

Notes for *The Gebusi*, 2nd edition

GENERAL

Personal names used in the second edition of *The Gebusi* are in most cases actual names. This includes persons who have given permission for their real names to be used and for persons whose depiction in the text is nonproblematic and/or if they have been deceased for a number of years. This reflects the fact that the Gebusi generally are pleased to have their real identities represented to the larger world. Pseudonyms have been used in a few cases in which personal information could be perceived or interpreted as embarrassing, immoral, criminal, or otherwise unflattering, and the person or his or her cohort relatives are still alive.

Quotations in the main text that been taken from field notes and from Gebusi have been edited to make them more direct and succinct. I have attempted to retain the spirit and meaning of original remarks. My occasional resort to quoted paraphrase is designed to make the material more understandable to a general audience.

INTRODUCTION

How to appreciate cultural diversity while criticizing inequality and domination. These complementary themes and their historical relationship in anthropology are discussed in greater detail in *Genealogies for the Present in Cultural Anthropology* (Knauft 1996, pp. 48–57).

The Gebusi in 1998 versus 1980–82. An extended scholarly description of Gebusi society in 1980–82 is *Good Company and Violence: Sorcery and Social Action in a Lowland New Guinea Society* (Knauft 1985a). A more detailed account of Gebusi changes in 1998 can be found in *Exchanging the Past: A Rainforest World of Before and After* (Knauft 2002a), and in a chapter on changes in Gebusi performance and body art (Knauft 2007b).

The Nomad Station as a local place of influence and power. See the discussion in “How the World Turns Upside Down: Changing Geographies of Power and Spiritual Influence among the Gebusi” (Knauft 1998a).

Becoming modern—a process that is both culturally diverse and global in scope. See the collected essays on this topic in *Critically Modern* (Knauft 2002c) and Knauft (2007b). A fascinating case study of a rural people who are becoming alternatively modern in Togo, West Africa, can be found in Charles Piot’s *Remotely Global: Village Modernity in West Africa* (1999). For an urban example that focuses on women in China, see Lisa Rofel’s monograph *Other Modernities: Gendered Yearnings in China After Socialism* (1999).

In-depth accounts of specific Gebusi practices. Beyond the present book, information about specific Gebusi practices and beliefs can be found as follows:

Concerning Gebusi in 1980–82:

- colonial history (Knauft 1985a, pp. 12–16)
- emotion concepts and orientations (Knauft 1985a, chapter 3)
- gender relations (Cantrell 1998; Knauft 2004)
- killing and homicide rates (Knauft 1985a, chapter 5; Knauft 1987c)
- kinship and marital relations (Knauft 1985a, chapter 5)

- myths and folktales (Knauft 1985a, chapter 10; Knauft 1986)
- ritual feasts and dancing (Knauft 1985a, chapter 9; Knauft 1985b)
- sexual relations between males (Knauft 1986; Knauft 1987a)
- sorcery beliefs, inquests, and attributions (Knauft 1985a, chapters 2, 4–5, 7–8)
- spirit séances (Knauft 1985a, chapter 11; Knauft 1989; Knauft 1996, pp. 209–217; Knauft 1998b)
- subsistence and health (Knauft 1985a, pp. 16–21)
- tobacco, drugs, and the use of them to quell rather than to promote violence (Knauft 1987b)

Concerning the Gebusi in 1998:

- body art and public performance (Knauft 2007a)
- Christianity and church (Knauft 2002a, chapters 5–6)
- gender relations (Knauft 2002a, pp. 27–29; 2003; see more generally Knauft 1997)
- history of events and changes between 1982 and 1998 (Knauft 2002a, chapter 3)
- market activity (Knauft 2002a, pp. 207–211)
- morality and exchange (Knauft 2007b)
- music (Knauft 2002a, pp. 217–220); see the author’s website for Gebusi music clips from 1980–82, 1998, and 2008
- police and government (Knauft 2002a, chapter 4)
- public culture and Independence Day celebrations (Knauft 2002a, pp. 226–231; Knauft 2002b, 2007c)
- schooling (Knauft 2002a, chapter 7)
- sexuality between men (Knauft 2003)
- sorcery beliefs and their decline (Knauft 2002a, chapter 5)
- sports (Knauft 2002a, pp. 211–213)

CHAPTER 1

Gift exchange in Melanesia and elsewhere. The most influential and classic description of gift exchange is *The Gift* (Mauss 1967). This short book uses ethnographic examples from a range of societies—particularly in the Pacific Islands and indigenous North America—to illustrate the social importance of giving and receiving gifts. The account includes a discussion of gift-exchange that is competitive or aggressive in nature—a pattern that occurs in some Melanesian societies (Strathern 1971; Young 1971; see Weiner 1976 concerning exchanges organized by women). Marshall Sahlins (1972a) describes three types of reciprocal exchange—“generalized,” “balanced,” and “negative”—that inform social relations in many societies. A large literature has developed concerning gift exchange and its ramifications. Regarding exchange in Melanesia under conditions of hoped-for development and moral change, see Robbins and Wardlow (2005).

The impact of steel tools in preindustrial societies. For a dramatic case example based on ethnographic documentation, see *From Stone to Steel* (Salisbury 1962).

The Bedamini people, adjacent to the Gebusi. Information concerning the Bedamini can be found in Knauft (1985a, chapters 1 and 8; Knauft 1998a) and Sørum (1980, 1982, 1993).

The Western projection of discovery onto non-Western peoples. As “life explorers,” cultural anthropologists have often tried to discover things about peoples who are little known or not well understood. In the process, it is easy for them to project their own desires and assumptions onto those they study—including the assumption they have discovered something “new.” Even the notion that Columbus “discovered” America in 1492 belies the fact that Native Americans populated and developed trade links throughout the New World thousands of years before this event. Books that document the projections that Western explorers or early anthropologists have made onto non-Western peoples include Todorov (1999), Hodgen (1964), Pagden (1986), and Kuper (1988). Concerning contemporary anthropology, see Stuart Kirsch’s article “Lost Tribes: Indigenous People and the Social Imaginary” (1997).

