

dergreifen von Tourismus, Revival-Bewegung und Museumsentstehung dar.

Den dann folgenden Beitrag zu den Museen in Neuguinea hat Sebastian Haraha geschrieben, über das National Museum in Port Moresby, das er vor allem aus indigener Sicht gesehen als ein Zeremonialgebäude vorstellt. Auffallend ist auch die starke Rolle, die dem Direktor des Museums zugeschrieben wird, die Stanley auch mit der Rolle der traditionellen Big Men vergleicht. Weitere Beispiele sind das Gogodala Cultural Centre (dargestellt von Alison Dundon) und ein Cultural Centre im Finisterre-Gebirge im Nordosten von Neuguinea, das Christin Kocher Schmid beschreibt. Letzteres ist die Gründung eines lokalen Politikers, weniger ein Museum als ein Ort der Aktivitäten und Shows. Hier wird die politische Bedeutung dieser Zentren besonders auffällig. Nick Stanley schließlich untersucht ein Museum im indonesischen Teil von Neuguinea, in Agats bei den Asmat. Er stellt sich die Frage, inwiefern es ein indigenes Museum sei. Er bejaht die Frage wegen der Gegenwarts- und Zukunftsorientierung der Einrichtung. Folgt man allein diesem Kriterium, wird eine Abgrenzung gegenüber dem sogenannten westlichen Museum noch problematischer.

Robert L. Welsch und Christina Kreps geben schließlich in ihren beiden Aufsätzen einige allgemeine Ausführungen zum Thema des Buches. Welsch stellt gemäß der Ausgangsposition westliches Museum / indigenes Museum nochmals Objekte den nichtmateriellen Traditionen gegenüber. Es wäre jedoch falsch, die westlichen völkerkundlichen Museen in historischer Betrachtung allein als Orte des Sammelns von Objekten zu klassifizieren. Sie waren ebenso an der Dokumentation, der mündlichen Überlieferung, den Mythen und den ikonographischen Erklärungen interessiert. Bei den Cultural Centres seien nicht die Objekte im Mittelpunkt, da sie ja jederzeit wieder hergestellt werden könnten. Leider ist dem nicht so, wie ich selbst mehrfach erfahren konnte. Viele Gegenstände der materiellen Kultur sind vollständig in Vergessenheit geraten, gerade weil sie nicht mehr vor Ort waren und als Vorbild für eine Neuproduktion dienen konnten.

Die sehr detaillierten und für eine Museumsgeschichte des Pazifik wichtigen Beiträge machen deutlich, wie stark sich das Verständnis von Museum nicht nur im Pazifik, sondern auch bei uns verändert hat. Auch wenn eine Indigenisierung der Museen bei uns nicht das Ziel sein kann, da die Objekte hier nicht den gleichen Einfluss ausüben können wie in Neuguinea oder auf anderen Inseln Melanesiens. Markus Schindlbeck

Stasch, Rupert: *Society of Others. Kinship and Mourning in a West Papuan Place.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009. 317 pp. ISBN 978-0-520-25686-6. Price: £ 14.95

The Korowai and Kombai live east of the upper Eilanden River and south of the eastern mountains of West Papua (exact coordinates can be found in the World Atlas of Language Structures 2005). Their languages form part of the Awyu-Dumut family, known since Drabbe's

pioneering work as a member of the so-called Trans New Guinea phylum. De Vries has substantially contributed to our knowledge of Kombai and Korowai. The grammar "The Korowai of Irian Jaya. Their Language in Its Cultural Context," containing a wealth of ethnographic information and a collection of texts, has been written by van Enk and de Vries (Oxford 1997). The present study is a most welcome contribution on several grounds.

First, as ethnographic research is not facilitated, or even prohibited, by the Indonesian government, this work improves our knowledge of a neglected and not directly accessible area.

Second, at the same time, the book corrects a good number of popular accounts: "... in the 1990s tourists from Europe, North America, and Japan began visiting Korowai and Kombai lands to meet and photograph people who fit their stereotypes of primitive humanity" (66); tourists and would-be discoverers were attracted by the Korowai's famous tree house dwellings. Note 1 to the "Introduction" lists such accounts as well as television broadcasts (277). I have come across some articles and books written in German, for example: "Vom Leben in einer fremden Zeit" by A. Smoltczyk, presenting the Korowai as Stone Age men (*Geo Kompakt*, 13.2007); "Laleo – Die geraubte Steinzeit", by R. Garve and F. Nordhausen (Berlin 2009), entertaining, containing a lot of errors (*laleo* for Korowai "demon"); Karen Gloy's intolerant and unbalanced "Unter Kannibalen. Eine Philosophin im Urwald von Westpapua" (Darmstadt 2010).

Third, Stasch not only presents new data, but very thoughtfully puts them into the framework of social and anthropological philosophy, going back to Simmel and Tönnies. He shows that the Korowai organize their social life around "otherness," that is, social life is a constant balancing of closeness and attachment, on the one hand, and separation, alterity, or otherness, on the other. While this balancing casually reminds one of the fundamental human unsocial sociability (*ungesellige Geselligkeit*) as expressed by Kant, one may safely assume that it is an illustration of the Melanesians' choice of diversity and the ways a society comes into being by levelling out individuals' demands and the claims of the community (see Laycock on "linguistic diversity" as a Melanesian choice and Sillitoe on "give and take" as the main mechanism constituting society).

