In *Globalization and Culture Change in the Pacific Islands*. 2004. V. Lockwood, ed. pp. 339-57. Prentice-Hall.

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Cannibalizing, Commodifying, or Creating Culture? Power and Art in Sepik River Tourism

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Over the past few decades, perhaps no area of the Pacific has proven to be as alluring to tourists and travelers as the Sepik River of Papua New Guinea. And with good reason: the Sepik is associated with the legendary research of Margaret Mead, tales of cannibalism and headhunting, towering spirit houses with mysterious visages, exotic art, dramatic rituals, dangerous crocodiles, and, of course, glimpses of the waning Primitive. The unique mystique of the Sepik has an enduring position in the romantic imagination of the West. Why not visit?

Well, one reason not to do so is the common assertion that tourism inevitably, and solely, erodes the authenticity, autonomy, creativity, and power of local people. MacCannell (1992:27) speaks to a widespread scholarly and popular opinion when he claims that "relations between tourists and recent ex-primitives are framed in a somewhat forced, stereotypical commercial exploitation model characterized by bad faith and petty suspicion on both sides." This view allows local people only one significant pursuit in the touristic encounter: money. In all other respects, tourism is apparently meaningless.

In this chapter, I challenge this view by focusing on the touristic encounter in the Eastern Iatmul village of Tambunum, a middle Sepik River community in Papua New Guinea that is a popular tourist destination. My foil is the widely seen film *Cannibal Tours,* which, as I detail, portrays tourism as a process that only disempowers local people and erodes from their lives all genuine, meaningful dimensions of their culture.[1] In my view, however, tourism is often a context in which local Pacific people exercise subtle forms of power and resistance, and artistically express novel and hybrid concepts of personal, ethnic, national, and transnational "modern" identities.

CANNIBAL TOURS

No more persuasive evidence exists of the detrimental effects of tourism, and the arrogant buffoonery of Western visitors, than the 1987 film by Dennis O'Rourke, *Cannibal Tours*. The film follows a group of affluent yet astonishingly naive American and European tourists as they travel along the Sepik River aboard the *Melanesian Explorer* cruise ship. We see these intrusive visitors sunning themselves in bikinis aboard the ship, zipping along the river in small speed boats, and wandering through several Sepik communities. They incessantly snap photos of local people, hand out cigarettes and perfume as though they were rare treasures, offer embarrassingly foolish comments, applaud staged dances by the natives, purchase handicrafts, and comport themselves with such an awkwardly arrogant insouciance that the viewer can only squirm.

Interspersed throughout this voyage are comments by specific tourists, on whom the camera focuses. A trio of Italians muse about the differences between the Primitive and the Modern. Do the local people live in harmony with nature? Are they satisfied with their lives? Must the West, like missionaries, teach these people a modern lifestyle? An American woman bemoans the loss of authentic primitive art due to, of all things, tourism! A German man is obsessed with cannibalism. The tourists, we might say, are intent on validating themselves and Western Civilization as exalted or bereft through comparison with stereotypical notions of primitive people. Either we have much to teach them, or much to learn.

Local people, when they are not immobilized by the tourists' camera lenses, also speak—but to rather different issues. A man bemoans the loss of sacred objects and, somewhat abashed, recalls the naivete of his grandparents who looked upon the first Europeans to sail the Sepik as ancestral ghosts. An angry woman shouts about her lack of money and the miserliness of tourists. Young boys sing a missionary song. Elder men complain that white visitors buy so few handicrafts and snap photos without paying. Generally, local people in the film are baffled by the entire touristic enterprise. Why do these white people travel here? Where do they get their money? Indeed, the "primitive" people in the film are eminently concerned with practical matters and money while, ironically, the Westerners are captivated by fanciful notions about the world. In sum, the film portrays the clash between Western desire for an authentic primitive and local anguish at the lack of modernization and money. We empathize with the plight of local people who are now forced to prostitute their culture in order to earn a few dollars, and we are embarrassed at the tourists, and hence at ourselves whom they represent, for so shamelessly buying into it.

Cannibal Tours may be the most successful depiction of the contemporary Pacific for popular audiences. It was enthusiastically reviewed in *The New York Times* (August 23, 1989) and *The Nation* (September 4/11, 1988) and played at the 1988 Margaret Mead Film Festival and the 14th Annual Seattle Film Festival. Scholars, too, have discussed the film (for example, Cohen 1988; Bruner 1989, 1991; Errington and Gewertz 1989a; MacCannell 1990, 1992; Coiffier 1991; Young 1992). *Cannibal Tours* is shown in introductory anthropology classes as well as courses on the Pacific Islands, visual anthropology, colonialism and postcolonialism, tourism, culture change, the politics of tradition and ethnicity, and recreation management. That one can purchase online term papers about the film attests to its importance in the undergraduate curriculum.

The film, we will see, was made to be a moral allegory about late twentieth-century Western traveling. In this respect, *Cannibal Tours* makes no pretense to ethnographic veracity. Still, most viewers, in my experience, especially students, assume that the film portrays with *some* accuracy the contemporary lives of Sepik River dwellers whom tourists now visit. Perhaps the most telling moment in the film occurs when an elderly village man states equivocally that "we are living between two worlds." But the film ultimately says little about this man's liminal identity. Indeed, *Cannibal Tours,* like many scholarly discussions

about the film, does as much to erase or deny the empowerment of local people as the tourists that it so earnestly reproaches! To be sure, many facets of tourism are unsavory and humiliating. But is this all tourism has to offer? Unfortunately, most people are unable to answer this question, at least for the Pacific, since most studies of tourism essentialize the West and the Rest. The pure primitivism of local people, be it of the Hobbesian or Rousseauistic variety, is invariably corrupted by the vapidity of Western culture and overwhelmed by the onslaught of capitalism. In this simplistic framework, tourism is a process that exclusively erodes cultural authenticity. By thus foregrounding passive submission to Western hegemony, we are unable to apprehend moments of genuine cultural creativity, and thus incapable of understanding the complexity of "living between two worlds" in the contemporary, village-based Pacific.

MODERNIST ANGST

The tourists in *Cannibal Tours* voyage to Papua New Guinea in order to recapture the lost qualities of a raw, primal humanity—unfettered sensuality, aggression, artistry, beauty, and so forth. The narrative structure or diagesis of the film, as summarized by O'Rourke himself in an interview with Lutkehaus, concerns two quests worthy of Joseph Conrad:

> The first and obvious one is rich and bourgeois tourists on a journey into their own packaged version of the "heart of darkness" into the interior, up the mysterious Sepik River. The second journey (the real text of the film), is a metaphysical one. It is an attempt to discover the place of "the Other" in the popular imagination. It affords a glimpse at the "real" (mostly unconsidered or misunderstood) reasons why "civilized" people wish to encounter the "primitive." The situation is that shifting terminus of civilization, where modern mass culture grates and pushes against those original, essential aspects of humanity; and where much of what passes for "values" in Western culture is exposed in stark relief as banal and fake. (Lutkehaus 1989:427–428)

According to O'Rourke, tourists are awash with the existential angst of modernity that arises from displacement, alienation, unfulfilled dreams of progress, and "the failure of Christianity. . . . We've had two world wars, the nuclear bomb, and the holocaust" (O'Rourke, cited in Lutkehaus 1989:428). Thus they—we, actually—look to primitive people for something Real, Truthful, and Primal. But when tourists arrive in the Sepik, alas, the primitive they desire has disappeared beneath the sheer power, and the mechanized brawn, of "modern mass culture."

