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This is an admirable book on the Chambri in Papua New Guinea--as were the ones published earlier by these two well-known anthropologists. And each time a new book appears I am impressed by its bold the oretical outline, the brilliance with which evidence is provided, and, finally, by its rhetorical power.

In *Twisted Histories* the authors deal with "changes, choices and constraints in the lives of the twentieth-century Chambri" and the way "they were caught up in world processes of social and cultural change" (pp. 1, 19). They try to show how the Chambri who had been living in a regional system (interacting in a system that consisted not of equals but where at least the differences were commensurable) were now moving to a world system (in which the differences are incommensurable).- It is the encounter of the regional system, represented by the Chambri, with the world system that is the main focus of this book. Gewertz and Errington discuss the relationship between regional system and world system on a broad level and have therefore chosen different fields of Chambri life: in the village, interactions with tourists who buy artifacts and are allowed to attend initiation ceremonies, Chambri living in towns, the role of literacy, and the Chambri negotiating with the state.

I shall limit myself mainly to discussing the first topic. The conceptual framework in which the twisted relationships of the Chambri are represented is, as briefly mentioned, one constructed on the opposition of "regional system" and "world system." At the same time these are identified with notions of Third World and First World respectively, the Chambri being put into the former category, the anthropologists and the tourists into the latter. These notions expressing hierarchical relations are used as fixed points of reference. Only by accepting these does it become understandable how the paying audience at an initiation can

be called a "first-world audience" (p. 32) and why the authors call themselves "members of the first world" (p. 209). The Chambri would probably oppose such a classification, at least when they perform ceremonies to which tourists and the anthropologists (although "they had struggled to become insiders," p. 27) were admitted only after having paid an admission fee. This is clearly the Chambri's demonstration of another hierarchical relationship, one in which the Chambri are a first world and the others classed as a second or third world--or simply as outsiders. The categories of a First and a Third World (created by economists on the assumption that the industrialized countries *are* the "first" world!) have to do with notions of development also, closely related to those of evolution. Gewertz and Errington have noticed the unilinearity even tourists associate with development, as when some of them considered that their visit to Chambri, where they wanted to see a culture less developed than their own, was "like stepping back in time" (p. 39).

The Chambri conceive of development as mainly the opportunity to earn money. Some interviewees who had gone through the schooling system reproduced definitions such as "the capacity to realize basic needs" (p. 121). In the Sepik (as in other parts of New Guinea), unilinearity is not *the* basic principle of thinking concerning processes taking place within the dimension of time. Time is, I would suggest, at least partially conceived to be cyclically organized rather than linear (see also Schuster 1970). Characteristically, there is no term for "development" in Sepik languages. Thus, one wonders if this concept is lacking what development really means for them within their perception of time and processes that take place within it. "Development" therefore has not only two different aspects (those the tourists associate with it and that of the Chambri), but is also a term pretending comparability whereas it disguises two completely different concepts of processes within the dimension of time.

A similar basic assumption of the linearity of time becomes obvious also with regards to carvings, used in the book as a means to exemplify the way stories are twisted among the Chambri themselves and their outer world. The authors tell the story of how some years ago a Chambri man had sold two water drums to get money. The anthropologists later located them in the National Museum in Boroko; the Chambri wanted them back. The loss of these water drums is presented as an element of the regional system having been taken over by the world system, leaving a gap in Chambri culture because "the Chambri no longer made objects that were significant to them because they were filled with ancestral power"; "they no longer carved ritually efficacious fig-

ures and images" (pp. 57, 28). Only in later chapters do readers gradually find out that two new water drums were apparently carved to replace the old ones (the anthropologists had provided the Chambri with photographs and measurements). In their use within initiation rituals the new ones do not seem to be considered simply as pieces of wood; rather, they seem empowered with ancestral spirits again. Thus, the regional system still persists, detached from the world system.

The sudden loss of sacred artifacts without replacements made beforehand is not new to Sepik cultures. In raids (even in those without a "German shotgun," p. 50) *sacra* stored in the men's houses were preferred trophies (if the whole building with its contents was not set afire). Artifacts were not usually copied but were continuously recreated by specialists who had the requisite ritual knowledge and who were at the same time experts in carving and painting. As I have demonstrated elsewhere (Hauser-Schäublin 1983), the old men's consent as well as the approval of the ancestors over the new *sacra* were necessary, Therefore Sepik art (as others as well) had creativity and competence that was not limited to meticulously copying old artifacts but was constantly producing new ones. To make my point clear: There never existed linear, uninterrupted chains of traditions. Traditions could come to an end, only to start anew again, even after years or decades. Middle Sepik cultures may very well continue to produce airport art (in the late sixties the Chambri already produced masks and sculptures shining with black shoe polish, an innovation introduced by the missionary there). At the same time they may create ritually important *sacra.* It is not "no longer" in terms of linearity of time, for traditions may again and again reappear according to their notions of cycles of time. This situation creates histories that are more complicated than assumed.

Gewertz and Errington establish a whole network of implications around the owner of a singular "traditional" spear who allowed others to "copy" it for sale to tourists. The authors maintain that the owner of the original spear used it as the basis of a system to pay debts. *Forms* and *types* of spears were never individually or even clan owned, as were specific patterns and their combinations. Most of the forms were common throughout the Middle Sepik anyway, and it is difficult to imagine how a "right to make the generalized, essentially powerless and valueless derivatives" (p. 51) was transferred to other men with the political and economic implications suggested. There exists, as far as I know, no category of carvings or paintings in the Sepik that has not been reproduced for sale.