Gebusi *kogwayay* as “good company.” A fuller discussion of Gebusi *kogwayay* and its implications can be found in Knauff (1985a, chapter 3).

Cultural “key symbols.” Anthropologists have often discussed and debated how to identify and document which concepts, symbols, and metaphors are most crucial in a given culture. The clearest and most influential statement on this issue is Sherry Ortner’s short article “On Key Symbols” (1973). In this paper, Ortner defines the characteristics of key symbols and describes how they can be recognized in different cultures.

How to combine cultural appreciation with a critical view of social and cultural inequality. This issue is discussed in Knauff (1996, pp. 48–61).

The anthropology of women and the cross-cultural study of gender relations. These topics have generated a large literature in anthropology since the 1970s. Selected works include *Women, Culture, and Society* (Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974), *Toward an Anthropology of Women* (Reiter 1975), *Sexual Meanings* (Ortner and Whitehead 1981), *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge* (di Leonardo 1991), and *Making Gender* (Ortner 1996). Extensive case studies of gender relations are now available for all major world areas. A selective review of recent trends in gendered ethnography and associated theory can be found in Knauff (1996, chapter 7). General books include two different works titled *Gender and Anthropology* (Mascia-Lees 2000; Morgen 1989), and an introduction to women’s studies that considers gender from a cross-cultural and cross-national perspective (Grewal and Caplan 2001). The relation of anthropology to feminism is considered in books by Moore (1988, 1994) and Sanday and Goodenough (1990). In the Mid-East context, see Mahmood (2005) and Deeb (2006).

The experience of women as ethnographers. This issue has been widely explored in recent years. Representative works include *Women in the Field* (Golde 1986), *Women Writing Culture* (Behar and Gordon 1995), *Self, Sex, and Gender in Cross-Cultural Fieldwork* (Whitehead and Conaway 1986), *First in Their Field* (Marcus 1993), *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork* (Wolf 1996), and *Women and the Invention of American Anthropology* (Lurie 1999). Concerning the sexual orientations of ethnographers themselves, see *Taboo* (Kulick and Willson 1995).

CHAPTER 2

Kapauku base-sixty counting system. This is described in *The Kapauku Papuans of West New Guinea* (Pospisil 1963).

Culture as adaptation. This issue has been extensively studied by materialist anthropologists and those interested in human ecology. Leading proponents of this perspective in the history of American anthropology include Leslie White, Julian Steward, Marvin Harris, Roy Rappaport, and Robert Netting, each of whom wrote many books and articles concerning it.

“Felling the trees on top of the crop.” This phrase is taken from the title of an article about this topic by Edward Schieffelin (1975).

Simple humans groups as “original affluent societies.” This notion is developed and documented by Marshall Sahlins in his paper “The Original Affluent Society” (1972b).

Agricultural intensification and the evolution of complex human societies. See a general overview of this issue in *The Evolution of Human Societies* (Johnson and Earle 1987). Concerning densely populated areas of the New Guinea highlands in particular, see Feil (1987), Brown (1978), and Watson (1977).

Semidomesticated pigs. Detailed studies of this practice among the Etoro or Etolo peoples, who live northeast of the Gebusi on the other side of the Bedamini, have been published in Kelly (1988) and Dwyer (1989).

Cultural diversity in Melanesia. Although Melanesia contains less than 10 million people, it includes an amazing one quarter of the entire world's languages and associated cultures—approximately 1150 of the roughly 4000 languages estimated to be spoken in the world today (see Wurm 1982a, b; Finegan and Besnier 1989, p. 296). The astounding diversity of customs and beliefs in Melanesia is reviewed in *From Primitive to Postcolonial in Melanesia and Anthropology* (Knauff 1999). For an introduction to Melanesia and to its social change, see Sillitoe (1998, 2000).

Learning a language in the field. See *Learning a Field Language* (Burling 1984) and *Language Learning in Intercultural Perspective* (Byram and Fleming 1998).

The experience of ethnographic fieldwork. Evocative accounts of fieldwork include *The High Valley* (Read 1965), *The Headman and I* (Dumont 1978), and *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco* (Rabinow 1977). Newer and more reflexive accounts by female anthropologists include *Return to Nisa* (Shostak 2000; see also Shostak 1981), *Translated Woman* (Behar 1993), and *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography* (Visweswaran 1994). The process of ethnographic fieldwork is described and analyzed more generally in Watson (1999), Laine (2000), Amit-Talai (1999), Coffey (1999), Jackson and Ives (1996), Lareau and Shultz (1996), and Dresch, James, and Parkin (2000).

CHAPTER 3

The anthropology of sorcery and witchcraft. Gebusi beliefs are technically “sorcery” rather than “witchcraft” because they involve the reported manipulation of physical objects to make individuals deathly ill. By contrast, witchcraft entails the belief in an intrinsic capacity to cause sickness either by an act of mental will, by being possessed by an intrinsically evil spirit, or by having an inherently diseased or corrupted soul.

Concerning sorcery and witchcraft in general, see Marwick (1982). For sorcery and witchcraft in Melanesia, see especially Fortune (1932) and Stephen (1987, 1994). For Africa, see especially Stoller (1987), Evans-Pritchard (1937), and collections by Middleton and Winter (1963) and Douglas (1970). African witchcraft under conditions of contemporary change is discussed by Comaroff and Comaroff (1999) and Geschiere (1997). Concerning witchcraft accusations in Puritan America, see Erikson (1966); regarding magic and witchcraft in contemporary England, see Luhrmann (1989). For a contemporary account of a modern African man bewitched, see Ashforth (2005). An interesting account of magic in relation to modern development in various world areas can be found in Meyer and Pels (2003).