If O'Rourke traces the origins of "cannibal tourism" to the postmodern condition of "loss," the noted theorist of tourism and cultural studies, Dean MacCannell,[2] embraces a psychodynamic explanation:

> modern civilization was built on the graves of our savage ancestors, and repression of the pleasure they took from one another, from the animals and the earth. I suspect our collective guilt and denial of responsibility for the destruction of savagery and pleasure can be found infused in every distinctly modern cultural form. (MacCannell 1992:25; see also MacCannell 1990)

Yet, in the Sepik at least, tourism affords Westerners no expiation for the sins of modernity. Local people, claims MacCannell (1992:26) after viewing *Cannibal Tours,* are acculturated exprimitives or, worse, performative primitives. True, they continue to dance and sing. But these touristic parades are inauthentic since they mirror European desire for Otherness (see also Bruner 1991:244). Indeed, *Cannibal Tours* implies that the only authentic rituals in the Sepik today are those of the tourists themselves! *They* are the real savages. By contrast, villagers champion the bourgeois logic of rational utilitarianism. They seem so, well . . . , *Western.* Yet these Papua New Guineans are pragmatic, implies the film and MacConnell, only because their authentic culture has been steadily ravaged by colonialism, missionaries, capitalism, and, now, tourism.[3]

Cannibal Tours and MacCannell (1992) laudably critique (neo) colonialism and primitivist ideologies that continue to dehumanize

"tribal" peoples. It is not this moral vision that I contest. But the film and many discussions of tourism reproduce an equally Eurocentric ideology by portraying the inhabitants of the Sepik River as irreducibly passive and disempowered—as children, to be honest. True, as O'Rourke intimates in the lengthy quotation which I discussed above, the intent of the film is not to present Sepik people in the full actuality of their current lives. His goal is to comment on the West. But O'Rourke's allegorical tale can only be sustained by depicting contemporary Sepik people in a particular way: a primitive people who have "fallen from grace." Moreover, one can assume that O'Rourke believed that he was, at some level, presenting an accurate portrayal of the contemporary Sepik lest his own film be as "mythic" as the touristic imagination he mocks. If, by contrast, local people are in some sense deriving "authentic" meaning from tourism, then the narrative collapses.

All too frequently, as evidenced by *Cannibal Tours,* critical reflections on tourism unwittingly write over indigenous meanings and concepts, much like the tourists who are so commonly denounced. Indeed, the touristic myth of primitivism is matched by the scholarly myth that tourism is structured solely by economic asymmetry. While the tourists of *Cannibal Tours* foolishly characterize Sepik art in terms of "baroque" curves and Modigliani, MacCannell (1992:25–30) calls Iatmul flute music a "concerto" and likens local people to Donald Trump! (He also repeatedly refers to the inhabitants of the region as Papuans, which in all respects is wrong.) MacCannell even suggests that the allure of the Sepik for tourists (and anthropologists) arises from a denial of our "violent, homoerotic, and cannibalistic impulses," and a "displaced anal sadism which is a strong, albeit necessarily denied, component of western culture and consciousness. A side benefit of New Guinea ethnography is free psychoanalysis" (MacCannell 1992:36–37). This may be true. To some extent, I concur. But it tells us *nothing* about the local experience of tourism. It is valid, of course, to discuss tourism in terms of Western woes, as per *Cannibal Tours.* My objection begins only when the focus on those woes denies local people their cultural authenticity, creativity, agency, and meaning.

THE TOURISTS: NEOCOLONIALISM, AND ROMANTICISM

Cannibal Tours opens with a statement of biblical force (see Exodus 2:22), literally written in black and white: "There is nothing so strange, in a strange land, as the stranger who comes to visit it." The first scene consists of a deep panning shot of the ocean and coastal jungle. We hear Mozart, the spinning of a shortwave radio dial, and the mention of Henry Kissinger in a BBC news report. The message is clear: Even here, in the seemingly pristine Sepik, we can sense the inexorable penetration of Western power.[4]

Dichotomies recur throughout *Cannibal Tours.* Dugout canoes silently glide before the chugging tourist ship. Passive local children pose for aggressive European adults. And the symphonic melodies of European "High Art" or Mozart overpower the bamboo flute tones of "Primitive Art." Yet the sonorous presence of Mozart in *Cannibal Tours*—a German musician, after all—alludes not only to European gentility and genius, but to something more ominous and tragic in recent European history. Indeed, the frequent splicing into the film of black and white photographs from the 1884–1914 German protectorate of New Guinea implies that tourism is a form of colonialism, with all of its violence and domination. The old photographs of "authentic" natives in the film are accompanied by the melancholy tones of bamboo flutes. But the sounds of Mozart always frame the daguerreotypes of colonialism *and* the contemporary scenes of tourists zipping along the river in speedboats. Veiled allusions to the Holocaust and explicit references to colonialism make for a powerful moral statement. But it is flawed, inappropriate, and ultimately ethnocentric precisely because Western moral concerns are allowed to eclipse local cultural assertions.

The antihero of *Cannibal Tours* is a German man obsessed with cannibalism and thus, like most tourists, captivated by dreams of the past, rather than the realities of the present.[5] (For most Sepik people, cannibalism and headhunting are bygone practices, rarely discussed unless prompted by inquisitive visitors.) With his olive-green outfit and bush hat rung with a band of tiger skin, this man is the Ur-tourist, a Great White Hunter who embodies Rosaldo's (1989) "imperialist nostalgia." In *Cannibal Tours,* this man is a fool, but a dangerous one since he evokes the memories of World War II (MacCannell 1992:26). (One of my students, in fact, drawing on the popular American TV sitcom *Hogan's Heros,* called him "Sgt. Shultz.") But in so obviously figuring a German as "a cipher for all that is evil in the West" (Dan Jorgensen, personal communication, 1995), and by omitting any glimpses of Australian visitors, *Cannibal Tours* succumbs to the level of moralistic stereotyping which, when spoken by the tourists, it scorns.

Cannibal Tours also features an Italian trio for whom the natives are "truly living with nature . . . the experts assure us they are satisfied . . . happy . . . and well-fed." Nature "provides them with . . . the necessities of life, they don't have to worry about thinking of tomorrow." (This conversation about naturally satiated primitives contrasts with a previous scene in which the German tourists chat about cholesterol and dieting while partaking of a hearty breakfast.) Utopian sentiments aside, we also hear that local people "don't really live . . . more like vegetating . . . apathy . . . indolence." They are unproductive, in other words, and thus in need of a proper moral education: "We must teach them and go into their villages," one of these tourists says, "to educate and to stimulate them to behave different."

