

Tourism and Anthropology in a Postmodern World

—redderick Errington and Deborah Gewertz

As he drove from the airport in Wewak, Papua New Guinea, to his three-room guesthouse, Ralf warned us that with our arrival all fifteen beds would be filled. We were disappointed, for we had hoped to be largely alone there, as we occasionally had been in the past when we came from our Chambri Island field site to resupply in Wewak. Indeed, as we grumpily wrestled our heavy metal patrol boxes inside the door, his house seemed to be crawling with noisy, young tourists. Our annoyance was increased when one of them derisively asked us whether we always traveled so heavy, adding that he had just returned from two weeks of paddling from village to village along the Sepik River with only a small backpack. We promptly responded to this taunt. We said that we were anthropologists who had come not to travel but to stay; our boxes contained supplies sufficient for seven months of field research among the Chambri. Moreover, to ensure our victory in what was obviously a contest, we added that this was our fourth trip to Papua New Guinea during the past twenty years.

Thinking over the incident we were amused to see how easily these tourists had been able to pull us into competition over which, they or we, had had the more authentic experience with native people in Papua New Guinea. This had been a competition we had wanted to win, and we wondered whether we would have emerged triumphant if this had been our first trip.

After we had settled at Chambri, we might not have thought much more about these noisy young tourists—"travelers" they called themselves—with their search for the authentic and their competition with us—if it were not for the frequent arrivals of older and wealthier tourists. Although more easily accepting that we had surpassed them in their search for the authentic, the latter were largely unimpressed with our choice of a profession that was not only relatively poorly paying in their view but required the deprivation and discomfort of life in the jungles of Papua New Guinea. Unlike the travelers with their sporadic and low-budget arrivals, these tourists came to Chambri at regular intervals, transported in luxury on the Sepik in a cruise ship, the *Melanesian Explorer*. With their frequent visits, we realized that tourists now had a major role in Chambri life. Their presence, and that of the travelers—their reactions and those of the native people as members of each group observe and perform for the other—needs to be understood.

To this ethnographic focus, and prompted by our musings on our own relationship to these visitors, we add a more general theoretical discussion about the nature of anthropological authority. A number of contemporary writers would not have been surprised that we were so readily pulled into a comparison with these tourists (of both sorts). They have argued that, despite an ideology to the contrary, anthropologists are, in fact, little different from tourists (see Boon 1982; Dumont 1977; Hamilton 1982; Mintz 1977; and van den Berghe 1980). Perhaps the most forceful formulation of this view comes in a recent article by Crick (1985) who endorses and summarizes the recent critique that we have, as anthropologists, lost our authority because, like tourists, we do not reach an objective understanding of the other—what we do is for ourselves and in our own terms. (On the loss of ethnographic authority, see also Clifford 1988; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Crapanzano 1986; Strathern 1987, 1989; and Tyler 1986.)

Furthermore, Crick suggests, many field confessions reveal that anthropologists, far from immersing themselves and thereby acquiring competence in an alien culture, frequently spend much time avoiding interaction with native people by reading novels and dreaming of home (see Barley 1983). Semiotically if not linguistically maladept and chronically gauche, they both misunderstand what they are told and, in addition, annoy their informants who become little inclined to reveal themselves (Herzfeld 1983). And, often forced to employ interpreters and purchase information, anthropologists further distance themselves from the other.

Nor can anthropologists be readily distinguished from tourists since the former work and the latter play. According to Crick and others, tourists may be engaged in a modern secular ritual equivalent to a rite of passage or a rite of intensification. (See, for example, Cohen 1988; Grabum 1983; Lett 1983; and Pfaffenberger 1983.) Comparably, fieldwork may be a modern secular ritual for those seeking transformation from students into professional anthropologists.

Finally, at the most general level, it is argued that anthropologists, like tourists as products and agents of capitalist systems, objectify those they observe (Fabian 1983; Pratt 1986), regarding the other as available for their acquisition and use. In this process, the other, stripped of power and volition, becomes defined to meet Western standards of conceptual utility (Appadurai 1985; Asad 1973; Haraway 1985a; Spooner 1986).

Thus, according to this critique, the "I was there" of the anthropologist should carry little more ethnographic authority than that of the tourist. Ethnography, these writers contend, is like the tourist report; it is essentially self-interested fiction (Crapanzano 1986).

Although Crick allows that not all anthropologists or all tourists are the same (as we have indicated, many of the tourists in Papua New Guinea consider themselves not as "tourists" but as "travelers") and that there are differences between them, his general conclusion from this comparison is that anthropology, like tourism, is a game we play for our own purposes. This conclusion, however, does not disturb him particularly. Indeed, he thinks that the nature of anthropology as game has unfortunately been obscured by a scientism, which holds that social reality is an entity that may be perceived objectively through the application of value-free rules. (On misplaced scientism, see Bleier 1984; Haraway 1985b and 1986; Keller 1985; and Louch 1969.) Crick's is the postmodern perception that social life (including the disciplines that examine social life), in its fragmentation and multiplicity, is not an order produced by the enactment of a set of rules. Therefore, a much more accurate perception not only of anthropology but of social life more generally (including, of course, tourism) would be one that recognizes the importance in both of the continual negotiation of the rules in game-like fashion. Freed from its pretenses, anthropology could itself become more ludic, he argues, and in so doing better convey the ludic in the game that constitutes social life.

We contend that one could regard social life as the product of continual negotiations and yet not share Crick's conclusion that anthropology should be more like play (no matter how important or pervasive play might be as a human phenomenon). We also contend that one could likewise reject scientism without accepting that anthropology be essentially ludic, simply one game of many, without substantial seriousness.

We doubt, in fact, that there can be much justification for anthropology if anthropologists are fundamentally like tourists. In this paper, therefore, while pursuing our ethnographic interest in the Chambri social field (which includes both tourists and anthropologists), we return to Crick's original comparison to examine the terms we share with those we met at Ralf's and elsewhere in Papua New Guinea, and those we did not. It will be our conclusion that, in a world in which it profoundly matters who controls the terms of the interactions—the negotiations—and who wins or loses, anthropology needs not a heightened sense of the ludic but of the political.

