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## ABSTRACT

This publication for educators offers in-depth articles on current anthropological research, teaching activities, and reviews of new resources. The document aims to disseminate recent research in anthropology; to help those teaching anthropology utilize new materials, approaches, and community resources, as well as integrate anthropology into a variety of curriculum subjects; and to create a national network of anthropologists, archaeologists, teachers, and other professionals interested in the dissemination of anthropology, particularly in schools. Articles in this issue include: "Anthropology and the Issues of Our Day" (James L. Peacock); "Communication and the Future of American Archaeology" (Jeremy A. Sabloff); "The Art of Anthropology" (Robert L. Humphrey); "Teacher's Corner: Zoo Labs" (Alison S. Brooks); "In Search of America's MIAs: Forensic Anthropology in Action" (Robert W. Mann; Thomas D. Holland); and "High School Maritime Archaeology Program" (JoAnne Lanouette). (BT)

**AnthroNotes:  
Museum of Natural History  
Publication for Educators, 1998**

P. Ann Kaupp, Ed.

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# ANTHRONOTES

MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY PUBLICATION FOR EDUCATORS

VOLUME 20 NO. 1 SPRING 1998

## ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE ISSUES OF OUR DAY

by James L. Peacock



[Editors' Note: The *AnthroNotes* editors asked James Peacock, President of the American Anthropological Association (1993-95) what he sees as the future for anthropology as we approach a new millennium.]

In the presidential address to the American Anthropological Association in 1995, I sketched three possible scenarios for anthropology in the 21st century:

1. Death, extinction.
2. Living death. Anthropology as an enclave: irrelevant, cherishing ideas once avant garde, and now quaint. In this vision, anthropology consists of disorganized, slightly intriguing and amusing nay-saying eccentrics who relish vaguely-recalled avant-garde ideas from the 20th century but who are merely a curiosity in the 21st.
3. Life. Anthropology remains intriguing and creatively diverse, iconoclastic, and breathtaking in breadth and perception, profound in scholarship but integral and even leading in addressing the complex challenges of a transnational yet grounded humanity.

In this third scenario, anthropology builds on its strengths (e.g., undergraduate teaching) and diminishes its weaknesses (its marginality despite its scope, and its presence everywhere yet nowhere in academia and society).

The community of K-12 teachers is one of the two or three most crucial arenas in which to broaden the dialogue between anthropology and our wider

society. I am delighted, therefore, to join that dialogue through this invited article honoring the 20th anniversary of *AnthroNotes*.

This article is written in the hope that more anthropologists and teachers will find ways to help our discipline achieve the third scenario by addressing and helping to solve the great issues of our day.

I speak from both inside and outside anthropology. I am an unrepentant, un-deconstructed anthropologist. During the past seven years, I have spent as much time outside the discipline as inside. Various elected posts, including chair of faculty at my university, have brought more interdisciplinary than disciplinary work, allowing me to see enormous opportunities for the discipline of anthropology.

The mutual engagement of anthropologists and academics with teachers and others (such as legislators) in community settings (such as town meetings or conferences) addressing issues of concern to all is worth considering. This could be an alternative to the hierarchical and unidirectional model of the anthropologist or other academic as "expert," conveying wisdom to others such as teachers or students.

### Trends in Anthropology

The history of anthropology over the last one hundred years can be divided into three phases or orientations: past, present, and future. Beginning in the late

20th  
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nineteenth century, anthropology focused on the past: human origins and evolution. Edward Tylor, holding at Oxford the first academic appointment in anthropology, signifies this focus (*Primitive Cultures*, 1871). In the early twentieth century, anthropology began to focus on the present: ethnography, describing contemporary living peoples. Malinowski's fieldwork during World War I (*Argonauts of the Western Pacific*,

1922) signaled the advent of this phase. Then in the beginning of the mid-twentieth century, after World War II, anthropology was oriented more toward the future through concern with change, "practice" (how people use cultural rules to negotiate their lives), and shaping the future. Sir Edmund Leach, a pupil of Malinowski, inaugurated this phase with his 1954 publication, *Political Systems of Highland Burma*.

This analysis does not say that focusing on the past or present is obsolete. On the contrary, the tracing of human origins and evolution remains our bread and describing living peoples (ethnography) our butter. Understanding where we come from and who we are are still the fundamental questions of anthropology. Nor is it to say that anthropology is or should become only future oriented, in the manner of authors Alvin Toffler (*Future Shock*, 1970) or Peter Drucker (*Post Capitalist Society*, 1993). However, I do believe there is and should be an emerging emphasis on dynamism and activism—grasping and shaping the future. Hence my two slogans: (1) the future of anthropology is the future and (2) the future of our mastery is the mastery of our future.

The most recent epoch has been a troubled one, marked by two complementary trends: turning inward and turning outward. The inward turning is exemplified by the notorious reflexive or postmodernist navel-gazing: the anthropologist, like many other academics, reflecting on his- or herself and discipline and questioning/deconstructing both.

The outward turning is exemplified by the growth in applied anthropology, the practice of anthro-

pology in the world at-large. Half the anthropologists with new doctorates now take jobs outside the academy. Thus my third slogan: you get the most out of anthropology by getting out of it provided, of course, you carry its wisdom with you as you go out to work in the world. It is these ambassadors who often have the opportunity to be engaged in the issues of our day.

### Anthropology's Contributions

*What should emerge from anthropology's engagement with human issues? How can we get better at doing it constructively and publicly?*

Margaret Mead is a good example of one who publicly addressed issues of society, promoting anthropology as a useful perspective. Some of anthropology's current intellectual leaders waste valuable public opportunities by airing arcane debates internal to the discipline and tedious to those outside—not to mention some of us inside the discipline.

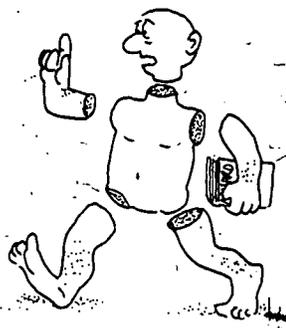
Anthropology has a distinctive and difficult intellectual task. Carrying it out, anthropologists perform miracles. What is this task? Another slogan "backwards and in high heels" sums it up. When Ginger Rogers asked what it was like to dance with Fred Astaire, she replied, "I do everything he does, backwards and in high heels." Anthropologists do that so to speak, compared to other thinkers. They engage the categories of our society, such as democracy or capitalism, then throw our own anthropological concepts into the dialogue with exotic ones—a dance if you like—thus forcing us to rethink our own categories and our own society. We are to most intellectuals as Ginger was to Fred.

A basic contribution of anthropology is to honor and understand local knowledge. "Local" is sometimes far away, sometimes close by, but always localized, immediate, and thus subordinated to the so-called global—to turn that local wisdom back on our own taken-for-granted categories of wisdom and morality.

I affirm and applaud the miraculous achievements of anthropologists today and over the past hun-



NAVEL-GAZING



DECONSTRUCTION

dred years who are the real heroes and heroines, putting themselves at risk in every way—physically, psychologically, culturally, professionally—to do what nobody else does: to reach out into incredibly remote or different or challenging situations and make sense of them—brilliantly. Anthropologists really do miracles.

But somehow we need to do more miracles and within the public sphere. Thus, public or perish. By public I mean not publicity but engaging serious public issues, sometimes publicly, deploying our special strengths, our miracles, in so doing—in forums ranging from schools to town meetings.

### Issues to Embrace

*What kinds of issues should we engage?*

The gamut—from human rights to environmental destruction to creating viable national or international culture, to poverty, homelessness, and the 45 million refugees in the world today. We anthropologists already contribute importantly to such issues but vastly less than we could and should.

One general issue bears directly on the future of our discipline and to which our discipline offers special wisdom—the issue of globalism.

One aspect of globalism is often identified by two terms: the information revolution and the management revolution. The information revolution pertains to the growth of the computer technology in every sphere, from banking to teaching. The management revolution pertains to the growth of management in a corporate or business model in every sphere, from health delivery to education. Both so-called revolutions are driven by globalistic capitalism, where the ultimate goal and value is the bottom line. To maximize profit, human values are subordinate to this one value.

Thus, in health care, some HMOs may subordinate the Hippocratic oath to economics; in education, downsizing replaces humanistic ideals of education with a piecework model, so that temporary employees replace the classic academic community, which united scholarship, mentoring, governance, and public service as a full-time, life-long calling. The result is that for short-time savings, schools or the academy sometimes resemble sweat shops.

We anthropologists must force the “real world” leaders to think hard about the long-term consequences of undermining the educational endeavor and other societal processes by the information and management revolutions.

A counter to this trend of profit-making is suggested by the modifying adjective: global. Globalization bears a relationship to particularized groundings: to local identities, region, kin, community, and to the ground itself—nature, the environment. Globalization works in many ways to destroy these groundings; perhaps in other ways it can affirm them. Anthropology is the discipline perhaps best equipped to grasp at once the global and local/particularized and to probe the ways these seemingly opposed trends relate and could relate. I call this relationship GLOB GRO—global and ground.

Hence, the management revolution and the information revolution should engage anthropological analysis; they are both global and “cross-cultural.”

Globalism or the broader relationship of “glob-gro” takes anthropology far beyond the stones and bones that are its staple. Engagement with globalism as an issue brings anthropology into the classroom and into the community in a way that deploys the discipline’s full spectrum from evolution to ethnography.

### The Teaching of Anthropology

*What abides and what should abide in the teaching of anthropology?*

First, I would nominate, especially, telling the human story—prehistory and history—our most solid and publicly recognized contribution. Second, I would incorporate new twists such as gender and ideology into ethnography and comparison and continue the study of the sustaining institutions, such as religion and the family (kinship). The most exciting work combines history or prehistory and ethnography; for example, Charles Hudson’s work on DeSoto and the Spanish era in American history (*Hernando de Soto and the Indians of Florida*, 1993), offers a fine tie-in between ethnography and early American history. Ecological frameworks also provide excellent ways to join the so-called four fields (and more), in pushing issues of the environment, both natural and cultural.



*How can we encourage anthropology departments to engage more with the issues of our day and departments to work more with local school systems?*

I caution my colleagues to sustain the basics; nobody else will. But think flexibly about these; the four fields are better conceived, I think, as force fields—as dynamic tensions among biological and cultural, theory and practice, positivism and interpretivism, past and present orientations—rather than as fixed sub-disciplines. Second, consider mustering support for selected ways to help anthropology reach out:

- ◆ Offer fellowships or prizes for public anthropology; that is, for anthropologists, here or overseas, who develop cogent ways of engaging public issues. University news bureaus can offer editorial assistance and contacts to help researchers turn findings into commentaries on public issues, which could appear in forums ranging from “Weekly Reader” for pupils to the *Atlanta Constitution*, *Washington Post*, or *New York Times* op-ed pieces.

