

Teaching Anthropology: SACC Notes



Volume 18, Number 1 spring 2012

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Teaching Anthropology: SACC Notes is the official publication of the Society for Anthropology in Community Colleges (SACC), a section of the American Anthropological Association (AAA). It is published semi-annually by SACC and AAA as a benefit of membership, and is available to the public on SACC's website, <http://saccweb.net>.

Lloyd Miller, Editor; Ann Kaupp, Assistant Editor

SACC's mission is to encourage dialogue and collaboration among teachers of anthropology across sub-disciplines and institutional settings, and to promote excellence in the teaching of anthropology. *Teaching Anthropology: SACC Notes* advances this mission by providing members with news of SACC activities, including annual meetings, and publishing articles and commentaries on teaching, research, and of general anthropological interest.

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ISSN: 1537-1751

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Introduction

By sheer coincidence, three of the five articles in this issue deal with human consumption, the kinds we eat and drink both for nourishment and pleasure. In his recurrent column, "Archaeology Matters," **Bob Muckle** discusses the relationships between archaeologists and beer. He offers some explanations of why he and so many of his trowel and brush colleagues are enamored of beer, and he examines evidence for the uses of beer in the past. He also recounts how, while in graduate school, his ability to keep the fridge well stocked won him applause at a regional anthropological conference.

Ari Ariyaratne examines apparent similarities between some of anthropology's traditional ways of teaching about culture and popular ways of viewing culture. Collaborating with his students in a cultural anthropology class and using food culture as the topic of study, he and they together find evidence that perhaps some of our pedagogical techniques contribute inadvertently to the kind of cultural stereotyping found in popular discourse.

In light of the growing food crisis around the globe, **Analiese Richard** details food consumption across cultures, and, in addition examines production, distribution, ritual practices and, of course, the politics

that surround them all. She explains ways that anthropological studies that take into account such factors as environment, sociopolitical systems, values and cosmology can contribute to solving paradoxical dilemmas like poverty in the presence of plenty or the coexistence of malnutrition and obesity.

Deborah Shepherd provides us with a detailed look at NAGPRA, the National American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990. She documents its origin, rationale and evolution, and describes how Native Americans act and feel about the law. She also relates experiences from different tribes in order to give a multidimensional perspective on the law and its outcomes.

Finally, I report on the American Atheists, Inc. 2011 annual conference in Des Moines, IA, in an attempt to answer several questions I've pondered for some time. Who are these people who share my values and yet belong to an organization that writes and speaks out publicly to promote their agenda? Are they as religiously absolute in their belief that gods do not exist as traditional religious zealots are in their theism? And, on a more personal level, in what ways, if at all, are they different from me?

Lloyd Miller

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Lloyd Miller is professor emeritus of anthropology and Spanish at Des Moines Area Community College, Ankeny, IA. He is Editor of *Teaching Anthropology: SACC Notes*, and a contributing editor to *Anthropology News*, newsletter of the American Anthropological Association.

Bob Muckle has been practicing, teaching and writing about archaeology for more than 20 years. His work at Capilano University in North Vancouver, British Columbia, includes directing an annual archaeological field school. Bob contributes frequently to *SACC Notes* and his column, "Archaeology Matters," is a regular feature. He is also a past president of SACC.

Analiese Richard is Assistant Professor of Anthropology and Faculty Chair, School of International Studies, University of the Pacific, Stockton, CA. She presented this paper for SACC's Current Issues/Five-Fields Update Symposium at the American Anthropological Association's 2011 Annual Meetings in Montreal, Quebec.

Deborah Shepherd, formerly adjunct faculty at Anoka-Ramsey Community College, MN, is an education and communications professional, editor and researcher in the Greater Minneapolis-St. Paul Area. She specializes in nonprofit and curricular education programs.



Archaeology Matters

a recurring column

Bob Muckle



On the Special Relationship Archaeologists Have With Beer

Archaeologists love beer. They love looking at it, drinking it, talking about it, and writing about it. Some probably even dream about it. They research its origin, including when, why, and where it appears in antiquity. They investigate how it was made, distributed, and consumed in both prehistoric and historic times. They use the remnants of beer containers as time markers in archaeological sites for determining activity areas and for reconstructing ethnicity. Archaeologists often tend to put themselves in danger, especially during fieldwork, but are rarely scared. The only thing archaeologists are really afraid of is running out of beer.

Beer as the Beverage of Choice

That beer is the beverage of choice among archaeologists is well-known. Many have commented on it, and some have tried to explain it. Some have traced the correlation of archaeology and drinking alcohol as originating in the Renaissance and Enlightenment when it was the alcohol-loving upper class that did much of the archaeology. Originally it was gin and other liquors that were favoured by archaeologists in places such as the Middle East, but apparently beer is the number one choice of archaeologists in those regions now as well.

Few would deny that beer drinking has become part of the culture of archaeology, especially field archaeology. Many, especially those who undertake the ethnography of archaeological fieldwork, appreciate that besides providing cheap labor by students, field schools introduce students to the professional culture of archaeology, including attitudes, customs, and rituals (see, for example, the *Ethnographies of Archaeological Practice*, edited by Matt Edgeworth). Many of those attitudes, customs, and behaviours involve beer.

Enculturation also takes place during archaeology parties and conferences and by archaeologists talking about it in classes.

Archaeology isn't the only profession in which beer seems to be the beverage of choice. An on-line article appearing in 2009, called "Why Geologists Love Beer," examined answers to the question. Based on interviews with a number of earth scientists, the author came up with three theories to explain the special bond. One theory was that after a hard day of work in the hot weather, beer is enticing. I see some value in that theory, but have some trouble with using it to explain the bond in archaeology, insofar as archaeology doesn't only occur in warm weather (I know geology doesn't either, but the author fails to consider this). The second theory may be described as the social lubricant theory, with the rationale that beer drinking stimulates the sharing of information. Maybe this is true, but it still doesn't explain why beer, rather than other liquors, is the beverage of choice. It would make an interesting research project, perhaps comparing the

amount of information sharing at conferences that had beer only vs. conferences that had no beer. I doubt whether many archaeologists would attend a conference with no beer though. The third theory is "drinking beer is simply part of the culture of the discipline." In my view, this is a weak theory, because it doesn't really explain why it became part of the culture.

I've come up with some other explanations. One is that in many locations where archaeologists do fieldwork, beer is safer to drink than water. Considering the amount of liquid an archaeologist consumes in a day, especially during fieldwork, I wouldn't want to imagine replacing beer with any other alcoholic beverage. Another explanation is related to cost. Much archaeological fieldwork is undertaken by college or university

The oldest drinkable beer was discovered a few years ago by salvagers of a shipwreck in the Baltic Sea, dating to between AD 1800 and 1830, and it was sampled by professional beer tasters. They claimed it tasted "very old."

students, or shovelbums (professional, often itinerant, fieldworkers) who make relatively low wages. Beer may be the only viable option for them. By the time they rise through the professional ranks, if they do, beer has become the norm. Maybe there is another reason. Maybe it is just simply the fact that archaeologists recognize a good thing when they drink.

But I'm biased. I'm an archaeologist that thinks the taste of beer is great. The health benefits and cost factor in, but mostly it's the taste and convenience. You don't need a special glass, a corkscrew, or ice. It may also be worth considering that the correlation between beer and archaeology may be what attracts some people to the discipline. I know that on more than one occasion when a student has sought my advice on whether she or he should go into archaeology or cultural anthropology, my first question often pertains to their own beverage of choice.

Ancient and Archaeo-Theme Beers

A number of archaeologists, other scientists, and breweries have made attempts at recreating ancient beers. Media reports in 2011 described how a biologist extracted 45 million-year-old yeast from amber, subsequently used the yeast to grow a larger batch, and created a company that uses the yeast to make beer today. The brewery is called Fossil Fuels Brewery Co. and is located in California.

Drinking beer started with 45 million-year-old yeast likely wouldn't pose a problem for most archaeologists. In fact, I think if it was served at a conference, the line-up at a bar would be quite long. I also believe that there would be a good number of archaeologists willing to try any kind of beer preserved in liquid form. My experience tells me that there will always be at least one person on an archaeology crew willing to try almost anything. Unfortunately, at least for those who would like to try, ancient preserved beer in liquid form does not have a long antiquity. As far as I know, the oldest drinkable beer was discovered a few years ago by salvagers of a shipwreck in the Baltic Sea, dating to between AD 1800 and 1830. According to news reports, it was sampled by professional beer tasters. They claimed it tasted "very old."

Although drinkable beer more than 200 years old is yet to be discovered, it doesn't mean that archaeolo-

gists and others interested in ancient beer cannot get a taste. There are some archaeologists who specialize in analyzing residue and other things to reconstruct beer recipes. The best-known person is molecular archaeologist/archaeological chemist Patrick McGovern, who works with Dogfish Head Brewery in Delaware to recreate some of ancient concoctions based on his analysis of residue, including a 9,000 year old Chinese beer.

Fossil Fuels and Dogfish Head are certainly not the only breweries to recreate palaeo-beers. Anchor Steam Brewery in California, is reported to have recreated beer from an ancient Sumerian recipe, and based on analysis of things discovered in an Egyptian tomb, a brewery in the United Kingdom created 'Tutankahmen Ale.'

