Recent Ethnological Studies from the Highlands of Papua New Guinea

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パプアニューギニア高地社会の民族学研究における最近の傾向

アンドリュ・ストラサーン, パメラ・J・スチュワート

This paper discusses and evaluates certain recent trends in the analysis of ethnographic information from the Highlands of Papua New Guinea. It traces changes in the trends over time in relation to four themes: social structure and process, politics and violence, Christianity and millenarian movements, and studies in aesthetics, bodily symbolism and material culture. Studies of these themes have all been influenced by the growing attention to the importance of the historical approach in anthropology. This is partly because the Highlands have experienced considerable social change since the 1960s. The studies also show the influence of recent theoretical styles of approach to ethnographic data in general, in particular an emphasis on the interpretation of cultural meanings and on the ways in which embodied experience enters into these meanings.

　　本論の目的は，パプアニューギニア高地の民族誌データの分析における最近の傾向について論じ，評価を行うことである。具体的には，次の4つのテーマとの関連で，これまでの研究傾向の変遷をたどることにする。1）社会構造とその変化，2）政治と暴力，3）キリスト教と千年王国運動，4）審美観，身体シンボリズム，物質文化。こうした研究テーマは，人類学の中で，歴史的アプローチの重要性がいっそう強く認識されてきた結果といえよう。このような

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研究上の傾向は，ニューギニア中央高地が1960年代より急激な社会変化を経験
してきた，という事実に基づいている。また同時に，民族誌データへのアプロー
チが理論的傾向を強めてきているという，人類学の一般的傾向をも示している。
とくに，文化的意味の解釈と，具体的経験が文化的な意味の構成要素となる様
が強調される傾向を示している。

Introduction

A discussion of the kind we develop here, based on a geographical region, can take either of two pathways: an overview in terms of peoples or areas (e.g. Huli, Duna, Melpa) or an examination of themes running across areas. Here we choose the latter, because this makes it easier to highlight the theoretical or comparative significance of the studies involved. Our list of themes also follows a particular logic. We move from themes that preoccupied the earlier analyses (late 1950s to mid-1970s) to those that have emerged subsequently as strong foci of interest. One shift has to do with a perception of the growing importance of historical change in post-colonial times since 1975. Another has to do with the reformulation of earlier analytical problems in terms of gender relations, embodiment, and aesthetics. We will deal with them separately. Given limited space, our survey is suggestive rather than exhaustive and is primarily informative rather than critically oriented. We recognize the artificiality of discussing a geographical region as though it were a bounded entity (see Hays 1993); this is done as a practical matter[1].

Themes

1. Social structure and process: trade and exchange, gender relations, prehistory, the history of religious cults, environment and demography, group affiliation, leadership.
2. Political change, problems of violence, scale of social relations, ethnicity, social change, questions of writing history.
3. Christianity and religious change, cargoistic and millenarian movements, ritual and myth, religion and conflict, witchcraft and sorcery.
4. Studies in aesthetics, embodiment, symbolism, and material culture.

Social Structure and Process

Early characterizations of the Highlands region picked on certain features of Highlands societies as "diagnostic", including: achieved leadership via exchange by "big-men", gender separation and antagonism, flexible affiliation to groups, openness to economic change and a generally secular and pragmatic attitude to tradition.   These features were in turn linked to the demographic expansiveness of groups and their intensive agricultural methods, aspects that were contrasted with fringe Highland societies.   R. Foster further contrasted the northern coastal Tanga people with whom he worked and their "replicative" system of social reproduction with the "multiplicative" and expansionist systems of the Highlands (Foster 1995: 228, 233).