On Travelers

Ralf's guesthouse was inexpensive, costing PGK6.00 per night. (Kina is the currency of Papua New Guinea. In 1987, PGK1.00 = US\$1.15.) In contrast, each of the three local hotels was by any standard expensive, costing approximately PGK100.00 per night. His guests were generally in their twenties, often on long-term excursions after they had completed university studies or military service. They stayed at Ralf's, not only because they rarely could afford the other accommodations, but also because they wished to distinguish themselves from those they regarded as tourists. They did not use money to insulate themselves from direct and significant experience—from the "real"—as did the "tourists." (On travelers, see, for example, Cohen 1989; Smith 1989; and Teas 1988.)

Ralf's accommodations were basic. Although he had electricity and running water, the shower was cold and the outdoor toilet, odorous. Strangers shared rooms with each other and with members of Ralf's family in what was his home. Ralf originally came from Germany to Papua New Guinea as a Catholic missionary. Although no longer a priest, Ralf had remained permanently in the country, as a citizen. He married a woman from a Sepik River village and was raising a family. Since Ralf had led an eventful life and seen much of Papua New Guinea, his guests felt that staying with him was memorable for it was in itself an authentic experience.

Most travelers arriving in the Sepik region brought with them a popular travel guide, *Papua New Guinea: A Travel Survival Kit* (Lightbody and Wheeler 1985), from which they learned, for example, that the Sepik is "the best known area of PNG for artifacts" (1985:44) and "has attracted little development and remains remarkably untouched by western influences" (1985:152). Nevertheless, Ralf's establishment was an important clearing-house of information for them. In addition to the knowledge Ralf himself conveyed about where to go, how to get there, and what to take (he rented at low cost such absolute necessities for travel in the Sepik River area as mosquito nets), there was advice available from the other guests—especially those stopping at Ralf's as they returned from their trip on the Sepik.

Those returning furnished the new arrivals with accounts of recent adventures larded with travel tips. The new arrivals reciprocated in kind by telling of their own travel in other parts of Papua New Guinea or other remote parts of the world. In these accounts of adventure and advice there was a striving for verification. Virtually anyone who ended up at Ralf's could be recognized as intrepid, at least by comparison with the tourists. However, even among this relatively elite group, important distinctions were made about which among them was immersed most completely in native life. These preoccupations pervaded not only the conversation at Ralf's but also the observations that these guests wrote in notebooks Ralf provided for the edification of later visitors. As we shall see in the following excerpts from these notebooks, by recording what to visit and what to avoid, travelers con-

veyed the breadth of their experience, their fortitude, and their capacity to discriminate between the authentic and the inauthentic. Of particular interest to us are the criteria used in this discrimination.

1. An anonymous traveler wrote in April 1983:

Watch out for Kanganaman and Parambei [villages along the Sepik] you might miss them. It is quite some paddling to get to Parambei. The *haus tambaran* [men's ceremonial house] in Kanganaman is sure worth seeing. They try to charge you for it. In both villages people are friendly because they are accustomed to the big spending Explorer tourist. Hardly any good carving left if you are looking for that. . . . Kapaimari, the Catholic school shortly after Kanganaman, you leave untouched. It is like other mission places—Timbunke, Ambunti. People very unfriendly; ready to rip you off. The smaller the village the better. Some places may get five white tourists a year. . . . Accommodation is no problem if you stay away from the tourist spots. Every village will put you up and sometimes even provide food free. Your visit is an honor for them—a change in everyday life. . . .

This traveler assumed that tourist money and missionary activity spoiled local people by making them unfriendly and concerned only with acquiring money. Those so remote as to have escaped these pernicious Western influences retained a tradition of carving and hospitality. Moreover, they also recognized and appreciated the fact that this traveler was willing to leave the path beaten by the less enlightened members of his own European society to visit them. Such an encounter as an instance of intercultural communication was seen as reciprocally enriching traveler and villager alike.¹

2. Two male travelers, one from Poughkeepsie, New York, and the other from Russian River, California, described villages along the Sepik in July, 1983:

Japanaut: friendly; good resting spot. Yentchamangua: very friendly . . . free night. Korogo: very friendly; free night with Peter; his son is Ronny; one of the first houses up river; excellent haus tambaran; good for carvings. . . . Yentchan: interesting haus tambaran; impersonal atmosphere; 5 PGKs [In 1983, PGK1.00 = \$U.S.1.40] to sleep in haus tambaran. . . . Kambrindo: friendly. Moim: uninteresting. . . . no carvings, at least they don't offer to show us some. Also had clothes ripped off here. Important notes: . . . If you want to buy artifacts, do it last, or in the morning. Show you are interested in the villagers; they are interested in you. Be friendly and they will not treat you like a tourist. Explain difference between tourist and traveler. They are really good people. Show pictures. Tell stories. Ask questions. . . . We met people who hated the Sepik. Be respectful of haus tambarans and culture. Bargain but don't degrade. Be a traveler, not a tourist. It makes a big difference. . . . Don't leave things in canoe at night. Even grungy clothes will disappear something belong "masta" [a colonial Pidgin English term for white man]. Food: bring plenty. No one really offered us food since we brought our own. They did let us use their pots, pans, fresh water and utensils. By the way, we had a fantastic time (to for it, yea, to the max, far-lucking out!

These travelers categorized villages according to whether social encounters had been friendly and nonmonetary or impersonal and commercial. In addition, they were alert to the presence of features of interest such as a haus tamberan or carvings and implied that since insensitive tourists were attracted to these features, local people had become cynical and indifferent. It was the travelers who could, because they were sensitive and caring, re-establish warm, human (and inexpensive) relationships and enable villagers to manifest their essential goodness. Although such a project of redemptive encounter might fail to reclaim those who coveted even grungy clothes, these travelers found their experience eminently rewarding.