The film tends to deny the Italian woman a voice but certainly not a presence. She coyly flirts with the camera, which shortly thereafter focuses on a bikini-clad sunbather.[6] O'Rourke (cited in Lutkehaus 1989:428–429) wants to critique the ideology of sexuality in the myths of primitivism and tourism. But the film conveys this message through a male gaze that represents female sexuality in terms of the body alone, specifically, breasts and buttocks, of which we see quite a lot in *Cannibal Tours.* Indeed, the next series of shots consists of a crocodile drifting in the water, a colorful parrot, and carved house post images of phallic-nosed spirit faces and an ancestress with prominent genitals. But the film provides no context concerning, say, local cosmology and gender. As a result, the carved images make sense only in terms of the preceding shots of natural beauty, danger, and speechless female bodies. While the roving eye of the camera repeatedly focuses on female tourists and bikinis, every Sepik woman wears a modest "meri blaus." Ironically, *Cannibal Tours* inverts the gaze of *National Geographic* (Lutz and Collins 1993:115–116) by inscribing passive sexuality onto the bodies of women who are white (or tan) and modern rather than black and native. Still, the film retains a phallocentric gaze that is reminiscent of classical primitivism (see Solomon-Godeau 1989; Rony 1996).[7] It privileges the desire of white, heterosexual men.

The "ecstatic moment" of *Cannibal Tours,* writes Lutkehaus (1989:428), is the penultimate scene, filmed in slow motion to the sounds of Mozart, lit by a Sepik sunset. On the deck of the ship, their faces painted in swirling patterns by men from Tambunum village (Bruner 1989:440), the tourists perform what O'Rourke calls a "hyper-real . . . dance of death" (cited in Lutkehaus 1989:428). They prance, twirl, grimace, and parade. A burly man has removed his shirt and assumes the stance of a boxer. MacCannell remarks, "It is so profoundly embarrassing that no one can even tell him that he is making an ass of himself. The New Guineans could not have done him better" (1992:33). True. But in the film, this dance by the tourists is the *only* genuine ceremonial display in the Sepik today. Its appalling antithesis is the earlier scene where two Iatmul boys awkwardly sing missionary songs. Furthermore, local people in *Cannibal Tours* have no interest in romanticizing their alters (K. Barlow, personal communication, 1996). This is the prerogative of moderns,

who thereby reveal themselves to be the true primitives. Whereas natives have lost their culture and desire only, as one Sepik man says, "to purchase trousers," tourists acquire primitive faces and triumphantly dance to the mythic beat of their own delusions.

Finally, the credits are interrupted by an American couple—a stereotype, it turns out, of Jewish New Yorkers—who clasp mock phallocrypts ("skin bilong kok," O'Rourke tells them), climb into a small propeller airplane, and disappear into the empyrean haze. The camera, by remaining behind on the grass airstrip, subtly positions itself in the "native's point of view." In the end, tourism reduces Sepik people to "emasculating trophies" (M. Rohatynsky, personal communication, 1996) of a successful voyage up the proverbial heart of darkness.

Cannibal Tours raises a key question that it refuses to answer: What would a critique of tourism look like that was itself not touristic? For most critics and analysts of tourism, local people are the antithesis of Westerners. In *Cannibal Tours,* tourists are driven by fantasy, sexuality, ethnocentrism, and missionary zeal. They are naive romantics, wealthy dilettantes, objects of prurient interest, insufferable excursionists, and neo-Nazis. By contrast, the exprimitives are simply pragmatic and decorous. Conrad's Kurtz said it best: "the horror, the horror."

TOURIST ART

In *Cannibal Tours,* tourism is an inauthentic experience that denies local people their agency and forces them to commodify their culture into banal dances and crass trinkets which, to add insult to injury, the tourists never buy enough of anyway. Any potential for meaningful action is muted by the relentless pursuit of money. I now want to offer a contrasting view of Sepik tourism that, much as Gewertz and Errington (1991) argue for the nearby Chambri, acknowledges local creativity.

The tourists in *Cannibal Tours* incessantly photograph local people and purchase objects. They embody the power of European acquisitiveness (Clifford 1988; Thomas 1991). This way, again, tourism is the latest stage in a long history of colonial exploitation and trauma.[8] But Sepik people *do* exercise self-conscious agency in creating their contemporary identities. Eastern Iatmul commonly deliberate the parameters of custom or *kastom,* and they frequently appeal to "culture" and "tradition" during totemic debates, village moots, and ritual preparations. Tourism, then, has not diminished local intentionality.

Nor has tourism eroded tradition through the introduction of alien practices and objects. After all, Margaret Mead (1938) noted a generation ago that Sepik societies trafficked extensively in cultural forms. The structures and categories of Iatmul villages, she recognized, were highly labile; they allowed for a discordant culture. Foreign objects, ideas, and behaviors were retained even though they were unable to be fully integrated into the local cultural system and its logic (Mead 1938:163; 1978:70). Hybridity, then, is an authentic and traditional quality of Sepik cultures. In the 1930s, European buttons were carefully pressed into the shell applique on spirit masks called *mai.* Today, young men sporting military fatigues and American T-shirts decorate these very same objects (Figure 20.1). During ritual, elder women dance in shirts that advertise "Greenwich Tennis Club" and "Disco Momma." This may offend European sensibilities about what constitutes a genuine, proper Sepik ritual. But no such difficulties, or contradictions, torment local people. Nor do these hybrid presences alter the efficacy of ritual, which may even, as in the case of the six-month long *mai* festival of 1989–1990, be staged for tourists as much as for local inhabitants of the region.

Eastern Iatmul are prolific creators of "tourist art." When tourists and art dealers arrive in Tambunum, thousands of objects may be displayed along the main village path in an informal and often playful, transnational, and polyvocal market. The shapes, colors, and styles include napkin rings and eight-foot-tall sculptures, carved animals and baskets, rattan figures, and pottery. We can, like the self-proclaimed "exponent of

Figure 20.1 A young man primes a *mai* mask while dressed in military fatigues and a T-shirt decorated with the American flag and the Statue of Liberty.

Figure 20.2 A man displays his touristic carvings. Of particular note is the center object, a multi-facial mask, and the mask at the left, which ambiguously depicts a crocodile emerging out of the mouth, or being eaten by it.

primitive art" in *Cannibal Tours,* bemoan that it would be "too bad if they . . . deviate . . . and work for tourism as such." The irony of this statement is obvious to all viewers (see also Price 1989; Errington 1994; Steiner 1994; Root 1996). But *Cannibal Tours,* rather than challenging this cliché, implies that tourist art is a meaningless source of money and frustration for local people—mere economic inequality and tawdry commodification.

In my view, tourist art in Tambunum expresses new concepts of self and ethnicity (see also Errington and Gewertz 1989b; Gewertz and Errington 1991; Silverman 1999). Carvers strive to create unique objects that reflect their identity as egocentric or autonomous individuals rather than sociocentric members of a descent group. Men combine traditionally separate motifs into new forms, and carve mythological images that were not heretofore lent a visual expression. Tourist art also expresses traditional modes of identity. Men refrain from carving the totemic beings of other descent groups, and they depict sociocentric personhood by hewing multifacial masks (Figure 20.2, center) which juxtapose a large countenance with multiple selves.