Animism and shamanism. It has long been thought that human spirituality originated in “animism,” that is, the belief that spirits beings animate the natural environment. Such beliefs have been common among foraging peoples and hunter-gatherers, whose livelihood depends on wild species of animals and plants. Such foraging adaptations have characterized the bulk of our evolutionary history as a species. Among foragers and other highly decentralized peoples, spirits typically communicate with humans through the body of spirit mediums or shamans, who become temporarily possessed or entranced. Concerning the evolution of human spiritual beliefs, see especially Wallace (1966).

Concerning shamanism in simple human societies, see Eliade (1964). For Melanesia, see Knauff (1989), Schieffelin (1977), and Fortune (1935). A dramatic case study of spirit possession among the !Kung San of South Africa is *Boiling Energy* (Katz 1982).

Michael Taussig (1987) has shown how shamanism and spirit mediumship among native peoples of South America have resisted outside influences and promoted healing with respect to suffering caused by colonial subjugation or state oppression. Similar patterns have been documented in southern Africa, for instance, by Peter Fry in his book *Spirits of Protest* (1976). I found a subtler permutation of similar themes in the spirit séances of a particularly creative Gebusi spirit medium from a remote settlement (see Knauff 1998b).

Female spirit possession has sometimes been interpreted as a protest against or resistance to patriarchy (Lewis 2003). A rich case study of female spirit possession in the Sudan has been published by Janice Boddy (1989). See also case examples of female and male spirit possession in Mayotte (north of Madagascar) by Lambek (1981) and a fascinating contemporary account of a Vodou priestess in Brooklyn by Brown (2001).

CHAPTER 4

Kinship and marriage in human societies. For background on kinship, see the classic short book *Kinship and Marriage* by Fox (1967), a reader by Goody (1971), and a more recent volume by Parkin (1997). A massive classic study of alliance and exchange systems of marriage is Claude Lévi-Strauss's *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1969). Concerning contemporary uses of kinship in anthropology, see Stone (2001), Schweitzer (2000), and Carsten (2000). For an account of cultural rules in American kinship, see Schneider (1980). Concerning the relationship of kinship to gender, power, and social inequality, see Collier and Yanagisako (1987) and Yanagisako and Delaney (1995). A good review of the anthropology of social organization through the mid-1990s was published by Peletz (1995).

Killing and homicide across human societies. Comparative rates of homicide in different societies are tabulated in Knauff (1985a, p. 379) and Knauff (1987c). Ethnographic studies of societies with high rates of killing have been published for the Yanomamo of the Amazon (Chagnon 1997) and, in New Guinea, for the Mae Enga (Meggitt 1977), the Jalemo (Koch 1974), the Grand Valley Dani (Heider 1979), and the Tuade (Hallpike 1977), in addition to my initial book on the Gebusi (Knauff 1985a). Theories of prestate warfare and killing are reviewed based on considerable evidence from Melanesia in Knauff (1999, chapter 3). Display warfare in Melanesia is discussed in Knauff (2002d).

In recent years, the anthropology of violence has expanded to consider the suffering and disruption associated with civil or international war, terrorism, and ethnic strife. Prominent examples include Kleinman, Das, and Lock (1997), Das and associates (2000, 2001), Nordstrom (1997), Nordstrom and Robben (1995), and Nordstrom and Martin (1992). A powerful account of the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 has been written by Gourevitch (1998); see also Mamdani (2001). See Hinton (2002) for an edited collection of papers on the anthropology of genocide.

As discussed in Parts II and III of *The Gebusi*, 2nd edition, Gebusi homicide has declined greatly since the 1980s. Indeed, there has not been a single homicide among descendants of Yibihilu at Gasumi Corners since the late 1980s. The decline of killing to a rate of zero among this group is arguably one of the most dramatic cases of violence cessation in the ethnographic literature.

Persecution of witches in Western countries. Concerning witch persecutions in European history, see Kors and Peters (2001), Ankarloo and Clark (1999, 2002), Scarre (1987), and a dramatic case study by Kunze (1987). Concerning the Salem witch trials in Puritan America, see Erikson (1966), Norton (2002), and Hoffer (1996). Concerning contemporary witchcraft in England, see Luhrmann (1989).

CHAPTER 5

Cross-cultural variation in sexual orientation. This topic has spawned much research in recent years. A general and readable overview of alternative sexual practices in different regions of the world is *Same Sex, Different Cultures* (Herdt 1997). A more scholarly compendium of historical and cross-cultural examples is *Third Sex, Third Gender* (Herdt 1994). Collected editions that consider the contemporary relationship among sexuality, gender, and culture include Lancaster and di Leonardo (1997) and Parker and Aggleton (1999). Ethnographic case studies of alternative sexual orientations from different world areas are available, including for Brazil (Parker 1991, 1999), Mexico (Carrier 1995), New Guinea (Herdt 1981, 1987, 1993; Ernst 1991; Kelly 1976; Knauff 1986, 1987a, 1993: chapter 3 and appendix 1), Native America (Williams 1986), India (Nanda 1990; Reddy 2001), and the United States (Herdt 1992; Herdt and Boxer 1996; d'Emilio 1983, Weston 1991). An influential review of lesbian and gay studies in anthropology has been published by Weston (1993). Sexual orientation in relation to the ethics of fieldwork is considered in edited collections by Kulick and Willson (1995) and Whitehead and Conaway (1986). Concerning South and Southeast Asia, see Peletz (2007, 2009) and Boellestorff (2007, 2005).

New Guinea highlands beliefs concerning female sexual pollution, loss of masculinity, and male "pregnancy." Concerning Hua beliefs in male pregnancy, see Meigs (1976); concerning sexual beliefs and practices among the Mae Enga, see Meggitt (1964). Concerning sexual pollution and gender hostility in the New Guinea highlands more generally, see Langness (1974, 1999) and a rich contrasting view by Strathern (1988). For a rich account of changed sexual beliefs in the context of alternative sexuality and sexually transmitted diseases in Papua New Guinea, see Wardlow (2006) and Butt and Eves (2008).

