Massey, Doreen B.
1994 *Space, place, and gender*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press.

Murray Li, Tania
2000 Articulating indigenous identity in Indonesia: Resource politics and the tribal slot. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42 (1): 149–79.

Raffles, Hugh
2002 *In Amazonia: A natural history*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press.

Raffles, Hugh
2005 Towards a critical natural history. *Antipode* 37 (2): 374–78.

Smith, Neil
1992 Contours of a spatialized politics: Homeless vehicles and the production of geographical scale. *Social Text* 33: 55–81.

Wainwright, Joel
2005 The geographies of political ecology: After Edward Said. *Environment and Planning A* 37 (6): 1033–43.

West, Paige
2006 *Conservation is our government now: The politics of ecology in Papua New Guinea*. Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press.

Whitten, Norman E.
1985 *Sicuanga Runa: The Other Side of development in Amazonian Ecuador*. Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press.

Response: STUART KIRSCH
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

***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.

REFERENCES

Ager, Britta
2010 Roman agricultural magic. PhD diss., Univ. of Michigan.

Bainton, Nicholas A.
2009 Keeping the network out of view: Mining, distinctions and exclusion in Melanesia. *Oceania* 79(1):18–33.

Bashkow, Ira
2006 *The meaning of Whitemen: Race and modernity in the Orokaiva*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.

Benson, Peter and Stuart Kirsch
2010 Capitalism and the Politics of Resignation. Forthcoming, *Current Anthropology* 51(4): 459–86.

Carrier, James
1992 Occidentalism: The world turned upsidedown. *American Ethnologist*. 19(2):195–212.

Coronil, Fernando
1996 Beyond occidentalism: Towards non-imperial geohistorical categories. *Cultural Anthropology* 11(1): 51–87.

Ginsburg, Faye
1997 "From little things, big things grow." Indigenous media and cultural activism. In *Between resistance and revolution: Cultural politics and social protest*, ed. Richard G. Fox and Orin Starn, 118–44. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press.

Kirsch, Stuart
1997 Regional dynamics and conservation in Papua New Guinea: The Lakekamu River Basin Project. *The Contemporary Pacific* 9(1):97–121.
2001a Lost worlds: Environmental disaster, 'culture loss' and the law. *Current Anthropology* 42(2):167–98.

2001b Property effects: Social networks and compensation claims in Melanesia. *Social Anthropology* 9(2):147–63.
2002 Anthropology and advocacy: A case study of the campaign against the Ok Tedi Mine. *Critique of Anthropology* 22(2):175–200.
2008 Social relations and the green critique of capitalism in Melanesia. *American Anthropologist* 110(3):288–98.
2010 Ethnographic representation and the politics of violence in West Papua. *Critique of Anthropology* 30(1):3–22.

Lindstrom, Lamont
1993 *Cargo cult: Strange stories of desire from Melanesia and beyond.* Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press.

Malinowski, Bronislaw
1922 *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An account of native enterprise and adventure in the archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea.* London: Routledge.
1935 *Coral gardens and their magic: A study of the methods of tilling the soil and of agricultural rites in the Trobriand Islands.* New York: American Book Company.

Melucci, Alberto
1998 Third World or planetary conflicts? In *Cultures of politics, politics of culture: Re-visioning Latin American social movements,* ed. Sonia E. Alvarez, Evelina Dagnino, and Arturo Escobar, 422–29. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Mentore, Laura
2010 Trust and alterity: Amerindian analysis of social and environmental relations in Southern Guyana. PhD diss. Univ. of Cambridge.

Risen, James
2010 U.S. identifies vast mineral riches in Afghanistan. *New York Times.* June 14, 2010. http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/14/world/asia/14minerals.html (accessed June 14, 2010).

Saina, Mangi
2010 Mine will affect us. Letter to the Editor. *The Post Courier.* Electronic document, accessed June 17, 2010. http://www.postcourier.com.pg/20100617/thhome.htm

Strathern, Marilyn, and Eric Hirsch
2004 Introduction. In *Transactions and creations: Property debates and the stimulus of Melanesia,* ed. Eric Hirsch and Marilyn Strathern, 1–20. Oxford: Berghahn.

Thomas, Nicholas
1992 The inversion of tradition. *American Ethnologist* 19(2):213–32.

Trouillot, Ralph
1991 Anthropology and the savage slot: The poetics and politics of otherness. In *Recapturing anthropology*, Richard Fox, ed., 17–44. Santa Fe, NM: SAR Press.

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt
2005 *Friction: An ethnography of global connection*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press.

Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo
1998 Cosmological deixis and Amerindian perspectivism: A view from Amazonia, transl., P. Gow and E. Ewart. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 4:469–88.

Wagner, Roy
1981 *The invention of culture*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.

West, Paige
2006 *Conservation is our government now: The politics of ecology in Papua New Guinea*. Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press.

Wood, Michael
2010 Trees, wind and gas: Changes and continuities in kamula relationships with climate change and carbon markets in the Western Province, PNG. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania, Washington, D.C.

Zimmer, Laura
1986 Card playing among the Gende: A system for keeping money and social relationships alive. *Oceania* 56:225–63.

Response: PAIGE WEST
BARNARD COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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,