Besides recreating ancient beers, breweries are also known to label and name their beers with things of interest to archaeologists. Dogfish Brewery recently came out with a

label for one of their brews with a drawing of the recently discovered 4.4 million-year-old *Ardipithecus ramidus*, complete with an opposable toe. Many will likely have heard of 'Pyramid Beer.' Less well-known are Walking Erect, Biped Red, Homo Erectus, and two of my personal favourites – Obsidian Stout and Dead Guy Ale.

Beer in Historic Archaeology

Historic archaeologists have long been able to use beer containers as indicators of antiquity and distribution networks. Labels rarely preserve, but often bottles are embossed with company names that can delineate the city of production and dates of production. Changes in bottle and can technology can often be used to date deposits to specific years. Relative frequencies of various kinds of beers can also be used to ascertain ethnicity and change, such as some of my own work looking at changing preferences in Japanese and Canadian brands in early 20th century Japanese logging camps in western Canada. Of course, the presence of beer containers can often be used to delineate trash dumps.

An emergent area of substantial interest in historic archaeology, particularly in the west, is on saloons. Besides being reported in scholarly journals, the research is sometimes published as easily accessible monographs or books (e.g., *The Mascot Saloon* by



Archaeologist Bob Muckle winding down after a day in the field.

Cathy Spude and *Boomtown Saloons* by Kelly Dixon). A longstanding major void in North American industrial archaeology was some kind of guide for studying breweries. This void was recently filled with the publication of *The Material Culture of Breweries* by Herman Ronnenberg (Left Coast Press 2011).

Recent Research on Beer in Prehistory

Beer has only recently emerged as a sustained area of serious scholarly enquiry in prehistoric archaeology. There has been some serious scholarship by Patrick McGovern and others, but it has been rare. Some of the big names (e.g., Robert Braidwood) studying the emergence of plant domestication around the world have considered the place of alcohol, including the production of beer, as a possible explanation as early as the 1950s, but didn't go so far as initiating research projects to test such hypotheses. Over the past few decades some archaeologists have proposed the production of alcoholic beverages as the driving force of plant domestication in Mesoamerica and elsewhere but these hypotheses have tended to be overshadowed by hypotheses based on the food value of plants.

The recognition that the driving force of plant domestication may be related to alcohol in general, and beer in particular, is gaining more serious attention in contemporary times in both scholarly and popular media. An article that appeared in the *Journal of Archaeological Method and Science* earlier this year ("What Was Brewing in the Natufian? An Archaeological Assessment of Brewing Technology in the Epipaleolithic" by Brian Hayden, Neal Canuel, and Jennifer Shanse), for example, suggests that the production of beer for consuming in feasting contexts may have been the driving force of plant domestication in the Near East. The original report led to multiple stories in popular media based on the research. Apparently the public must have a fascination with all things beer.

The origins of beer was also discussed in a recent *Scientific American* blog (Feb 2012). As described by the blogger (science writer and biologist Rob Dunn), "The first beers would have been accidental. A mash of wheat and sprouted barley was left out, in a clay pot, on a clay shelf, in among the mud. Perhaps yeast fell in and fermentation began. Yeast is everywhere.....The first sample would not have been high in alcohol content.

But, if someone drank enough, they would have started to feel the party coming on." The blogger also has a suggestion for the origins of beer, figuring beer may have quelled some of the problems of living in communities that were becoming increasingly larger, perhaps leading to such statements as "Dude, I'm sorry man, I did not mean that about your mom. Have you tasted my fermented wheat?"

Interestingly, experiments are driving some of the archaeological research on beer. The authors of the article on brewing in the Natufian based much of the article on their own experiments with making beer with cereal grains. I know that several years ago, some archaeologist came up with a hypothesis that pit features they were encountering may have been used to make beer, which they then tested through experiments. Some Irish archaeologist created a video documenting their ancient beer making (search for 'Billy and Dec's Bronze Age Beer'). I am also aware of an archaeology field school in Europe focussing on recreating establishing a facility to the standards that will make it capable of recreating Bronze Age beer.

Dangerous Archaeology, and Beer

Archaeologists frequently find themselves in dangerous situations during fieldwork (see, for example, *Dangerous Places: Health, Safety and Archaeology* by Poirer and Feder). There are few areas in the world where archaeologists don't have to be aware of the perils of nature (ranging from nasty critters to disease-carrying parasites) and being where other people don't want to be found (e.g., stumbling across marijuana growing operations and meth labs during survey). The only thing archaeologists are truly afraid of, however, is running out of beer, whether in the field or at a conference. As an archaeology grad student, with a background in bartending, I was responsible for the bar for a regional conference being held at my university. After three days of meetings, I found myself sitting at the head table with some very distinguished anthropologists. I was introduced last and received the largest amount of applause. It was apparently the first time in the history of the conference that the venue hadn't run out of beer. As most archaeologists know, the most feared words in archaeology are "No more beer." 74

"Comment is free, but facts are sacred."

-- C.P. Scott, editor of the Manchester Guardian, 1921

Current Native (and Other) Views of NAGPRA

Deborah J. Shepherd

NAGPRA, The National American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, allowed federally recognized Native American nations the right to retrieve and rebury the remains of their ancestors from museums and other research institutions (National Park Service 2011). Furthermore, cultural artifacts, especially those with sacred and ritual connections, could also be reclaimed.

Museums of ethnology, housing collections from many different cultures, grew out of a tradition of colonialism. The collections of objects and human remains were often taken and displayed with the intent to preserve the curiosities and to educate as well as entertain the western public with visions of societies and cultures who thrived in the past. At the turn of the twentieth century, most experts expected Native American societies to soon be extinct. Little thought was given to the rightful ownership of cultural artifacts. Even as assumptions of extinction proved false in every respect, western attitudes stayed rigid.

For tribes then and today, many museum artifacts are still recognized as parts of their living culture. The human remains are their honored ancestors.. Both artifacts and bones must be handled with appropriate care and respect. Where they come to rest matters greatly for the harmony of the earth and the living society (Meadows: 66).

Since 1990, many of our courts have seen museums, universities, scientists, and tribes argue the fine points of the law. Whereas the idea of repatriation was met with vehement resistance from many researchers and institutions in the beginning, many repatriations have nevertheless been achieved. Many more are waiting for completion.

Some refinements to the law have been made. Native American groups have structured annual ceremonies around repatriation and fought hard over contested cases. The Salt River Pima-Maricopa Community of Arizona have held an annual reburial ceremony for

twenty years for the reburial of repatriated ancestors, known to them as Huhugam (Anton: 9).

A recent change in the law, enacted in 2010, allows tribes to claim human remains found on their lands without proof of ancestry. While tribes feel this rule falls short because it does not apply also to associated artifacts, researchers interested in studying the bones complain that genetic studies of native populations will no longer be feasible. Tribes counter that such concerns are thoroughly eurocentric (Capriccioso 2010b: 1).



National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, D.C.

Native Participation

The National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), which opened in Washington, DC in 2004, has enabled a strong native presence to guide its educational displays and programs. Collaboration with native peoples is the key in this new museum venture. Through the NMAI, native voices can speak to the larger American public in a formal public setting so often in the past reserved for colonial and European voices. Although certainly not the only museum to collaborate effectively with native points of view, the central example, achieved on such a large scale by the NMAI, illustrates the potential for learning and understanding made possible when each side is an equal partner (King: 76, 101-102).

While some tribes bring their people together for annual repatriation education and ceremonies, others join in public conferences also involving government and museum personnel. The "To Bridge a Gap" Conference has been held annually for ten years to discuss concerns about NAGPRA, the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act. These and other official meetings are essential for maintaining communication. The tribes have been active in hosting and planning such conferences (Osage Nation).

An increasing number of native Americans are trained as anthropologists. Some are museum curators. They acknowledge that NAGPRA regulations are

sometimes vague, but most agree that flexibility of interpretation is a good thing even when it allows for conflict. Not all tribes want to reclaim ancestral remains due sometimes to irreparable ritual violations which have already occurred or to a current inability to provide correctly for the remains. For certain Pueblo tribes of New Mexico, the Poeh Cultural Center and Museum has assisted by housing repatriated objects in an accepted and respectful manner until further action can be taken by the tribes, often in the form of the arrangement of ceremonies to be conducted (Meadows: 66).

Native tribes take their NAGPRA responsibilities seriously. The Choctaw nation, today of Oklahoma, like others, has put long thought into how to conduct the reburial process. It is a new kind of ritual based on tradition but not *of* a tradition that never conceived of the problems of repatriating remains. The Choctaw see repatriation as a particular responsibility handed by the ancestors to the current generation. Traditions must be adapted to needs. Similarly, the Pawnee of Nebraska found a way to deal with the problem of reburying five hundred ancestors whose individual identities were no longer known (Duggan: A1).

Another responsibility recognized by the tribes is to help each other file their repatriation claims. The Coalition of Southeast Tribes, to which the Choctaw belong, has been working to improve the process (Moss: 8).