Sexual orientation among Gebusi women. See documentation and discussion of this issue by Eileen Cantrell (Knauft) (1998).

Sexual relations between women among the Kamula. Evidence on this topic was obtained by Michael Wood (1982).

"Gebusi women regard sexuality as a positive force . . ." This quotation is taken from Eileen Cantrell (Knauft) (1998, p. 99).

Gebusi spirit mediumship. Fuller accounts on this topic can be found in Knauft (1985a, chapter 11; 1989; 1998b).

Gebusi ritual dance costuming. Gebusi dance costuming and symbolism are analyzed in Knauft (1985a, pp. 257–261). An evocative and influential book about ritual dances and emotional dynamics among the Kaluli people, twenty-five miles southeast of the Gebusi, was published by Edward Schieffelin (1976). Concerning changes in Gebusi dance performances to 1998, see Knauft (2002b and 2007b).

Religion as the projection of human society into a spiritual world. This idea was formulated by Emile Durkheim and developed in his book *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1965 [original in French, 1912]).

Sexual imagery in Gebusi dances and folktales. More information about these topics can be found in Knauft (1985a, chapters 9–10; 1986).

Gender and sexuality diversity in Melanesia. These issues are reviewed and discussed more systematically in Knauft (1999, chapters 2 and 4).

In one study, 29 percent of gay/lesbian teenagers in the United States had attempted suicide. This information is taken from Herdt and Boxer (1996, p. 207).

CHAPTER 6

Male initiations and fertility cults in Melanesia. A review of Melanesian initiation and ritual customs can be found in Knauft (1999, pp. 66–84); see also Whitehead (1986) and Herdt (1982).

The "liminal" stage in rites of passage. The concept of a liminal or "in-between" stage in rites of passage was first developed by the French sociologist Arnold van Gennep (1960 [original in French, 1908]). The notion was expanded and developed by the British and American anthropologist Victor Turner (1969, 1972).

Secrecy in male initiations. Secrecy is strongly evident in studies of male initiation from various world areas, including Melanesia (Herdt 1982, 1993, 2003; Allen 1967) and Africa (Turner 1969).

Harshness of male initiation in some Melanesian societies. Harsh or traumatizing male initiation customs and beliefs are described for Melanesian societies in *Rites of Manhood* (Herdt 1982; see also Herdt 1993) and by Langness (1967) and Barth (1975). Concerning male initiations more generally, see Turner (1969).

Benign initiation in some Melanesian societies. The Purari peoples of the New Guinea southern lowlands, who were inveterate headhunters, are particularly striking in this respect; see Williams (1923) and Knauff (1993, pp. 173–178).

Color-coded costumes at the height of a male initiation. See the remarkable account of the rest of the initiation mentioned—among the Umeda people of Papua New Guinea—in Alfred Gell’s book *Metamorphosis of the Cassowaries* (1975).

Female initiations and the ritual role of women. A fuller account of women’s role in Gebusi initiations can be found in Knauff (2004a). Concerning female initiates and the role of women in initiations and fertility cults in Melanesia more generally, see Lutkehaus and Roscoe (1995), Whitehead (1986), and Bonnemère (2004). An exemplary ethnography of female initiation among the Okiek of Kenya has been published by Corinne Kratz (1994).

CHAPTER 7

The anthropology of global influences. Summary articles by well-known anthropologists about a wide range of global influences and problems can be found in MacClancy’s edited collection *Exotic No More* (2002). A reader on globalization by Inda and Rosaldo (2001; see also Trouillot 2003) documents the history and challenge of global influences from an anthropological perspective. The relationship of global problems and culture to capitalism and the history of colonialism has been configured for students by Robbins (2002). See also Bodley (1999). A wide-ranging set of political and internationalist perspectives on the future of globalization has been compiled by O’Meara, Mehlinger, and Krain (2000). A critical examination of global influences in relation to neo-imperialism and the United States can be found in Knauff (2007c).

The reemergence of violence in Papua New Guinea. Some parts of Papua New Guinea—especially highlands areas, towns, and cities—have seen a marked rise of violence in recent years (see Strathern 1993; Dinnen 1991).

On getting bitten by a death adder. The following passages are from my field notes.

September 8, 1998. Field entry: Death Adder

It seemed so innocuous, earlier tonight. I was briskly walking down the trail that I’ve taken almost every day to the Nomad Station. True, it was dark, but the moon was peeking through the clouds and I had a flashlight to lead the collective way. A troop of seven younger and not so younger guys, aged 12 to 20, were going with me to “video night” at the Nomad Station. I had tried to go to the video before, but it had been rained out. Tonight had seemed a better bet.

Going down the hill to the river, all I felt was a prick in my left foot. Shining the light on the offending object, it was already curled in a tight ball. Must be some kind of really large caterpillar, I thought at first. My young companions knew better. “*Sayamp. Sayamp.*” they intoned. They quickly chopped off its head with a long knife and threw it in the bush. To confirm, I asked Didiga if he knew the English term. “Poison snake,” was his answer. I asked in Gebusi, “Is this the same kind of snake that bit and killed my friend Sasaga?” “Yes.” My heart started to race.

I looked at my left foot but I couldn’t see anything dramatic. All I felt was a kind of mosquito bite sensation in my second toe. But my friends examined it closely. *Moliar galaym*: teeth bite marks. Then followed a period of uncertainty. “Do you feel any really big pain?” “It just feels like a strong mosquito bite.” Trying to listen more closely to my own body, I did sense some light-headedness, sweat, and clammy skin. But I also thought this might be a shock response to the news that I had just been bitten by a death adder. My foot really didn’t hurt that much yet—just a dull ache that was easing its way up my foot. “It hurts some, but not a lot.”