3. A family traveling on motorcycles left their account anonymous but nonetheless included a photograph of themselves on their motorcycles. Writing in December, 1984:

As we travel as a family, two adults, two kids and two motorcycles, we had a different trip. Luckily for us we had got a Papuan friend here in Wewak and we went up to Ambunti [sub-provincial headquarters] with him in his motorboat free and slept in his house. Next day we borrowed his boat and went four hours up the Sepik River and turned up the April River to [the village of] Biaka where we lived with a family for two days free. The food we brought we gave to the wife and asked to have only native food during our stay. A bit hard to get sago down, but nice fish, taro and pumpkin and this was really an experience. Everything very "primitive." As gifts we had brought toys for children and these everybody enjoyed, adults as well as children. It was lots of fun. In return we got a grass skirt, pigs' teeth, a belt with tail and a cassowary knife, which we are really happy about. On way back we saw a witch doctor working in another village. A very outstanding experience.

These travelers had it all. They formed such a close friendship with a Papua New Guinean that he not only provided them with free accommodation but also loaned them his motorboat. They chose to spend their limited time in a single village where they developed reciprocal relations with a local family. Living under "primitive" conditions and encountering a witch doctor at work, they experienced Papua New Guinea life as it really was.

4. Two anonymous travelers wrote in July 1986:

The next morning half the village turned out to watch us spin out into the Sepik. The younger group amused, the older alarmed. After an erratic half hour in which the three of us simultaneously attempted to use our own steering methods, we calmed down and zigzagged semi-proficiently to the village of Korogo . . . The villagers are building a new haus tamberan. The carvings are interesting, but photographs [of the haus tamberan] cost an exorbitant 5 dollars [kina] . . . We stopped at Aibom village [in the Chambri Lakes] where they are carving a new haus tamberan to watch an old woman potter making the clay cooking pots for which the village is famous. The lakes are well worth a trip, beautiful islands with highlands in the distance. Many birds and fish, lilies in the water. The

village of Chambri is huge [actually there are three villages on Chambri Island] with a large mission and interesting haus tamberan with oval windows. But it has become like a souvenir shop with chalked prices on the statues. There is a special house for visitors. No cooking facilities; two kina per person.

By lightheartedly demonstrating to a Sepik audience that they lacked competence in the basic skill of canoeing, these travelers showed themselves willing to establish relations of intimacy and equality with local people. Given their genuine interest in and appreciation of the people, it was lamentable that they, as if they were tourists, should be offered the culture—the haus tamberans and the artifacts—as commodities.

Ralf provided a place where travelers might appraise themselves and seek validation as unique, autonomous, and subjectively rich individuals. They were able to regard themselves as relatively unique and autonomous since few members of their society had either the desire or the self-reliance to travel in a place as distant and "undeveloped" as Papua New Guinea. Moreover, what they encounter there was experienced as further enhancing their already distinctive selves. For travelers, the encounter with what was seen as the "primitive"—the exotic, the whole, the fundamentally human—contributed to their own individuality, integration, and authenticity. Those who gathered at Ralf's also sought to affirm the extent to which they had embodied the values and the rewards of the successful traveler and, as we have seen, they competed as each tried to gain further distinction as being unique among this august body of fellow travelers. This competition concerned who had most fully encountered the most "untouched" people in Papua New Guinea. (In this competition, as we have noted, the anthropologist who lived for a major period in a remote village had the upper hand. Indeed, anthropologists are often drawn to the "remote" for many of the same reasons as are the travelers.)

The motives that impelled this competition frequently led to a politics that, while purporting to be (distinctively) radical in its rejection of conventional, materialistic Western values was—at least in the context of Papua New Guinea—relatively conservative. The principal value of Papua New Guineans to most of the travelers was that they be "untouched." (The radicalism at home and the conservatism abroad were experienced as consonant since travelers assumed that their own societies had become corrupt because earlier—more "primitive"—values were lost.)

Correspondingly, the principal lament of those travelers who found aspects of their trip disappointing was that the people had become spoiled. The social relationships between travelers and native people had become, like those in the West, essentially commercialized. The "primitives" they had expected to engage with had, in other words, become too much like us.

Those held most responsible for spoiling Papua New Guineans were "the big spending Explorer tourist[s]" (see account 1) who, representing the worse commercialism and superficiality of Western society, had through their

insensitive use of money fostered the commercialization of social relations and the consequent development of a "souvenir shop" (see account five) atmosphere throughout the Sepik.² From the perspective of the travelers, the tourists not only reduced the value of the "primitives" by corrupting them, but also manifested their own corruption by remaining "content with [their] obviously inauthentic experiences" (MacCannell 1976:94).

On Tourists

Most tourists who visited the Sepik region had bought a packaged excursion that included four days on the river in the *Melanesian Explorer*. This was a relatively luxurious, air-conditioned tourist ship that cruised at 12–14 knots and contained European amenities, including in-room plumbing and showers, a full bar, a video recorder with tapes of Papua New Guinea peoples and a library with over 100 books on the country.³ The Travel Corporation of America, which provided tours to the South Pacific that had the option of a swing through Papua New Guinea, furnished the *Melanesian Explorer* with most of its passengers. Their travel brochure described the Sepik River cruise as follows:

Eighth thru 12th days—Tuesday thru Saturday—Sepik River Cruise: Board our cruise ship Tuesday evening and begin our journey to one of the world's most remote and fascinating areas, the Sepik River region. We cruise in air-conditioned comfort aboard the *Melanesian Explorer*. Our trip through the lower and middle Sepik visits villages such as Kamindimit, Timbunke, and Tambanum. Off the main river, we use speedboats to travel the tributaries and the Chambri and Murik Lakes. Life along the Sepik has been virtually untouched by western ways.

The villagers hew canoes from gigantic logs and set off on fishing and hunting trips, bringing back food, exotic feathers, shells, skins and animal bones to use as headdresses, adornments and ritual implements.