Through tourist art, moreover, Eastern Iatmul continue to import, transform, and export anew alien cultural forms. They visit the villages of other language groups and town markets in order to purchase masks, pots, and ornaments which, often after modification, they offer at a profit to tourists and dealers.

Some carvers, in the search for novel and unusual aesthetic forms, acquire formal entitlement to reproduce and sell the art styles that are characteristic of other Iatmul and non-Iatmul villages—say, by drawing on distant affinal relations (Silverman 2001a). Women, too, participate in this process. They duplicate the baskets associated with the Murik of the Sepik Estuary, and loop long-fringed "Madang style" bilums or string bags. Tourism, we might say, sustains local notions of artistic "copyright," and encourages men and women to seek ways of borrowing aesthetic styles without violating traditional notions of cultural (and intellectual) property rights.

On many tourist masks, gaping maws ambiguously devour, disgorge, excrete, and give birth to creatures such as crocodiles. In the context of tourist art, the crocodile symbolizes pan-Iatmul and pan-Sepik ethnicity rather than, as in "traditional" art, the totemic ancestors of specific descent groups (Figure 20.2, carving on the left). Men also carve variations of the national emblem of Papua New Guinea (Figure 20.3, carving on the right), often in combination with biblical and Christian slogans. These works translate the abstract and modern notions of nationhood and citizenship (see Gewertz and Errington 1991) into localized, even individualized, expressions. My point here is that tourist masks draw on traditional idioms of self and society to represent the emergence of new social and personal identities.

Eastern Iatmul also sign their tourist carvings with Christian and sometimes totemic names, thus mediating between tradition and modernity through literacy and "graphicalization" (Gewertz and Errington 1991; O'Hanlon 1995). Likewise, women weave the acronym "PS" into baskets (Figure 20.4), which signifies in the national language of Papua New Guinea, called Tok Pisin, regional identity as "Pikinini Sepik" or "Child of the Sepik." On one carving (Figure 20.5), a crocodilian symbol of Iatmul ethnicity confronts a stylized bird-of-paradise that evokes the national emblem. Both figures are encircled by tokens of literate personhood and provincial identity: names, date, the phrase "P[ikini] S[epik]

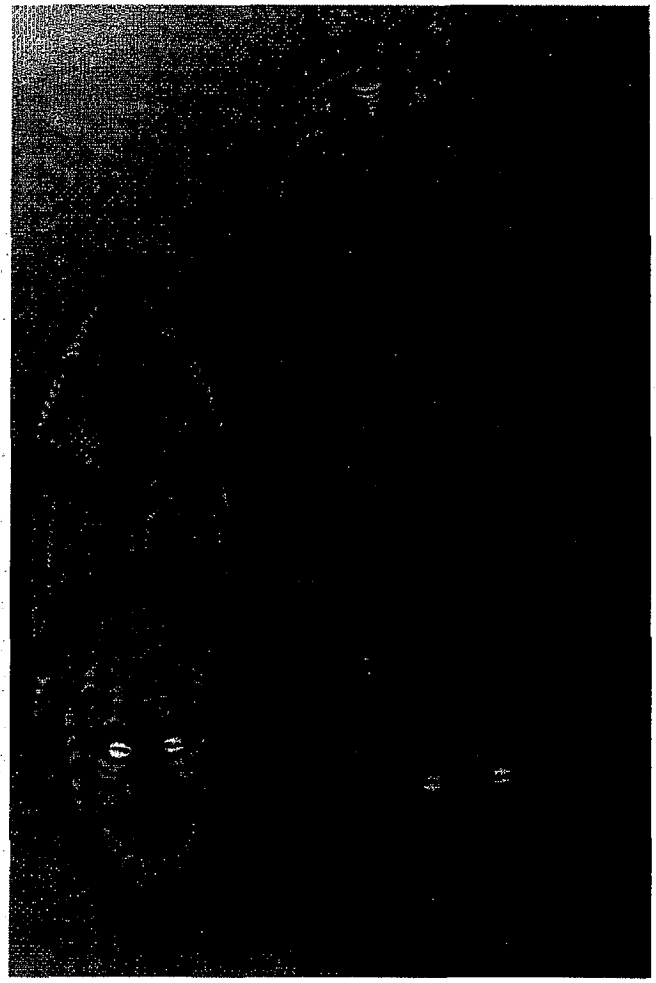

Figure 20.3 A touristic mask with a "traditional" face surmounted by the national emblem of Papua New Guinea

Country," and a reference to the Wewak Post Office. Because tourist art is a relatively recent aesthetic medium, it is particularly appropriate for expressing new concepts of ethnicity such as "Sepik," "Papua New Guinea," and even "Iatmul," a term coined by Gregory Bateson in the early 1930s.

Touristic carvers also derive artistic inspiration from Melanesian art catalogs and guidebooks. This way, at least one type of mask, forgotten since the era of German colonization, was reintegrated back into the local repertoire in the late 1980s (Silverman 1999). Of course, this development confounds any simplistic notions of cultural authenticity, and the idea that tourism erodes tradition. Here, we might say, tourism revived it! The very same year, a tourist guesthouse was

Figure 20.4 A woman named Tupwa holds a basket into which is woven the letters PS for Pikinini Seik, or "Child of the Sepik." This basket, on which are attached a few kina banknotes, was a gift to the author, who earlier presented his nephew (standing behind Tupwa) with a chicken as part of the general exchanges that occur between mothers' brothers and their sisters' children.

Figure 20.5 A stylized version of the national emblem of Papua New Guinea in which a bird-of-paradise confronts a crocodile. This naturalistic "conversation" between tradition and modernity is encircled by the carvers' names, date, and location.

constructed across the river from the main village, which precipitated a complex dispute over the ownership of the land (Silverman 2001b). The feud, however, concerned symbolic power and not money, and it reinforced rather than denounced the role of totemism in the prestige hierarchy of the village.

All told, tourism in Tambunum fosters the emergence of complex identities that blur the local and global. On tourist art, Tambunum villagers express themselves as Iatmul, regional Sepiks, egocentric and sociocentric selves, capitalists, Christians, Papua New Guineans, and Tok Pisin writers and readers. From this perspective, I turn again to *Cannibal Tours,* this time with an eye (and ear) toward moments of touristic resistance to visitors.

GHOSTLY EUROPEANS

The portrayal of modern tourism in *Cannibal Tours* conjures the popular ethnographic spectacles of the late nineteenth and early

twentieth centuries wherein "primitive" people were put on public display for curious Americans and Europeans. (For example, a Philippine village was erected at the 1904 St. Louis Exposition, featuring the so-called "Igorots"; a man from the Belgian Congo named Ota Benga was displayed at the same event, as well as the American Museum of Natural History and the Monkey House at the Bronx Zoo.) Instead of "savages in cages," though, the natives in *Cannibal Tours* are displayed in their own habitat. Moreover, they speak. Yet local people in the film talk exclusively about cultural malaise and stifling encompassment by the world system. Like many discussions of tourism, O'Rourke thus deconstructs the mythic "Savage Other" by concocting an equally fictitious image: the fallen primitive.