- ◆ Offer fellowships that combine research and teaching. Worldteach is my name for a program that would offer doctoral candidates two-years support: funding for a year of international fieldwork and a year of writing, provided the student returns, in that second year, to teach what is learned in fieldwork to undergraduates or K-12 students. In short, share the miracle—the truly astounding insights and experiences of fieldwork, which are fresh when you return.

- ◆ Define some societal issues that can be a focus for analysis and public communication. Work with local schools to organize forums that engage teachers, students, and parents around those issues.

- ◆ Organize an educational experience around a local issue, for example, the Nike course. Nike shoes gives \$11 million to our university’s athletic program. Students and faculty protest because of the sellout to commerce and specifically to Nike with its sweatshops in Southeast Asia. As a forum for students, faculty, and others to explore this issue, three of us, including our current faculty chair, are offering a course on Nike, including all the contexts and issues. Nike people have come, critics will come, and Nike has offered to pay for trips to SE Asia to see the factories. We read scholarly works and do field trips to local textile mills for comparative purposes. Students, thereby, gain in-depth exposure to a societal issue, part of globalization, in which they are engaged.

### Conclusion

I encourage teachers to approach anthropologists in their communities about getting involved in K-12 education. Taking the initiative might in turn stimulate anthropologists to reach out and form collaborative efforts.

Anthropology departments or individual anthropologists, who decide to collaborate on issues with K-12 classrooms or schools, can receive some help from

the AAA's long-range plan, which has as one major objective "engagement of the discipline with societal issues."

Many of the 400 departments and programs of anthropology are already doing outstanding outreach to their communities, including schools and teachers. More might do so if approached by the schools in the 3,000 counties where the 400 programs are distributed. Some may fear that this outreach will cause anthropology to lose its moorings as a learned discipline and turn it into just another servant of our globalizing, downsizing, greed-driven, exploitative society, stripping us of our scholarly, scientific capacity that can also back up a critical capacity. That would be tragic. However, I contend that outreach can spur inreach: scholarly revitalization through engagement.

Anthropology's special perspective is precious. It is time to engage better, to deploy our wisdom creatively outward. If we do it right, we can revitalize our

scholarly and scientific endeavors by fueling them with wider dialogue and bigger work.

*James Peacock is the Kenan Professor of Anthropology, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and past President of the American Anthropological Association.*

*Postscript:* Some publications that may be useful to educators wishing to explore collaborative programs are:

*AAA Guide.* Lists academic anthropology departments and programs, museums, research firms, and government agencies. Available from the American Anthropological Association, 4350 North Fairfax Dr., Suite 640, Arlington, VA 22203-1620; (703) 528-1902 ext. 3032; E-mail: <http://www.ameranthassn.org>. \$40 for AAA members; \$55 for non-members.

*Why Belong? A conversation about cultural anthropology with James Peacock* by Carol Ball Ryan (Chandler and Sharp, 1975) discusses possible links between anthropology and schools. Some of these ideas are in *The Anthropological Lens*. Cambridge University Press, 1986, reprinted 1996.

## MATERIALS AVAILABLE FROM THE ANTHROPOLOGY OUTREACH OFFICE

"1998 Summer Fieldwork Opportunities."

The following teacher packets consist of bibliographies; teaching activities and resources; and articles, some of which were previously published in *AnthroNotes*.

- "Teacher's Resource Packet: Anthropology," consists of 32 pieces of informational material.
- "Teacher's Resource Packet: American Indians" for K-12 consists of 20 pieces of informational material.

To order, write: Anthropology Outreach Office, NHB MRC 112, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560. Please limit request to one copy; duplicate as many copies as you require.

*Smithsonian Resource Guide for Teachers* is a catalog listing materials from all the museums and other educational facilities associated with the Smithsonian. The first copy is free; additional copies are \$5 each.

Order from: Smithsonian Office of Education, Arts & Industries Bldg., Room 1163, MRC 402, Washington, DC 20560. The guide is also available on the Internet:

<http://educate.si.edu/intro.html>. The Smithsonian Home Page address is <http://www.si.edu>.

## MAMMOTH EXCAVATION ON THE WEB

Between April 13 to May 15, 1998, researchers from the Center for Indigenous Research will be excavating a Columbian mammoth, which died between 11,000 to 13,000 years ago, near Ruidoso, New Mexico. As part of the dig, daily images of the excavation will be uploaded onto the Center's web site for anyone to follow the dig as it unfolds. Viewers will also be able to email questions to the researchers in the field and participate in the dig without actually being in the field. A curriculum that covers mammoths, archaeology, and paleontology will be made available. Visit the dig at [www.virtualel Paso.com/archaeology](http://www.virtualel Paso.com/archaeology).

## COMMUNICATION AND THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY

by *Jeremy A. Sabloff*



[Following are excerpts from a revised text of the Distinguished lecture in Archeology at the 95th Annual Meeting of the AAA, held in San Francisco, California, November, 1996. Sabloff demonstrates the convergence of anthropology's and archeology's concerns with reaching out to the public in general and teachers specifically on the issues of our day.]

In the 19th century, archaeology played an important public and intellectual role in the fledgling United States. Books concerned wholly or in part with archaeology were widely read. Data from empirical archaeological research, which excited public interest and was closely followed by the public, indicated that human activities had considerable antiquity and that archaeological studies of the past could throw considerable light on the development of the modern world.

As is the case in most disciplines, as archaeology became increasingly professionalized throughout the 19th century and as academic archaeology emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the communications gap between professionals and the public grew apace. This gap was particularly felt in archaeology because amateurs had always played an important part in the archaeological enterprise.

The professionalization of archaeology obviously has had innumerable benefits; the discipline has little resemblance to the archaeology of 100 years ago. With all the advances in method, theory, and culture historical knowledge, archaeologists are now in a position to make important and useful statements about cultural adaptation and development that should have broad intellectual appeal. Ironically, though, the professionalization or academization of archaeology is working against broadly disseminating current archaeological understanding of the past.

I am convinced that as archaeology rapidly expanded as an academic subject in U.S. colleges since World War II, the competition for university jobs and the institutional pressures to publish in quantity and in peer reviewed journals has led to the devaluation by

academics of popular writing and public communication. Such activities just do not count, or even worse, count against you.

If some academics frown upon popular writing, even more do they deride popularization in other media, such as television. Consequently too few archaeologists venture into these waters. Why should the best known "archaeologist" to the public be an unrepentant looter like Indiana Jones? Is he the role model we want for our profession? We need more accessible writing, television shows, videos, CD-ROMS, and the like with archaeologists heavily involved in all these enterprises.

It is depressing to note that the academic trend away from public communication appears to be increasing just as public interest in archaeology seems to be reaching new heights. If we abandon much of the popular writing to the fringe, we should not be surprised at all that the public often fails to appreciate the significance of what we do.

How can American archaeologists promote more popular writing by professional scholars? The answer is deceptively simple: we need to change our value system and our reward system within the academy. Just as Margaret Mead and other anthropological popularizers have been sneered at by some cultural anthropologists, so our Brian Fagans are often subject to similar snide comments. We need to celebrate those who successfully communicate with the public, not revile them. Ideally, we should have our leading scholars writing for the public, not only for their colleagues. Some might argue that popular writing would be a waste of their time. To the contrary, I would maintain that such writing is part of their academic responsibility. Who better to explain what is on the cutting edge of archaeological research than the field's leading practitioners? We need to develop a number of our own Stephen Jay Goulds or Stephen Hawkings.

Not only do we need to change our value system so that public communication is perceived in a posi-

tive light, more particularly, we need to change the academic evaluation and reward system for archaeologists (and others!), so that it gives suitable recognition to popular writing and public outreach. Effective writing for general audiences should be subject to the same kind of qualitative academic assessment that ideally goes on today in any academic tenure, promotion, and hiring procedures. However, such a development goes against the current pernicious trend which features the counting of peer reviewed articles and use of citation indices...The whole academic system of evaluation...needs to be rethought...and the growing trend away from qualitative evaluation is especially worrisome.

As a call to action, in order to encourage popular writing among academics, particularly those with tenure, all of us need to lobby university administrators, department chairs, and colleagues about the value and importance of written communication with audiences beyond the academy. Academics should be evaluated on their popular as well as their purely academic writings. Clearly what is needed is a balance between original research and popular communication. In sum, evaluations should be qualitative, not quantitative.

There clearly is a huge irony here. The academic world obviously is becoming increasingly market-oriented with various institutions vying for perceived "stars" in their fields with escalating offers of high salaries, less teaching, better labs, more research funds, and so on. Most academics not only are caught up in this system but have bought into it. At the same time, those scholars who are most successful in the larger market place of popular ideas and the popular media and who make dollars by selling to popular audiences are frequently discounted and denigrated by the self-perceived "true schol-

ars." These latter often have totally bought into the star-centered broad academic market economy and are busy playing this narrower market game!

In order to fulfill what I believe is one of archaeology's major missions, that of public education, we need to make some significant changes in our professional modes of operation. This is a four-field problem with four-field solutions! The Society for American Archaeology has just endorsed public education and outreach as one of the eight principles of archaeological ethics...I strongly believe that we must change our professional value system so that public outreach in all forms, but especially popular writing, is viewed and supported in highly positive terms.

It is my belief that, unfortunately, the bridge to the 21st century will be a shaky one indeed for archaeology and anthropology—perhaps even the proverbial bridge to nowhere unless we tackle the communication problem with the same energy and vigor with which we routinely debate the contentious issues of contemporary archaeological theory. The fruits of our research and analyses have great potential relevance for the public at large. The huge, exciting strides in understanding the past that anthropological archaeol-

ogy has made in recent years need to be brought to the public's attention both for our sakes and theirs!

*Jeremy Sabloff is director of the University of Pennsylvania Museum and past president of the Society for American Archaeology.*

[The complete article should appear in the December 1998 issue of the *American Anthropologist* 100(4). Members of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) receive this publication. For information on joining the AAA, write: AAA, 4350 N. Fairfax Dr., Suite 640, Arlington, VA 22203.; e-mail: <http://www.ameranthassn.org/>]



## THE ART OF ANTHROPOLOGY

by Robert L. Humphrey



[Editors' Note: Robert Humphrey's cartoons have amused *AnthroNotes* readers for twenty years. In celebration of his work, we present excerpts from an original essay written for the new publication *Anthropology Explored: The Best of Smithsonian AnthroNotes*, available from the Smithsonian Institution Press. See pp.18–19 of this issue for a full description of this new publication as well as information on ordering a copy. Excerpts from Humphrey's chapter are presented with permission from the Smithsonian Institution Press.]

The ability to make and understand cartoons represents some of the most complex symbolic thought, expression and self-reflection of which we humans are capable.

Admittedly, it is sometimes difficult to find the humor in some of the articles in *AnthroNotes*. Not all cartoons are meant to be funny, but they are intended to combine visual elements in such a way as to startle—to capture our attention and focus it momentarily on a new idea, or on a familiar idea seen from a new perspective. By synthesizing multiple elements into a single focus, cartoon art causes us to see an event or phenomenon through new eyes, making us laugh, or even to think! . . .

