ideologies represented by Christianity, capitalism, and colonialism.

According to the authors, Christianity introduced the notion of a "single, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent god" instead of the numerous district and family gods that predominated in ancient Samoa (p. 101). Capitalism introduced the notion of private property, individual ownership, and exclusive access to land and the rights to retain profits from its exploitation (p. 102). Previously, land was communal property, and any profits that accrued from its use reverted to the extended family. Colonialism introduced the idea of nation state in which "power, authority and administration were centralized primarily for the convenience of colonial powers" (p. 103). Before global contact, Samoan government rested largely in the hands of village councils, that is to say, the political system was decentralized. To these three ideological models may be added a fourth one: the scientific model of health, which effectively excludes supernatural agency

as the cause of disease and instead substitutes a scientific one based on the agency of bacteria and viruses.

However, the effects of these changes were not destructive because they were controlled largely by the Samoans themselves to the extent that they did not seriously disrupt the traditional aspects of social organization. The effects of these changes relating to "the foundations of its theocracy, the essence of the human condition, the aetiology and causes of health and illness, the nature of land and labour, and the character and origins of governance and the law" were largely invisible, the authors argued (p. 116). This was because the changes "could be grafted on to existing bodies of Samoan belief" so as to "minimize their impact on the Samoan worldview and lifestyle and on their personal standing" (pp. 116–17). In time, the memory of their origins was lost, having been internalized. Thus, "Each of the 'new' ideologies represented major departures from Samoan models of society, and yet each seems to have been incorporated into the worldview and lifestyle of the village so completely that they are no longer thought of as having origins beyond the village" (p. 105).

Samoan secular and religious elites have largely succeeded in controlling the extent and pace of social change in the past, but this may not be true in the future, the authors argue. They provide three reasons for this. First, Samoa is increasingly exposed to new ideologies, and elites may no longer be able to control the content, speed, or the ways in which these enter and are incorporated into Samoan culture and society (pp. 119–20). Second, Samoan elites are becoming more diverse than was once the case and may not be able or willing to form a single view on new ideas or to agree to a consensual course of action as was once the case (p. 120). Third, those agencies promoting these contemporary ideologies may have greater leverage than those that promoted some of the earlier ones and may not be as willing to allow Samoan elites to control the process (p. 120).

That is to say, change is inevitable, always has been, except that now it is going to become even more difficult for the indigenous elites to manage, and the leadership of the elites themselves will be challenged by the new nontraditional centers of power (e.g., by the untitled migrants, human rights groups, aid donors). Even the leadership of the center of power, the Samoan heartland itself, will be challenged by the nontraditional migrant centers overseas. Thus, the center may have to "reconfigure itself in ways that make it easier to embrace or risk losing the very commitment on which its continued existence depends" (p. 191).

In their concluding chapter, the authors relate that the emphasis of their study has been on the dynamism of social change rather than on cultural continuity in Samoan society. The authors feel that emphasis on cultural

continuity understates real changes that are taking place, as well as the dynamism evident in the society's engagement with challenges from global forces and the concerns of the village people with issues of social change (pp.187–88).

The study took many years and is full of interesting and relevant anecdotes from relatives, neighbors, and migrants. However, I would have liked to see an extensive input of statistical tables, especially when comparing the achievements of one period (e.g., economic performance) with another. Because this book makes an ideal text for social change in Samoa, I think the inclusion of statistical tables, already available from government records and other academic publications, would have produced an even more exciting publication. Such tables would have put the comments and narratives of the authors in better perspective.

Another minor point is the year of the arrival of the first Wesleyan missionary, Rev. Peter Turner. According to the book (p. 31), Rev. Turner visited Samoa in 1828, but according to my sources, Rev. Turner arrived in Samoa in 1835. He arrived at Faleu, Manono, and that day has been commemorated in Samoan oral history as the *Taeao na i Faleu ma Utuagigi* (the historical day at Faleu and Utuagigi, commemorating the arrival of the Wesleyan mission).

It was a Samoan-turned-Methodist named Teoneula (or some such name) who arrived in Samoa in 1828 and began setting up Wesleyan congregations at Salelologa and Palauli, Savaii, based on those he had encountered in Tonga, while he was living there. He might have been in exile in Tonga as a member of a defeated war party. Fauea, the Samoan who accompanied the London Missionary Society missionaries John Williams and Charles Barff to Samoa in August 1830, was also another famous war exile of the period. Although Samoans living in Wallis and Futuna might have encouraged Catholic missionaries to evangelize Samoa (p. 32), it was not until 1845 that they first arrived under the sponsorship of the powerful chief, Mataafa.

Conclusion

The Macphersons have done a magnificent survey and have looked and commented brilliantly on the extensive literature about social change in Samoa. My main criticism has been the absence of statistical tables that are readily available from government annual reports and other records. Perhaps it is a matter of different priorities, description and analysis versus mathematical formulae.

The thesis about social change is easily sustained, and the reasons given for this are widely known; namely, Christianity, capitalism, and colonialism. Also, the authors argue that the new forces that induce social change, such as global forces represented by international human rights conventions, human rights organizations, aid donors, and so on, will be even harder for the traditional elites to accept.

The argument about the dialectical oppositions posed by cultural continuity and the dynamism of change must surely pose a riddle for all concerned. The central question is, when all is said and done, is it the nature of society to resist change (as one noted social scientist said) or to welcome any opportunity to change? This is difficult to answer, especially because even the Macphersons admit the existence of cultural continuities. What we are witnessing, especially about current events, is that the propensity to resist change is commensurate with the desire to welcome it, even force it. Thus, if Samoan society shows dynamism in welcoming and coping with social change, to the same extent it will resist social change. That is, neither side wins. Or so it seems.

BOOKS NOTED

RECENT PACIFIC ISLAND PUBLICATIONS SELECTED ACQUISITIONS, JANUARY 2009–DECEMBER 2009

THIS LIST of significant publications relating to the Pacific Islands was selected from new acquisitions lists received from Brigham Young University—Hawai'i, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Bernice P. Bishop Museum, University of Auckland, East–West Center, University of the South Pacific, National Library of Australia, Melanesian Studies Resource Center, Center for Pacific and Asian Studies, University of Nijmegen, University of California San Diego, Secretariat of the Pacific Community Library, Center for South Pacific Studies, University of New South Wales, Macmillan Brown Library at University of Canterbury, and the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau's Center for the Pacific Development Training. Other libraries are invited to send contributions to the Books Noted Editor for future issues. Listings reflect the extent of information provided by each institution.

Abbott, Jon Webster. "We Are the Weeds: The Interplay of Policy and Culture in the Use of Introduced Plant Species as Medicine in Hawai'i." MA thesis, Univ. of Hawai'i, 2004.

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