Fourth, ethology (!) deduces signalling behaviour from the conflict behaviour in approach and flight: the Korowai's social life consists in establishing borders as well as boundary crossings. Signals and symbols develop while closeness and distancing are regulated and mediated (for instance, through rules of nonverbal behaviour in dwellings or during encounters, through sharing food, expressing grief). Thus, Stasch focuses on processes of signification (see, for example, pp. 103, 265, 273; "land, time, bodily touch, bodily genesis, food, gifts, sight, and modes of person reference" are presented as "media of involvement in which people relate to each other practically" (265, see also 16 and 267), this "relating to each other" being realized by signifying acts, that is, by semio-

sis. Stasch's work thus aims at contributing to semiotic anthropology.

The study is based on eighteen months of fieldwork in the Korowai area carried out between 1995 and 2007. The author has lived in about fifty Korowai houses located on thirty-five clan places located in five villages. About 250 men and 230 women have been interviewed (xiv). Time and again statements and descriptions are introduced by formulas like "when asked to explain Korowai assert" or "once I asked a man" (see, e.g., 88, 90, 97, 105, 135, 140). The data base consists, then, in these interviews, reference to larger bits of information is occasionally made (to settlement narratives, songs, see 209, or myths, see 135, 143, 177, 193, 209, 217, in particular 219f., where a whole myth is given). Throughout the book the semantics of Korowai words and idioms are discussed (e.g., on "place": 28–31, "other" and "stranger": 39f., see particularly chapter 2, "Pairing and Avoidance," see also minor examples on pp. 219, 224, 260). Kinship terms are not only listed, but examples of their use in idioms, compounds, and greeting-formulas are given (see 108–113). All this yields what one could call a "dense" mesh of observations, statements, and excursions into theory and philosophy.

The chapter "Introduction: Otherness as a Relation" advances the argument "that Korowai define their social engagements around ways in which they are strange to each other. Boundaries of otherness are points of unity between people. Perhaps all human relations have this paradoxical organization" (2). The two goals of this book are, first, to discredit a model of social bonds according to which "people's social unity is based on their similarity and their shared experience," and, secondly, to examine the ways in which the Korowai people "make qualities of otherness the central focus of their social relations" (1).

The following chapters produce arguments for this markedly different view. Chapter 1, "A Dispersed Society" is centered on landownership, activities of dwelling, moving, laboring on land, geographic separation and interlocal travel. Chapter 2 examines patterns of pairing and avoidance, "otherness-charged dyads," e.g., "owner" and "guest," "bow and arrows," or "human" and "demonic dead." Such pairs are basic units, their linkage being a "clear way in which Korowai make otherness the very basis of a relation" (73). The following chapters are concerned with kinship: maternal uncle relationships, children and their relation to parents or other caring relatives, and marriage. The final chapter 6 examines "understandings of death and practices of mourning."

A good number of mere facts are also found in the concise ethnographic sketch of van Enk and de Vries, for instance, the role of the avunculate and the road to marriage via MMB's offspring. What Stasch does, is to present these facts as mirrored and interpreted by the doings and statements of the Korowai themselves and to place them in the context of the tensions built up by mediating closeness and separation or alterity. Thus, marriage is seen as a "practice of systematic mismatches of closeness and strangeness" (21), strangers marry, not "together people," as the Korowai state (173, see also

258), signifying acts of nonverbal behaviour, sharing of food, exchange of gifts, moving in space, and rules of speaking have to mediate the autonomy of the protagonists and the necessary construction of "consociation" or of "conjoined belonging and strangeness" (see p. 177 on shyness and cooperation). This amounts to saying that "boundaries of otherness" are not only a matter of theory but also a powerful method of ordering and tying together seemingly unrelated data (see also 206f.).

This study shows the tensions between the autonomy of those living in "closeness" and the rules of a society, which is in the making "along the lines of otherness" (260). The necessary balancing is created through histories of ownership, living at specific locations, marriage, mourning – that is, through organizing social relations. The Korowai's awareness and understanding of social relations is guided by events and actions. Structures dissolve into histories. "Korowai define what they are to each other by signifying it, through all the specific kinds of media of contact I have touched upon: pandanus, pigs, kinship terms, word avoidance, forms of person reference, architectural forms, ownership of land, material gifts, acts of touch, facial expressions, laughter, and much more" (273).

The style of this study consists in a peculiar way of swinging from philosophy to Korowai statements and interpretation (see, e.g., p. 48, where arguments move from Simmel's "we are boundaries" to de Certeau's concept of boundary-crossing to Korowai's pairing of "owner" and "guest"). Comparison would have helped to evaluate findings: the Korowai's technique of pairing forms part of the ubiquitous parallelism membrorum, as found particularly in songs, which are neglected in this book; the concept of "anger" (see 183) is found in other Papuan languages as well. When processes of "consociation" and signification lead to semiotic anthropology, when semiosis, signs in the making, is demonstrated, one would expect this discipline to turn into genetic semiotics. One is looking forward to publications, where Stasch's documentation is not, so to say, interview-centered but open for describing and displaying other sign systems. Van Enk and de Vries write that "Korowai land is very sparsely populated" (1997: 9): perhaps, hints at population density, demography, and scarcity of resources may help to understand the Korowai's way of constant moving in space and balancing closeness and separateness. Only one weak and insufficient reason for their special way is incidentally mentioned: "Korowai egalitarianism consists of aversion to anyone controlling others' actions by authoritarian domination and discomfort with anyone being wealthier or better than others" (43). It should be said that the author, having dealt with tourists and officials, also endured fieldwork in a difficult environment; I would like to congratulate him on writing this theoretically innovative study based on an astonishing corpus of Korowai statements, comments, and observations.

Volker Heeschen