A good cartoon simplifies, distills, and refines an event until it instantly communicates a moment in time that the artist has singled out as being different from the preceding moment or the next one. Immediacy is the essence of a successful cartoon. . .

As an anthropologist, I particularly enjoy drawing for *AnthroNotes* because I am able to work as an artist and anthropologist simulta-

neously. Every drawing is an ethnography or archeological site of its own—a specific time and place, a complete environment peopled by thinking, behaving, interactive beings. Further, I suspect there is no better guide to the morality, politics, religions, social issues—in short, the culture—of our times than our cartoons. . .

As an anthropologist, I realize it is important to symbolize without stereotyping, to lampoon a serious topic without becoming tasteless, since the cartoonist's goal is to communicate ideas, not just to amuse the reader. The most amazing part of this experience is what others read into my cartoons; they find humor in things I did not anticipate or, worse, they miss what I meant to be most obvious. Unlike my academic papers, my cartoons often do distort ordinary perceptions by violating some kind of cliché and looking at something familiar in an off-kilter way. To do this while remaining sensitive to an extraordinarily eclectic and critical readership can be quite a challenge.



## TEACHER'S CORNER: ZOO LABS

by Alison S. Brooks

**Lab 1: Locomotion**

1. Walk by at least 8 cages with *different* primates and record what the most active animal in the cage is doing as you walk by—for example, sitting, grooming, sleeping, brachiating (hanging from branches and swinging arm to arm), knuckle or fist walking, hanging by the tail and one leg, slow quadrupedal climbing or leaping (indicate whether quadrupedal running like a cat or vertical clinging and leaping where animals push off with hind limbs, twist in mid-air, and land on hind limbs). Record the name of the primate and the locomotion pattern.

2. For 3 primates **who were moving**, describe how the method of locomotion you observed is related to the animals' anatomy. What physical features help the animals move, such as tail form, location of special friction skin (like skin on our palm), form of nails, long legs or ankles, long arms, grasping or flat feet, bare knuckles, long curved fingers, curved spine, deep chest, etc.)

3. Select any active adult primate to observe for 15 minutes. Then observe an infant primate (of the same species) for 15 minutes. Estimate about how much of the time is spent in each of the different locomotor activities—walking on all fours, walking or standing on two legs, brachiating, jumping from hindlimbs and landing on forelimbs, jumping from hindlimbs and landing on hindlimbs. Discuss the similarities and differences between the adult and infant's movement.

**Lab 2: Communication**

Types of Communication Acts to Observe (the numbers and letters will be used as explained below):

**I. Olfactory:** taste and smell

- smelling of one animal by another
- smelling of other object and/or eating object and then same thing done by second animal
- "marking"—urinating, licking, or rubbing a

part of the body against part of the environment which is then smelled by another animal

**II. Tactile:**

- grooming
- hand clasping or arm embrace
- kissing
- nipping
- wrestling, rolling together
- touching another animal

**III. Visual:**

- postures—rigid, relaxed
- gestures—*aggressive*: raised eyebrows or open mouth display threatening; "rushes," shaking stick, slapping ground or cage *appeasement*: bowing to ground; presenting hand, face, or hindquarters; holding up one hand.
- facial expressions—*aggressive*: stares, eye brow raises, yawns or canine displays; *appeasement* grins
- chasing
- use of hands to signal communication

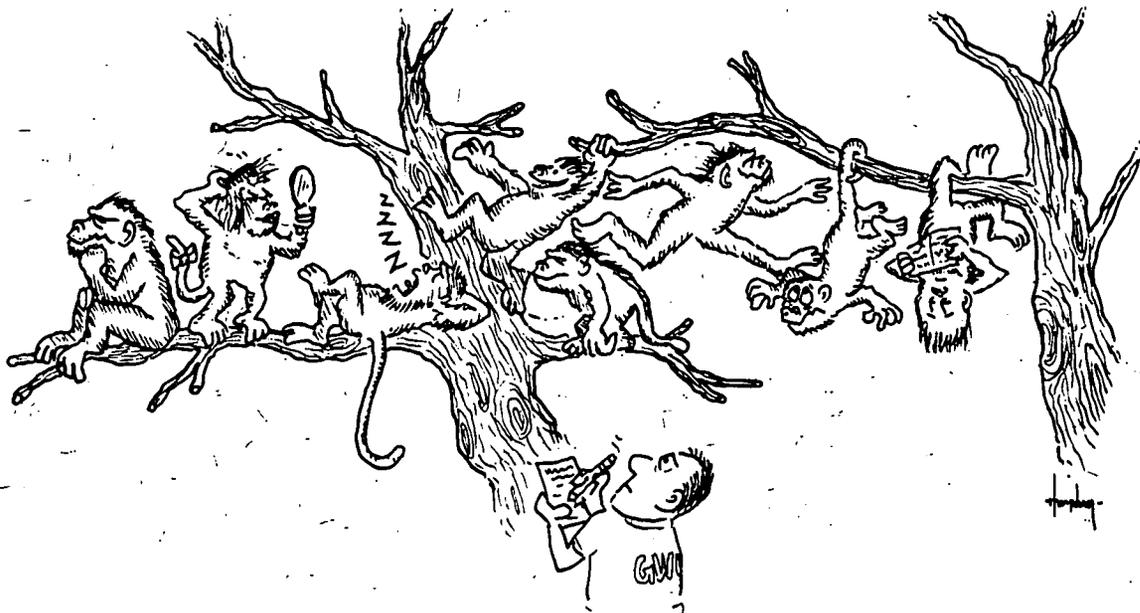
**IV. Vocal-auditory:**

- speaking
- listening
- shouting
- laughing
- hooting or calling—series of similar noises mostly vowels
- chattering—series of similar noises mostly consonants

**How to Attack Problems:**

1. Choose a group of animals which interests you. Don't worry too much about being able to "hear" voices, there is plenty of silent communication to watch.

2. Watch the group for 10 minutes learning to identify animals and "logical" behavior sequences. (you may want to assign names to animals).



LOCOMOTION...

3. Begin to take notes—try to take notes either in terms of behavior sequences or time intervals (make separate notebook entry for each one or two minute period).

Example (note assignment of letters and numbers to communication acts):

- a. A swings over to B who looks up (IIIc) They wrestle (IIe)
- b. B bites at A (II d)

4. Watch for 20 minutes. Afterwards add communication numbers and letters to the descriptions.

5. Do a similar observation on a human group.

6. Summarize the communicative acts for both nonhuman primate group and human group.

7. Try to summarize your observations and findings—what are the most common communication acts, which animals communicate the most, how do nonhuman primates differ in communication acts from humans?

### Lab 3: Mother-Infant Interaction

The relationship of the infant primate to other animals of its own species has been the subject of considerable experimentation and observation, both in captivity and in the wild. This lab involves a quantitative

study of these relationships and an attempt to see patterns of interaction and socialization in a group of caged primates.

1. Observe any two different groups with infants for 20 minutes each. Record in detailed notes the behavior of the infant and those with whom it interacts over this time. Take notes particularly on:

- a. Number of times infant contacts other animals (specify mother, adult, male, juvenile, etc.)
- b. Number of times infant breaks contact with other animals.
- c. Number of times other animal contacts infant.
- d. Number of times other animal breaks contact with infant. Describe the general nature of the contact in each instance. Also note if the infant is threatened or approached by other animals. Note which animals the infant has the most interaction with.

2. For each species, estimate the percentage of time spent by the infant in various activities, such as grooming, eating, playing, cuddling, sitting, etc.

3. Write a brief summary comparing the interactions of infants in the two groups.

**Lab 4: General Behavior**

1. Watch any group of three or more primates for 30 minutes. Try to assign a name to each animal observed, and if possible, note the animal's sex and approximate age. If your group has more than four animals in it, choose one or two animals to focus upon during your observation.

2. Describe how each animal is physically different from the others.

3. After 5 minutes of observation, begin to take careful notes on what is happening in the group. Try to identify "behavior sequences"—a series of interactions or behaviors which seem to begin and end. What happens during each sequence, who is involved, how long does the behavior last?

4. Note what the animals are doing, what expressions and communication acts are involved, which animals are interacting most intensely.

5. Look for differences in behavior among the adult males, adult females, infants, and juveniles.

6. Try to summarize the group's behavior during the time you observed. Can you make any "educated guesses" about the dynamics of the group you were observing—i.e., which animals are related; which animals prefer to interact with one another; which animals are older, younger; which are dominant or submissive?

**Lab 5: Dominance/Submissive Behavior**

Describe dominance/submissive behavior in a group of caged primates and discern the rank order (if any) of individuals in the group.

The following events or interactions are connected with dominance behavior in various species:

*Approach-Retreat Interactions*

1. Spatial supplanting of subordinate by dominant
2. Avoidance of dominant by subordinate  
Aggressive actions on the part of one animal
3. Threats (e.g., stares, postural fixation, special vocalizations, etc.)
4. Displays (e.g., canine (yawn), tree shaking, chest beating, etc.)
5. Chasing

*Approach-Approach Interactions*

6. Presenting
7. Grooming
8. Mounting
- 9 Other submissive gestures (reach out a hand—chimps)
10. Control of desirable food (and females—though this is a more disputed concept which you probably won't be able to observe.)

Observe one group of animals housed together for 40 minutes. Make a chart with those 10 interactions across the top and the list of animals in the cage down one side. Note "dominance" interactions as they occur, under type of interaction and animals involved, e.g. under supplanting you might have a "d" for animal 4 and an "s" for animal 6, indicating that animal 4 spatially supplanted animal 6. Any given interaction may fall into more than one type: mark it under as many types as relevant but indicate that it is one behavior sequence (for instance, you might number interactions sequentially 1d-1s, 2d-2s, 3d-3s, etc.).

Rank animals in order of number of d's. Rank in order of number of s's. What do you perceive to be the rank order of the animals in this group? What kind of interaction is most closely correlated (by eye) with your rank order? Is the rank order of some animals (e.g., very young juveniles) improved by their association with a more dominant animal? Hand in notes and chart along with your conclusions. (Note: one problem you may find is that the most dominant animal may be avoided by others, resulting in little interaction.)

