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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