Success stories, and ones not so successful, abound. This year, the T'akdeintaan Clan recovered eight out of fifty objects sought from the University of Pennsylvania (Home: A4). The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts repatriated an object for the first time under NAGPRA—a headdress which went to the Tlingit and Haida tribes of the Pacific Northwest coast (VA Museum: 2). Wesleyan University of Middletown, CT, holds a large collection of Native American artifacts and human remains and is under fire for failing to communicate its inventory to affected tribes as required, nor has the university recorded the tribal affiliations of many objects. Tribes wait while the university works to get in compliance to retain its federal funding (Wesleyan: 2). The University of Michigan announced last year that it has adopted a “consultation first” policy when dealing with tribes about repatriation requests. With a new formal procedure in place, the University has promised to “include any funerary objects associated with culturally unidentified human remains if the remains themselves are transferred” (U-M: 10).

Up until the 1970s or so, most native remains and objects uncovered during excavation or construction

were routinely sent to museum storage if they did not fall into the hands of private collectors. Years of native resentment over this fact preceded the passing of NAGPRA. Simply collecting and storing remains for no specified purpose was bad enough, but the mishandling of remains was much worse. At the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, it was learned in 1998 that unwanted native bones were simply incinerated in the 1960s (Duggan: A1).

At the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, it was learned in 1998 that unwanted native bones were simply incinerated in the 1960s.

Repatriations continue. The magnitude of the nationwide problem will surprise those unfamiliar with it. A recent estimate placed the number of unaffiliated native remains in

American collections at 124,000, and the objects in storage total in the millions (Duggan: A1). A 2010 Government Accountability Office (GAO) study of NAGPRA compliance demonstrated some dismal failures across government agencies and American museums.

Native Attitudes about the Law

For many natives, the positives of repatriation overshadow the losses. Some odd stories have come out of the wilderness of human events. When the British Petroleum Deep Horizon disaster occurred, a little reported part of the cleanup concerned the hiring by BP of archaeologists to sort out artifacts clinging to the tar. Negotiations with the Chitimacha tribe, linked to the ancient village sites of the coastline, led to the correct reburial of these finds. Native writer, S. E. Ruckman, noted “Ultimately, [NAGPRA] is like a cosmic insurance policy that salvages human dignity while serving as a footnote that this continent belonged to native forebears at one time (Ruckman: 5).”

NAGPRA actually covers two distinct groups of natives: American Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations. Their respective experiences with eurocentric attitudes and behaviors vary according to their differing contact period histories. However, some general concerns plague all indigenous groups.

There is insufficient funding provided to indigenous groups active in repatriation. Although they are expected to enable repatriation, natives must often provide the means from their own resources.

Native objects are still being bought and sold without adequate enforcement of trafficking rules.

The law excludes some items judged “indispensable for completion of a scientific study,” an exclusion that can easily be abused.

The U.S. government and courts are the final arbitrators of disputes.

The law requires tribes seeking repatriation to be federally recognized. Some tribes do not desire this status, for it orders them to conform their identity to federal standards in ways that conflict with their own self-view, yet exclusion from federal status also excludes them from participation under the law (Kelsey and Carpenter: 58).

Many tribes see opportunities to establish new and stronger relationships with government entities—relationships that can be made stronger and expanded with each successive repatriation agreement. Furthermore, scientific methods and professional consultants are also employed in the repatriation effort thus accomplishing further study. An agreement between the Choctaw Nation and the Department of Historic Preservation over the repatriation of Choctaw ancestral remains formerly removed from a native cemetery included the study of the original burial site with ground penetrating radar so that the Choctaw could better understand how the bodies once had been arranged. Finally, other bodies from the cemetery in the possession of other institutions were located and returned to the original group. According to Dr. Ian Thompson, employed as Choctaw Tribal Archaeologist, “Through this, we are building positive relations with the National Park Service in the Southeast, and those relationships will make it much easier to repatriate other ancestors who need to be brought back to their homes.” (Moss: 8)

Accountability

The 2010 Government Accountability Office study, “Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act: After Almost 20 Years, Key Federal Agencies Still Have Not Fully Complied with the Act” (<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-10-768>), pointed out many of the complaints native groups have had about NAGPRA. Reports of cultural remains in the possession of government agencies, or their tribal affiliations have not been completed, nor has access by tribes as well as other agencies to existing reports been possible. More oversight is required in all areas of implementation. Although some tribal officials are skeptical, the GAO points out that it has had a high success rate with recommendations overall (Capriccioso 2010a). Perhaps change can be expected.

The Smithsonian itself has had difficulty with compliance. According to catalog entries, the National Museum of the American Indian and the National Museum of Natural History together have housed the remains of about 20,000 Native Americans plus a great many more funerary objects. The GAO claims that the Smithsonian cannot provide a reliable estimate of the number of objects. Some of these remains have already been repatriated, but the process is difficult for many tribes. It begins with a collection of catalog records being sent to a tribe for their perusal. The tribe must study the records and mark which remains or items they think are ancestral to their people, but the records can lack crucial information. Then the museum generates a case report on each item and makes a recommendation for or against repatriation. The process puts a large burden on the tribes to perform important decision making without (necessarily) the requisite expertise or available personnel. It is no wonder some tribes are overwhelmed by it.

Each museum faces its own set of NAGPRA issues. The Science Museum of Minnesota still holds thousands of Native American artifacts and some human remains. Almost all of these artifacts, and all of the remains, are kept in storage although they can be viewed by appointment. Many items came to the museum from the Henry Whipple collection. Whipple (1822-1901) was the first Episcopal Bishop of Minnesota and active in missionary efforts to convert the local tribes. Nevertheless, he also valued and collected hundreds of arts and crafts from the Dakota, Anishinabe, and others. The museum currently works with tribes to handle its collections in the most appropriate ways that include segregating certain powerful and spiritually dangerous items, such as medicine bundles, and preventing specified objects from being handled by women. The native human remains are in the process of being repatriated. Where negotiations with native groups do not produce satisfactory results, the museum uses “mutually agreed upon processes of mediation and arbitration” (Regan: 13).

NAGPRA Conflicts and Issues

The most public NAGPRA battleground has been the remains of Kennewick Man. Discovered in 1996 in Washington State, the remains, now dated to ca. 9,300 BP, have become with the help of media coverage the most fought over remains for research and repatriation.



Scientists wished to determine Kennewick's origins. It was reported that he did not have the expected broad face of a Bering Strait immigrant but rather the longer face of a European. Who could he be, if not American Indian? Several native tribes lay claim to the remains on the basis of where he was found and would not accept the scientists' rebuttal that the human they called *Oytpama Natitayt* (the Ancient One) had died millennia before their people had ever come to live on that land. Origin myths were cited to prove that the tribes had always lived in that place. After much back and forth, a federal judge finally allowed scientists to study the remains since the bones were so old. It was impossible, the judge decided, to know how the Kennewick skeleton might be related to current generations (Banse and Cedar). Seen as a scientific victory by the media, the outcome was bittersweet if not tragic for everyone. Today there are many archaeologists and other researchers who would like to see these bones also repatriated to the tribes. Ultimately, a single find is not so informative about the origins of a people, and the more important story may be the continuing dehumanization of Native Americans in preference for access to their things and their bones (Engum: 390-392).

Despite the headliner case of Kennewick Man and smaller flare-ups in a similar vein, many people are beginning to understand how necessary NAGPRA law is for the maintenance and even improvement of Native American and Euro-American cultural coexistence. In Hawaii, Christian conversion did not entirely suppress the old belief system and traditions, and the mutual tolerance of the two traditions has often been remarkable. Hawaiians have rekindled a serious interest in their former deities, the traditional meanings of hula dancing, the *aumakua* spirits who protect families, and other beliefs and ceremonial practices. Their knowledge of these traditions has been preserved much more thoroughly than comparable Native American knowledge. Like the American tribes, Hawaiians hold ancestral burials as sacred places not to be disturbed.

Thus, Hawaiians have been deeply upset by the recent actions of the Church of the Alii. This historic church on Oahu, called *Kawaiahao* and founded for the ruling chiefs of the islands, has caused the excavation of some dozens of burials during the construction of its new facility. Protesters have accused the church of ignoring Hawaiian burial law and desecrating ancestors. The church has claimed otherwise and obtained a court ruling that placed it outside the jurisdiction of both native Hawaiian burial laws and federal NAGPRA law. It is too difficult to sort out the cultural and legal arguments from a distance while events are still happening, but this incident is one of the most serious Hawaiian cultural conflicts of recent decades and

would likely be improved if it were placed under NAGPRA rules (Kawaiahao; Robbins 2005-2011).

The new rule attached to NAGPRA in May 2010, allowing unaffiliated human remains to be repatriated to such tribes as would accept them, set off a new round of objections from the museum and scientific communities, fearing that they would lose all their study specimens (Capriccioso 2010b: 1-2). Many people view Native Americans as unconcerned about or antagonistic to studies of population origins and genetic diversity, but those who have negotiated over remains have discovered common ground. It is thoroughly unfounded to think that scientific inquiry into origins only matters to Euro-Americans. At the same time, too many scientists and museums continue to show insufficient respect for the spirituality and beliefs of native tribes, brushing off this knowledge as irrelevant. One oft-repeated advantage of NAGPRA is that it has forced groups to talk to each other and has helped each side to learn about the other (Colwell-Chanthaphonh: D4).