Many of these features have by and large been confirmed in later studies. However, considerable modifications have appeared in the overall set.   First, while achieved leadership by "big-men" is recognized as a strong pattern in some cases (e.g. Melpa, Enga, Mendi), elements of succession to leadership roles also appear in some cases (Standish 1992 on Chimbu), and the ritual reinforcement or basis of "big-men's" power has also been analyzed (A. Strathern 1993a), reminding us also of elements stressed for what has been called "great-man" systems by M. Godelier (1982, 1986; compare also A. Strathern 1999).   Second, recognition of the dependence of "big-men" on female labor and affinal links has in time led to a more balanced view of gender relations, granting to women significant and active roles in exchange activities (e.g. Feil 1978 on the Tombema Enga; Lederman 1986 on Mendi) and finally conducing to a reinterpretation of some of the "male cults" in the western part of the Highlands as symbolizing the complementarity rather than the antagonism of the sexes or the simple subordination of women (P. J. Stewart and A. Strathern 1999a).   In a context of historical change Sexton's (1982) work also showed the initiatives taken by Eastern Highlands women in their *wok meri* (women's work) movement, and Zimmer-Tamakoshi also stresses women's active agency in the Bundi area (Zimmer-Tamakoshi 1997).   In the ritual context, separation need not imply antagonism.   It can mark cooperation, which has impelled us to invent the "collaborative model" of gendered activity in cult contexts that extends also into the day-to-day lives of the people.   This is not intended to exclude or deny elements of hierarchy or exclusion but rather to bring to light aspects that tended to be obscured or ignored in earlier treatments (e.g. Hawkins 1984).   P. Bonnemere's related work on women's roles in Ankave Anga rituals has been one of the more recent studies that have taken into consideration the important roles of women in ritual activities (Bonnemere 1996).   P. Lemonnier's work on shifting concepts of leadership throughout the Highlands can also be brought to bear on the ques-

tion of ritual power (Lemonnier 1990) and how this affects gender relations.

The earlier interest in the typology of forms of descent and affiliation and the arguments regarding flexibility and demographic pressure (e.g. Meggitt 1965; A. Strathern 1972; Kelly 1968) seems not to have been carried through to the present. P. Sillitoe, however (1978, 1979, 1983) has made major on-going contributions to this theme, arguing, like H. Scheffler (1985), against the idea of agnatic descent and stressing land usage and individual competition between "big-men" as decisive factors in the patterns of group composition. R. Wagner (1974) early on questioned whether there were any "groups" at all in the Highlands; but his perspective was better applied to the low population-density Daribi people, whom he studied, than to the large central highlands cases (see e.g. Warry 1987: 13). While Meggitt's early pronounce-ments on the association between a stress on agnatic descent and high popu-lation density (Meggitt 1965) have not been completely borne out, it is clear that there is an important ecological component to practices, as R. Rappaport (1968, 1999) innovatively stressed, and the clarifying work by R. Kelly (1968, 1977) remains to be further followed up in this regard. Kelly pointed out that cultural or social principles mediate between group structure and ecological conditions, giving rise to a variety of outcomes. One arena in which we now have more in-depth insights available is that of the operation of cognatic des-cent, particularly among the Huli and the Duna (Frankel 1986; Glasse 1968, 1995; Goldman 1983, 1993; Strathern and Stewart 2000a). Earlier typologi-cal arguments about whether these people's social systems were "really" agnatic or cognatic are convincingly obviated by the realization that they are both. Within the Duna local parish (*rindi*), agnatic men (*anoakaro*) in principle control land and a preponderance of ritual knowledge and power, while those affiliated through female links (*imakaro*) have secure rights of residence and participation in community affairs that can, however, be abrogated in situa-tions of conflict, for example those surrounding witchcraft accusations (see below). The finding that witchcraft accusations may be bound up with struggles over leadership between agnates and cognates in parishes is new for this area, while it is also reminiscent of a genre of earlier African studies (Marwick 1965; V. Turner 1957).

Another major new direction of study may be characterized as ethno-historical. Many of the issues discussed in the analytical literature can profit-ably be set into a longer term historical perspective to which both archaeology and ethnohistory can contribute. P. Wiessner and A. Tumu's massive com-pilations of materials from different parts of the populous Enga language area have made it abundantly clear that there is a history of changing social structure over some hundreds of years prior to colonial contact (Wiessner and Tumu 1998). To give two examples of their findings, they are able to place the great ceremonial wars described earlier by Meggitt (1977) into the fifth or sixth

generations before the present (Wiessner and Tumu 1998: 267) and to show how these were related to the growth of ceremonial exchanges based on alliances; and they underscore earlier work on traditions of the introduction of the sweet potato as a staple crop into the Highlands (Golson 1982) with an account of ritual practices that accompanied the crop's entry into the Enga area (pp. 101 ff.). This theme in turn matches work done on the historical movement of cults, especially the Female Spirit cult in the Hagen area east of the Enga (Strathern and Stewart 1999a). These cults also mirror changes in time of trade routes for shell valuables and complex concomitant changes in gender relations.