**Classification of the Living Primates**

ORDER: PRIMATES

SUBORDER: PROSIMII

FAMILY: Lemnridae (lemurs)

FAMILY: Indriidae (indris, sifakas)

FAMILY: Daubentoniidae (aye-aye)

FAMILY: Lorisidae (lorises, galagos, bush baby, potto)

FAMILY: Tarsiidae (tarsiers)

SUBORDER: ANTHROPOIDEA

INFRAORDER: PLATYRRHINI (New World)

SUPERFAMILY: CEBOIDEA

FAMILY: Calitrichidae (marmosets, tamarins)

FAMILY: Cebidae (squirrel, spider, howler, Capuchin monkeys)

INFRAORDER: CATARRHINI (Old World)

SUPERFAMILY: CERCOPITHECOIDEA

FAMILY: Cercopithecidae (monkeys)

SUBFAMILY: Cercopithecinae (baboon, macaque, guenon, mangabey)

SUBFAMILY: Colobinae (Colobus, lagurs)

SUPERFAMILY: HOMINOIDEA (apes, humans)

FAMILY: Hylobatidae (gibbons, siamangs)

FAMILY: Pongidae (orangutans)

FAMILY: Panidae (chimp, gorilla, bonobo)

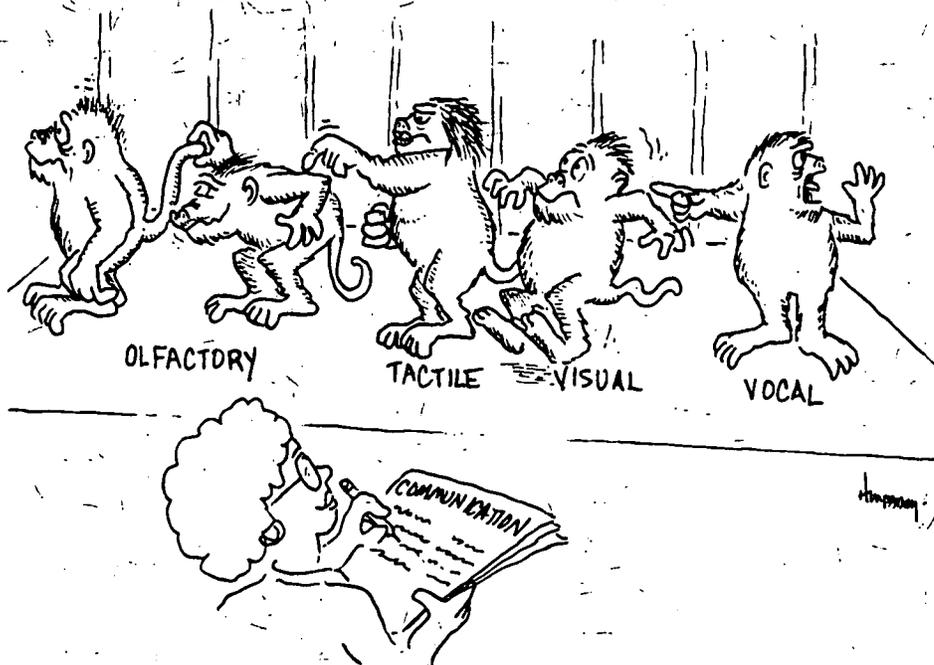
FAMILY: Hominidae (human)

[Editors' Note: All of the zoo labs were designed for observation of monkeys and apes at the National Zoological Park, Washington, D.C. These activities, written by Alison S. Brooks for classes at George Washington University, were tested by Carolyn Gecan, an anthropology teacher at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Fairfax, VA. These activities can be adapted for use in any zoological environment.]

References on Primates:

Napier, J.R. and P.H. Napier, 1985. *The Natural History of the Primates*. London: British Museum (Natural History).

Ciochan, R.L and R.A. Nisbett, eds., 1998. *The Primate Anthology: Essays on Primate Behavior, Ecology and Conservation from Natural History*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall (selections from *Natural History* magazine).



## IN SEARCH OF AMERICA'S MIAs: FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY IN ACTION

by Robert W. Mann and Thomas D. Holland



[Editors' Note: At Arlington National Cemetery, the famous Tomb of the Unknown Soldier holds the remains of unidentified soldiers from each of our major wars—in honor of all the United States soldiers either missing in action or whose remains are still unidentified. On February 5, 1998, the *Washington Post* reported the possible future exhumation of a coffin from the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier for a mitochondrial DNA test, a relatively new test that can establish identification through genetic markers in the maternal line (Chip Crews. "A Name for the Unknown." Style Section B pp. 1&4). Jean Blassie, whose blood would be used for the testing, hopes to finally establish the answer she has sought for 26 years: what happened to the remains of her son after his A-37 attack plane went down on May 11, 1972 near An Loc, 60 miles north of Saigon. What is known is that the following October South Vietnamese troops found six bones—four ribs, a pelvis, and a humerus—and 2 ID cards belonging to 24 year old Air Force 1st Lt. Michael J. Blassie. The bones were shipped from Saigon to the Central Identification Laboratory (CIL) in Hawaii, and from there eventually to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The case has a bit of the "unsolved" mystery to it and reminds us once again of the importance of forensic science in the everyday lives of ordinary citizens of this country. In the article that follows, one of the forensic physical anthropologists from the CIL-Hawaii describes the important work that goes on year in and year out in this largely unknown facility, as teams of specialists work to recover, repatriate, and establish definite identifications for American service members (POWs/MIAs) lost in all past wars.]

### Introduction

What do Jeffrey Dahmer, the Branch-Davidian Standoff, the crash of Korean Airlines Flight 801, War of 1812, Operation Desert Storm, and thousands of American soldiers listed as missing in action (MIA) share in common?

Few people are aware that forensic anthropologists assisted with each of these cases and continue to serve in many emergency response and mass disaster teams as well as acting as consultants to a variety of medical and legal agencies in the U.S. and abroad. Forensic anthropologists apply their skills to some unusual and difficult cases, including the finding,

recovering, and identifying American POWs/MIAs by the only laboratory of its kind—the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii (CILHI).

The role of forensic anthropology historically has been to assist medicolegal agencies—medical examiners, police, and the FBI—in the identification of recent homicides. From an examination of skeletonized remains, forensic anthropologists first distinguish whether they are animal or human. If the latter, they then ascertain biological age at death, time elapsed since death, sex, race, stature, and method of death (e.g., shooting). Forensic anthropologists must have specialized training in radiology, anatomy, dentistry, and forensic pathology in order to complete their objectives. The awareness of unique skeletal and dental features also helps them establish a positive personal identification.

### Background

Although most forensic anthropologists are affiliated either with a university or research facility (e.g., Smithsonian Institution), fifteen are employed by the Department of the Army at the CILHI. Located adjacent to Pearl Harbor on Hickam Air Force Base, Oahu, the laboratory has, in addition to its anthropologists, two forensic dentists, and more than 150 soldiers and civilian support staff. The CILHI grew out of the Vietnam War and CIL-THAI (Thailand); it moved to its present location in Hawaii in 1991. This world class laboratory has the largest staff of forensic anthropologists in the United States and is responsible for the worldwide recovery, repatriation, and identification of American service members (POWs/MIAs) from all past wars. At present there are nearly 80,000 American MIAs from World War II, 8,100 from the Korean War, and 2,098 from the Vietnam War. Since 1973, the laboratory has been responsible for the identification of 738 unaccounted-for service members.

The search for POWs/MIAs is a very sensitive issue among many Americans who have lost children, spouses, and friends as part of the tragedies of war. Although these soldiers, sailors, airmen, and civilians were "lost" at war, they have not and never will be forgotten. The slogan of the American POW/MIA effort is "You are not forgotten."

Just as Americans long for the return of their loved ones, so do the people of other countries who also have missing friends and family members. The Vietnamese people, for example, have exceptionally strong, close family ties that are strained at the loss of a loved one. There are over 333,000 Vietnamese MIAs, most of whom will never be identified, even if found, because of the lack of Vietnamese medical and dental records from which to base a comparison, and subsequently, an identification. In addition, most Vietnamese soldiers were buried in large open fields or dense mountain jungles in unmarked or poorly marked graves, all signs of which in time will disappear.

### **In the Field**

The CILHI has a dual role. First, it deploys 12-person teams of experts throughout the world to find and excavate graves and aircraft crash sites (for example, F-4 Phantoms and UH-1 Cobra helicopters). Second, it provides for the laboratory analysis and identification of American MIAs. A typical recovery team consists of an anthropologist, a military officer, a noncommissioned officer-in-charge (the "foreman"), an explosive ordnance disposal technician for disarming or removing bombs, a medic, interpreter, radio operator, photographer, and mortuary affairs specialist.

While most of the world's forensic anthropologists work from the relative comfort of a laboratory, those at the CILHI must travel to distant, and often remote, areas of the world in order to excavate and recover POW/MIA remains. In 1997, for example, the laboratory sent teams to Vietnam, Laos, China, North Korea, South America, the Pacific Islands, Russia, and Armenia. The terrain in these countries varies from ice-laden to tropical rain forests, and the hazards include malaria, snakes, scorpions, spiders, unexploded ordnance (bombs and mines), and precarious mountains. Housing conditions "in the field"

also vary from hotels and guest houses in the larger cities to sharing an 8-person tent in the jungles of such inhospitable places as Laos and Cambodia for 30 to 45 days. The team must carry everything necessary to be self sufficient throughout the mission including excavation equipment, electrical generators, fuel, tents, food, cooking supplies, medicine, and hundreds of boxes of bottled water—all trucked or flown in by helicopters. It is a physically and mentally demanding job that requires dedication, professionalism, and stamina.

Although the teams excavate isolated graves, the majority of excavations currently undertaken by the CILHI are air crashes in Southeast Asia, many of which were lost over the infamous Ho Chi Minh Trail. This "trail" actually consists of a vast network of footpaths, tunnels, and dirt roads that served as a clandestine supply and personnel pipeline connecting North and South Vietnam during the war. The difficulty for the excavation/recovery teams, however, is that by the time they reach a crash site there is little remaining of the aircraft. Many environmental and cultural (i.e., human intervention) variables, over a period of 20 or 30 years, result in the decay and loss of remains, personal effects, and aircraft wreckage.

One such case is an F-4 Phantom jet that crashed in Quang Binh, Central Vietnam in 1969. While searching for the site, a witness told one of the authors that as soon as the airplane stopped burning, he and many other villagers rushed to the crash site and scavenged wreckage for useable parts. Using only their bare hands, they bent and snapped aluminum from the fuselage, cut electrical wiring with machetes, and used a blow torch to cut thick metal rods into useable items. Everything that could be scavenged from the site was either carried back to the village and used around the home or sold to the nearest scrap dealer. This and other crash sites serve as a sort of "hardware store" where villagers living in remote areas obtain items and materials otherwise unavailable. Examples of the creative use of wreckage include rice-house rat guards and boats from fuselage aluminum, smoking pipes from hydraulic fittings, knives and machetes from propeller blades, rubber Ho Chi Minh sandals cut from aircraft tires, and fence posts, flower pots,

and pig troughs from aerial-dispersed cluster bomb units resembling four-foot long canoes.