You will have time to explore the many villages, and the House Tambarans, some of which are enormous and display a wealth of art. We are able to buy magnificent ritual masks, statues, and artifacts of these artistically gifted people. We will witness traditional sing-sings and get-togethers for joyous events or mourning, in the lives of these primitive people. (Travcoa n.d.:35)

This text promised an encounter with the "primitive." Tourists visiting the Sepik did wish to have this encounter although, as we will see, their reasons were somewhat different from those of the travelers. Most of the tourists from the *Melanesian Explorer* that we met, as they visited Chambri by speedboat or after we joined the ship itself for portions of two of its cruises, were prosperous middle-aged professionals—physicians, lawyers, scientists. Older and much better established in life than the travelers, they sought not the "pure primitive" but the "primitive" on the edge of change.



A tourist brochure promised: "You will have time to explore the many villages, the House Tambarans, some of which are enormous and display a wealth of art. We are able to buy magnificent ritual masks, statues, and artifacts of these artistically gifted people." (Photo by Deborah Gewertz and Frederick Errington)

An experienced guide on the *Melanesian Explorer* cautioned us that in the lectures we would give (in exchange for our board and room) we should be careful not to overemphasize the extent to which change had already taken place. For example, tourists interested in "black magic" should not be informed that old Chambri men had begun tape recording their magical spells so that these spells would not be forgotten when they died. The tourists "don't mind a little change," she said, "but would hate to know that the natives are sophisticated enough to tape their own chants."

One *Melanesian Explorer* tourist, a woman from New Jersey, told us that her Sepik trip had been wonderful although she had been, along with others, puzzled about how to characterize it. She said that it was "not a fun trip; not exactly educational; it was like stepping back in time, but there are modern things too." In a like vein, one physician from Chicago, in stating her reason for coming to Papua New Guinea, said that it was about as far away from her hospital as she could get, and that it is a place that "will be completely changed in ten years; one has to see it now as it really is." Another physician said that he was glad to have seen the Sepik "before," he added wryly, "people like us spoil it, as we have in so many other tourist places."

One group of these tourists told us with satisfaction of an unscheduled visit by the ship to a lower Sepik village where they came across a group of men trying to raise PGK4,000.00 to purchase what would be a collectively-owned truck. The PGK200.00 they had thus far raised was displayed on a mat around which the men sat. The tourists joined this group by contributing some PGK60.00. Their names, along with those of the native contributors, were duly recorded in a notebook. Then, probably in recognition that the tourists would not be able to make reciprocal claims for assistance, they were given two live chickens.

Because this stop was unscheduled, the tourists knew that these men were pursuing their own interests rather than engaging in a staged production. (See MacCannell 1976:91-107 for an interesting discussion of authenticity in tourist settings.) They found the mixture of old and new engaging: the villagers were cooperating in a traditional way to pursue nontraditional objectives, even though they were a long way from realizing their goal. (As one tourist commented to us, "My goodness, we contributed almost a third of what they had; they'll never get to where they want to go.") Certainly in the view of these affluent professionals, the villagers appeared naive: they were sadly naive in hoping to raise the money needed for their car⁴ and charmingly naive in believing that a gift of live chickens was appropriate reciprocity to the Europeans. This naiveté marked these villagers as still on the edge of change and left them sufficiently open that they would reveal their real lives to the passing tourist.

We were told of another encounter by two members of a group that, before joining the *Melanesian Explorer*, had visited the home of "the daughter of a chief" in the Highlands of New Guinea.⁵ She had been married to an Australian but had divorced him to return to her home territory and marry a Papua New Guinean. Now living on the outskirts of her natal village in a nice house, she had her own car in which she drove her children to school. Although well educated, having been trained as a teacher, she was not using her skills to help her people progress. The first tourist to tell us this story was incensed by the young woman's selfishness in not helping her people advance to her level of development. A different evaluation of this woman came from another tourist who was impressed by the attractiveness of her home, the clarity and precision of her English and the beauty of her mixed-race children. Both of our commentators agreed, though, that the sophistication of this woman relative to other Papua New Guineans must be the product of her special position as the daughter of a "chief" and as the former wife of an Australian. Although others would, and indeed should, follow in her path, she was in her cultivation still very unusual.

Another tourist we met, a physicist, saw himself as a catalyst for change. He had been impressed by the accuracy of what he regarded as the largely intuitive knowledge of physical principles possessed by Papua New Guineans. He commented to us with excitement and admiration that villagers had been able to modify their traditional canoes to accommodate the additional weight

and speed provided by outboard motors in a way that duplicated the configuration of a Western-designed speedboat. He was impressed by certain projections internal to slit-gong drums, which, he said, served to amplify the sound in the same way as did the bridge of a violin. However, his dismay was apparent when he encountered some bamboo scaffolding surrounding a haus tambaran under reconstruction. This scaffolding did not employ triangular bracing. Speaking in English and describing the success of the Chinese in Hong Kong with high-rise bamboo scaffolding, he gestured toward the haus tambaran in an effort to convince a passing youth that this scaffold would have been easier to construct and safer to use if diagonal supports had been employed. He believed with obvious sincerity that he could significantly help Papua New Guineans in their further development by conveying to them an important principle of construction that they had not yet discovered for themselves.⁶

Of all the villages he and the other tourists on the cruise visited, Korogo was their favorite. They said that it was the first village they had seen in which the houses were ordered. By this they meant that the houses were laid out in a geometric lattice with a wide central avenue. There were also plantings of ornamental shrubs around a number of the houses. These the tourists referred to, only partly in jest, as "formal gardens." Many were particularly impressed by a house whose roof was under construction. Three-foot sections of sago-leaf thatch were stacked neatly in piles along the length of the house and adjacent to each section of roof. The concern with efficiency that this planning seemed to demonstrate was interpreted as indicating the advent of a "division of labor," a specialization of skills and work. In Korogo, the tourists thought that they had discovered a progressive community about to replicate Western patterns of development—a community on the edge of modernity.