I now want to suggest that local utterances in the film are more complex and multilayered, or heteroglossic, than they first seem. Sepik people in *Cannibal Tours* insinuate modes of cultural authenticity and resistance that contravene the explicit narrative of the film and its commonplace vision of touristic tragedy. The first indigenous voice in the film recalls the frightened response of nineteenth-century Iatmul when they initially encountered Europeans: "the spirits of our dead have come back! . . . They went and got a new face and skin." He continues: "So now, when we see tourists, we say about them: The dead have returned." Nevertheless, "we don't seriously believe they are our dead ancestors . . . but we say it!" (in Tok Pisin, "mipela save makim tok nating").

These statements, which are common across Melanesia and the Pacific, seem to ridicule the innocence of a previous generation (see Bruner 1991:247). But in my experience, Iatmul do *not* mock their ancestors. They may reflect on the material impoverishment of the past, sigh with compassion, and feel "pity" (*miwi,* or "tarangu" in Tok Pisin)—but not shame.[9] Perhaps, then, our Iatmul interlocutor was parodying the *tourists?* After all, Westerners lack many of the moral characteristics that define adult personhood such as generosity, vernacular speech, competence in the river, and the skillful ability to paddle canoes. The association of tourists with death is a satirical reflection on what it means to be human (see Strathern 1992). It is an instance of counterdiscourse rather than self-denigration (see also Errington and Gewertz 1989b:49–51). Like ghosts, Europeans are marginal and dangerous, sometimes cooperative, often powerful.

Like ghosts, too, Europeans are white. In local conception ideology, paternal semen and maternal blood respectively congeal into the hard skeleton and soft organs. The former is the final embodiment of death, and so ghosts are said to be as white as paternal bones. Furthermore, Eastern Iatmul myth and funerary rites are populated by numinous beings who slough old skin and regenerate a new epidermis. Contrary to the narrative of *Cannibal Tours,* it is no childish gesture to call Europeans "dead ancestors." It is a complex linguistic and cultural act that conceals multiple meanings. On the one hand, it mocks the humanity of the tourists by associating them not with persons but with ghosts. On the other hand, it categorizes Europeans according to Iatmul notions about the body.

Another local man speculates that tourists "must be wealthy . . . their own ancestors made the money . . . now they can travel . . . we don't have money so we stay in the village." If the tourists paid higher prices for carvings, "I could go on that ship." The issue here is unmistakable: White people are rich and powerful; Iatmul are poor and disenfranchised.

Or is it? These statements, too, are multifaceted. Many Papua New Guineans hold the postcolonial state, not tourists, accountable for their economic woes. Indeed, this man wonders aloud if the tourists aren't given money by their government. From this perspective, the Western privilege of tourism is symptomatic of a wider crisis of legitimacy concerning the Papua New Guinean nation (see Clark 1997). The memory of colonial humiliation sometimes coexists with nostalgia for Australian rule. But the narrative of *Cannibal Tours* does not enable viewers to hear the range of possible and often contradictory meanings in local comments.

Many indigenous voices in the film seemingly express bewilderment about the tourists. Yet local people are not so naive. "Touris" is a recent ethnocategory that contrasts with missionaries, government administrators, patrol officers, health workers, artifact buyers, and anthropologists. Tourists, it is understood, want to see the localized culture which, as I indicated earlier, is self-consciously articulated as "culture." Furthermore, several Eastern Iatmul have traveled to Australia, often in conjunction with tourism trade shows, and two men in the 1990s spent several months at Stanford University and the greater San Francisco Bay area helping to carve the Papua New Guinea Sculpture Garden (Silverman 1997). They, too, like their European touristic counterparts in the Sepik, toured an unfamiliar environs in order "to see" exotic places and things. They, too, returned home with souvenirs and photos. But in *Cannibal Tours,* and the common view of tourism, local people lack the self-reflexivity and knowledge that is so often attributed only to Western visitors.

SHELLS, BEADS, AND MISPLACED BANKING METAPHORS

One indigenous person in *Cannibal Tours,* a woman, is particularly aggressive and strident. She berates the camera because "we hurry down here with things for the tourists, but the tourists only look, they don't buy. . . . we village people have no money—we need it! [for school fees, she later implies] You white people! You have all the money . . . not us 'backward' people" (*kanaka* in Tok Pisin). She code-switches during these comments, that is, shifts between speaking her vernacular tongue and the national language of Papua New Guinea. But she prefers the former. As a middle-aged Sepik woman, her reluctance to speak English or even Tok Pisin is not surprising. For her generation, language is gendered, especially when older women speak to European men. Her vernacular speech also seems to challenge the filmmaker himself. She wants to be heard, but she also wants to exclude the filmmaker from her discourse. "I'm talking in my dialect," read the subtitles, "and he [O'Rourke] doesn't seem to hear." O'Rourke, of course, is a "white person" who traveled, moreover, on the *Melanesian Explorer.* Regardless of how *he* perceived his identity, local people would have immediately associated him with tourists and touristic desires. O'Rourke, then, is not so much filming the problem of tourists in this scene: He is part of the problem himself.

This resentful Sepik woman deploys additional rhetorical strategies. She refers to Papua New Guineans in Tok Pisin as the "parents" of Europeans. This figure of speech is unrelated to her chronological age. In one cosmological tale, Eastern Iatmul say that Europeans, who are the mythological children (or younger siblings) of Papua New Guineans, fled the Sepik in a canoe laden with advanced technology. According to Iatmul norms, younger siblings and children have unrestricted access to the possessions of their parents and older siblings. But Europeans exceeded the limits of morality when they hoarded the wealth of their "parents." What were the Papua New Guineans doing while the Europeans monopolized communal technology? Eating. From one perspective, this signifies that local people are indeed lazy when compared to industrious Europeans. From another perspective, however, it suggests that local people forge sociality through generosity and feasting while Europeans are greedy. This way, the angry woman in *Cannibal Tours* appears to position tourists and filmmaker alike in a state of moral dependence on their Papua New Guinean "parents," and thus accuses *all* Europeans of violating the ethic of reciprocity within the parent-child relationship.

Moreover, she may reside in Angoram, a multiethnic administrative *town* born of the colonial experience. Angoram is not a traditional *village* populated by a single linguistic group and enmeshed in a common web of kinship and morality. If this woman does reside in town, then she may likely require cash for daily subsistence. We do not know from the film what access she has to gardens, fishing lagoons, sago palms, and so forth. Viewers

can only react to her diatribe with a "gut feeling" rather than insight. Her wanting for money becomes emblematic of a wider regional predicament wherein all Sepik people are destitute because of tourism. But this image is inaccurate. In fact, many people in the middle Sepik remain in villages rather than migrating to urban centers precisely because tourism ensures a steady source of cash. The absence of tourism, then, would do more to erode village-based life than the presence of tourists! Finally, we have no way of knowing if this woman's vitriol was spontaneous or the result of relentless badgering by the cameraman, whose lens was surely as intrusive as that of any tourist. In sum, there is no self-evident or singular way in which to interpret this woman's comments, nor tourism itself.