In forensic anthropology, the physical relationship of one item to another (i.e., its context) and whether the objects are on the ground or buried, are important in reconstructing what amounts to a police crime scene. Legally, forensic anthropologists and dentists deal in evidence. Unfortunately for U.S. recovery teams, villagers who remove aircraft wreckage from a site remove the very evidence that U.S. teams need to identify aircraft. For example, aircraft engines and many electronic components have serialized data plates unique to each aircraft. Finding one serialized data plate or identification tag ("dog tag") can turn an otherwise unidentifiable jumble of wreckage into an identifiable aircraft. Incredibly, excavation teams working in Southeast Asia often recover only 100 to 150 pounds of twisted wreckage from a 28,000 pound jet. The rest either disintegrated on impact or was destroyed as a result of secondary explosions, burning, or scavenging.

During the act of scavenging aircraft wreckage, villagers sometimes find personal effects such as "dog tags," wrist watches, wedding bands, and religious medallions. If found, these items are taken from a crash site and used or worn by villagers while others are sold, traded, or subsequently lost. What must be borne in mind is that a wedding band or medallion to a villager living high up in the mountains does not bear the same sentimental value or significance as it does to Westerners. To villagers an identifying "dog tag" can be fashioned into a useful implement such as a small knife or tweezers for removing facial hair, one Vietnamese form of shaving.

The basic excavation strategy at a crash site is to let the evidence "speak" for itself. Only when there is no more wreckage coming out of the ground does the team cease working at a crash or grave site.



By searching for life-support related equipment (parachutes, oxygen bottles and hoses, flight helmets, flight suits), the anthropologist and life-support technician may be able to account for the aircraft's occupants. Determining the number of occupants on board an aircraft when it crashed can be done based on duplicated or multiple life-support related gear. For example, a parachute harness has only two metallic "D" rings. If the aircraft that crashed was an F-4, it carries a maximum of two occupants. If three parachute "D" rings are recovered from among the wreckage, it is safe to say that two people were on board at the time of impact.

Even with the presence of three "D" rings, could one of the occupants have survived this F-4 crash? The answer to this question can only be answered after reviewing all of the evidence and carefully considering the "preponderance" of the evidence. The items recovered from the crash site must provide substantial and wholly consistent evidence that, not only was the occupant(s) on board at the time of impact, but that the crash was not survivable. An example of a non-survivable air crash using this F-4 jet included the following evidence that we excavated from the crash site: portions of the cockpit were found near engine components; pieces of a flight suit, helmet, and wrist watch were recovered among cockpit debris; two parachute "D" rings; a religious medallion, one tooth, and two bone fragments were found near the flight suit material. Few would doubt that the preponderance of the evidence is consistent with one person in the aircraft when it crashed. (In this scenario we knew that the second individual parachuted from the aircraft and was rescued within hours.)

**In the Laboratory**  
At the end of each Joint Field Activity in Vietnam, all bones, teeth, and personal effects that were turned over by Vietnamese citizens or excavated by the six U.S. recovery

teams are received at the Vietnamese Institute of Forensic Medicine in Hanoi. Each set of remains—sometimes no more than a few dime-sized bone fragments—is hand-carried to the Institute in locked and sealed hard plastic cases by a Vietnamese official. Once at the Institute, the cases are opened during one of the regularly-scheduled Joint Field Reviews, which are attended by Vietnamese forensic specialists and a CILHI forensic anthropologist and forensic dentist. The task of the joint team is to conduct a preliminary examination to determine which of the remains may be American. All suspected American remains are repatriated to the CILHI for detailed forensic analysis. (Vietnamese remains are retained by Vietnamese officials for burial.) The remains are flown in a military C-141 airplane to the CILHI in flag-draped (American) containers for the identification phase.

At the CILHI, the remains are laid out in anatomical order on a foam-covered table, and a forensic dentist and anthropologist are assigned to the case. The two scientists work independently of one another in order not to bias their conclusions. The dentist focuses on the teeth and the anthropologist on the skeletal remains. The remains are inventoried and photographed and the teeth are x-rayed and compared to ante-mortem (before death) records, charts and x-rays. Dental x-rays provide the vast majority of identifications as the dental fillings and morphology provide unique individualizing features for basing a positive identification. Other methods of identification include mitochondrial DNA derived from bones and teeth, unique skeletal features such as a healed broken bone, and video superimposition made by overlaying an image of the skull on a facial photograph.

When the dentist and anthropologist have completed their work, their conclusions are put in writing and compared. The skeletal attributes derived by the anthropologist must be consistent with those of the individual identified by the dentist. In other words, if the suggested identity provided by the dentist is a 22-year-old white male, with a living stature of 5' 11," then the anthropological indicators must be in agree-

ment. If the anthropologist determines that the bones are those of a 30 to 35-year-old black male with a height of 5' 5," there is a problem. One possibility for the conflicting data is that the bones are from one person and the teeth from another (i.e., co-mingled remains). Once this portion of the examination process is completed, the reports are compiled and submitted for inside peer review by other CILHI scientists.

The next step is to submit the recommended identification to the CILHI Laboratory Director, the CILHI Commander, and to three laboratory consultants for outside review of scientific integrity and accuracy of interpretation. The reports then are sent to the Casualty of Memorial Affairs Office in Alexandria, Virginia, the appropriate Office of Mortuary Affairs in Washington, DC who presents the case to the family, and finally to the Armed Forces Identification Review Board. If the family disagrees with the suggested identification, they have the right to hire their own consultant who will review the laboratory's findings, examine the remains, and draw his/her own conclusions. If the family's consultant disagrees with the recommended identification, the entire case may be sent back to the original anthropologist and dentist for a second go-round. In all, the process is quite difficult and there are many checks and balances to ensure that each case is handled accurately and in accordance with strict scientific procedures. Once the family agrees to the recommended identification, which most commonly happens, the remains are forwarded to them for burial at the government's expense.

While finding, recovering, and identifying American POWs/MIAs is a costly as well as a physically and mentally demanding job, the POW/MIA issue deserves our fullest attention and unwavering efforts. America's POWs/MIAs truly are not forgotten.

*Robert W. Mann is Senior Anthropologist and Thomas D. Holland is Scientific Director of the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory, Hickam AFB, Hawaii (CILHI).*

## HIGH SCHOOL MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY PROGRAM

by JoAnne Lanouette



Starting in 1991, Xavier High School in Chuuk, one of the states in the Federated States of Micronesia between Hawaii and the Philippines, began offering scuba diving and other marine-related programs. In 1992, a marine science and oceanography course was added followed in 1994 with a maritime history and archaeology program organized and taught by Clark Graham, president of the Society for Historic Investigation and Preservation (SHIP) and an environmentalist. This led to the first maritime archaeology field survey in 1995 of a submerged Japanese aircraft from World War II. Operation Hailstorm, a two day attack by the U.S. Navy on the Japanese Imperial Fleet, successfully damaged most of the Japanese air fighters and sunk numerous Japanese cargo ships along with aircraft. In the last few years, high school maritime archaeology groups have worked on a Nakajima C6N Saiun, a night fighter/reconnaissance aircraft, a Mitsubishi A6M model 52, a Nakajima B6N Tenzan, and historical war sites including airfields.

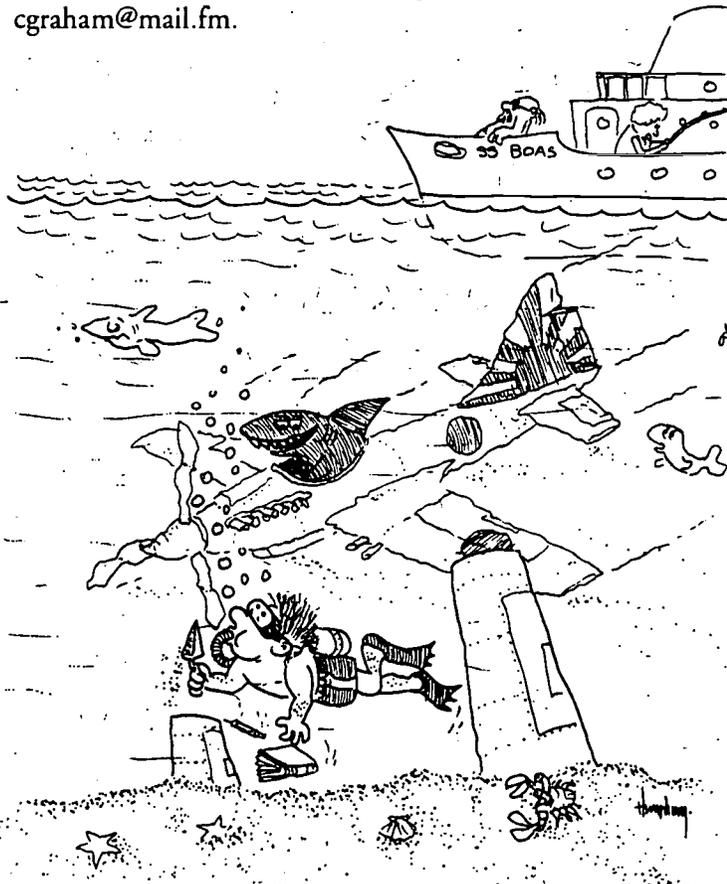
The survey of the Nakajima B6N Tenzan included conducting a marine survey of the submerged site and nearby reef, the latter made possible through the efforts of Kenneth Yong, marine biology instructor.

This year students are studying two traditional subjects. One group is surveying stone fish traps (maai), while the second is conducting an intensive above-ground survey of an ancient petroglyph site. In addition, under the direction of Kenneth Yong, students are carrying out a marine survey and water quality studies of the archaeological sites.

SHIP and Xavier High School believe that these projects are not only educational but also make a significant contribution to Micronesia's historic record.

Just as important is the firm conviction that Micronesians can and should study and document their historic and marine sites. Students at Xavier have concluded that "Our work can serve as an example to the people of Micronesia that they can do what people from other countries do." Furthermore, since these sites are located in their oceans and on their islands, the students and teachers believe it is better if Micronesians are involved in the study of their own homeland.

Thanks to the Internet, these innovative teachers and students from Micronesia found the *AnthroNotes* editors at the Smithsonian. We encourage our readers to contact this combined archaeology and marine science program at Xavier High School or the Society for Historic Investigation and Preservation at: SHIP, P.O. Box 1072, Chuuk, FM 96942; e-mail: cgraham@mail.fm.