A Navajo elder involved in NAGPRA discussions put it this way: "We have truths, but we must all understand that everybody's truth is true in its own place. We have an historical truth. We have an archaeological truth. We have a ritual truth. And we have a cultural truth. All those truths are true in one place or another, in one way or another (Meadows: 66)." 74

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You are what you eat: Anthropological Pedagogy and Popular Cultural Discourses of “the Other”

Ari Ariyaratne

In this brief paper I explore how the pedagogical traditions of anthropology have been functioning largely to reinforce the popular understanding of culture with which hierarchical cultural separations can be made. Focusing on the findings from a class assignment for Gen Ed college students on culturally varied food habits, I contend that anthropological pedagogy and popular discourses maintain a complicit relationship in transforming cultural diversity into illustrated stereotypes of otherness, as well as assimilating them within hegemonic constructions of sameness.

Pedagogical Practices of Anthropology and Popular Discourses of Culture

Let me begin by quoting a line from David Lean's film *A Passage to India* (1984), based on E. M. Forster's novel. Mrs. Moore is an elderly English lady who sails to Bombay to be with her son, the city magistrate of Chandrapore. She expresses her desire to meet and socialize with some of the natives when she and her traveling companion, Ms. Adele Quested, meet Mr. Turton, the colonial governor. Mrs. Turton, the wife of the governor, immediately discourages this idea. “East is East Mrs. Moore,” says Mrs. Turton while sipping from her drink and commenting, “It's a question of culture.”

These words of Mrs. Turton aptly represent the popular conception of culture: culture (with a lower-case c) is a tool with which “other” can be separated from “self” and placed in a hierarchical order.

The irony is that this is the same notion of culture espoused and extolled by generations of anthropologists as sets of behavior and ideas that people acquire as members of society through enculturation, and not through biological inheritance. From the 19th century British social anthropologist E. B. Tylor's “that complex whole” (Tylor, 1871) to the 20th century American interpretive anthropologist Clifford Geertz's “web of significance” (Geertz, 1973), culture has been the core concept of and for anthropology. Throughout its history

of theoretical traditions ranging from British structural functionalism and French structuralism to the American movements of cultural relativism, personality research, cultural ecology and interpretivism, anthropology has been a discipline clinging religiously to culture.

Anthropological pedagogy has been following suit. Just take a quick glance at several current titles of introductory level cultural anthropology texts in the American system of college education: *Culture* (2011), *The Tapestry of Culture* (2009), *Culture Matters* (2000)

and *Culture Counts* (2012). The concentration on culture is not limited to the pedagogy of cultural anthropology. Biological anthropology, for instance,

tries to explain how defining features of humans are codetermined by biological and cultural factors. Similarly, the texts of anthropological linguistics concentrate on language, the most striking cultural feature of human beings. Moreover, material evidence of past human culture is the focus of archeological anthropology text books. Meanwhile, the college textbooks on applied anthropology attempt to explain how the use of existing cultural knowledge can be helpful in resolving contemporary human predicaments. The dependency of anthropology on the notion of culture is such that, it is even unthinkable for anthropological pedagogy to survive without referring to culture.

However, the anthropological notion of culture, which is claiming to be so central in explaining why people are what they are and why they do what they do, has lost its message in translation. Instead, what it has somehow delivered and enthusiastically received by popular cultural discourses is the following: “those who share a culture ought to live and breed together” (Kuper 2000).

It is within this context one can raise the following question: does the concept of culture operate within anthropology and its pedagogical traditions to enforce



hierarchical separations, just like it does within popular cultural discourses? And if it does enforce, is it an indication of the existence of a complicit relationship between anthropology, its pedagogy, and popular cultural discourses?

The recent critics have indeed pointed out that culture has been the concept used in anthropology to construct and maintain the other. Accordingly, this process of “othering” is accomplished through the emphasis of coherence (Clifford, 1988: 112), erasure of temporality, nurturance of discreteness, and retention of difference in ethnographic narratives (Abu-Lughod 1991:466- 479, Gupta and Ferguson 1997).

Such critiques do not ring hollow before the evidence in anthropology classrooms as conventional wisdom of anthropology would have us believe. Recently, in a popular textbook for cultural anthropology beginners, I found an intriguing exercise on food and culture. According to this exercise, the students were supposed to choose from a list of food items that they would or would not eat and explain why. The list included anything from eel, kangaroo tail, dog, monkey brain, rattle snake and raw steak to rotten meat. When I gave this exercise to my students to complete, the overwhelming majority of them responded by refusing to eat any of these food items with utter disgust. Moreover, they extended that repugnance to the members of some unspecified “tribes” in Africa, Asia, and South America who, according to them, eat such foods on a regular basis.

My students’ responses to the aforementioned textbook exercise did not necessarily surprise me. Most of them were Gen Ed students or the first and mid-level undergraduates who take introductory level courses to fulfill the requirements for General Education. Quite often, they tend to glean simplified notions from these courses and misapply them as universal truths. However, Gen Ed students are the most salient constituency in college level anthropology classes and even this factor alone warrants that their responses are worthwhile of studying.

What most attracted my attention was one particular response that I thought was typically representative of all responses. Underscoring the point that people in some parts of the world would prefer to eat monkey brains, my student recalled a sequence from the feature film *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984) in which the female companion of Indiana Jones was seen fainting upon seeing how her primitive hosts tasted monkey brains as dessert.

The objective of the exercise seemed clear enough. In anthropological terms, foods, as a cultural creation, primarily support one to make sense and be appreciative of cultural diversity. Therefore, the exercise on food and culture helps, on the one hand, to comprehend the narrowness of viewing one’s own way of life as natural, and, as naturally better than others. On the other hand, it urges us to interpret particular



Eating iced monkey brains,
from *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*

My students knew instantly that what brought the “incredibly foreign and moving” experience to them was not Levi-Strauss’ Raw and Cooked food but Indiana Jones’ monkey brain dessert and the likes.

beliefs and practices in the context of the culture to which they belonged. Then why did the exercise fail to deliver the message of cultural relativity to my students? Worse, why did it manage to convey a message anthropologists want to block at any cost—ethnocentrism? Moreover, why didn’t my students make any reference—inspirational or otherwise—to Levi-Strauss or Mary Douglas, whose classical papers on food and culture were aptly summarized in the aforementioned anthropology textbook? Furthermore, why instead did they choose to refer to Indiana Jones, the popular film character of a fictional archeologist? Was that because the anthropological message was not that different from the messages emanating from popular cultural discourses?

Assignment on Food and Culture

It was the unsettling questions and thoughts of the sort that motivated me to design an assignment on food and culture that I gave to my students as a part of the written exercises on the week’s study topic, the concept of culture. I asked them to post their responses to the following question: “You are what you eat.” What light does this statement shed on the concept of culture, the central organizing construct of anthropology?

I picked this catch phrase from a popular TV commercial by the cereal marketing pioneer Kellogg on the Nutri-Grain breakfast cereal bar. In this commercial seeking to extend its reach to meal skippers and on-the-go eaters, people in one office choose doughnuts for breakfast. They are then seen wearing

doughnuts around their waist as they walk down the hall or sit in meetings. The narrator says: “Is this what you sometimes call breakfast? Let’s remember something. You are what you eat.”

I wanted to see whether my students were capable of identifying the complex cultural themes that the catch phrase was capable of delivering, apart from the obvious nutritional aspects of foods that it was intended for. The first of these cultural themes, the one espoused by current anthropological pedagogy, is the following: The food different groups of humans eat or refuse to eat are defined through the meanings these people ascribe to them for various reasons. The differences in culture arise, in part, from this fact. If the foods eaten by different groups of people are different from one’s own food choices, one should react with the understanding of why cultural differences exist. Succinctly put, understanding what causes differences helps to appreciate the sameness.

The second theme of culture deriving from the catch phrase is the one espoused by popular cultural discourses. According to this theme, the food different groups of human beings eat or refuse to eat are the prescriptions handed down to them by the culture that they were born into and grew up with. If the foods eaten by different groups are different from one’s own food choices, one should react with the acknowledgement that profound cultural differences exist regardless of similarities. In brief, understanding differences helps to appreciate the otherness within the sameness.

Student Responses

Nineteen out of the twenty Gen Ed students enrolled in the relevant class participated in this assignment. Fourteen students strongly agreed on the position that ‘what you eat’ indeed represents ‘who you are.’ They went on further to point out that the dining experience can be used as an accurate criterion to identify



Bear Grylls in the Discovery Channel’s *Man vs. Wild* show

the culture of the individual(s). Three more students agreed on the above premise, although their emphasis was the theme that foods are cultural creations, not the preposition that one’s food plate is a true mirror of one’s own culture. Only two students disagreed.

Most of my students seemed convinced that people in exotic cultures are true food connoisseurs, and therefore, their edible universe and dining experience bear evidence for why they are what they are and why they do what they do. In making this point, I found that my students were referring to Bear Grylls, Andrew Zimmern and Anthony Bourdain, the television personalities who brought that wisdom. Grylls is the protagonist of the TV program, *Man vs. Wild*. Each episode of this program highlights Gryll’s efforts to survive in the wild and find a way back to ‘civilization,’ usually requiring an overnight shelter of some kind, and foods of some sort, ranging from rattle snake to goat testicles. Similarly, Zimmern is the host for *Bizarre Foods with Andrew Zimmern*, a documentary style travel and cuisine television show. Each episode of this program presents a scenario in which Zimmern is seen tasting a variety of exotic food, procured and served by equally exotic people around the world. In the same vein, Bourdain is the host of a culinary and cultural adventure program, *Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations*. He is known for consuming exotic ethnic dishes as well.