For several years, I wondered if O'Rourke, like Kauffmann (1988:269) in another Sepik society, was unable to film in some locations because he did not reach agreement with local people. Imagine my surprise, then, to read in a recent essay by O'Rourke (1997:41) that he *did* encounter anger and distrust in one Sepik village, Kanganaman, "the place where the redoubtable American anthropologist, Margaret Mead, had done a lot of her famous work. The villagers were angry, they told me that they resented how she had profited from them." Mead, however, never conducted ethnographic research in this community. Something else was going on in Kanganamun. But the film contains no hint of the incident.[10] Had it done so, we would have likely seen another side of tourism, one where local people are far more assertive than we are otherwise led to believe.

I want to offer a final comment about the angry Sepik woman's invective in *Cannibal Tours*. This time, I am interested not in the film per se but in some erroneous suggestions by MacCannell (1992:30) in regard to the bead and shell necklaces that she has displayed on the ground before the tourists. MacCannell sees a "deeply ironic movement of the camera" as it focuses on these objects which, of course, she is hoping to sell. This "irony" hinges on his false assumption that these touristic ornaments are "strings of shell money."[11] They are not. What's more, MacCannell writes that the Sepik woman "knows herself to be positioned like the Western banker, trading in currencies under unfavorable exchange conditions. The tourists think they are buying beads." But that is *exactly* what the tourists are purchasing! I am not denying the presence of "unfavorable exchange conditions" in some touristic encounters. But I see no irony here. It is misleading, if not downright silly, to equate this woman and her necklaces with Western bankers and currency.

I do, however, perceive some irony in Tambunum village where men peddle World War II Japanese occupation notes and old Australian money to tourists. This way, they transform colonial history, Western nostalgia, and monetary symbols of European domination into valid Papua New Guinean currency.[12] In this instance, tourism is ironic, but this irony works in favor of local people, not against them.

Cannibal Tours is particularly noteworthy because it allows local people to speak and even dialogue with the filmmaker (see Bruner 1989; Lutkehaus 1989; Young 1992; Mascia-Lees and Sharpe 1994). In this sense, the film is somewhat collaborative—shaped by the intentions of the people it portrays, who are thereby allowed to exercise their subjectivity. They are not, therefore, objectified. But however much Sepik people speak in the film, they are never permitted to articulate fully or freely the circumstances of their contemporary lives. In the end, then, they *are* objectified. The selective interviews rely "on the audience's assumption that the authority of the speakers validates the authority of the entire structure" (MacDougall 1995:245). We hear, or read from the subtitles, a great deal of what MacDougall (1995) calls "testimony" and "implication" but little "exposition." In this manner, local voices in the film seem to authenticate a single ideological construct: the fallen primitive. It is only when *Cannibal Tours* is placed into a context furnished from outside the film itself—as I am trying to do—that the ideology of its narrative, and the local voices within it, begin to unravel.

Almost all the voices in *Cannibal Tours* are men: indigenous, Western, filmmaker. With the sole exception of the local woman who yells at the camera, women are passive and speechless bodies. By contrast, local men are generally inquisitive and reflective, albeit to a lesser degree than the tourists, who are allowed far greater discursive freedom than Melanesians. Since Iatmul interlocutors tend only to *respond* to specific questions posed by the filmmaker, they appear less assertive and capable of engaging in contemplative thought than the tourists (relatedly, see Kulick and Willson 1992; Weiner 1992: 104–105). For example, O'Rourke repeatedly asks local people why they want money. It seems an innocent enough question. But it ignores the last two centuries of history and reduces Papua New Guinean adults to the status of innocent, wide-eyed children, gaping at cash and miraculous commodities. I am reminded of the South African apartheid-era film *The Gods Must Be Crazy,* where a softdrink bottle, tossed out of the window of an airplane, lands at the feet of a bewildered native.

THE POWER OF LANGUAGE

All Tok Pisin statements in *Cannibal Tours* are paraphrased into English subtitles. Tok Pisin is highly beguiling. It appears to be a simple language of descriptive phrases and limited vocabulary—like tourism itself. But underneath this grammatical facade lurks a vast range of subtleties which can only be understood in terms of regional dialects, social framing, and broader contextual cues. *Cannibal Tours,* however, translates Tok Pisin utterances with little regard for connotative nuance.

One man suggests that tourists want to see if "*mipela* [we] *sindaun gut,*" which the film translates "if we are civilized." Yet *sindaun gut* connotes a general sense of well-being and not, at least not self-evidently, a notion of civilized civility. Another man says, "*mi no ken askim ol touris.*" We read, "I *can't* ask the tourists." "I *shouldn't* ask them," however, would have been more commensurate with Iatmul uneasiness about questioning the motivations behind a person's decisions.[13] Finally, we learn that village leaders "had to obey" (*harim*) the missionaries. This may be true. But the verb *harim* evokes a range of meanings from simple listening to forceful heeding. As Dan Jorgensen (personal communication, 1995) remarks, "the cumulative effect of such slippage is to portray local folks as having less grasp of what's going on than they do, of being de-culturalized and more powerless vis-à-vis Europeans than their words indicate."

Most indigenous voices in *Cannibal Tours* speak with confusion, naivete, sadness, resignation, anger, and pathos. "Not only do tourists take photos of the village without paying," says one elder man, "but they make them into postcards—my own child spent money on a postcard of *my* house, which he sent me!" When local people stop talking, the camera often lingers on their silent faces; several men finish their comments with "*toktok bilong mi pinis,*" "I have nothing more to say." When tourists are quiet, it is not because they have exhausted their discourse but, rather, because they are enthralled by the jungle or preoccupied with taking photographs. With the exception of one irate woman, local people are passively frozen by the camera. Only the tourists actually move. Not only does this overall portrayal irk many Papua New Guineans who view the film, but tourists have often commented to me that the inhabitants of Tambunum village are particularly assertive. Yet *Cannibal Tours* fails to "see" and "hear" these voices and behaviors. Most of the scenes do not occur in Tambunum, but in other villages, despite the fact that Tambunum is a touristic center of the region. Moreover, to repeat, the camera fails to capture moments of local assertion. The film does not, then, simply present local speech and action as it happened during tourism. Rather, it re-presents particular types of conversation and behavior.

Most local people who talk in *Cannibal Tours,* too, reached adulthood during the colonial era. Missing are the voices of youth whose postcolonial aspirations and discontentments are tied to the English language, formal schooling, urban employment, the

lure of luxury goods, the promise of a middle-class lifestyle, rock and roll music, and romantic love (see Gewertz and Errington 1991; see also Gewertz and Errington, Chapter 16). Their voices, like the hybrid imagery on tourist art which I interpreted earlier, are not easily forced into an overall dichotomy that sees a primordial culture of purity waning beneath the sheer magnitude of a debased modernity. Younger voices, too, often tend to be a bit more outspoken, aggressive, and sexually audacious. Here is a brief example.