My data (on the Iatmul) point in an opposite direction: With the exis-

tence of a market for artifacts (from the beginning of this century), men who had neither the ritual knowledge nor the artistic skill to carve made artistic productions, too, without asking permission or paying for any "rights" at all. Withholding or controlling such "rights" would be difficult, anyway, in situations that are finally determined not by ancestral power but by market demands and the cash economy.

Linearity, the implication that the Chambri histories run from one direction--tradition--to the other--modernization--is found again in the chapter on initiation. "Selling their initiations (and perhaps other ceremonies) as tourist attractions could subtly but profoundly transform both Chambri and their ceremonies" (p. 98). Linearity is implicitly suggested by mentioning that when Gewertz saw her first initiation in the seventies without any tourists present, tradition had persisted at least until then; and, by seeing an initiation in 1987 the anthropologists wanted to know "to what extent, if any, the ceremony would reflect the changes that the Chambri had been experiencing since the time of Deborah's first research among them" (p. 25). Apart from interactions with tourists, the initiation is described as if no substantial changes had affected its course, contents, and meaning.

This touches on a crucial thesis of the book: Change is understood as something that has taken place mainly since the early seventies. But Sepik cultures had suffered fundamental blows, the world system taking part control over the regional system, much earlier. Initiation had been hit most seriously in the early twenties when headhunting was banned. At that time, initiation and headhunting formed an unseparable complex of rituals and meanings. Those who continued to practice headhunting were chased like criminals, prosecuted, and finally hanged in Ambunti before a large audience from all over the Sepik.

A second serious blow, the literal invasion of the world system into the regional system, was caused by the Second World War, when the Japanese fought their desperate retreat battles in the Sepik. The Sepik people did not know what the fighting was about. Both sides threatened to kill them if they conspired with the other. Some villages helped the Japanese, others the Australians and their allied troops (it was the first time Sepik people saw there existed other peoples with black skins, such as the Americans and Indians). The villages were driven to play one off against the other, resulting in the Japanese executing about one hundred men in Timbunke--a dreadful story that spread throughout the Sepik. It was also the first time huge amounts of supplies and modern technology (mainly all sorts of weapons) were dropped from planes. The Second World War was a shock to Sepik cultures. During the fifties and the early sixties few initiations took place and men's houses were allowed to

deteriorate. Only in the late sixties and early seventies, after almost twenty years of interruption, did a cultural revitalization set in. Initations were held and men's houses built again. These sequences of events, prior to the mid-seventies, reveal cyclical structures and, at the same time, the tendency of the regional system to detach from the world system again and again.

Therefore, I do not know what to think of the initation described so extensively in *Twisted Histories* because no further comments concerning change, apart from that caused by tourism, are given. According to my view, ceremonies of this kind as well as men's houses built ("most architecturally complete," p. 30) especially to attract tourists (the first one of a whole series in the Sepik was built in Kamanebit at the beginning of the seventies) are phenomena that cannot be understood without an outline of the larger historical context, the interactions of the outside world with the Middle Sepik (and vice versa).

Or, to cite another example: it was 1909 (and not during Margaret Mead's stay in Chambri or in the seventies) when Otto Reche, a member of the German South Sea Expedition, noted with surprise that Middle Sepik people brought for sale all kinds of artifacts and even skulls-in their canoes to the Peiho without having been asked to do so (1913: 18). During the first decades of this century, tens of thousands of artifacts from Middle Sepik villages were bought for museums and private collections all over the world. Within a relatively short period, a large portion of the most beautiful artifacts, made with stone and bone tools, disappeared from the region. Some artifacts were replaced by new ones.

Nowadays, judging from my own experience and the pieces I have seen in recent collections, "old" pieces date no further back than the fifties. Thus the role and the meaning of the artifacts described in Gewertz and Errington's book to demonstrate twisted histories have to be considered in the context of a much longer and complex history: Artifacts were bartered for artifacts (with the first Germans and, even later, with the Australians for knives and steel axes), were reproduced and sold for money, and were again produced for the Chambri's own use (with obviously new meanings attributed to them as in the case with the *mwai* mask). Gewertz and Errington's approach is, therefore, rather a synchronic one, dealing with a period of fifteen years. The diachronic perspective--how this period has to be understood in a wider historical context full of interactions and struggles between the Middle Sepik people and the outside world--is only occasionally applied.

Before concluding, let me briefly discuss another subject mentioned in the book: gender. It is another track of twisted histories. Male initiations in New Guinea in general were all-men events, women being

strictly excluded. If, among the Iatmul, women were caught in spying on men's secrets they were gang-raped or initiated like men or both (Hauser-Schäublin 1988). Gender seems, by now, to have become a less-strictly defended social category: not only was the woman anthropologist allowed to witness initiation in the early seventies but informants on the two important original water drums were obviously women, too (p. 9); the people who were carrying the *mwai* masks were all women (unthinkable in former times); and all tourists, men and women alike, were allowed to enter the men's house and even inside the initiation fence. I do not know how to interpret these changes; gender is, or perhaps was, according to my experience, one of the most persistent social categories in the Sepik. But it is certainly another of the aspects that, taken together, form such complicated coils. To disentangle them when each of them has its own history is a complex task. *Twisted Histories, Altered Contexts* is a significant and admirable attempt to answer such important questions.

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