Political Change and History

This new stress on history finds its most general expression in contemporary studies of the rapid alterations in life-ways that have come about since the first incursions of whites into the Highlands in the early 1930s (for an excellent new account of one phase of this process see Gammage 1998, also Schieffelin and Crittenden 1991). Much of this writing remains in the form of articles or book chapters rather than monographs; but LiPuma (n.d.) has reviewed colonial and postcolonial history among the Maring (see also Maclean 1998 and Görlich 1999 on the neighboring Kobon), and Strathern and Stewart (2000b) have traced the histories of exchange, warfare, political development, and ritual among the Melpa of Mt. Hagen. Merlan and Rumsey (1991) present a detailed discussion of social structure in the Nebilyer Valley south of Hagen which stresses both the importance of language and rhetoric and the way that rhetorical forms encapsulate and constitute shifting narratives of group history spanning pre and post colonial periods.

Most observers agree that an oscillation between friendly exchanges and hostile violence is an enduring characteristic of Highlands societies. Questions remain regarding what causes the switches between these modalities, and such questions are particularly important in contemporary contexts where transformed "resurgences" of violence continue to manifest themselves, disrupting activities such as cash cropping and accompanying the preludes to and aftermaths of parliamentary-style elections. (e.g. Gordon and Meggitt 1985; A. Strathern 1993b; A. Strathern and P. J. Stewart 2000b; J. Ketan 1996). From the mid 1970s onwards violent conflicts of this sort have resulted at least in part from the altered or increased scales of political and generally social relations between groups and language areas (Levine and Levine 1979; Levine 1999; A. Strathern 1974; P. J. Stewart and A. Strathern 1997a). Levine (1999: 170–174) notes that these conflicts sometimes emerge from urban contexts of job competition or other tensions, and he sees them as a part of emergent classifications that take on an "ethnic" character. This is an im-

portant topic for future work.

At a time when changes resulting from cash cropping and business development during the 1960s and 1970s in some parts of the Highlands close to towns such as Goroka and Mt. Hagen were becoming clearly evident, numbers of writers began to explain tensions and conflict in terms of social class and the growth of the "big peasantry" (e.g. Fitzpatrick 1980; Donaldson and Good 1981; Amarshi, Good and Mortimer 1979). While developing class patterns are certainly significant, analyses of the intersection between class, ethnicity, politics of patronage and the continuous re-creation of intergroup animosities appear to grasp the complexities of the contemporary situation in greater depth (Knauft 1999; A. Strathern and P. Stewart 2000b, n.d.a). For urban situations, the study by Gewertz and Errington of the Rotary Club in Wewak in East Sepik Province shows a development of class-based ideas that results in city attitudes towards peripheral rural areas slotting these into the category of 'backward' dwellers in the bush (Gewertz and Errington 1999). No comparable study exists for the Highlands towns. However, to separate off urban from rural contexts is itself a mistaken perception, or 'misrecognition' in Bourdieu's (1977) terms. Rural areas, whether physically close to towns or not, are affected in both obvious and subtle ways by changes that center on the towns. Their people migrate to and from the towns, develop desires for goods, become carriers for diseases, introduce new practices, and come to perceive themselves as disadvantaged or neglected. The acute conflict between senior and junior generations which can be seen at work in peri-urban areas also has a part of its genesis in different horizons of expectations to do with work, wealth and leisure. The phenomenon of the 'rascal' is relevant here. The rascal is a kind of villain and a kind of heroic character at one and the same time, the latter-day instantiation of the 'violent man' who played a part in the Highlands ethos of conflict in the pre-colonial past.

With a span of some seventy years since early Australian exploration in the Highlands some anthropologists have begun seriously to take stock of Highlands history, with an emphasis on the development and vicissitudes of exchange practices and their relationship to questions of social order, the creation and dissolution of local identities and the slow emergence of aspects of a national consciousness (e.g. Clark 1997). A running series of studies on national elections has contributed to this stream of writing (e.g. Ketan 1998). We ourselves have pushed this narrative theme to the end of the twentieth century, looking at 'the death of *moka* exchanges' and the rebirth of the exchange mentality in the context of End Times thinking and the building of large new churches in Hagen (P. J. Stewart and A. Strathern 1998a, 1999b, 1999c; A. Strathern and P. J. Stewart 2000b). Aletta Biersack has for some years worked on similar themes, in particular for the Paiela, with whom she works, and on a comparative basis (e.g. Biersack 1991, 1995). Studies with a longer

time depth and broad geographical remit dealing with pre-colonial history and based on ethnohistorical sources, such as that by Wiessner and Tumu (1998), can usefully be set alongside the earlier synoptic work on the "evolution" of Highlands societies (e.g. Feil 1987).