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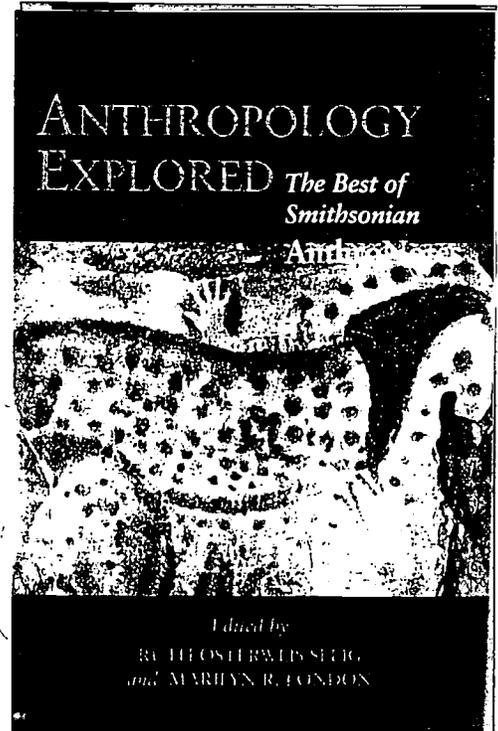
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# ANTHRONOTES

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## CULTURAL RELATIVISM AND UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS

by Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban

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*[Editors' Note: December 1998 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. On December 11<sup>th</sup>, The Washington Post (p. A52) reported President Clinton's public announcement of a Genocide Early Warning Center as well as a new interagency group to monitor U.S. compliance with human rights treaties; new Immigration and Naturalization Service guidelines to make it easier for children to file political asylum claims; and increased funding to organizations that treat torture victims. At the ceremony, Mrs. Clinton spoke out against the treatment of women in Afghanistan who are not allowed to work or attend school. "We must all make it unmistakably clear this terrible suffering inflicted on the women and girls of Afghanistan is not cultural, it is 'criminal'."]*

**T**oday, cultural relativism is experiencing a period of critical self-examination within the field of anthropology.

Cultural relativism asserts that since each culture has its own inherent integrity with unique values and practices, value judgments should be withheld or suspended until cultural context is taken into account. What members of one culture might view as strange and bizarre in another culture (for example, polygamy, body tattooing, or strict dietary laws) can be understood best within that culture's context. Theoretically, anthropologists always should be observers and recorders not evaluators of other peoples' customs and values.

While some anthropologists would still agree with this view, others, both inside the field and outside, especially in the arena of human rights, are challenging this concept.

It is important to state at the outset that universal human rights and cultural relativism are not philosophically or morally opposed to one another. The terrain between them is fluid and rich.

### **Anthropology's Role in Human Rights**

Historically, anthropology as a discipline declined to participate in the international dialogues that produced conventions regarding human rights, mainly due to philosophical constraints stemming from cultural relativism. This meant that anthropology's voice was not included in the drafting of human rights statements such as the United Nation's "Conventions for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women" (1979) or the "Rights of the Child" (1989).

The world has changed since the Executive Board of the American Anthropological Association decided in 1947 not to participate in the discussions that produced the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), used subsequently as a foundation for opposition to authoritarian and politically repressive regimes. Since then some anthropologists have been active in cultural survival and human rights of threatened groups.

As I explained in my article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, anthropologists "are in a unique position to lend knowledge and expertise to the international debate regarding human rights." And, in fact, anthropologists have spoken out against reprehensible practices such as genocide. They have testified in U.S. courts against government rules that impinge on the religious traditions or sacred lands of Native Americans. But there are other

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human rights issues, from domestic abuse to female circumcision to culturally based forms of homicide, about which anthropologists have remained silent. Thus, anthropologists have not built up accumulated experience in the area of human rights informed by cultural relativist considerations (1995:B1-2).

This article is an attempt to lay out some of the basic issues and considerations in this arena, looking at the intersection of cultural relativism and the human rights issues that have gained more public awareness than ever before.

### **The Limits of Cultural Relativism**

Cultural relativism may be taken to extremes. Some argue that since cultures vary and each culture has its own unique moral system, we cannot make judgments about 'right' and 'wrong' in comparing one culture to another. Thus, one cannot reject any form of culturally acceptable homicide—for example, infanticide, senilicide, or 'honor' killing of women in Mediterranean and Middle East societies for alleged sexual misconduct—on moral grounds because cultural acceptance or condemnation are equally valid. This extreme relativist position is actually a form of absolutism with which few anthropologists would agree. Anthropologists did not defend Nazi genocide or South African apartheid with cultural relativist arguments, and many have been critical of relativist defenses especially of Western practices they see as harmful, such as cultural institutions emphasizing violence.

The truth about our complex world of cultural difference is that moral perplexity abounds. The ability to accept that another person's or culture's position with which one disagrees is nevertheless rational or intelligible lays the basis for discussion of differences.

Relativism can be used as a way of living in society with others. An egalitarian relativist sees all human beings as moral agents with equal potential for making ethical judgments. Though moral judgments in and of themselves are not scientific, they can be socially analyzed. That is, relativism and universalism in cultural values or practices (including international standards of human rights) need not be opposed morally, but they can be discussed, debated, and assessed by the social sciences, including anthropology.

### **Relativist Challenge to Universal Rights: Islamic Societies and the West**

In the conflict between cultural relativism and universal rights, one area where there is a seeming clash between cultures and a war of words is where the West meets the Islamic world. The highly politicized context of this oppositional discourse and occasional real warfare reminds us of another kind of cold war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The subjective perceptions of morality and immorality, of right and wrong, on both sides can be so powerful that objective discourse and cultural negotiation may seem impossible.

Islamic governments from Iran to Afghanistan to Sudan have claimed cultural and religious immunity from international human rights standards. For example, the perceived Islamic responsibility to protect women by restricting their activities has been asserted in defense of public morality. This stand has been criticized in the context of Western human rights and feminism. Islamic philosophers and political activists may deny that a woman can be a head of a family or a head of state. Their position violates international standards of women's rights and human rights, particularly as outlined in the United Nations 1979 "Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women." Muslims in several states, however, have disregarded the advice of these religious figures when they made Benazir Bhutto Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Tansu Cillar and Sheikha Hassina the respective heads of state in Turkey and Bangladesh. Western nations actually have proportionately fewer female heads of state and may be accused of hypocrisy in their finger pointing at the Islamic world.

During the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995, positions on women's rights expressed by some Muslim activists diverged from the majority feminist view. Debates over sexual and reproductive health and over sexual orientation as universal rights of women met with opposition not only from Muslim nations, like Iran and Egypt, but also from the Vatican and other Catholic representatives at the conference. In the end, disagreements were aired that proved not to be destructive and there was frank acknowledgment that reasonable persons (and by extension, cultures) could disagree. This is a relativist solution to different views about "universal rights" of women. But consensus was achieved on a host of other

issues, including: 1) opposing all forms of violence against women, 2) opposing female genital mutilation, and 3) identifying rape during armed conflict as a war crime, and, in certain cases, a crime against humanity. Relativism expressed with respect to the religious sentiments of some delegates eased the negotiated terrain and permitted dialogue that achieved consensus on many other points while allowing reasonable difference to be asserted on other matters.

### Universal Rights Challenge Relativism: Female Circumcision

One of the most culturally and emotionally charged battlegrounds where the cultural relativist confronts the advocate of universal human rights is the issue of female circumcision or FGM (female genital mutilation)\*. Female circumcision is the removal of all or part of the clitoris and/or labia. The issue of female circumcision has set Western feminism against African cultural traditions and Islam, and has pitted Muslim against Muslim and African against African. Despite female circumcision's prevalence in African Islamic societies, it is also found in some non-Islamic, African contexts and is rare in Islamic contexts outside Africa. There is no consensus among Muslim scholars or among African Muslims about whether female circumcision is mandated by religion. Religious interpretation in the Sudan as early as 1939 determined that female circumcision is only "desirable" (manduh), and not compulsory (Fluehr-Lobban, 1987: 96), while in 1994 the late Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar Islamic University in Cairo, Gad al-Haq Ali Gad al-Haq, called female circumcision "a noble practice which does honor to women." His chief rival, the Grand Mufti of the Egyptian Republic, said that female circumcision is not part of Islamic teaching and is a matter best evaluated by medical professionals (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 13, 1995, section A-3).

I have previously written about confronting my own personal struggle between cultural relativism and universal rights regarding female circumcision in the Sudan (Fluehr-Lobban, 1995):

For nearly 25 years, I have conducted research in the Sudan, one of the African countries where the practice of female circumcision is widespread, affecting the vast majority of females in the northern Sudan. Chronic infections are a common result, and sexual intercourse and childbirth are rendered difficult and painful. However, cultural ideology in

the Sudan holds that an uncircumcised woman is not respectable, and few families would risk their daughter's chances of marrying by not having her circumcised. British colonial officials outlawed the practice in 1946, but this served only to make it surreptitious and thus more dangerous. Women found it harder to get treatment for mistakes or for side effects of the illegal surgery.

For a long time I felt trapped between my anthropological understanding of the custom and of the sensitivities about it among the people with whom I was working, on the one side, and the largely feminist campaign in the West to eradicate what critics sees as a "barbaric" custom, on the other hand. To ally myself with Western feminists and condemn female circumcision seemed to me a betrayal of the value system and culture of the Sudan which I had come to understand. But as I was asked over the years to comment on female circumcision because of my expertise in the Sudan, I came to realize how deeply I felt that the practice was harmful and wrong. In 1993, female circumcision was one of the practices deemed harmful by delegates at the International Human Rights Conference in Vienna. During their discussions, they came to view circumcision as a violation of the rights of children as well as of the women who suffer its consequences throughout life. Those discussions made me realize that there was a moral agenda larger than myself, larger than Western



culture or the culture of the northern Sudan, or of my discipline. I decided to join colleagues from other disciplines and cultures in speaking out against the practice.

### **The Anthropologists' Dilemma**

The sense of paralysis that kept me from directly opposing female circumcision (FGM) for decades was largely attributable to my anthropological training grounded in cultural relativism. From a fieldworker's standpoint, my neutralist position stemmed from the anthropologist's first hand knowledge of the local sensitivities about the practice, along with the fact that dialogue was actively underway in the Sudan leading in the direction of changes ameliorating the practice. While I would not hesitate to criticize breast implants or other Western surgical adjustments of the female body, I withheld judgment of female circumcision as though the moral considerations were fundamentally different. My socialization as an anthropology undergraduate and graduate student, along with years of anthropology teaching, conditioned a relativist reflex to almost any challenge to cultural practice on moral or philosophical grounds, especially ones that appeared to privilege the West. However, I realized that a double standard had crept into my teaching. For example, I would readily criticize rampant domestic violence in the U.S. and then attempt to rationalize the killing of wives and sisters from the Middle East to Latin America by men whose "honor" had been violated by their female relation's alleged misdeeds, from flirtation to adultery. Of course, cultural context is critical and the reading of cultural difference our stock-in-trade. One may lament the rising divorce rate and destruction of family life in the U.S. while applauding increasing rights for judicial divorce for Middle Eastern women. At times relativism may frame and enlighten the debate, but, in the end, moral judgment and human rights take precedence and choices must be made.

What changed my view away from the conditioned relativist response was the international, cross-cultural, interdisciplinary dialogue that placed female circumcision on a level of such harm that whatever social good it represents (in terms of sexual propriety and marriage norms), the harm to the more basic rights of women and girls outweighed the culturally understandable "good." Moreover, active feminist agitation against female circumcision within the Sudan

has fostered the kind of indigenous response that anthropologists like, so as not to appear to join the ranks of the Western feminists who had patronizingly tried to dictate the "correct" agenda to women most directly affected by the practice. Women's and human rights associations in the Ivory Coast and Egypt, as well as the Sudan, have also called for an end to female circumcision, while the Cairo Institute for Human Rights reported in 1995 the first publicly acknowledged marriage of an uncircumcised woman. In other words, a broad spectrum of the human community has come to an agreement that genital mutilation of girls and women is wrong.