What was even more intriguing, in the views of my students, were the themes of foods and culture emanating from the aforementioned television programs, and well-known ethnographic films that they have watched in class, such as *Nanook of the North* (1922) by Robert Flaherty and *The Hunters* (1958) by John Marshall. These films share profound commonalities. The students also added to this list the article titled *Doing Fieldwork among the Yanomamo* (1997), excerpted from Napoleon Chagnon’s all-time best selling anthropology text, *Yanomamo: the Fierce People* (1997). *Nanook of the North* is a feature-length documentary depicting the struggles of an Inuit man named Nanook and his family against the perils of nature in



Andrew Zimmern, *Bizarre Foods*
from the Discovery Channel

the Canadian Arctic. *The Hunters*, the most widely used film in the history of ethnographic film, focuses on a group of Ju/hoansi men who undertake an arduous thirteen-day hunt to find meat for the hungry members of their band. *Doing Fieldwork among the Yanomamo* is a description of how Chagnon conducted ethnographic fieldwork among the Yanomamo, the people he portrays as the Stone Age survivors in the Amazon.

My students established the connections between the themes highlighted in the aforementioned TV programs and the ethnographies through references to a number of ethnographic episodes. In relation to *Nanook of the North*, the Inuit family's prolonged, vigorous and bodily effort to pull a large seal out of its breathing hole onto the ice, the flaying of the dead seal and the eating of raw seal meat on the spot were the most discussed sequences. The shooting of a giraffe with poisoned arrows, the long chase, the eventual killing by repeatedly piercing at close range and the cutting, sharing and eating of the meat by Ju/hoansi men were the most referred to sequences in *The Hunters*. In relation to *Doing Fieldwork among the Yanomamo*, my students were noting mostly to the events described under the subheading, *Life in the Jungle: Oatmeal, Peanut Butter and the Bugs*.

For instance, while citing the film sequences in *Nanook of the North* and *The Hunters*, one of the students compared them to an episode in Bourdain's book:

For Christmas a few years back, my cousin gave me Anthony Bourdain's *The Nasty Bits*. Bourdain's stay with an Inuit family near the Hudson Bay and the delight, and the closeness that the family shared while tearing apart this freshly killed seal with blood covered faces was incredibly foreign and moving to me. This meal was intimate because they had to work for it.

Links between Anthropological Pedagogy and Cultural Discourses of "the other."

The responses of the sort revealed the complicit partnership existing between the pedagogical practices of anthropology and cultural discourses of otherness. For example, *Nanook of the North* and *The Hunters* present an ethnographic pastoral crafted along the theme of the aborigine's/the forager's unrelenting struggle to secure foods in an unforgiving landscape. The blood-covered faces of the Inuit and the !Kung and their hard-earned meal can be appreciated in that they represent drastically different ways of being with those of the anthropologists and viewers.

In the same vein, *Doing Fieldwork among the Yanomamo* is partly an ethnographic portrayal of an outsider's inconvenience in acquiring, preparing, protecting and consuming food in the jungle. It focuses on the food (and food-related) metaphors of oatmeal, the bugs and peanut butter, while identifying the Yanomamo among the prime sources of inconvenience. This portrayal leads the reader to juxtapose the Yanomamo's radically different ways of being with those of the anthropologist and readers.

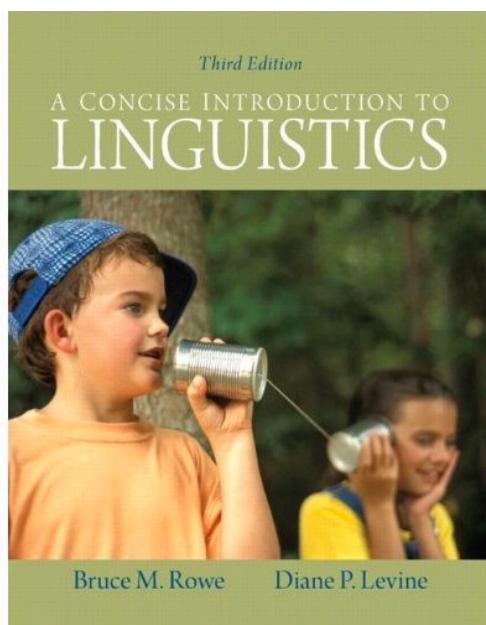
These ethnographic episodes to which my students referred illustrate how anthropological pedagogy facilitate 'ethnic snacking,' a practice that paves the way to convert cultural difference into stereotypic illustrations of otherness, and to incorporate them simultaneously within hegemonic structures of sameness. Ethnic snacking finds its more pertinent practitioners in popular culture, a point my student participants have aptly recognized. They knew instantly that what brought the "incredibly foreign and moving" experience to them was not Levi-Strauss' *Raw and Cooked* food but Indiana Jones' monkey brain dessert and the likes.

Recent critics have pointed out the validity of scrutinizing how the notion of culture is used in anthropology to make hierarchical separations. Exposing the complicit links between anthropological pedagogy and the popular cultural discourses of otherness, in my view, is a crucial part of that endeavor. 74

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Concise Introduction to Linguistics, A, 3/E

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ISBN-10: 0205051812

ISBN-13: 9780205051816

Publisher: Pearson (Prentice Hall)

Copyright: 2012

Format: Paper; 432 pp

<http://www.pearsonhighered.com/educator/product/Concise-Introduction-to-Linguistics-A/9780205051816.page>

This student-friendly and well-balanced overview of the field of introductory linguistics pays special attention to linguistic anthropology and reveals the main contributions of linguistics to the study of human communication and how issues of culture are relevant. Its workbook format contains well-constructed exercises in every chapter that allow students to practice key concepts.

We Are What We (can decide to) Eat: Anthropologists Engage the Global Food Crisis

Analiese Richard

You can tell a lot about a place by observing the way people eat. Food habits—production, distribution, processing, consumption, ritual—reveal much about the way a society is organized, what it values and how its members see themselves in relation to others. In recent years, a series of global food crises have catalyzed debates about the impact of our current international food regime on human health, environmental safety and social inequality. The issue has often been framed in terms of a false dichotomy between the imperative to produce greater and greater quantities of food versus emphasis on the quality and distribution of food. However, the work of cultural anthropologists reveals that a third factor—the struggle for control over the food regime itself—may be even more important to efforts aimed at creating sustainable planetary futures.

Based on my own research into the Mexican food sovereignty movement and my experiences teaching in California's Central Valley, I want to offer some thoughts on how anthropology can contribute toward improving public understanding of the global food crisis and offering alternative models for the reconfiguration of food systems and practices. I also want to argue that research into food and food systems offers cultural anthropologists like me unique opportunities to learn from and collaborate with colleagues in the other subfields and related disciplines.

Social movements around food have gained increasing traction in North America in recent years, as evidenced by the popularity of books like Michael Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (2006). If humans are capable of eating just about anything, even what the author calls "food-like substances," then what, he asks, *should* we eat? Like many Americans, Pollan frames our food crisis as a problem of choice. Students in my Anthropology of Food course also tend to relate to the topic by reflecting on their own choices. They enroll because they are curious about the foodways of other peoples and places, but also to inform their own decisions of what and how to eat. In Stockton, California,

where my university is located, immigrants have historically been drawn from Southern Europe, South and Southeast Asia and Latin America via participation in large-scale industrial agriculture.



In San Joaquin County, we produce a lot of your fruits and nuts, the tomatoes in your ketchup and spaghetti sauce, the feed corn for your dairy and beef, dried beans, asparagus and other fresh produce, and

The politicization of food is never only about nutrition. the Arab Spring began with a series of so-called "bread intifadas"—bread uprisings, and Egyptian activists later demonstrated their solidarity with their US counterparts by ordering pizzas to feed the protestors at the Wisconsin Statehouse.

even a good deal of the wine grapes bottled under Napa and Sonoma labels. Aside from its economic importance, food is a way of constituting ethnic identity in relation to others. While the city of Stockton is well known as an epicenter of the foreclosure crisis, outsiders are often surprised to find we have of one the most active online Yelp communities. It is devoted

not only to reviews of local restaurants, but to crowd-sourced mapping of all manner of informal, sometimes underground, food destinations as well. Examples include Elsa's Paladar, run out of the living room of a Cuban construction worker and his Chinese girlfriend, and Angel Cruz Park where Cambodian and Laotian grandmothers sell street snacks on Sunday afternoons. The community also holds vigorous ongoing debates over which taco truck makes the tastiest—and heftiest—burrito.

Local religious institutions, such as the Stockton Buddhist Temple, Temple Israel and St. Basil's Greek Orthodox Church, are reviewed on Yelp primarily in terms of the quality of their annual food fairs rather than the merits of their spiritual guidance.