Religious Change

Christian missionaries of the Lutheran and Catholic churches entered the Highlands hard on the heels of explorers for gold (Mennis 1982). From the beginning they had a considerable impact on the Highlanders' ways of thinking about the world, although this by no means implied a wholesale acceptance or assimilation of the missionaries' messages. Formal adherence to churches and 'conversion' with baptism into the church was the norm by the 1960s in most areas where churches had been at work for more than a decade. Subsequently, however, a more complex picture has emerged, with the advent of new evangelistic, charismatic, and fundamentalist Protestant churches that have taken many converts away from the main-line churches and have stimulated, intentionally or otherwise, millenarian or cargoistic thinking and movements.

Indeed such movements were quite characteristic of the earlier days of colonial influence, as a number of studies have shown (e.g. Meggitt 1974; A. J. Strathern 1979–80; P. J. Stewart and A. Strathern 1999b, 2000a). So the more recent manifestations are not isolated or new (see particularly Trompf 1994 for a good overview). However, as with historical analyses generally, we lack an overview of the history of religious change throughout the Highlands, although most anthropologists discuss it to some extent and some (e.g. Clark 1984; Robbins 1999) have made it central to their work. In Hagen, as we have noted, people have since the early 1990s been deeply concerned with End Times issues, their notions altering as each year goes by (P. J. Stewart and A. Strathern 1997b, 1998b, 1998c, 1998d, 1999c).

The presence of multiple churches in a single area has led to two processes: competition between churches leading either to mimesis, or some form of schismogenesis (disharmony) between them (see Jebens 1997); or outright conflict (e.g. A. J. Strathern 1993c; Stewart and Strathern 1999b, 2000a).

At earlier stages of change the arrival of the missionaries heralded the decline and abandonment of indigenous ritual practices such as initiation cults and their replacement by church initiations and professions of repentance and turning away from violence. However, violence soon reasserted itself from the 1970s onwards, leading to polarization of community ideas in favor of or against it. The contemporary activities of 'rascals' fall into this pattern also. In some places religious cult performances survived into the 1980s, as with the Female Spirit cult in the Mount Hagen area (Strathern and Stewart 1998a, 1999a). Here too, however, already in the 1960s there were dramas of oppo-

sition between Christians and pagans over whether to hold cult performances or not.

One Hagen leader who sponsored a performance in 1983–84 was by 1999 planning his baptism into the Assemblies of God local church congregation in his area. Another focus of conflict has been polygamy. The AOG church permits polygamists to be baptized but not to take further wives. The Lutherans and Catholics refused baptism to any who were in a polygamous relationship. Women have become prominent in the newer church movements and use this prominence to campaign against polygamy in many cases (P. J. Stewart and A. Strathern 1998b, 1998c, 1998d).

One element of 'belief' that has remained polyvalent and adaptive to change is the realm of ideas about witchcraft, and in some places sorcery (on sorcery see, e.g. Stewart and Strathern 1997a, 1999d; Lederman 1981). In the Duna area of the far western Highlands a resurgence of notions centering on female witchcraft has taken place in the 1990s and church authorities have admitted that prayers may not be effective against witchcraft powers (A. Strathern and P. J. Stewart 1999b). Witchcraft ideas remain powerful in part because they relate to the unseen, in part because they become a vehicle for the 'discontents of modernity' and for gender-based conflicts which no longer find expression or resolution in cult practices.

Christianity entered the Highlands as a part of the colonial process in the 1930s, but the Highlands has also been an arena for the long term transmission and importation of religious cult forms prior to direct colonial influence. Aspects of these earlier processes appear in the reworking of Christian and indigenous forms that has occurred since the 1960s including the incorporation and transformation of Christian millenarian and eschatological themes around the time of the year 2000 (e.g. Biersack 1995; Goldman and Ballard 1998; and the studies by Ballard, and by Bieniek and Trompf in Stewart and Strathern eds 2000a).