### **The Changing U.S. Legal Context**

Beyond these cultural and moral considerations is a changed legal environment in the U.S. and elsewhere. The granting of political asylum by the U.S. government in 1996 to Fauziya Kasinga, a Togolese woman who argued that her return to her country would result in the forcible circumcision of her daughter and thus violate her human rights, was a turning point. Prior to this decision, articles had appeared in American law journals arguing for the U.S. to follow the examples of France and Canada and "legally protect" women and girls at risk by criminalizing female circumcision and by extending political asylum. Authors also argued against the cultural relativist or traditionalist justification for female circumcision. Typical customary cultural arguments in defense of female circumcision include: it is a deeply rooted practice; it prevents promiscuity and promotes cleanliness and aesthetics; and it enhances fertility. Defenders of the practice, female and male, African and Western, inevitably invoke cultural relativism and ethnocentrism. Opponents argue that while the morality and values of a person are certainly shaped by the culture and history of a given society, this does not negate the philosophical theory that human rights, defined as the rights to which one is entitled simply by virtue of being human, are universal by definition. So, although human behavior is necessarily culturally relative, human rights are universal entitlements that are grounded in cross culturally recognized moral values. In response to the relativist argument, Rhoda Howard writes that the "argument that different societies have different concepts of rights is based on an assumption that confuses human rights with human dignity" (1986:17). Further, for non-anthropologists, especially moral philosophers and legal practitioners, evocation of relativist arguments as a 'defense' or excuse for violence,

injustice, or other social ills is patently offensive. "Cultural values and cultural practice are as legitimately subject to criticism from a human rights perspective as a structural aspect of a society. African 'culture' may not be used as a defense of human rights abuses" (Howard, 1986:16).

There is nothing particularly African, Sudanese or Nigerian about violence or injustice. This is true of violations of human rights whether they are in the form of arbitrary arrest, detention and torture inflicted by the state, or female circumcision imposed by custom. Moreover, many African progressives have taken an active role in evaluating the contemporary legitimacy and relevance of cultural practices arguing for the retention of useful traditions and the abandonment of practices that inflict harm or injury. Ethnic scarification has all but disappeared among peoples for whom this practice was routine only a few generations removed from the present day. And the fact that female circumcision is an ancient custom found in many diverse cultures does not legitimate its continued persistence (Lawrence, 1993:1944).

Beyond the standard of harm evoked in this argument, it is increasingly evident that attempts to justify the control of female sexuality—whether using aesthetics, cleanliness, respectability or religious ideology—increasingly are being questioned and rebuked in different cultures and cannot be sustained as a justification for the continuation of a harmful practice.

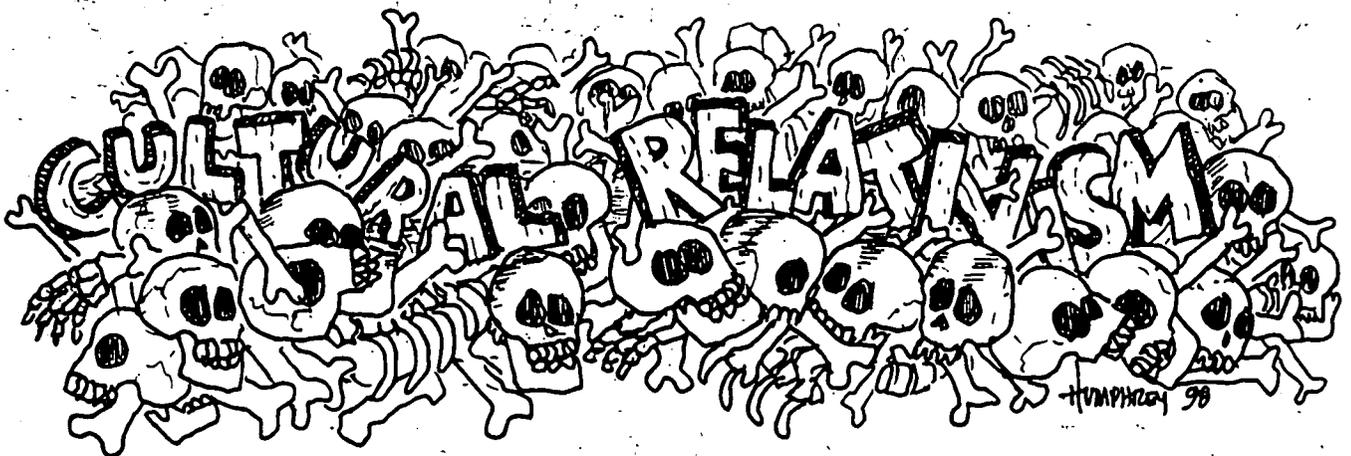
**Anthropologists' Expert Testimony**

I had the opportunity to offer expert testimony in an Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) case involving application for asylum and withholding of

deportation for a Nigerian family. The case revolved around the issues of Muslim persecution of Christians and the fear of female circumcision for the two young daughters of the parents, the wife having already undergone circumcision. My testimony involved responding to questions about female circumcision from the attorney for the Nigerian family and the judge. I was examined and cross-examined especially on the issue of the probability that the girls would be circumcised in their home community in northern Nigeria even if the father and mother opposed this.

Interestingly, after the 1996 Kasinga case, the U.S. State Department issued guidelines to the INS and its courts suggesting that uncircumcised girls would not be at risk if their fathers opposed the practice. I explained that on the basis of my knowledge of the practice in a comparable African Muslim context, female circumcision is the province of female kin. There is no assurance, given the influence of extended family ties, that the girls would be protected on the strength of their parents, or just their father's, opposition. The matter of the state protecting the girls was moot given its lack of interest in regulating matters of "custom" and Nigeria's poor human rights record. Even in the Sudan, where female circumcision has been illegal since 1946, there has been little or no enforcement of the law. I was not asked if I believed that female circumcision is a violation of human rights, women's rights, or the rights of the child. At a subsequent hearing, the mother, who had been circumcised as a child, testified about her fears of her daughters' forcible circumcision or, if no circumcision were performed, of their inability to be

*(Continued on page 16)*





artists. *The Bentwood Box*, *The Button Blanket*, *The Cedar Plank Mask*, and *The Spindle Whorl*, published by Sasquatch Books in Seattle, WA, contain an illustrated story; activities and puzzles; a parent-teacher guide; and a full-color, pull-out insert with which children can make a paper model of the book's subject. Available for \$10.95 each at local bookstores or contact Nan McNutt directly for a 20% teacher discount. Write: Nan McNutt, 12722 39<sup>th</sup> Ave., N.E., Seattle, Washington 98125; or email her at [nmcnutt@worldnet.att.net](mailto:nmcnutt@worldnet.att.net).

#### **Publications:**

◆ "Is it Race?" has been a recent theme of the American Anthropological Association's *Anthropology Newsletter* (1998-99). In over 70 articles, anthropologists discuss race and human diversity. The AAA is making these articles available for \$10, payable by Visa or check. Contact the AAA Membership Office on email: [members@ameranthassn.org/](mailto:members@ameranthassn.org/) or by calling (703) 528-1902, ext. 9. The AAA Statement on Race, published in the September issue of the *Anthropology Newsletter*, is also available on the AAA web site: [www.ameranthassn.org/](http://www.ameranthassn.org/) under "government relations." A new book on race, *Cultural Intolerance: Chauvinism, Class, and Racism in the United States* (Yale 1998), by Mark Nathan Cohen, received the Bruno Tolerance Book Award from the Simon Wiesenthal Center this fall.

◆ *Careers in Anthropology* by John T. Omohundro (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1998) is a practical and informative workbook that explains what anthropology is, what anthropologists do, career opportunities (starting at the B.A. level), how to begin job hunting, and how to get hired. The book contains exercises to help you determine if a career in anthropology is for you.

◆ *Teaching Anthropology Newsletter* is a free publication that promotes the teaching of precollege anthropology. The Fall 1997/Spring 1998 issue mentions the National Association of Biology Teachers position statement on the teaching of evolution and World Wide Web sites teachers might wish to consult on the topic. To subscribe, write: TAN, Department of Anthropology, Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 3C3; [mlewis@shark.stmarys.ca](mailto:mlewis@shark.stmarys.ca).

◆ Look for the May/June 1998 issue of *The Social Studies* that includes a "Special Section on Anthropology in the Classroom," with articles by Thomas Dynneson,

Ruth Selig (*AnthroNotes* editor), KC Smith, and Jane White.

◆ *Teaching About Evolution and the Nature of Science* (140 pp.) is a new publication of the National Academy of Sciences. Chapters include: Why Teach Evolution?, Major Themes in Evolution, Evolution and the Nature of Science, Evolution and the National Science Education Standards, Frequently Asked Questions, Activities for Teaching, and Selecting Instructional Materials. Available from the National Academy Press, 2101 Constitution Ave., N.W., Box 285, Washington, DC 20055; (800) 624-6242 or (202) 334-3313. Also available online at [www.nap.edu/readingroom/books/evolution98](http://www.nap.edu/readingroom/books/evolution98).

◆ *Teaching Anthropology: SACC Notes* (TASN), the publication of the Society for Anthropology in Community Colleges (SACC), a section of the American Anthropological Association, is published biannually. Precollege teachers are encouraged to subscribe to TASN, which reports on current issues in the five fields of anthropology, on new teaching resources, as well as on activities of SACC and on papers given at SACC's annual conferences. Non-members of SACC may subscribe to TASN by contacting the editor, Lloyd J. Miller, Des Moines Area Community College, 2006 South Ankeny Boulevard, Ankeny, Iowa 50021; (515) 964-6435; email: [LJMIL@aol.com](mailto:LJMIL@aol.com). To be added to SACC's list serve, email: [pops@gwis.com](mailto:pops@gwis.com). SACC members are available to assist teachers in curriculum planning for social studies courses, which usually employ anthropological topics and concepts.

◆ Check out *Anthropology Explored: The Best of Smithsonian AnthroNotes* as a possible classroom textbook/reader. See page 19 for ordering information. The book received a positive review by David Gellner in the *Times Literary Supplement* (London: Oct. 20, 1998, p. 32): "Many of the chapters on archaeology or evolution contain interesting updates, which give a sense of the progress of these kinds of anthropological study through conjecture and refutation.... The book provides a sense of a massive anthropological profession, secure in the use of basic concepts, largely unruffled by the deconstructive, postmodern concerns that are some of its elite members' most influential exports...." See Spring 1998 issue of *AnthroNotes* (page 19) for information on requesting an examination copy for classroom use.