While enjoying elaborate community feasts during my dissertation fieldwork in rural central Mexico, I was often told by my campesino hosts, "*somos pobres pero delicados*," we are poor but picky. My Stockton neighbors and cash-strapped college students would probably agree. We may be dispossessed and de-

industrialized, they would say, but our *lumpia* are way better than anything you can get in San Francisco. This variety of available choices, and the histories of immigration and adaptation from which they emerged, are part of the city's self-conscious mapping of ethnic and class frontiers and points of encounter.

However, as anthropologists know, individual choices only ever tell part of a society's story. In order to see the big picture, we must take into account the everyday environments in which people make those choices, attending to the global processes that shape our lives in intimate but sometimes hidden ways. For example, we currently produce one and a half times the amount of food needed to feed our population of about 7 billion; yet nearly one billion people in the world are hungry because they can't afford to buy food. As the decade-long struggles over the Doha round of the WTO have shown, the global food regime structures political and economic inequality by redistributing economic and ecological risk. In many countries, food activists have used campaigns in defense of traditional food systems to launch deeper critiques of the new forms of vulnerability and dependency created by late capitalism (see Richard 2012). It is worth remembering that the Arab Spring began with a series of so-called "bread intifadas"—bread uprisings, and that Egyptian activists later demonstrated their solidarity with their US counterparts by ordering pizzas to feed the protestors at the Wisconsin Statehouse. The politicization of food is never only about nutrition, but also encompasses a variety of issues like structures of social inequality and forms of rule.

Anthropologists have been tracking the creation of the current global food regime since its inception, following the spread of the Green Revolution, which brought capital-intensive industrialized monoculture to the far reaches to the planet. Indeed, the most widely read classic in anthropological food studies, Sidney Mintz's *Sweetness and Power* (1986), laid out in fascinating detail the creation of the very first global food regime via the establishment of European sugar colonies in the Caribbean. This created the conditions of possibility for the Industrial Revolution by pioneering industrial labor practices (the first factories in the field), establishing trade arrangements advantageous to the accumulation of capital and industrial capacity



Ad photo from the Iowa Corn Promotion board

building in the metropole, and creating a cheap source of calories to fuel the British working class.

The outcome was a new global system for producing and consuming food as a commodity, the basic tenets of which remain with us today. The current global food crisis has been building for over 20 years, but its eruption in 2007-08 was closely related to US ethanol programs, which convert food into fuel. The last two global price spikes, in 2008 and 2010, were primarily caused not by production shortfalls, but rather by commodity futures speculation, undeniably linked to the increasing financialization of the global economy.

Cultural anthropologists can help to illuminate the complex interactions between values and systems that lead to seemingly paradoxical phenomena, such as the simultaneous epidemics of malnutrition and obesity, which have risen to the top of the public policy agenda in many countries.

But of course, even in the age of casino capitalism, food is more than just a commodity. Food is essential to understanding human evolution, the history of human civilizations and the modern crises in which we now find ourselves. As George Orwell said, "A human being is primarily a bag for putting food into; the other functions and faculties may be more godlike, but in point of time they come afterwards" (1972: 91). The

global food crisis has, in many ways, brought us back to this fundamental fact. It captures the primacy of food to human biological and social life, and hints at why cultural foodways often become politicized in times of rapid change. I'd like to briefly highlight a couple of the directions in which cultural anthropologists are currently taking our explorations of these dynamics.

The first is the study of food systems, aimed at identifying the main factors driving the changes we see unfolding all around us. Changes in policy, changes in modes of production and consumption, climate change, migration, war, gender relations and biotechnology, are just a few of the phenomena transforming how and what people eat in different locales. A decade ago, a survey of the literature by Mintz and DuBois (2002) lamented the rarity of comprehensive ethnographic studies of food systems.

There are many reasons for this. Though food and eating have always been a part of ethnographic research projects, particularly during the era of community studies, until recently they tended to appear as side notes rather than as primary subjects. In recent years, funding and institutional dynamics have also made large-scale, longitudinal studies more difficult to undertake. But if the volume and variety of recent job ads and conference calls for papers are any indication, they are certainly an idea whose time has come.

Both the urgency of humanitarian crises caused by food insecurity and renewed public interest in the food movement have provided opportunities for interdisciplinary teams to collaborate and impact policy processes. Since processes of value creation, like those embodied by food systems, are intimately tied to the reproduction and reworking of cultural values and meanings, cultural anthropologists have a strong role to play in generating deeper public understanding of how such processes takes place. Alongside medical and biological anthropologists, we can help to illuminate the complex interactions between values and systems that lead to seemingly paradoxical phenomena, such as the simultaneous epidemics of malnutrition and obesity that have risen to the top of the public policy agenda in many countries.

Ethnographic studies of food systems can also offer alternatives to the current global food regime. The hegemony of market fundamentalism and rational actor theory seem to have robbed social science of the ability to conceive of agro-ecological systems in which the management of a commons (like water, land, or biodiversity) does not automatically result in tragedy, necessitating privatization and authoritarian management schemes.

Anthropologically driven interdisciplinary studies, like Stephen Lansing's (2006) long-term project on the Balinese water-temple system of rice irrigation, offer alternative rationalities for configuring local or regional food systems, not in isolation from but in dynamic interaction with the global food regime. Lansing is better known in environmental anthropology and the anthropology of development than he is among food scholars, since his project began with the question of how Green Revolution technologies and agricultural development schemes nearly destroyed rice agriculture

on Bali. In the process, he ended up working with archaeologists, agronomists, biologists and others to piece together a portrait of interlocking religious, political and agricultural systems that ultimately reinforced one another. These in turn led to the creation of a self-organizing food system far more productive and sustainable in the long term than the systems engineered by agribusiness. By collaborating with others to map complex systems of food production, consumption and exchange while simultaneously drawing attention to the ways food systems embody cultural values and cosmologies, anthropologists can offer knowledge about possible alternative configurations.

Finally, ethnographies of food and eating have an important role to play in the analysis of emergent forms of sociality. Recently, many of the classic categories of analysis used in the social sciences (including the notion of "society" itself) have come under scrutiny as artifacts of a nineteenth century paradigm which has outlived its ability to explain the ways people actually experience and construct their worlds. Food and eating, however, have always been key means of working out who we are in relation to others. As classic ethnographies by Claude Levi Strauss (1965) and Mary Douglas (1966) demonstrated, food is not only good to eat, but also to think with.

For example, the schemata we use to distinguish among categories of food can be applied to categories of persons. In addition, food transactions define social networks and distinguish among social positions. Indeed, as Emiko Ohnuki Tierney (1994) illustrated in her account of Japanese cultural history, *Rice as Self*, a staple food can become the basis for an entire cosmology, intimately shaping how people view the universe and their role in it. According to Richard Wilk (2004), even in consumer societies, where food is viewed primarily as a deconsecrated commodity, food choices entail moral stances. North American consumers make decisions about what to eat based on the effects their choices may have on different classes of others, as well as the way they will affect the formation of their own subjectivity. If we want to discover the contours of social bodies without assuming we already know their shape beforehand, then we would do well to examine



Marketplace in San Francisco

food transactions for what they tell us about social relationships.

In a world where the forces of change often seem abstract, food can provide a tangible medium through which to think through all sorts of human problems. Likewise, since food is both sustenance and symbol, the fact that food is currently a hot topic at kitchen tables and cabinet meetings affords anthropologists a unique set of opportunities to demonstrate the value of our insights. After all, we can't decide to eat in ways we don't know about. 74

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Words of Wisdom a few favorites

"The things we admire in men, kindness, generosity, openness, honesty, understanding and feeling are the concomitants of failure in our system. And those traits we detest, sharpness, greed, acquisitiveness, meanness, egotism and self-interest are the traits of success. And while men admire the quality of the first they love the produce of the second."

John Steinbeck, *Cannery Row*. Bantam Books, 1971, p. 89 (originally published 1945)

"Social change of a fundamental character takes place through ultimate recognition of the facts of life . . . Leadership in [this] recognition . . . must come from individuals and groups who can, over the years and decades, persuade their fellow citizens that what they see is true."

Robert M. Hutchins

"To think deeply in our culture is to grow angry and to anger others; and if you cannot tolerate this anger, you are wasting the time you spend thinking deeply. One of the rewards of deep thought is the hot glow of anger at discovering a wrong, but if anger is taboo, thought will starve to death."

Jules Henry, *Culture Against Man*. Random House (Vintage edition), 1963. p. 146.

"There are many objects of great value to man which cannot be attained by unconnected individuals, but must be attained if at all by association."

Daniel Webster

On Atheism

Lloyd Miller

I've been an atheist since my early teen years, though I didn't really know it. That is, I didn't subscribe to the label, nor did I know any atheists personally. In discussions about religion, when asked, I would respond, "I guess I'm an agnostic." The term seemed less controversial, and since matters of belief didn't really inform my life, I had little interest in debating the existence of supernatural deities with people who believed in them.

Then, near the height of the Bush Administration's infusion of fundamentalist Christianity into national politics, I "came out of the closet" with a commentary in the spring 2004 issue of *SACC Notes* titled, "What's a Non-Deist to do?" In it I lamented that people like me, who are quietly agnostic about religious matters but do not openly advocate for our non-beliefs, end up being dominated by the vocal proselytizers. By maintaining silent acquiescence when they speak, we grant them the existence of their gods by default. I also speculated that many more like me inhabit the US. We don't know each other because, by our nature, we don't join non-believer organizations or advertise our views. Then I returned to the closet.