Aesthetics and Embodiment

Early studies on the Highlands emphasized strongly these peoples' love of display in the context of their exchange festivities. M.O'Hanlon's studies of these phenomena for the Wahgi society have become a classic exposition of this theme (O'Hanlon 1989). Display has to do with the importance of the body and embodiment generally in these societies. By embodiment we mean the expression of social values and relations through the body and the projection of the body also into human artifacts and wealth objects exchanged between people. A feature that is important here is the presence of what we have called, in general terms, 'humoral ideas': notions of basic substances and their concentration or depletion in the body, and their flows between bodies, that are

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tied in with concepts of balance, disturbance, tranquillity, sufficiency, etc., seen ultimately in a cosmic context. Studies of this phenomenon, broadly conceived, include e.g. Gillison 1993, Meigs 1984, A.J. Strathern 1996, Strathern and Stewart 1999b, Stewart and Strathern n.d.a. L. Goldman and C. Ballard's edited collection on *Fluid Ontologies* (1998) can also be compared in this context, dealing largely with identities seen in terms of cosmic flows of power. The place of artifacts and wealth objects in such flows is obvious, stemming from the basic idea of the equivalence of wealth to the human body (R. Wagner 1967; Godelier 1996; Strathern and Stewart 1999c). The idea has been extended to money in recent years, hence an ambivalent set of attitudes to money as on the one hand a corrosive force (seen in secular terms) and on the other as creative and life-giving (seen in sacred terms).

Of studies on material artifacts as such P. Sillitoe's magisterial and comprehensive work on Wola artifacts stands out from all others (Sillitoe 1988). A notable study of a particular artifact is to be found in MacKenzie's work on the netbag in the Ok region (MacKenzie 1991, see also Stewart and Strathern 1997c for a broad overview).

Conclusions

We have given here only a brief overview of a selection of themes. Much remains to be done in the Highlands of both a synthetic and a particular kind. We have highlighted the movement towards a historical anthropology of the Highlands as a project to be strengthened in the future. There is a need to keep abreast of the manifold contemporary changes and the ever more intricate intertwining of the national and the local in people's lives, and to recognize the transformations of ideas about witchcraft and sorcery as well as the indigenisation of Christianity. Finally, as an aspect of "embodiment" studies, there is a need for serious study of the domain of the sensuous, in songs, folktalkes, and ballads, comparable to the work of S. Feld on the Kaluli people of the Strickland-Bosavi area (Feld 1982, see for a beginning Strathern and Stewart 1997a; Alan Rumsey and Francesca Merlan are also working on these themes from Nebilyer Valley materials). Also, as an extension of ideas of embodiment, the theme of the identification of people with places has recently been re-examined in Highlands ethnography (J. Weiner 1993, cf. Feld and Basso 1996; Strathern and Stewart 2000b).

NOTE

1)   Our survey is not meant to be bibliographically or topically exhaustive. It deals with themes that bridge over from the concerns of anthropological writings of the 1960s to more recent concerns with questions of historical change. We mention both studies written in terms of the

observer's analytical concepts of social change (e.g. Feil 1987) and works written from the viewpoint of ethnohistory, that is accounts of their past given by people themselves (e.g. Biersack 1991, 1995). These studies represent different current approaches to the writing of anthropological history, discussed, for example, by Sahlins (1985, 1994). We cannot enter here into this discussion in further detail, but refer to our work on Highlands history (Strathern and Stewart n.d.b) for more exploration of this theme. The themes we choose are not arbitrary or antiquarian. They are designed to be relevant both to the past histories of the societies of the Highlands and to the contemporary conditions in the Highlands, seen as a region impacted by new ideological political and economic forces. At the same time they deliberately preserve the distinctive anthropological approach signaled by the term "ethnological studies" in our title, and our focus here is on the Highlands of Papua New Guinea (not West Papua).We cite our own works simply to indicate their contribution to the themes we are dealing with. We want to stress very strongly that anthropological topics are very relevant to contemporary issues, just as much as issues of development economics, law, criminology, transport, telecommunications, or other putatively "modern" aspects of the world; and our previously published works stress this point also.

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