The motives of the older and professionally successful tourists in coming to the Sepik were quite different from those of the young travelers who, as we have already noted, wished to engage with the "primitive" as a means of personal development. The tourists on the *Melanesian Explorer* wished to engage with the "primitive" partly to demonstrate that personal development had already successfully taken place. Whereas travelers wished for the "primitive" to remain frozen in time, tourists had a much more positive attitude toward change. Although many of our conversations with travelers continued the extent to which Papua New Guinea had changed and was thereby spoiled, many of our conversations with the tourists focused on the obstacles that had to be overcome before change was possible. Tourists asked us whether college-educated Papua New Guineans would be able to reject beliefs in sorcery, and to persuade others to reject these beliefs. They urged us to persuade the Chambri to give up the "barbaric" practice of scarification during ceremonies of male initiation. They speculated about the marvelous transformations that could be made in Papua New Guinea, a country rich in natural resources, by people of vision and enterprise (such as the Israelis).

The view that Papua New Guinea should eventually develop was consistent with the interest of these tourists in validating the system in which

they, as prosperous professionals, had achieved success. However, the tourists in addition wanted to be assured that they had come before this rapid transformation of the "primitive" world was complete: they viewed the "primitive" as an increasingly rare prize to be witnessed and captured before it was too late. But since they wanted to be among the last to do this, they also wanted assurance that they had come in time. They wished to use their money to enjoy life and see the out-of-the-way portions of the world, and they wanted assurance that this world was still worth seeing.

The competition of most interest to these tourists was not with the other tourists who had chosen to visit the Sepik, but was with their peers at home where it would focus on efforts to display themselves as having led unusually full, interesting and successful—distinctive—lives (see Bourdieu 1984). Moreover, unlike the travelers, tourists—at least after the first sounding-out—did not find it important to compete with us as anthropologists. They did not envy our research conditions in Papua New Guinea—in a remote village without running water and plumbing—or our standard of living as academics at home. On those few occasions when we thought they were vying with us for distinction, the competition concerned the universities we were affiliated with as students and as teachers. (Thus, one tourist, after discovering that we were living at a Chambri Lake village as academic researchers rather than as missionaries, immediately volunteered how pleased she was that her daughter had just decided to attend M.I.T., an institution favored by members of her family for generations.)

It was not surprising that travelers felt antagonism toward the tourists: it was antagonism between the unformed and the well-formed and, we need add, between those who had time and energy and those who had money and experience. The older tourists were viewed by the younger travelers in what were perhaps Oedipal terms: the older tourists consumed and spoiled the "primitive" in such a way that it was difficult for those who were, in generational terms, their children to be nourished and to develop. Certainly the travelers took more notice of the tourists than the tourists did of the travelers. We did, though, hear occasional and somewhat wistful comments from the tourists about the enterprise of the youthful travelers: one anesthetist (who, perhaps significantly, had come to the Sepik as part of the affluent adventure of sailing around the world in a yacht) said that 20 years ago she and her husband would have been among those she had seen paddling along the Sepik River. An orthopedic surgeon and his wife, likewise, said that, if they didn't have the money to travel in comfort, they wouldn't, at their age, want to travel at all.

On Anthropologists

Many of these data would seem to substantiate Crick's case. Indeed, we recognized from our interaction with both varieties of tourists that we were motivated in some of the same ways as they. We readily understood the

terms of comparison between us and the travelers concerning relative authenticity of experience and between us and the *Melanesian Explorer* tourists concerning relative professional status, earning capacity, and taste. And, of course, the outcome of these comparisons—more favorable in the first than in the second instance—was not a matter of indifference to us. Such could be expected. All of us were products of the same sociocultural system; all of us, despite differences in age, possessed largely comparable views of person, of self.

Yet, tourists (of both sorts) have little impetus or competence to go beyond self-reference: the significance of the other is largely in what it does for oneself. Although anthropologists may share some of the personal objectives that have led tourists to Papua New Guinea, the comparative data we have collected since the nineteenth century make us reject the epistemology on which the tourists rest their politics. Tourists are essentially unilinear evolutionists who find the world filled with chiefs and witch doctors, and their self-referential tales are based on—indeed require—partial, simplified, and often completely erroneous information. However ultimately incomplete the understanding anthropologists have of the other, we are, to judge by our Papua New Guinea experience, incomparably better informed.

We can use our superior understanding (and we really must emphasize that no tourist seriously attempts to understand a Papua New Guinea kinship, exchange, or cosmological system) to convey what the world looks like to the natives and how our world affects theirs. We can document and explicate moments of resistance, capitulation, confusion, and indifference. We can place their lives and ours in sociohistorical, cultural, and systemic context. Thus, if we cannot easily differentiate our personal motivation from that of tourists, we can differentiate our politics from theirs. What can distinguish anthropologists from tourists is that we can and must be political in terms, not self-referential and individualistic, but comparative and systemic.

Let us illustrate this argument that anthropologists do have something of distinctive importance to say by describing, as a modest example, an event in which anthropologists, tourists, and Chambri took part. As will be apparent, each had very different perceptions to report.

The Hazing

It was already mid-afternoon and the feast that Maliwan had arranged as part of the ritual to take place on the sixth day after his sons had received their initiation cuts had been over for some time. Everyone was waiting for the next ritual event. Maliwan was circulating inside the men's house, assuring an increasingly impatient audience of initiators that the tourists would be arriving soon. He was hoping to attract many tourists to Chambri during what would be a month-long course of events focused on the initiation. Indeed, he was counting on charging them admission fees of P(K)10.00 per person or

PGK50.00 per group to defray a significant portion of his costs, expected to exceed PGK1,000.00.