They examined my toe more closely. Only a little bit of blood and two small scratches. Sebety was the first to venture an opinion: *moliar, warsok mwi*—the teeth had bitten me, but the “death dealing arrow” hadn’t. It didn’t take me long to figure this out: the snake had bitten me with its small teeth, but I had not gotten a full bite from its fangs. My friends told me that I was unlikely to die even though I might get really sick. If my stride had been a hair less forceful or the snake a millisecond faster . . .

As I sit here typing and trying to distract myself this same night, I reflect on my brush with possible death. I am trying to relax and accept the pain. I don't want to linger on the event or make it too prominent, since this just makes me more conscious of my growing discomfort. So I imagine that my encounter with the snake was like a car accident that could have been fatal but wasn't and won't be. Is there anything I could have done differently, or will now? Yes, of course: wear shoes when going on trails at night. Death adders aren't very long snakes, and they don't strike more than an inch or two above the ground. Keda said that they sometimes come out in the evening, "The death adder was going along the trail at night, just like you!" But I have been on that trail so many times, and so have Gebusi, including at night. We've never seen a snake there before. My friends told me that if they had been going first, it would have been they who would have been bitten. It was just bad luck, a risk of the road, as it were. Other than the pain, my main aftershock seems to be a bad case of indigestion. Which is peaking right now, in fact . . .

Sorry for that break, but I just upchucked my supper. At least I have a conveniently high open porch to heave from. I suppose it is possible that vomiting could be a side effect of death adder toxin. But my foot, though paining me, remains tolerable. Perhaps my stomach upset is a combination of wolfing down dinner prior to leaving for the video, subsequent stress, and taking an excess of Ibuprofen. [Note inserted on October 24, 1998: Actually, this is wrong. I have since learned that a common effect of death adder toxin is digestive upset a few hours after having been bitten. But I am glad I didn't know this at the time!]

September 25, 1998 [six days later]. Field entry: The second snake!

It was about the thickness of a small death adder. And it stung just a little. And it was shedding its skin. But it was part of me: my own toe. As the skin sloughs off and the new toe emerges, I am reminded of skin changing and snakes. My toe is its own snake. Perhaps it has some sympathy now, venomously injected, for that poor reptile who got its head cut off for biting my appendage so slightly.

I do feel, somehow, that the force of this snake, if not its spirit, has affected me. We slough our skin and moan our lost innocence and look anew at the older and only marginally wiser person we have become. Being bitten and being changed and coming out of a naive chrysalis; these are all part of life. Another spin on the circle of life's wheel. I will never again be the same, trotting so innocently down nighttime trails. (And neither will the snake, being dead.) But as the skin sloughs off and we come up new, I realize there must be new innocence as well. Were we to crush all innocence in safe reflection, we would be living behind the thick glass, believing too much in the poison of the world around us and perhaps in our own.

So once burned and twice learned, but let us hope that a spark of wonder escapes the pulp, as we slough the old to find the new.

Changes in temporality—in the meaning and sense of time. In recent years, cultural anthropologists have become increasingly aware of different senses of time in different cultures—see collections of essays on this topic edited by Carol Greenhouse (1996) and Diane Hughes and Thomas Trautmann (1995). The German historian Reinhart Kosellek (1985) found that even in European societies the notion that time unfolds as a linear and non-repeating path of development was largely absent prior to the latter part of the eighteenth century. But beginning in this period, belief in human improvement and in the ideal of progress became more pervasive in Europe. Although this more modern sense of time is widely distributed and influential today, it contrasts with notions of time in many other societies—as well as those in earlier periods of Western history. In a number of earlier and non-Western instances, the unfolding of time was believed to mark either the eventual or hopeful return to a previous state or the gradual decline from a preceding period of goodness or beneficence. That time is not a circle of repetition or a path of decline but an arrow of newness and expected improvement is not a cultural universal but a distinctively modern idea.

Rainforest logging. Farther to the south of the Gebusi, hardwood timber is a prime resource for lumber companies that practice clear-cut logging. This destroys the rainforest and the livelihood of local people. In many cases, local people don't realize how much devastation logging will cause; they may be persuaded by the lure of money, goods, and trips outside the area to sign away their land in contracts with logging companies (see Brunois 1999; Barlow and Winduo 1997; Wood 1996, 1999). Deforestation from logging is a colossal problem in Melanesia, in the Amazon, in Southeast Asia, and in other rainforest areas. A wide array of resources and activist initiatives concerning rainforest destruction can be found on the Internet.

Modern material aspirations in out-of-the-way places. The Gebusi are not alone in their great desire for increased wealth and more commodities—despite, and even because of, the fact that they live in a remote location. For poignant examples from other parts of Papua New Guinea, see Knauff (2002b, 2007b), Gewertz and Errington (1996) and Errington and Gewertz (1998); for Amazonia, see Hugh-Jones (1992). See generally, Knauff (2002c).

Resistance versus accommodation to social change and “modernization.” Non-Western societies that harbored either valuable resources or sizable populations have often been subject to domination or oppression by colonial powers. This has occurred through warfare, slavery or forced labor, land alienation, taxation, removal of resources, and forced acculturation, particularly of indigenous elites. In many if not most cases, indigenous populations have resisted these depredations insofar as they have been able to do so. Domination and resistance as historical precursors to contemporary “globalization” or “modernization” have been foregrounded by anthropological scholars such as Eric Wolf (1969, 1982), James Scott (1998), Michel-Rolf Trouillot (2003), Peter Worsley (1984), and John Bodley (1999). Sometimes these developments are associated with pronounced social movements (see Nash 2004). The Gebusi have been fortunate, indeed, to have had a less difficult historical engagement with outside influences than many other societies. Against this background, the special circumstances of Gebusi history highlight the cultural significance of modern material aspirations even when external oppression has not been that great in relative terms.