Six years later I learned that the American Atheists, Inc. planned to hold their annual conference in my hometown, Des Moines, Iowa, in April 2011. I was vaguely aware that some people professing to be atheists belonged to organizations and promoted their views, but I knew nothing about this organization. I was also aware that the word "atheist" was a lightning rod for many Americans (a 2006 University of Minnesota study found atheists to be least trusted among a number of groups often discriminated against, including Muslims and gays—Bramlett 2010).

Like many of the uninformed, I shared the stereotypical view that atheists are just like religious people—they defend their "godlessness" with blind faith. However, this seemed like a fortuitous opportunity to learn about them first-hand: where do they come from? What are they like? What are they trying to accomplish? And, more personally, are they really different from me, and if so, how? So I bought a \$20 online

membership, ordered some back issues of their journal, *American Atheist*, and attended the meetings.

At the opening meeting, I learned that this was the conference's largest attendance ever, over 800. The moderator announced, "Let's not take ourselves too seriously!" and then introduced AA President **David Silverman**. Silverman identified himself as "an atheist extreme, but not a militant atheist. Militant Christians blow up abortion clinics; militant Muslims blow up trade centers; militant atheists apparently put up billboards." He stated further that AA's goal is to seek true equality for atheists. "We are challenging 'church pew atheists' to examine their beliefs and come out. Atheists and agnostics are largely the same. Anyone not believing in a deity is an atheist."

Randy Henderson, Director of the "Iowa Atheists & Freethinkers" (IAF) stated that the most pressing issue in the state is combating the religious right, especially the Tea Party people and their faith-based caucus. This group was instrumental in causing three Iowa Supreme

Court Justices (Including Chief Justice Marsha Turnus, the first woman to hold that seat) to be voted out of office for their support of the state's same-sex marriage law. (In Iowa, the judges need a simple majority of the popular vote to remain in office.) Henderson said, "These folks want to impeach the other four Supreme Court justices as well."

Henderson also said that while atheists should not hide their anger, "it must be based on civil, reasonable beliefs supported by facts." He used his organization's placing of atheist billboards on Des Moines municipal buses in August 2010 as an example of the kind of grass-roots victory they strive for. After receiving some complaints about the ads, the Des Moines Area Rapid Transit removed them. When IAF challenged this decision publicly, DART apologized to them and put the ads back.



Atheist billboard on Des Moines municipal bus, August 2010 (photo from KCCI TV video clip)

Distinguished Speakers

The speakers for the four-day event (intentionally scheduled over Easter weekend) had impressive credentials and included representatives from worlds as diverse as academe, journalism, the military, law, psychiatry and entertainment. Included among them was world-renowned author and progressive activist **Christopher Hitchens**, who had to cancel due to his ongoing battle with cancer (he passed away December 15, 2011). Hitchens sent a letter, which was read to the audience. It stated, in part:

As the heirs of a secular revolution, American atheists have a special responsibility to defend and uphold the Constitution that patrols the boundary between Church and State. This, too, is an honor and a privilege. Believe me when I say that I am present with you, even if not corporeally (and only metaphorically in spirit...) Resolve to build up Mr. Jefferson's wall of separation. And don't keep the faith.

Several speakers had deeply religious roots. **Hector Avalos**, a professor of religious studies at Iowa State University and author of several books on religion, was formerly a Pentecostal preacher and child evangelist. His public critiques of creationism and intelligent design are well known in Iowa. **Matt Dillahunty** was raised in a Baptist fundamentalist family and today is president of the Atheist Community of Austin. He hosts its live program, "Non-Prophecy Radio."

Tom Flynn is Executive Director of the Council for Secular Humanism and Editor of *Free Inquiry* magazine. **Kathleen Johnson** is Vice-President and Military Director for American Atheists and founder of the Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers. She served in Iraq and Korea. **Lawrence Krauss** is an internationally known theoretical physicist, a best-selling author, editorialist, lecturer, and radio commentator. **P. Z. Myers** is associate professor of biology at the University of Minnesota-Morris and author of the science blog *Pharyngula*. He is a public critic of intelligent design and the creationist movement in general.

J. Anderson Thompson Jr. is a psychiatrist in private practice, staff psychiatrist in various departments of the University of Virginia, and a forensic psychiatrist for Region Ten Community Services. He serves as a Trustee for the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science. **Indra Zuno**, a star of stage and screen in both Mexico and the US, moderated a panel on diversity. **Jeff Sharlet**, a well-known journalist and author, specializes in writing about religious subcultures in the United States. His recent popu-

lar expose, *The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism at the Heart of American Power*, investigated the political power wielded by a secretive association of Christian evangelicals in Washington, D.C.

Troy Conrad, a writer, director and producer, is perhaps best known for his comedic portrayals of George W. Bush in "The Bush Monologues: Inside the Decider" and "The Comedy Jesus Show." **J. T. Eberhart** co-founded the Missouri State University Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster, which became one of the nation's largest college skeptic groups. He is also co-founder of the Skepticon annual convention. **Elizabeth Cornwell**, PhD, is the Executive Director of the US branch of the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science. She founded the OUT Campaign, a public awareness initiative for free thought and atheism. **David Gozlan** is Deputy Secretary General of the French Freethinkers Federation. **Edwin Kagin** is the National Legal Director for American Atheists. **Eddie Tabash**, a lawyer, is considered to be one of the top Atheist debaters on the "Does God Exist?" debate circuit. He is on the board of directors of the Council for Secular Humanism and the Center for Inquiry and is a life member of American Atheists.

"When you tell an atheist (or a woman or a queer or a person of color) not to be so angry, you are, in essence, telling us to disempower ourselves."

Atheism and Anger

Many Christians ask why atheists seem so angry all the time (Google the question for lengthy discussions). Veteran atheist blogger **Greta Christina**, a regular correspondent for the online political magazine, *AlterNet*, presented her popular blog essay on atheists and anger (Christina 2007), now an ebook on Kindle and Nook: *Why are you Atheists so Angry?* Following are some reasons she offered for her own anger: "I get angry...

when atheist soldiers—in the U.S. armed forces—have had [prayer ceremonies pressured on them and atheist meetings broken up](#) by Christian superior officers, in direct violation of the First Amendment.

that the 41st President of the United States, George Herbert Walker Bush, said of atheists, in my lifetime, "No, I don't know that atheists should be regarded as citizens, nor should they be regarded as patriotic. This is one nation under God."

that school boards all across this country—82 years after the Scopes trial—still have to spend time and money and resources on the fight to have evolution taught in the schools.

that women are dying of AIDS in Africa and South America because the Catholic Church has convinced them that using condoms makes baby Jesus cry.

that women are having septic abortions—or are being forced to have unwanted children whom they resent and mistreat—because religious organizations have gotten laws passed making abortion illegal or inaccessible.

when advice columnists tell their troubled letter-writers to talk to their priest or minister or rabbi... when there is absolutely no legal requirement that a religious leader have any sort of training in counseling or therapy.

with preachers who tell women in their flock to submit to their husbands because it's the will of God, even when their husbands are beating them.

that children get taught by religion to hate and fear their bodies and their sexuality. And I'm especially angry that female children get taught by religion to hate and fear their femaleness, and that queer children get taught by religion to hate and fear their queerness.

enraged—at the priests who molest children and tell them it's God's will, and I'm enraged at the Catholic Church that consciously, deliberately, repeatedly, for years, acted to protect priests who molested children.

when religious believers make arguments against atheism—and make accusations against atheists—without having bothered to talk to any atheists or read any atheist writing.

when religious believers insist that their interpretation of their religion and religious text is the right one, and that fellow believers with an opposite interpretation clearly have it wrong.

“But perhaps most of all, I get angry—sputtering, inarticulately, pulse-racingly angry—when believers chide atheists for being so angry.”

Christina said further that anger is always necessary, that it has driven every major movement for social change in this country, and probably in the world—anger over injustice, anger over mistreatment and brutality, anger over helplessness. “So when you tell an atheist (or for that matter, a woman or a queer or a person of color or whatever) not to be so angry, you are, in essence, telling us to disempower ourselves.”

She concluded that since there is no reality check on religion, it has the unique capacity for limitless harm. It is therefore entirely fair to blame religion for what bigotry has done in religion's name. “Our primary political priority,” she said, “is secular government.”

It is revealing to compare Greta Christina's sources of anger with the organization's “Aims and Purposes,” stated on the inside back cover of each issue of *American Atheist*. Briefly summarized, they are:

To stimulate and promote freedom of thought and inquiry concerning religious beliefs, creeds, dogmas, tenets, rituals, and practices;

To promote a more thorough understanding of all religions, including their origins and histories;

To advocate in all lawful ways the complete separation of state and church, and challenge any attempt to breach its wall of separation;

To develop and propagate a social philosophy in which humankind is central and must itself be the source of strength, progress, and ideals for the well-being and happiness of humanity;

To promote the study of the arts and sciences and of all problems affecting the maintenance, perpetuation, and enrichment of human (and other) life...

Much of atheist criticism of society, including religion, is done in the form of humor and satire.