Early in the initiation he had been disconcerted when a group of tourists from the Karawari Lodge (a luxury hotel set on one of the Sepik's tributaries) refused to pay. When their European guide translated Maliwan's policy to them, one exclaimed with tones of outrage, "Ten Kinal! What a rip-off!" and the rest—clearly hot and tired—grumbled their agreement. When they left, claiming to have looked only at the artifacts in the men's house and not at the initiates, their guide had pressed PGK3.00 into Maliwan's hand. Maliwan was furious: he told us and other Chambri that he had been doing this tourist work a long time and was not to be tricked by a young man who gave him PGK3.00 rather than the amount he had set. He said that the tourists and the guide think they can treat those of us in Papua New Guinea as if we were of no importance. They spend lots of money to come here and take pictures that they will sell for large amounts of money. He simply did not believe them—staying as they were at the Karawari Lodge—when they claimed they could not afford to pay the PGK10.00 admission. If they don't want to pay, they can simply leave.

This unpleasantness was an exception: Maliwan usually had satisfactory encounters with tourists. Over the years, he had been especially careful to cultivate a good relationship with the owner and the guides of the *Melanesian Explorer*. And he had persuaded them to bring their tourists regularly to Chambri, where they could enter a traditional men's house (which Maliwan managed) and purchase artifacts. (Few of the 443 adults living at Chambri during the period of our most recent research were able or willing to subsist without money, and most saw tourism as the key to their postindependence economic viability. Although some money came into Chambri through the sale of produce, including crocodile skins, and in the form of remittances sent by relatives working in urban centers, most of the money acquired in the course of a year by men living at Chambri was derived from the sale of artifacts: the total from sales of artifacts comes to approximately PGK10,000, according to our 1987–88 data. Extensive as this contemporary reliance on money had come to be, the acquisition of money was, nonetheless, regarded as requiring the exercise of ancestral knowledge to "pull" tourists to Chambri and to impel them to purchase artifacts. Hence, the presence of tourists at Chambri was interpreted not as testimony to the transformation of Chambri tradition but to its persistence and strength.) In the present instance, Maliwan had even arranged with the *Melanesian Explorer* guide, who had guaranteed admission payment, to coordinate the major events of the initiation with the schedule of the ship. As a consequence, the ceremonies of the sixth day were to take place on the seventh, which meant that he had to convince members of the appropriate initiatory moiety to delay their hazing of the initiates for a day. Thus, as he circulated after the feast, he was anxious to reassure the other Chambri men that the delay had been justified, that the tourists were coming. But they were nowhere to be seen and clearly Maliwan was nervous.

Finally, to his evident relief the sounds of the two big speedboats that convey the tourists from the Sepik River anchorage of the *Melanesian Explorer* up the tributary to Chambri were heard.

Once the twenty-five or so tourists arrived in the men's house, many began to take pictures of the initiates who had been posed to show their partially healed cuts. Then the initiates, together with uninitiated clan brothers some older and younger than they—were instructed to sit down in the middle of the men's house floor. As the tourists crowded around them, Maliwan asked us to advise the tourists that there was going to be a loud noise above them from the second story of the men's house. He did not want the tourists to be alarmed by the noise that would mark the awaking of Kwolimopan, the ancestral crocodile who had previously "eaten" the backs of the initiates.

As the four hazers approached the seated initiates, Maliwan instructed them to talk not in Chambri but in Pidgin English, which it was assumed the tourists could understand. Their performance, which consistently amused the Chambri audience and, periodically, even the initiates themselves, began when they offered fish and sago to the initiates but then pulled the food away and themselves ate portions. Next, they offered the initiates fish bones, fruit stalks, and other inedible scraps from a platter while shouting: "You don't know how to eat; you eat just like pigs, just like ducks; you don't have any shame."

While the initiates glumly contemplated their "food," there came the thundering from above as men jumped up and down on the floor of the second story, shaking loose a great cloud of dust. No sooner had the dust begun to settle, than water was poured through the floor, soaking the initiates and their platter of refuse, turning the dust covering the food into mud. The hazers walked among the initiates shouting "hurry up, hurry up" as they insisted that some of the water-soaked rubbish be consumed. (In fact, Kwolimopan's bull-roarer had been kept in this water and the water had thereby become filled with his power.)

Betel nuts were next offered the initiates and then taken away with the words, "You eat betel nut as if you were a woman, as if you were your little sister." Oversized spatulas covered with ashes instead of the lime normally consumed with betel nuts were shoved into their mouths. Burning banana leaf cigars—an inch in diameter and a foot long—were stuffed into their mouths and then pulled away, showering them with sparks, while the hazers harangued them: "You want to smokc; here, smokc! Your papa is giving this to you; smokc this big one, you rubbishman. You beg for cigarettes and betel nuts all the time, well here they are; take them; are you enough for them?"

Then a large female carving was brought out and was thrust on top of the initiates with the challenge: "Are you enough to make carvings and place them in the men's house for the tourists to buy?" Large pieces of firewood, including one with embers, were pushed down on them as they were asked: "Are you enough to bring firewood to the men's house?" A broom and a large bark dustpan were pushed down on the their faces with the words: "Are you

enough to sweep out the men's house?" Several grass-cutting knives were pressed against them with the question: "Are you enough to cut the grass around the men's house?" Finally, the initiates were asked derisively if they had more than the understanding of their mothers—if they were enough to sire children.

All of these questions were meant to convey that the initiates should uphold Chambri custom. Chambri custom, especially as it concerned appropriate adult male roles within the men's house, was presented in a quite literal way as heavy, as not to be taken lightly. Such custom based on collective authority, an authority embodied by the four hazers, could be made to cover virtually all aspects of life. Thus, reference was made to a rule that men are not supposed to smoke or chew betel nuts until they have been scarified. Although this rule is normally ignored nowadays, it was presented as one that could be made binding if the assembled men chose to make it so.

This assertion of collective male power had lasted about twenty minutes when one of the hazers said in Pidgin: "The law is finished now; we will stand up and the tourists will take pictures of us." Then all four of the hazers moved behind the initiates and stood in a row, facing the tourists, who were then instructed: "Clap your hands. The rule of Kwolimopan is over; it's finished now; we have completed it. OK, you can take pictures of us now. Clap your hands." The tour guide informed the tourists in English that they should applaud and had been invited to take pictures.