Decline of communal life. The decentralization of larger and more communal living arrangements—and a corresponding increase in individual family houses or compounds—is a common aspect of change among people who previously lived in collective longhouses. This pattern has been documented in the Amazon and among Canadian Indians (Murphy and Steward 1956) and in much of lowland northern and southern New Guinea. It has also been documented among the Samo people just northwest of the Gebusi (see Shaw 1996).

CHAPTER 8

Fundamentalist conversion and the cross-cultural study of religion. The strength and popularity of fundamentalist Christianity have grown dramatically in recent decades. In addition to the United States, this pattern is highly evident in Latin America, the Pacific Islands, and parts of Africa and Asia (see Hefner 1993; van der Veer 1996; Vasquez 1998; Robbins, Stewart, and Strathern 2001; Schmid 1999). As documented by Philip Jenkins in his book *The Next Christendom* (2002), many converts in non-Western countries are adopting Christian beliefs that are not considered “mainstream” in North America or Europe. By contrast, many mainstream denominations of Christianity have been experiencing a decline in membership, including in the United States. The current spread of Christianity often involves evangelical, Pentecostal, or “fire-and-brimstone” beliefs and practices that appear illiberal or absolutist to many Westerners. At the Nomad Station, the doctrines of all three Christian churches seemed to fit this pattern.

Some scholars suggest that other world religions have also become more fundamentalist in recent decades. This reasoning applies to the attraction of conservative Islam in the mid-East, northern Africa, and Southeast Asia. Islamic fundamentalism has arguably been both reflected in and fueled by the events that led up to September 11, 2001 and the subsequent U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq.

In India, increasing fundamentalism may also characterize the intensification of Hindu beliefs and practices such as “Hindutva,” including strong opposition to Islamic religious practices within the country (see Hansen 1999, 2001). Analogous arguments have been made concerning the influence of conservative Judaism and fundamentalist Zionism in Israel.

It remains to be seen whether these combined patterns are part of a longer-term trend in which “globalization” and “secularization” will be undercut by disputes fueled by religious antagonism and strife. Alternatively, it is possible that current tensions and conflicts are more principally caused by disputes that are ultimately political in nature and that can be managed through diplomacy and negotiation.

Religious conversion versus syncretism (mixing). People exposed to new religious influences have often melded or blended older beliefs with new ones. This pattern has been especially well documented in Latin American varieties of Catholicism (which often mixed with Native American beliefs) and in the proliferation of local Hindu deities and avatars in South Asia. As Robbins (2001) notes, however, fundamentalist sects retard this process by asserting a clear break or rupture between their doctrine and previous beliefs and practices. In future decades, it will be important to investigate how religious fundamentalism attenuates or remains resistant to blending with other practices and beliefs.

Modern progress and religious belief in “deferred gratification.” It has often been suggested that an ethic of personal discipline, financial investment, and faith in the longer future are characteristic of both Protestant doctrine and the development and spread of Western capitalism. This idea was first raised by the German sociologist Max Weber (1958, original in German, 1904–05). More recently, scholars have seen striking parallels between the desire to become “modern” and conversion to highly disciplined forms of Christianity in different world areas (see van der Veer 1996; Hefner 1993; Knauff 2002a, pp. 172–173). How these developments will unfold over time and in alternate cultures remains an open question.

“Cargo cults.” The attempt by Melanesians to access Western goods through magical or spiritual means has long been of interest to anthropologists. In many cases, the beliefs and practices of cargo cults have blended over time with Christian doctrines, including belief in the Second Coming of Christ and the Apocalypse (at which time God may be believed to bring both wealth and eternal life to those who have been faithful). Studies of Melanesian cargo cults include books by Worsley (1968), Burridge (1960), Schwartz (1962), and Lawrence (1964), and my first published journal article (Knauff 1978). Recent trajectories of millennial or apocalyptic belief in Melanesia have been examined by Robbins (2004; Robbins, Stewart, and Strathern 2001), Schmid (1999), and Stewart and Strathern (2000). An important critique of the Western fascination with cargo cults has been authored by Lindstrom (1993).

Decline of Gebusi sorcery accusations. The demise of Gebusi inquests—including statistics concerning the decrease in divinations, spirit séances, and accusations—is described and discussed in Knauff (2002a, chapter 5).

Christianity and gender. In the combined course of Christianization and “modernization,” it is common for women to feel empowered by their new religious affiliation while ultimately being subordinated to and dominated by male religious and other institutional leaders (see Brown 1994; cf. Knauff 1997).

Revival or reemergence of indigenous religious beliefs. Anthropologists have documented the persistence of occult beliefs such as sorcery in a wide range of world regions, including in Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and Latin America, as well as the South Pacific and Melanesia. Older practices and beliefs often combine with new orientations, circumstances, and aspirations. For instance, belief in sorcery may dovetail with belief in magical retribution by or against persons who have gained modern wealth and power at the expense of others (see Comaroff and Comaroff 1999; Geschiere 1997). Although such beliefs had not developed among the Gebusi by 1998, I noted in these notes in the first edition of *The Gebusi* that the resurgence of older Gebusi customs “might arise in the future.” This was indeed born out during my re-study of Gebusi in 2008; see chapter 12 of *The Gebusi*, 2nd edition.

Forest peoples in Africa. My textual reference is to the account of Mbuti Pygmies in the central African rainforest by Colin Turnbull in his popular book *The Forest People* (1961).

CHAPTER 9

Women and marketing in cross-cultural perspective. In many world areas, women are important or primary market sellers of food and domestically made goods. This pattern has been especially well documented in Africa (see Clark 1994; House-Midamba and Ekechi 1995; Kapchan 1996). The role of Caribbean women marketers in the global economy has been effectively discussed by Freeman (2001). Her article also recasts common assumptions about the role of men in understanding globalization.

