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Golub, Alex. Leviathans at the Gold Mine: Creating Indigenous and Corporate Actors in Papua New Guinea. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014.

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Alex Golub's book tells a fairly depressing tale. Eighty years ago, the Ipili of the Porgera Valley in the middle of Papua New Guinea (PNG) had but the barest acquaintance with the empire builders of the world. In 1939, however, all that began to change when members of an Australian patrol recovered gold from the Valley's lower reaches. Initially, despite the presence of nuggets the size of pebbles, the field remained too remote for more than small-scale exploitation, but with the discovery in 1986 of a high-grade gold bed, major mining operations became commercially feasible. By the mid-1990s, after protracted negotiations between Porgera land-owners, Placer Gold, and provincial and national governments, exploitation was seriously underway.

What followed was an engagement trajectory that fits easily into standard tropes: a story of progress and development – of the benefits that mining brings to Third World Stakeholders – and a familiar story of the “resource-curse” – global capital's destruction of untouched cultures and pristine environments, a tale of environmental devastation, subsistence crises, alcohol abuse, and the rise of squatter communities, conflicts, shootings, rapes, and other social disorders. For Golub, however, the Porgera story is much harder to understand, and his volume attempts to do justice to a much more complex reality, the saga of an indigenous people's engagement with the colonial and post-colonial world, magnified through the lens of a giant mining operation.

Golub's analytical concern is how to do justice to a contemporary global scene that anthropology currently seems to characterize as both Foucauldian and Deleuzian – a schizophrenic view that on the one hand, sees global populations as ever more structured by panoptic, neo-liberal technologies of subjectification and, on the other, as “evanescent assemblages of actors” with the potential to “gainsay the pretension to omnipotence that currently structures our world” (pp. 1-2). This apparent incoherence is rooted in questions about the relation of individuals to groups that have long lurked in the anthropological shadows: “How do individuals come to represent groups? How is action coordinated across time and space? How do macro orders of determination interface with micro levels of human interaction? How do human beings form social totalities..?” (p.3).

To address these questions, Golub deploys Callon and Latour's (1981) concept of a leviathan, a durable, potent institution that routinizes modes of thought, habits, forces, and objects to act as one, thereby making them “manage-able.” The Porgera Valley saw the construction of two such abstract entities, a large mining operation (“the mine”) and an ethnic group (“The Ipili”), neither of which existed less than a century ago. The leviathan concept, Golub argues, allows us simultaneously to avoid seeing these institutions as nothing more than epiphenomena of the microsociological (of individual agency and actors) or as macrosociological – unproblematic, reified – actors in themselves. Instead, it allows us, crucially, to see them as both. In the Porgera Valley, the mine, along with provincial and national government bodies were, like Hobbes's Leviathan, the social order of bureaucracy incarnate. The Ipili emerged as a leviathan in a different way, however. With the encroachment of governmental entities and the development of the mine, the people of the Valley needed to be identified as – and needed to identify themselves as – a collective whose will could be personified in order to articulate with the leviathans that were now on their doorstep. They needed to become “feasible” – to become “The Ipili,” where once they had been nothing of the sort. They needed to exist as an ethnic group (a kind of “Ipili, Inc.”), and they had to present themselves as having certain

politico-cultural features so that the legal and ethical requirements of these leviathans could be met.

The substance of the book is an examination of selected dimensions of this process, using data drawn from a detailed survey of historical and anthropological documents, with its later phases vividly supplemented by Golub's own 27 months of field interviews and observations of the mine operators, government representatives, local Porgera landowners, activists, and others, between 1998 and 2009. We learn how the Landowners Negotiating Committee, a limited circle of spokespersons, came to translate the microcosm of what was going on around them and came to be authorized to speak and act on behalf of their clans-people in an official capacity. We observe how the flexible kinship and ethnicity that had characterized contact-era social life in Porgera became disambiguated as 'The Ipili' were constructed in relation to the mine. The Ipili not only had to exist as an ethnic group, but clearly delineated "traditional" kinship units had to be assembled from their earlier, more fluid kinship practices. These units – "clans" – also had to "own" land in such a way that certain clans could lay claim to the territory within which the mine operated, and others could be excluded. Valley residents also had to be "pacified" – that is, rendered free of unpredictable and violent outbursts that might disrupt mine operations. We learn, in addition, how the Ipili also eventually used their (mine-empowered) position to effect changes at provincial and national levels.

The volume is clear and engaging and both sympathetic and even-handed to all of the actors involved without sacrificing a keen-eyed perspective on their agendas and strategies. The concept of a leviathan is a handy label to bracket the intricacies and inter-relations of the institutions that precipitate out as global capital reaches across the face of the Earth, though whether it can do much analytical work without considerable further refinement is not obvious. Perhaps reflecting its origins in a Ph.D. thesis, the volume picks out and weaves together analytical threads from a kaleidoscope of current anthropological thinkers, and while this erudition should rightly dazzle the anthropological reader, it may be of less interest to audiences from other disciplines. Nevertheless, non-anthropologists are unlikely to find another work that describes at such high resolution the complexities of global-local articulations.

In a well-crafted afterword, Golub deals with the recent, disconcerting academic fallout that followed anthropological efforts to document and engage with projects such as the Porgera mine. In a 2011 publication in *Current Anthropology*, Catherine Couman documented the same Porgera history: the environmental damage, the lawless behavior of some mine employees, the effects on local subsistence practices, and the disruptive social consequences. But Couman went further to accuse a prominent Australian anthropologist, Martha Macintyre, of complicity in all of this for serving on an independent oversight body charged with monitoring the Porgera mine's environmental impact. Macintyre, Couman charged, provided implicit and explicit support for the mine's responses to allegations about the environmental damage and human rights abuses for which it was responsible.

These charges were sufficiently over the top that *Current Anthropology's* editor publically apologized. Golub also worked closely with the mine's operators, albeit in a documentary role, and Couman's charges are broad enough to impugn him. His nuanced response to the dilemmas he – and, by extension, anthropologists working in similar situations – confront highlights the complex tragedies that large-scale projects such as the Porgera mine represent. He finds himself "amazed that as the issues in Porgera get more and more complex, people seek answers that are morally and empirically simpler and simpler" (p. 212). The saga of the Porgera Valley is far removed from any poignant stereotype of a rampaging capitalist

enterprise unilaterally devastating the idyllic life-ways of a hapless indigenous people. Neither the mine operators nor local pressure groups want the mine to close; local pressure groups and local people continue to engage with the leviathan to exact the promise of their expectations. The damage their engagement has wrought was caused not just by the mine but also by the decisions of the Ipili. In the end, unfortunately, the Ipili may have been the ones who lost.

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