The tourists did applaud, and most took a picture or two—although with some reluctance. They seemed somewhat annoyed and confused at this point. The hazers had suddenly defined the performance as staged, at least in part, for tourists rather than for the Chambri themselves and this called into question its authenticity. Moreover, by instructing the tourists to applaud and to take pictures of them, the hazers were extending to the tourists the same kind of control that they had exercised over the initiates: just as the initiates were not allowed to express their own autonomy with respect to activities that are usually defined as matters of individual volition—to smoke or chew betel nut—so too the tourists were commanded to express appreciation and interest. This occasion threatened to become for the tourists not simply a performance, but a performance out of control.

A fair number of tourists had left before this point in the performance and were outside photographing the Chambri women who were singing "take it, take it, listen, listen"—songs that enjoined the initiates to do as they were being told. It was very hot inside the men's house; with the shaking of the floor, it was very dirty—the tourists were anxious about their camera lenses after the dust had poured down. They seemed to find the hazing too violent, too aggressive, too prolonged; one woman looked askance at the cut that had opened on the initiate's arm when he had been pushed down by a burning piece of firewood.

By the end of the performance, those still remaining in the audience felt vulnerable, uncertain of their safety. Not only had the performance been vio-

lent, but they were no longer sure what the objectives and boundaries of the performance were. However, they were somewhat reassured when one of their number, an impressively large German man, asserted control by over-complying with the hazers' command to take pictures of them. He waded through the seated initiates, very much as the hazers had done, and took a series of extreme close-ups of each hazer's face.

The picture-taking concluded, Maliwan sent the initiates outside into an enclosure attached to the men's house. He was eager to clear the men's house so that the tourists could look at and purchase the carvings. Out in the enclosure, the hazers shook hands and talked with the initiates, some of whom were angry at the treatment they had received. One, for instance, was upset because several of his cuts had opened during the turmoil of the performance. He had enlisted the help of another initiate in cleaning up the blood so as not to further disturb the cut. Looking at them, a passing hazer said—in combined reassurance and disdain—that it was nothing to be worried about.

In this initiation, and in others we have seen with no tourists present, the initiates were made to appear not only ridiculous but impotent. Their escape was precluded; participants were forced to do as they were instructed yet nothing they could do was right. They were, in other words, placed in a multiplicity of double binds, a circumstance well designed to convey complete powerlessness—a powerlessness itself compounded in that they were unable to perform even the normal routines of life.

The hazing, however, was as well a means of conveying power to initiates. In particular, it was by having dirt and the water of Kwolimopan dumped on them and the garbage just served, and then being required to eat of that soggy garbage that the initiates incorporated into themselves important aspects of power—the power of Kwolimopan. As a result of this, they were released from most of the initiatory taboos—for instance, they might once more eat and scratch themselves in a normal manner, rather than with the use of tongs. In this Chambri version of what is a familiar theme of initiation throughout the world, the experience of powerlessness would seem to be an important step in the acquisition of adult status.

What was the effect of the presence of an audience of tourists both men and women—on this ritual? Hazing, as we have described it, would be most effective when it completely precluded any escape on the part of the initiates. It seemed to us, though, that the presence of the tourists, by introducing another sort of audience, gave the initiates a partial escape from their double binds. Because the initiators were to some extent playing for another audience, the hazing was no longer a closed Chambri show.

Significantly, the hazers in this initiation were clearly trying to be funny, and that even the initiates frequently laughed. Certainly, based on our own and Chambri recollections of other initiations, hazing as an occasion for the display of virtually absolute power with respect to the initiates was not normally experienced or remembered by the initiates as funny. Moreover, on this occasion, there was a concern that the tourists might become fright-

ened—they were warned, for instance, about the great thump that was to take place over their heads. Also, there is no doubt that the incorporation of the tourists into the proceedings made the hazing shorter—time had to be allowed for them to purchase artifacts. (As we have seen, the tourists thought even the modified performance was too frightening and lengthy.)

In addition, the distinction that the ritual of hazing imposed between those having and not having power—between those who could exercise adult volition and those who could not—and between those inside the men's house and those outside—between men and women—became somewhat blurred by the presence of the tourists, by the presence of these wealthy men and women from outside the Chambri system.

Thus, not only did the presence of the tourists dilute the display of absolute power and diminish the clarity of the distinctions that were made in terms of the social and spatial distribution of power, but their presence also reduced the duration and intensity of the hazing. The consequence, we think, of this partial leavening of ridicule was the emergence of comic elements.⁷

Although the initiates was not characterized by a complete amiability, were placed, they were, nonetheless, rendered substantially powerless. And if the presence of tourists had partially deflected the force of the display from the initiates, the tourists themselves became partial targets. They were transformed from spectator to performer and a portion of their volition (and distance) stripped from them, as they were commanded to applaud: they were required to assent, whether they had liked it or not, to a performance in which as the final act they too became victims.

Such a display of control over the tourists in an initiation staged in part as a tourist attraction would have especially appealed to Chambri. Certainly it would offset the vulnerability that Chambri might feel now that they were offering for sale not only artifacts but major cultural events such as the initiation itself.

Whether or not the Chambri were conscious of the sources of their satisfaction at turning the tables on the tourists, we do not believe they realized they were changing important elements of the initiation as it affected the initiates. To be sure, the world that these initiates were entering—a world in which adult capacities could now be measured through such activities as selling artifacts to tourists—was continually changing with respect to patterns of authority and valuation of Chambri custom. Yet, it seems to us that many of these changes had come about as the culmination of events like the initiation just described. An event of this sort had effects that, because they were unintended and unforeseen, were likely for some time to be unperceived. Understanding of what was in the process of happening was likely to be inhibited if there were no recognition that anything had happened. In particular, the Chambri did not understand that if they continued to sell their initiations (and perhaps other ceremonies) as tourist attractions, they would themselves no longer find them convincing and effective.