The social significance of money. Gift-exchange economies based on personal relations can be complicated or supplanted by the impersonal use of money to buy goods. Although gift exchange and the use of money often intertwine in fact, the difference between them has been documented and discussed in two books, both titled *Gifts and Commodities*. The first of these (Gregory 1982) discusses gifts and commodities in the context of Papua New Guinea. The second (James G. Carrier 1995) considers the same issues in the history of Western societies—namely, the rise of consumer society in the United States and Britain, and the ways in which social relations were correspondingly altered during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A contemporary account of commodities and consumption in Papua New Guinea has been authored by Foster (2002). Concerning European history, nineteenth-century scholars such as Karl Marx (1988, original 1844) and Georg Simmel (1990, chapter 5; original 1899) gave powerful accounts of how money can make people feel divorced or alienated from one another and from the fruits of their labor. Concerning money in the contemporary context of Melanesia, see Akins and Robbins (1999).

Commodities and prestige consumption. In many world areas, numerous manufactured goods have become more prestigious than the local goods they replaced. Important studies of modern commodity consumption have been published by Daniel Miller (2001). The relationship between status, material acquisition, and lifestyle has been critically documented for contemporary French society by Pierre Bourdieu (1984). For a colonial example from Zimbabwe in southern Africa, see Timothy Burke's book *Lifebouy Men, Lux Women* (1996). The contemporary study of luxury commodities and social status has important roots in the classic 1899 study by Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1965).

The anthropology of schooling and education. Given the importance of schooling for socialization and for wage employment in many world areas, a host of new ethnographic work on these issues is now being conducted or written up. Among existing monographs, that of Stambach (2000), on schooling in the Mount Kilimanjaro area of Kenya, is particularly significant. The research now emerging often reveals that for many students in developing countries, primary and secondary education does not lead in a predictable way to regular employment or economic satisfaction. Concerning Gebusi, see Knauff 2002a, chapter 7. Extensive information and sources concerning the contemporary anthropology of education in various world areas can be found in in-line book reviews of the journal *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*. See their reviews' web site @ <http://www.aaanet.org/sections/cae/aeq/br/AEQBookReviews.cfm>.

Theft and the desire for modern gratification, especially for men. An interesting case study of this issue has been supplied in a book chapter by Holly Wardlow (2002). In many countries of the world, and especially in major towns and cities, high rates of crime are associated with unsatisfied desires for commodities and for a modern means of earning a livelihood. This problem is especially acute among unemployed young men. Concerning Papua New Guinea (see Hart Nibbrig 1992; Goddard 1992, 1995; and Dinnen 1991).

Radio, mass media, popular culture, and nationalism. Recent years have seen an explosion of anthropological interest in the local, national, and international impact of mass media. An important collection of current studies, edited by Ginsburg, Abu-Lughod, and Larkin, is *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain* (2002). Anthropologists are increasingly aware of how local ideals are dynamically related to the influence of radio; TV; the printed media of newspapers, books, magazines, and comic books; and the “small media” of video and tape-recorded cassettes and circulated brochures, photocopies, and letters—as well as cell phones. “Large” media are particularly susceptible to control by state or international institutions, but audience responses to mass media, as well as local control of “small media,” often provide a rich interplay between what is broadcast and what is locally accepted or interpreted. Concerning globalization, culture, and media, see Mazzarella (2004).

Schoolchild aspirations easily disappointed. The graduation of children who have little chance of employment has sometimes been termed a “diploma disease” that is especially pronounced in developing countries (Gould 1993, pp. 152–154). At the same time, a lack of education can easily make the situation of young people worse rather than better.

CHAPTER 10

Magic and self-confidence. The anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (1954) theorized that magical potions and spells have the effect of giving people more confidence in undertaking activities that are otherwise difficult or dangerous. Concerning the role of magic in a modern world, see Meyer and Pels (2003).

Contemporary bride-wealth, bride-price, and/or dowry. Young people in societies from a range of world areas, including Africa, the Pacific Islands, and South and Southeast Asia, are increasingly faced with the tension between a growing desire for personal choice in marriage, family expectations, and inflated demands for bride payment or dowry. These tensions are poignantly depicted in the popular movie *Monsoon Wedding*, by Mira Nair, filmed in 2000 in New Delhi, India. Although the tensions surrounding marriage are for the most part reconciled in this film, their resolution is often compromised or conflicted in reality. Among the Gebusi, the tension between personal choice and family expectation is reflected in the case of the thwarted sister-exchange and its effect on the young woman, Gami, described in chapter 10.

The difficulties and dangers of well-intended intervention by outsiders. The subjugation, suffering, or domination of some members of a society has long been a concern to many if not most anthropologists. But what kind of intervention is best or most appropriate? This question is hard to answer in general; it depends on the specifics of the culture, the personalities of the people involved, and the capacities of the ethnographer. As the scope of proposed interventions gets larger in scale, it is unfortunately true that the possibility of unintended and even disastrous consequences also increases—notwithstanding the good intentions of those involved (see Escobar 1995). Feeling compelled to act, anthropologists increasingly recognize the importance of maintaining active dialogue with local people. It is important that the desires of an ethnographer not override the goals and opinions of those specific people on whose behalf he or she hopes to intervene. Concerning the anthropology of development, including the budding field of NGO-graphy, see Edelman and Haugerud (2005), Mosse (2004) and Lewis and Mosse (2006). Concerning practical anthropology in relation to both applied and scholarly concerns, see Knauff (2006), “Anthropology in the Middle” [Note: A PDF of this article is available on the author’s website].

Modern lifestyle, romantic attraction, and stigma. Although marriage choices continue to be strongly influenced by family considerations in many societies, young men and women in a wide range of world areas do have increased personal choice in marriage relative to their parents and grandparents. Increasing choice dovetails with new and locally modern forms of romance associated with the acquisition and use of commodities, mass media images, schooling, and the desire for self-actualization or -advancement, including among women.