I was chatting with some men in the lower village one day when the tourist ship arrived. As I was walking along the main village path, a young man hurried past me with a small woodcarving that he wanted to show to the female tourists in particular. As he rushed up the path, he spun toward me, flashed the carving, and said with a malevolent grin "*tumbuna cunt.*" It was a stylized rendition of female genitalia. (Since these tourists were American, I thought it best to walk in the other direction lest I be called upon to intercede in what promised to be an awkward encounter!) Later, one tourist remarked that she found some of the younger men to be crude and intimidating. I'm sure they were.

The tourist guesthouse which stands across the river from the village is decorated with splendid mythological images, many of which highlight quite vividly erotic themes. A snake slithers into a vagina, and ancestral phalloi are prominent. Tourist woodcarvings are also embellished with hypertrophic genitals, and local men enjoy joking about the desire for, and trysts with, female tourists and European women in general. A competitive ethos colors all forms of sexuality in Eastern Iatmul culture (Silverman 2001c). Conversely, all forms of competition, especially to men, and all forms of desire, are eroticized. These themes do not pertain solely to tourism and Western women. Here, we might say, young men are simply translating nontouristic modes of interaction into a touristic encounter. At the same time, some Eastern Iatmul men are also intentionally seeking to shock Western women in order to reassert the local masculinity. It is, to be sure, a complex interaction.

Yet indigenous assertion, with the sole exception of an irate women, is entirely lacking in *Cannibal Tours*. (Recall, too, that sexuality in the film is associated only with tourists. Local people are far too modest.) Instead, we perceive a formerly warlike and ritualistic people, evidenced by the black and white photographs from the early twentieth century, conquered by modernity, and humiliated by tourism.

OFF-CAMERA, OFF-SHIP

In one scene, a Iatmul man cryptically alludes to the totemic relationship between river waves, cloud formations, and decorative motifs on the cult house facade (see Bateson 1936 [1958]:230–231). This is virtually the *only* moment in the film where there is a focus on a contemporary belief or practice that is not directly tied to tourism. Yet this instance of nontouristic authenticity vanishes in the translation of the man's later assertion that "we have nothing sacred [*tumbuna samting*] anymore." All ritual objects, we read, were pilfered by Germany, England, and Australia. Here, "tumbuna" is an adjective that signifies sacredness. But "tumbuna" also connotes antiquity. In fact, the man's next utterance of *tumbuna samting* is translated as "old" rather than "sacred objects." As a noun, *tumbuna* refers to grandparents, distant relatives, and nonhuman ancestors such as totemic beings. This scene suggests that local people have been stripped of their genuine sacred culture. But this message, which ultimately denies local people their agency and creativity, arises from the narrative framing of the film and its overall allegory. It is not intrinsic to the statements themselves.

For Iatmul, in fact, sacredness is a nonmaterial quality that is largely transferred to an object through the bestowal of a totemic name. An old object, lacking a name, can be *tumbuna* in terms of age while a new object can be *tumbuna* in terms of magical sacredness. In short, the village has not been stripped of all its *tumbuna* objects, just its precontact ones. This is significant, to be sure, but not quite as decisive as the film implies.

Sepik men resent the many tourists and dealers who seek to bargain and to negotiate the prices of art and handicrafts. They dislike the persistent request for a "second" and "third" price. As local men say, they are allowed no such courtesy in the many stores in town. There, you have but one option: Pay the stated price, or move on. Consequently, village men may inflate the initial or "first price." More significantly, carvers adroitly weave tales about their touristic crafts in order to "authenticate" the price. Great antiquity can be readily simulated by soaking objects in the river and then smoking them like fish. Fictions of ancient rituals are enhanced when a seller quietly invites a tourist into the shadows of a house and then carefully unwraps an object. Local people, too, on their own initiative, stage open-air markets of objects when the tourists arrive in the village. Tourism, I am suggesting, does permit local agency and assertion.

Nearby Iatmul and non-Iatmul communities judge Tambunum to be one of the wealthiest villages in the region precisely because it is so frequently visited by tourists. Consequently, trading canoes from around the Sepik steadily voyage to the village laden with fruits, vegetables, betel nut, shells, clay pots and fire-hearths, smoked meat, baskets and net bags, and other items. Tourism has enabled Tambunum to maintain its position as a riverine entrepot. Many of these objects are resold, in fact, to tourists, often after some artistic modification. Likewise, men and women from nearby villages walk to Tambunum in order to gamble at all-night card games. Eastern Iatmul, who equip themselves for these competitions with magical spells and charms, are only too happy to oblige. Many competitors, too, also walk to the village with their own masks and carvings, which they themselves peddle to tourists. In this respect, it would be false to view tourism as a context that pits local people against Europeans.

In fact, tourism intersects with traditional trade and warfare rivalries and expands the horizon of regional exchange networks. Likewise, tourist art is rarely created entirely from local materials. Men procure paints, shells, styles, feathers, shoe polish, and so on from different areas of the Sepik region, both villages and towns. In this respect, tourist art is a wholly authentic cartographic representation of contemporary Sepik socioeconomic space.

The nearby Chambri, write Gewertz and Errington (1991), may alter the timing and pace of male initiation ceremonies so tourists can pay for the "right" to gaze at this "authentic" Sepik ritual. These rites transform youth into adults. Today, adult male personhood is a status that includes competence with modernity, for example, the ability to acquire cash and commodities, and to interact capably with Europeans and tourists. Tourism, then, reshapes a premodern ritual so that it remains relevant to contemporary lives rather than anachronistic. True, tourism instances a new form of hierarchy. Traditionally, Sepik hierarchies were based on what Gewertz and Errington (1991) call "commensurate" differences. Despite inequities in power and prestige, all members of the community were essentially equal. Tourism, and modernity more generally, entail "incommensurate" differences wherein people are fundamentally unequal. Nonetheless, tourism does not prevent local people from acting with genuine intention, meaning, and strategy.

ARGONAUTS OF THE SEPIK?

The boat featured in *Cannibal Tours* is the *Melanesian Explorer,* a steamship that first sailed the Sepik in 1980. It was replaced in 1988 by the *Melanesian Discoverer,* a luxurious catamaran cruiser that is berthed at the Madang Resort Hotel, which is the main facility of the Melanesian Tourist Services. This company is owned and operated by Jan and Peter Barter, who are naturalized Australian-born citizens of Papua New Guinea. The names of these two tourist vessels, it is true, by invoking notions of exploration and discovery, do invite visitors' fantasies (D. Jorgensen, personal communication, 1996). But the *Melanesian Discoverer,* it should be noted, maintains a fairly extensive video and

ethnographic library. In this respect, the tourist ship does provide the means whereby visitors can begin to contextualize their experiences of the Sepik. Whether or not visitors choose to do so is, of course, their own prerogative. Viewers of *Cannibal Tours,* however, are offered no such opportunity within the film itself of extending their gaze.