The tourists (including the travelers) were more aware than the Chambri that the tourist trade was an important component in change. They lacked, however, sufficient knowledge of both cultural particulars and cross-cultural patterns to understand in any sort of detail either the effect or the process of change. As far as we could observe, they understood practically nothing about the Chambri not, significantly, did more than a very few want to learn from us anything except the most readily assimilated facts about the initiation or other aspects of Chambri life. Apart from knowing that the scars in some way marked manhood and that Maliwan was staging the initiation for his sons, the ceremony was, and remained, virtually opaque to them. They were, in most cases, uninterested in our simplified explanations of even the most noticeable events as the drenching of the novices and their "food" with Kwolimopan's water. But what is the importance of our having reported on this hazing? We have provided the most complete and accurate inscription this moment will probably ever have. The understanding of these moments in their contexts has political consequences because it enables us to talk knowledgeably about such intersecting matters as the nature of the world political economy, the reasons that tourists come to Papua New Guinea, and the effects on and the response of the Chambri—including their capacity to resist, adapt, transform. (Ortner 1984 and Fernandez 1985 make a similar point.) For anthropologists to work toward reaching *and* conveying an understanding of such matters (even when specific events have a ludic form) strikes us as serious, but not as value-free, business.

Anthropology in a Small Place

In a recent novel, *A Small Place*, Jamaica Kincaid writes a powerful critique of tourism and tourist economies. She does this by caustically (certainly nonludically) describing the postmodern malaise—the fragmentation of experience and relationships—that leads Europeans to visit places like Antigua.

From day to day, as you walk down a busy street in the large and modern and prosperous city in which you work and live, dismayed, puzzled . . . at how alone you feel in this crowd, how awful it is to go unnoticed, how awful it is to go unloved, even as you are surrounded by more people than you could possibly get to know in a lifetime that lasted for millennia . . . I mean, your dismay and puzzlement are natural to you, because people like you just seem to be like that . . . But one day, when you are sitting somewhere, alone in that crowd, and that awful feeling of displacement comes over you, and really, as an ordinary person you are not well equipped to look too far inward and set yourself aright, because being ordinary is already so taxing, and being ordinary takes all you have out of you, and though the words "I must get away" do not actually pass across your lips, you make a leap from being that nice blob just sitting like a boob in your amniotic sac of the modern experience to being a person vis-

iting heaps and death and ruin and feeling alive and inspired at the sight of it . . . to being a person marveling at the harmony (ordinarily, what you would say is the backwardness) and the union of these other people (and they are other people) have with nature. (Kincaid 1988:15-16)

Kincaid does not specifically discuss anthropologists as among those who are, in the words of another analyst of sightseeing in the postmodern world, "striving for a transcendence of the modern totality, a way of attempting to overcome the discontinuity of modernity, of incorporating its fragments into unified experience" (MacCannell 1976:13). Presumably, she would agree with Crick and others who have noted that Western anthropologists are products of the world economy and subject to the same influences as the (Western) tourists. However, in her view, it would be the postmodern nature of this experience that would make anthropologists similar to tourists and, like them, pernicious influences and miscomprehending presences in places like Antigua. As she objects to the tourists reading Antiguan lives as the harmonious opposite of their own, she would, we think, object to anthropologists reading those lives as the fragmented equivalent of their own. Antiguan, in her presentation, are not postmodern: they are angry and oppressed. Moreover, in Jamaica Kincaid, they have a powerful indigenous voice that is able to combine intimate knowledge of Antiguan sociocultural particulars with that of world systems.

Under circumstances as these, it seems to us, if anthropologists are going to have anything of importance to say about these small places, we need to move, not in the direction of indulging our own postmodern sensibilities of, as Crick puts it, "anything goes" (1985:86) but of developing an anthropology of non-post-modern people: we need to develop an anthropology that has a voice as politically informed as that of Jamaica Kincaid. If she had explicitly extended her critique to encompass anthropologists, it would not have been to tell us to be more ludic, more poststructuralist, more self-involved. Whatever our own feelings of malaise, of rulelessness, of anything goes, we should not indulge them at the expense of the world, particularly as we work in places (like Chambri) where such a voice as hers has not yet emerged to correct and perhaps supersede our own.⁸

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Notes

- ¹ To be sure, many anthropologists (including ourselves) have been influenced by similar expectations and assumptions. Indeed, anthropologists often minimize references to tourism, missionization, and other indications of "development" in their ethnographic accounts: these, it is thought, make "their" people and, by extension, themselves less distinctive and, hence, less valuable. Such elisions could, however, be regarded as obscuring the nature of the world system.
- ² Missionaries as well are regarded as a source of corruption but of quite a different sort.
- ³ The owners of the *Melanesian Explorer* plan to replace their present ship with a far more luxurious one, equipped, for instance, with phones in each cabin that allow direct dialing worldwide.
- ⁴ In fact, considerable sums of money, sufficient to buy large trucks, can be raised in this way.
- ⁵ Perhaps basing their view of "primitives" on their stereotypes of Native Americans, many tourists, even when we attempted to explain the achieved leadership of big men, refused to change their views that Papua New Guinea social organization focused on chiefs.
- ⁶ Although not used on this scaffolding, triangular bracing is common and was, for instance, employed on a small bridge we had crossed earlier that morning.
- ⁷ In this analysis, the emergence of the ludic was something of an accident: it had not been the Chambri intention to allow the initiates respite from their double binds.
- ⁸ The construction of ethnographies on the basis of dialogues might appear to be an anthropological responsibility under these circumstances prior to the emergence of an indigenous voice strong enough to command outside attention (Clifford 1986). However, we have argued that one of the difficulties in constructing such ethnographies is that, at least in the Sepik and in much of Melanesia, people wish the anthropologist to present not a dialogue a plurality of voices—but a monologue, an inscription of a particular partisan view (Errington and Gewertz 1987). Although the voice of a Chambri comparable to Jamaica Kincaid might also promulgate a particular set of local interests, the politics expressed would under these circumstances be his or her responsibility, not ours.

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