Recent cases studies concerning this pattern include *Invitations to Love*, a book about love letters and modern romance in Nepal by Laura Ahearn (2001), and *Courtship After Marriage*, a study of love and sexuality in Mexican transnational families by Jennifer Hirsch (2003). As these books and other studies reveal, issues of moral impropriety and stigma can nonetheless remain strong, especially for women. Beyond the case of Gami described in the present chapter, for Melanesia see more generally “Gender Identity, Political Economy, and Modernity in Melanesia and Amazonia” (Knauff 1997). A poignant case study of women’s sexual choice and also stigma associated with sex and disease is Jessica Gregg’s monograph *Virtually Virgins* (2003), which concerns women in the city of Recife, Brazil. An important collection of chapters concerning the spread and tensions of romantic courtship in different world areas has been edited by Hirsch and Wardlow (2006).

CHAPTER 11

Ritual change and hybrid performance. Anthropologists have long been aware of mixing or “syncretism” between alternative forms of religious orientation and belief. So, too, diverse economic and social influences impact how rituals and other public enactments are materially performed. For instance, African and Roman Catholic religious images are brought together in Haitian Voodoo. (The name Voodoo itself derives from terms in West African languages for “god,” “spirit,” or “sacred object.”) In addition to documenting the combined significance of newer and older influences on ritual performance, anthropologists strive to understand what they mean for ritual practitioners and their audiences—how significant and personally important these combinations are. Trying to unravel and reflect on this issue was one of my challenges in considering Sayu’s dance and its aftermath.

Contemporary vis-à-vis traditional music. Sound clips and associated lyrics of Gebusi string band music, as well as traditional sèance singing, are available under “Gebusi research” on my Web site (type “Bruce Knauff” into www.google.com to get the address). Steven Feld (1982, 1995) has analyzed traditional and contemporary musical forms among the Kaluli, who live twenty-five miles southeast of the Gebusi. He has also produced CD recordings of Kaluli music in relation to sounds of the rainforest environment, including *Voices of the Rainforest* (1991) and *Bosavi: Rainforest Music from Papua New Guinea* (2001).

Concerning global musical influences, see especially Timothy Taylor’s book *Global Pop: World Music, World Markets* (1997).

Expressions of local, regional, and national public culture. In many world areas, local rituals are now influenced by, if not directly combined with, displays of regional or national culture (see Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992; Anderson 1991). These, in turn, are influenced by governments and mass media, including radio, TV, posters, advertisements, and music. The broader study of public culture within nations, regions, and locales has become increasingly important to cultural anthropologists. These interests are reflected in the contemporary journal *Public Culture*, including its special issues on globalization (Appadurai 2001), cosmopolitanism (Breckenridge 2002), and alternative modernities (Gaonkar 2001); see also Mazzarella (2004).

Making fun of tradition. Especially where people have difficulty considering themselves respectably modern on the basis of economic development or material acquisition, cultural assertions of progress may be configured through complementary assertions in which older practices or beliefs are held to be backward, ignorant, or uncivilized. For the Gebusi, see Knauff (2002b and 2007b). In insular Melanesia, a poignant case in point of this described by Frederick Errington and Deborah Gewertz (1994).

Performing and playing with rules of modern decorum. One of the great and seemingly irrepressible features of human symbolic expression is its ability to play with, reinterpret, and make fun of dominant assertions and doctrines. This capacity was described and analyzed in depth by the Russian literary scholar Mikhail Bakhtin (1968) and the anthropologist Victor Turner (1972). This propensity is evident in displays and festivals such as Mardi Gras, Carnival, and Halloween. Such occasions can include what anthropologists have called “rites of reversal,” that is, rituals in which normal social relations or rules of etiquette are playfully disrupted or turned upside-down (see Turner 1972).

The cultural enactment of fragmented social relations. It has often been asserted that social relationships become increasingly fragmented as societies modernize and become more complex and larger in scale (see Tönnies 1957). In contrast to social life in a small community such as Yibihilu, where people know and relate to one another in many different ways, social life in towns or cities—and even in a small outpost like the Nomad Station—brings together many people who may know little about one another and interact only fleetingly. This tendency was emphasized and scrutinized by classic European social theorists such as Karl Marx, Ferdinand Tönnies, and Max Weber, and by more recent scholars such as Anthony Giddens. It is consistent with this trend that rituals and other major expressions of public culture become increasingly complex, fragmented, and disjunctive as they evoke and symbolize social roles and practices that are increasingly diverse.

CHAPTER 12

Long term ethnographic fieldwork. A new edited volume with contributions from those who have conducted repeated fieldwork with the same people for many years or decades is anticipated to be published by Cornell University Press in 2010 as *Returns to the Field*, edited by Signe Howell and Aud Talle, with an afterward by Bruce Knauff.

CONCLUSION

Culture and the proliferation of locally modern institutions. As social life becomes locally modern, it reflects ideals of development and aspirations for progress, however these are locally defined. Given the increasing diversity of contemporary social roles and specializations, it is common for activities to be increasingly compartmentalized or “differentiated” into different institutions—such as churches, markets, businesses, schools, sports leagues, community organizations, and political groups. These spheres may be re-integrated through waves of cultural resurgence or rejuvenation, as occurred among Gebusi between 2000 and 2008.

Cultures becoming modern in their own distinct ways. Although people in virtually all world areas are subject to modern influences, what it means to be developed or to have progress is locally defined and interpreted (see Knauff 2002c). For anthropologists, this means both that societies share increasingly large patterns of social change and that cultural diversity remains powerful and important. In a contemporary world, cultural diversity is in some ways greater, more complex, and more self-conscious than ever.

Economic decline and cultural assertion. In many parts of the world, peoples are now grappling during situations of stress and hardship with the possibility that they may have been more developed or modern in the recent past than they are at the present time. In some ways, the recent economic decline in the U.S. puts many Americans in a similar situation as the Gebusi in 2008. In both cases, a challenge that emerges is how to recover and reassert key cultural values during periods of hardship and economic decline.