It seems to me that together, these two lists—what ought to be but is not, and what is sought—would find comfortable digs in the progressive wing of the Democratic Party platform. In other words, the American Atheists' core values appear to be those of our nation's mainstream liberal politics.

Atheism and African Americans

Freelance journalist and former editor and producer for National Public Radio **Jamila Bey** gave a fascinating and myth-shattering talk titled “We're Not Unicorns—People of Color in the Atheist Movement.” She argued that the civil rights movement happened in churches not because African Americans were super religious but because churches were comfortable refuges.

Black churches provided group identity and were friendly to mothers and children. In fact, they were so supportive that they made it difficult for black women to leave. Since both their families and friends and their children's friends were there, to leave would be a form of self-ostracism.

Black churches were also sanctuaries for black gays. The preachers didn't pressure them to go out and date women. The churches provided buffer for them from a culture they'd rather not join. They were “in it” but not “of it.” Plus the churches were fun: they had great music, fashion and food! MLK's right-hand man, Baynard Rustin (called “Brother Outsider”) was gay and atheist, but no one knew.

Bey concluded that there are more black atheists than people think, and exhorted them to become visible. “Wear your buttons and labels. When you volunteer to tutor kids or do something positive and parents or others say, ‘Thank God you were here,’ say to them, ‘No, thank me; I was here.’”

Atheism and Humor

The opening recommendation for us not to take ourselves too seriously signaled what I discovered to be a central characteristic or theme throughout the conference. Much of atheist criticism of society, including religion, is done in the form of humor and satire. Actor, comedian and filmmaker **Paul Provenza** read excerpts from his and photographer Dan Dion's just-published book, *¡Satiristas!* (2010), comprising 62 interviews that Provenza conducted and Dion photographed of comedians and comedy teams. Here the interviewees do not perform but rather discuss their work, audience reactions, how they feel about society in general and to what degree, if any, they believe that their writing or performing can change minds. Of course, given their propensity for satirical humor, their responses to Provenza's questions are often funny, sometimes biting and occasionally downright raw.

Though most interviewees do not identify themselves explicitly as atheists, a form of passive atheism comes through the comments of many of them as they satirize power of all kinds. For example, in response to Provenza's question, "...you don't consider yourself an atheist?" **Bill Maher** says, "I wouldn't describe myself as a strict atheist, but even Richard Dawkins doesn't describe himself that way... I'm a 'rationalist'.... We're not the crazy ones... We believe in empirical proof, not in personal gods and prayers that obviously don't get answered and cosmic justice that obviously doesn't exist" (Provenza and Dion 2010: 298).

Janeane Garofalo says that the GOP is a big-tent party. "All manner of assholes are welcome in the tent." Provenza then asks her, "Your dad is a Republican. Is your dad an asshole?" She answers, "Politically, yes. As a grandpa, not really. But he believes in a mythical guy in the sky, yet he doesn't truly care about people suffering on Earth" (ibid. 117).

Roseanne Barr is perhaps more nuanced in her approach to religion. "I was a preacher in the Mormon Church when I was six years old." When Provenza asks her where she stands on religion now, she responds, "I think religion is the enemy and as soon as it's gone, things will be better... I never said 'I don't believe in anything,' I just redefined it for myself. Underneath religion's big ol' books—the ones they use as an excuse to bomb each other—it just says to be nice to people. I like *that*; that's a good message, but I'm passionate about religion's brainwashing" (ibid. 72).

The late **George Carlin** was more direct in his assessment of religion. "America was given great gifts as the first real, working, self-governing democracy—of course it was an Iroquois concept that we stole from the Indians, but it works. But again, we gave our-



Atheists, non-atheists and passers by during the Reason Rally on the National Mall March 24, 2012 in Washington, DC. AFP PHOTO/Brendan SMIALOWSKI

selves over to superstitious shit: 'In God we Trust' on our fucking money? We open Congress with a prayer to an invisible man?" (Ibid. 341).

Provenza describes satirists as people who "speak truth to power." They are "iconoclasts, individualists and humanists. They care about class divisions, civil rights, freedom...fear mongering, ... the myths that are being created for us, ... our wars and the lies and deceptions that got us there, ... They care about people who are suffering and why, and the people and institutions that are responsible for it" (ibid. xix).

It seems to me, therefore, that many activist atheists in the US are progressive Democrats who care passionately about reducing abuses of power and human suffering. They organize to educate the public about the excesses of religious (especially Christian) hegemony and to fight for equal rights, particularly those of atheists. One goal mentioned often at the conference as well as in print was to get more "church pew" or "closeted atheists" to come out of the closet and become active. David Silverman argues that we should stop worrying about the precision of our labels. Agnostics, Secular Humanists, Secular Jews—all are atheists. "We have to concentrate on what binds us—a realization that all gods are false gods—and not worry about the minutiae" (2010, p. 11).

Anthropologist David Eller, a frequent contributor to *American Atheist*, asserts that agnosticism (meaning literally "without knowledge") is not a middle position between theism (I believe there are gods) and atheism (I doubt there are gods). Rather, agnosticism is the basis of atheism. "Agnosticism is a path indeed—the only viable and reliable path—through the thicket of theistic claims, but its necessary and inevitable destination is Atheism" (2010, p. 6) In an interview with Piers Morgan on CNN TV (2011), Comedian Bill Maher described himself as an "apatheist," meaning an apa-



Atheists and those who oppose religion in government gathered for the Reason Rally on the National Mall March 24, 2012 in Washington, DC. AFP PHOTO/Brendan SMIALOWSKI

thetic atheist who just doesn't think much about religion.

Post-Conference Reflections

The "breaking news" at the conference was that American Atheists, Inc., together with fifteen other organizations, would co-sponsor a "Reason Rally" on the Mall in Washington, D.C. in the spring of 2012, intended to be the "biggest gathering ever" of atheists. Only the expense and other commitments kept me from attending. As I write this article, the Rally has taken place. With several thousand in attendance, it indeed was the biggest ever (Aratani 2012). "'We are here to deliver a message to America,' David Silverman, president of American Atheists, one of the rally's sponsors, told the crowd. 'We are here and we will never be silent again'" (Winston 2012).

It's been nearly a year now since the Iowa conference, and I'm still not sure where I fit in the active atheist movement. I would like to have been at the Reason Rally (I mean, who wouldn't support reason, right?) I haven't renewed my membership in American Atheists, Inc., but I'm leaning more toward doing so. I do not particularly seek group affiliation. If I did, I could join the Iowa Freethinkers. Their members meet at a restaurant weekly for conversation. I do, however, support the Atheists' goals and would like to see them succeed, so my membership would be a monetary contribution to the cause.

At the conference, I bought a sweatshirt as a memento. It's dark blue, and above the organization's name and website address, gracing the center of a splitting atom, is a large, "scarlet letter A." I wear it around the house occasionally, but I haven't yet worn it in

public. My reasons for not doing so are the same as those that keep me from putting bumper stickers on my car. I don't want to have to talk with strangers at any moment on matters of religion, politics or anything else about which I have opinions.

Like Greta Christina, I do have moments of anger about the same issues. But so far I haven't been able to sustain anger enough to become an activist. Perhaps it is because my anthropological training has made me most comfortable in the role of observer, hanging outside looking in. Or perhaps I'm just lazy or too content in my retirement. After all, it takes energy and commitment to think about and actively pursue a cause 24/7.

Maybe this year's elections will move me to action. The theocratic excesses of Rick Santorum's campaign speeches are off the charts, and I have difficulty understanding how any number of people can imagine him as president. Yet trusted friends and family as well as the opinion polls tell me that I should be scared. I'm working on it. 74

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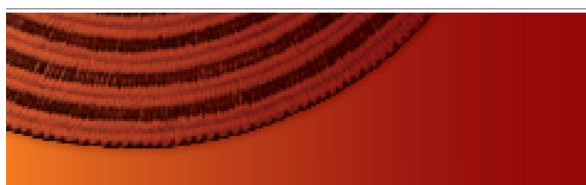
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INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF NORTH AMERICA

A CONCISE ANTHROPOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

ROBERT J. MUCKLE



"This book provides a concise overview of the Indigenous Peoples of North America, also known as Indians, Native Americans, First Peoples, First Nations, and other labels. There are separate chapters on archaeology, traditional lifeways, colonialism, and contemporary times. The book provides basic data on such things as nations, tribal entities, and population; clarifies issues relating to identity and terminology; outlines anthropological methods; explores relationships between anthropologists and Indigenous peoples past and present; and provides global contexts.

"The book is concise by design. As a core text for anthropology courses focusing on Indigenous Peoples, it provides a basic foundation from which instructors can follow their own interests, be they topical, temporal, or regional. Its concise nature also makes it suitable for use as a supplementary text for introductory courses in anthropology as well as courses in other social sciences and the humanities that focus on Indigenous peoples. The book is also suitable as a basic reference or handbook for those with an interest in the Indigenous Peoples of North America, be they academic, professional, or lay audiences."

Bob Muckle

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF NORTH AMERICA A CONCISE ANTHROPOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

By Robert J. Muckle

University of Toronto Press, Higher Education Division © 2012

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208 Pages

Paper, ISBN 9781442603561

Published Feb 2012, \$24.95

http://www.utppublishing.com/_search.php?page=1&init=1&q=Bob+Muckle