The tourist ship is a multifaceted institution along the Sepik. But *Cannibal Tours* overlooks much of this complexity. A world of interaction, for example, occurs between the vessel and local people. Because much of this activity is located at the stern of the vessel, and away from the tourists, it is largely concealed from their view—and from O'Rourke's viewfinder. The crew dispenses medical and school supplies at Sepik villages, purchases fruit and vegetables, and provides transportation along the river and sometimes to the coastal city of Madang. Several Sepik people are employed at the Madang Resort Hotel. For a period in the late 1980s, too, the crew reimbursed individual claims that the wake of the ship damaged dugout canoes. The tourist ship, then, does not merely ferry visitors throughout the region. It has a more complex relationship to local communities.

In the 1990s, Peter Barter won a seat in parliament, largely due to the successes of his touristic enterprises and locally perceived largess; shortly thereafter, he attained several cabinet posts. My point here is not to exonerate or justify the *Melanesian Discoverer* but, again, to suggest only that the tourist ship has a complex presence in the Sepik, one that is not so easily judged as exclusively disruptive or, for that matter, wholly beneficial. On the maiden voyage of the *Melanesian Discoverer,* for example, Tambunum villagers spontaneously danced for Peter Barter an honorific ceremony known as *naven* (Bateson 1936/1958; Silverman 2001c). In the film, however, the status of the tourist steamer is akin to that of the warship in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness:* an alien, intrusive vessel of folly and imperialism. It is a compelling portrayal, to be sure, but one that is unidimensional since it neglects all that goes on behind the tourist ship.

CONCLUSION

My goal in this chapter was to argue that tourism affords Sepik people opportunities for asserting various forms of cultural hybridity, resistance, and aesthetic innovation. I can think of no more apt a conclusion than the words of one tourist as recounted by O'Rourke himself (1997:41–42). During the filming of *Cannibal Tours,* O'Rourke presented videocassette copies of his previous films to Sepik villagers "as a gesture of sincerity." He returned a few weeks later on the *Melanesian Discoverer.* As the ship was departing from one village, a tourist proudly waved one of the videotapes: "Guess what! A young man was selling your films and I bargained him down from 50 kina to 20 kina!"

Clearly, the tourist made out like a bandit, and the young Sepik man was robbed of his integrity and money. Or was he? How can we understand this transaction? An act of resistance? A moment of indigenous creativity and entrepreneurship? A repudiation of Western morality? A comment on O'Rourke's film? It is entirely ambiguous—and certainly complex. And so, too, I have argued, is Sepik tourism.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Fieldwork in 1988–1990 was graciously funded by a Fulbright Award and the Institute for Intercultural Studies; related support was granted by the Department of Anthropology and the Graduate School, University of Minnesota. The Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research and DePauw University generously enabled a return visit in June–August 1994. My thoughts on *Cannibal Tours* benefited from conversations with Andrea Wohl, David Lipset, Dan Jorgensen, Stephen Leavitt, Karen Brison, Keith Nightenhelser, Kora Korawali, tourists, students at DePauw University, and an Internet dialogue about the film in November–December 1996 among members of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania (N. Maclean, M. Rohatynskyj, M. Evans, S. Srivastava, K. Barlow, J. Ruoff, M. McCutcheon, and J. Barker). I am also grateful for the hospitality of Jan and Peter Barter, and the crew of the *Melanesian Discoverer.* Finally, I

extend my inevitably unreciprocated gratitude to the people of Tambunum. Of course, I alone am responsible for the text and tone of this article.

NOTES

1. Ideally, this chapter will be read in conjunction with a viewing of *Cannibal Tours,* especially in the classroom.
2. MacCannell (1992:71, footnote 12) writes about a San Francisco newspaper article in which a Sepik man tells the reporter, who traveled on the *Melanesian Discoverer,* that Margaret Mead once studied in his village. Now there is another anthropologist in the community. During the reporter's visit, however, this new anthropologist was spending some time in town. The tour director facetiously added that the young anthropologists must phone his mother monthly to reassure her that he has not been eaten by cannibals. MacCannell labeled this unnamed anthropologist an "authentic postmodern attraction." I am flattered.
3. Two rejoinders to the longstanding tradition of using (fictitious) images of Pacific Islanders to examine Western morality is the 1999 film *Taking Pictures* by McLaren and Stiven (see the Filmography) and McCall's (1994) notes on the Hollywood film *Rapa Nui,* which was produced by Kevin Costner. During the filming of *Rapa Nui,* local people were offered US$25 per appearance—a gratuity that was increased to $36 for women who bared their breasts.
4. The invocation of Kissinger in the film recalls his infamous statement about Micronesia: "There are only 90,000 people out there. Who gives a damn?" (These comments were featured on the American CBS television program *60 Minutes,* in a segment titled "Who Gives a Damn?" which aired on December 23, 1979.) Kissinger sits on the board of directors for Freeport McMoRan Inc., which operates the enormous Freeport gold and copper mine in Irian Jaya. The mine has been implicated in human rights violations, environmental devastation, and official Indonesian policies concerning the erosion of Melanesian cultural identity in western New Guinea.
5. Morris (1996) ties the current fascination with cannibalism in popular, pseudoethnographic film to intensified capitalist consumption and bodily fetishes such as "urban primitive" tattoos, dieting; fitness, and natural cosmetics and clothing.
6. See Teaiwa (1994) for the role of the bikini bathing suit in the sexualized trivialization of Pacific history.
7. Mulvey (1975) and Kaplan (1983) explore the male cinematic gaze. *Cannibal Tours* is not the only film by O'Rourke to raise questions about sexual morality (Berry, Hamilton, and Jayamanne 1997).
8. Douglas (1996) traces the history of large-scale tourism in Melanesia to the early twentieth century. Other sources on Sepik and Melanesian tourism include Farrell (1979); Cohen (1982); Macnaught (1982); Errington and Gewertz (1989b); Schmidt (1990); Coiffier (1991); Gewertz and Errington (1991); Milne (1991); Michaud, Maranda, Lafreniere, and Cote (1994), and, relatedly Linnekin (1997) and Adams (1998).
9. Some Sepik societies, however, do internalize colonial and missionary racism, and view their past as immoral (Smith 1994; Brison 1996).
10. O'Rourke's comments about Margaret Mead are as stereotypical as his comments about tourism!
11. MacCannell cites early twentieth-century reports compiled by Quiggin (1949:172*ff.*), which do not concern the Sepik but rather the Papua Gulf, to the effect that these "strings of shell money" are "worth the value of between two and ten months of labor." This claim is groundless and wholly misleading.
12. On the eve of independence in 1975, Sepik people were trying to sell newly minted Papua New Guinea kina coins, which were pierced in the middle to resemble shells, for three times the Australian exchange rate (Griffin, Nelson, and Firth 1979:230).
13. Another man reports that his forefathers *pulim meri,* which O'Rourke translates as "raping women" but which could equally mean "seducing women." MacCannell, too, addresses language in the film, but with bizarre conceptual peculiarities that I cannot understand; for example, tourists speak metaphorically whereas "primitives speak metonymically" (1992:44) and "the language of the Iatmul people is filled with concrete images of violence. . . . The language of the tourists is filled with repressed violence" (1992:46). Of course, neither MacCannell nor O'Rourke understand the Iatmul language.

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