## TEACHER'S CORNER: EXPLORING HISTORIC CEMETERIES

by Ann Palkovich



In the Washington metropolitan area during the 16th, 17th, and early 18th centuries, as in most towns in the United States, "graveyards" were located in churchyards and usually near the center of town. However, overcrowding of graves and new sanitation laws mandated the closing of most of these early "graveyards" by the 1850s. The new cemeteries were located on the periphery of towns—distinct and separate from the focus of activity among the living. By the mid-19th century, a new genre of formal cemeteries was being established in America. (The Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, MA is one of the earliest examples of these new burial places.) Most existing cemeteries in the Washington metropolitan area were created during this time and are generally referred to as "rural cemeteries." What was this new genre?

The newly established 19th century "cemeteries" (replacing earlier terms such as "graveyards") were not simply a place to inter the dead but represented a new type of cultural institution. Cemeteries were now formally designed to resemble gardens. The dead were not simply interred but memorialized. New rules

defined such things as the proper care of the grounds and the appropriate attire and demeanor while visiting the cemetery.

The boundaries of most 19th century rural cemeteries are marked, for instance, by fences or shrubbery. Often a centrally located entrance leads to symmetrical paths or roadways that divide the cemetery into sections. These sections may be further divided into family plots or other areas (e.g. military graves). Planting may mark sections, plots or individual graves. Such features set off the individual graves as well as the entire cemetery, both physically and visually, from the surrounding area.

Nineteenth century cemeteries distinctly differ from earlier American graveyards. The differences are not limited to changes in gravestone styles, epitaphs, and symbols. Earlier graveyards express mortuary ideology and attitudes of death through individual graves. Rural cemeteries cannot simply be analyzed or understood as clusters of graves. Individual graves are an integral part of the overall cemetery "design." Interpretation of these



19th century cemeteries must, therefore, not only account for the variety among individual graves but also for the overriding common elements expressed in all such cemeteries.

### Class Exercise

The exercise below focuses on historic cemeteries. These cemeteries provide historic archaeologists with an interesting opportunity to examine how artifacts (in this case gravestones) vary at different times and in different places. Such variations often reflect how a culture is changing, how cultures differ from one another, and how artifacts reflect these changes and differences. To understand differences in gravestones, archaeologists observe both the individual markers and the larger context or setting of these graves. In general, they ask how important are artifact patterns and the context of these patterns to archaeological interpretations.

Select a cemetery to study and answer the questions for each part of the exercise.

1. What is the name of this cemetery? Spend about 15 minutes just walking around the cemetery. Pay particular attention to fences, paths, paved drives, chapels and other buildings, plantings, and other features of the landscape. Identify the boundaries of the cemetery. Is it marked by a fence, sidewalk, shrubs, or in some other way?
2. Make a rough sketch map showing the location of the fences, paths, and other features you have identified. Note the earliest and most recent gravestones and sketch in their locations. Does the cemetery seem planned or are the graves located haphazardly?
3. Using a standard form (see below), record 20 gravestones. Try to find different styles of gravestones to record. Do you find certain gravestone styles in only some areas of the cemetery and not others? Are these styles associated with only certain time periods? What does this tell you about the size of the cemetery at different times and how gravestone styles changed over time?

In metropolitan Washington, the most common gravestone styles are tablets, obelisks, blocks, and slabs. Occurring in the late 18th century to the mid-19th century, tablets are single vertical stones that average two to four inches in thickness and are made of limestone, marble, or sandstone. These stones, often with a sculpted top, are placed directly in the ground with no bases used.

All the surfaces of these stones have been cut (or finished) but not polished.

Shaped like the Washington Monument, obelisks, usually made of marble, are tall and square in cross-section and dominate gravestones in the late 19th to early 20th century. The obelisk may be topped with an urn, ball (known as an orb), or other figure and may have one or several bases of varying sizes. While most gravestones are lettered only on the front, obelisks may show lettering on all sides.

Blocks, which are square gravestones, vary in size, may or may not have bases, and generally show cut but not polished surfaces. Made of a variety of different stones, these markers are characteristic of the 20th century. A variation of a block stone, the pulpit style marker has a slanted face on which is carved the individual's name, other information, and decoration. Made of marble or granite, pulpit stones rest on bases.

Slabs typify the 20th century and are still the most common gravestone used today. Slabs, often composed of granite, are usually placed vertically on a base and vary in thickness from six to eight inches. While the front of a slab is polished, the sides and sometimes the back are roughhewn.

Other gravestone styles may be noted as well—elaborate figurative sculptures, crude stones, or simple wooden crosses. Often greater numbers of unusual gravestones are found during transition periods from one general style (e.g., tablets) to another style (e.g., obelisks).

Initial studies of local 19th century cemeteries have yielded some unexpected results. The striking similarity among contemporaneous cemeteries representing distinct socioeconomic and religious groups proved the most surprising observation. Formally marked boundaries, landscaping, symmetrical paths, and, in particular, the style of grave markers and the stone from which they are carved create a uniform visual impression. Economic class or religious affiliation are not immediately apparent. This suggests that the accepted "rules" for rural cemeteries—that is, how the grave is to appear in the landscape and the elements which it must contain—superseded differences within society. Only when individual grave data are examined do differences in community and religious cemeteries become evident. Contrasts in epitaphs, religious

symbols, decorations, and the spatial arrangement of graves seem to be the ways in which class structure and religious affiliations are expressed in these 19th century cemeteries.

4. Locate at least five gravestones, from different time periods, which have epitaphs. What do these epitaphs say? What might they reflect about attitudes toward death? How does the use of epitaphs and what epitaphs say change over time? What might this mean?

5. Locate a family plot or several gravestones with the same surname. Do you think these individuals are related or are husband and wife? How can you tell? Are other relatives buried in the same area? Are these family burial areas more common in earlier graves or more recent graves? What might this tell you about the changing use of family plots over time?

6. Select five gravestones with men's names and five gravestones with women's names from different time periods. How are men's and women's gravestones similar? How are they different? What might this tell you about the changing roles and statuses of men and women over time?

Questions 1 and 2 are designed to have you take a close look at the cemetery and to notice the importance of elements other than just the gravestones themselves. Question 3 treats each gravestone as an artifact and focuses on the same kind of details an archaeologist would find useful in understanding how artifacts reflect

or holiday decorations of graves. Comparisons of different parts of the same cemetery or of different cemeteries are also interesting. Students can then change over time. Questions about particular aspects of the cemetery, similar to 4, 5, and 6 can be added or substituted. For example, you can examine the special features of military gravestones or children's gravestones summarize their findings in a concluding essay, or share their insights in a roundtable class discussion.

#### Readings:

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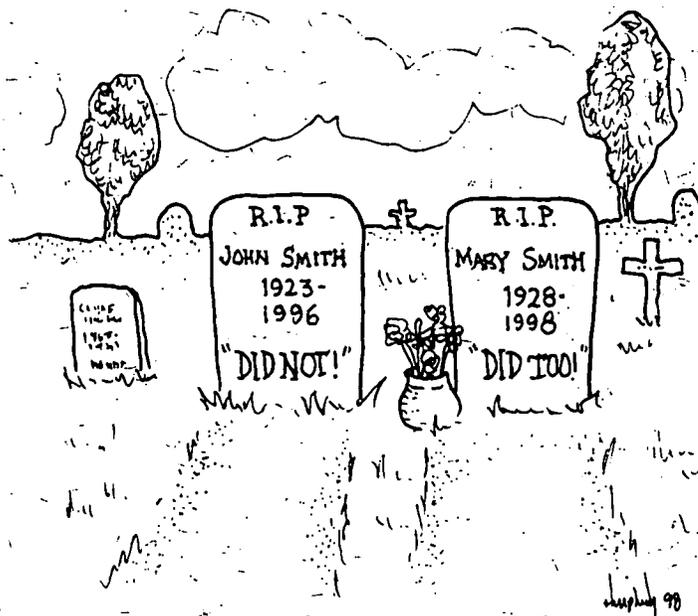
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(Continued on next page)



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[Editors' Note: Also of interest is the journal *Markers* published by The Association for Gravestone Studies. Check out their web site at [www.berkshire.net/ags/](http://www.berkshire.net/ags/).

An earlier version of this teaching activity appeared in *AnthroNotes*, vol. 8 (2), spring 1986. This and other *AnthroNotes* teaching activities are available free-of-charge by writing: Teacher's Packet in Anthropology, Anthropology Outreach Office, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560-0112. This packet serves as a companion to the book *Anthropology Explored: The Best of Smithsonian AnthroNotes*, available from the Smithsonian Institution Press (1-800-782-4612). Book royalties support the printing costs of *AnthroNotes*.]

**INDIVIDUAL GRAVE DATA**

Recorder's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Observation \_\_\_\_\_

Cemetery \_\_\_\_\_

Photo: B/W \_\_\_\_\_ Color \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Map/Location \_\_\_\_\_ Born \_\_\_\_\_ Died \_\_\_\_\_

Foot Stone Description

\_\_\_\_\_

Plot Marker (Single/Multiple) Description

\_\_\_\_\_

**Grave Marker (Permanent/Temporary)**

| Shape                                     | Material                              | Construction                                  |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tablet           | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood         | <input type="checkbox"/> Unfinished           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tablet-like      | <input type="checkbox"/> Cement       | <input type="checkbox"/> Hand-made            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vertical Slab    | <input type="checkbox"/> Metal        | <input type="checkbox"/> Formally constructed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Obelisk          | <input type="checkbox"/> Stone        | <input type="checkbox"/> Carved               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Block            | <input type="checkbox"/> Granite      | <input type="checkbox"/> Molded               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Triangular Block | <input type="checkbox"/> Marble       | <input type="checkbox"/> Soldered             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Horizontal Slab  | <input type="checkbox"/> Slate        | <input type="checkbox"/> Cast                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pulpit           | <input type="checkbox"/> Limestone    | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Figurial         | <input type="checkbox"/> Other        | <input type="checkbox"/> Polished             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sarcophagus      | <input type="checkbox"/> Unidentified |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cenotaph         | <input type="checkbox"/> Field Stone  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other            |                                       |   |

**Grave Adornment**

| Permanent                                 | Temporary                        | Individual                               | Ritual/Seasonal                       |
|---|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Potted Plant     | <input type="checkbox"/> Flowers | <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh Flowers   | <input type="checkbox"/> Easter       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plantings        | <input type="checkbox"/> Wreath  | <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic Flowers | <input type="checkbox"/> Christmas    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Religious Marker | <input type="checkbox"/> Other   | <input type="checkbox"/> Wreath          | <input type="checkbox"/> July 4th     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Military Marker  |                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Child's Toy     | <input type="checkbox"/> Memorial Day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other            |                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other           | <input type="checkbox"/> Other        |

Marker Dimensions: Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Width: \_\_\_\_\_ Thickness: \_\_\_\_\_

Inscription (Front/Back): \_\_\_\_\_ Design/Decoration: \_\_\_\_\_

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## AFRICAN JAMBOREE

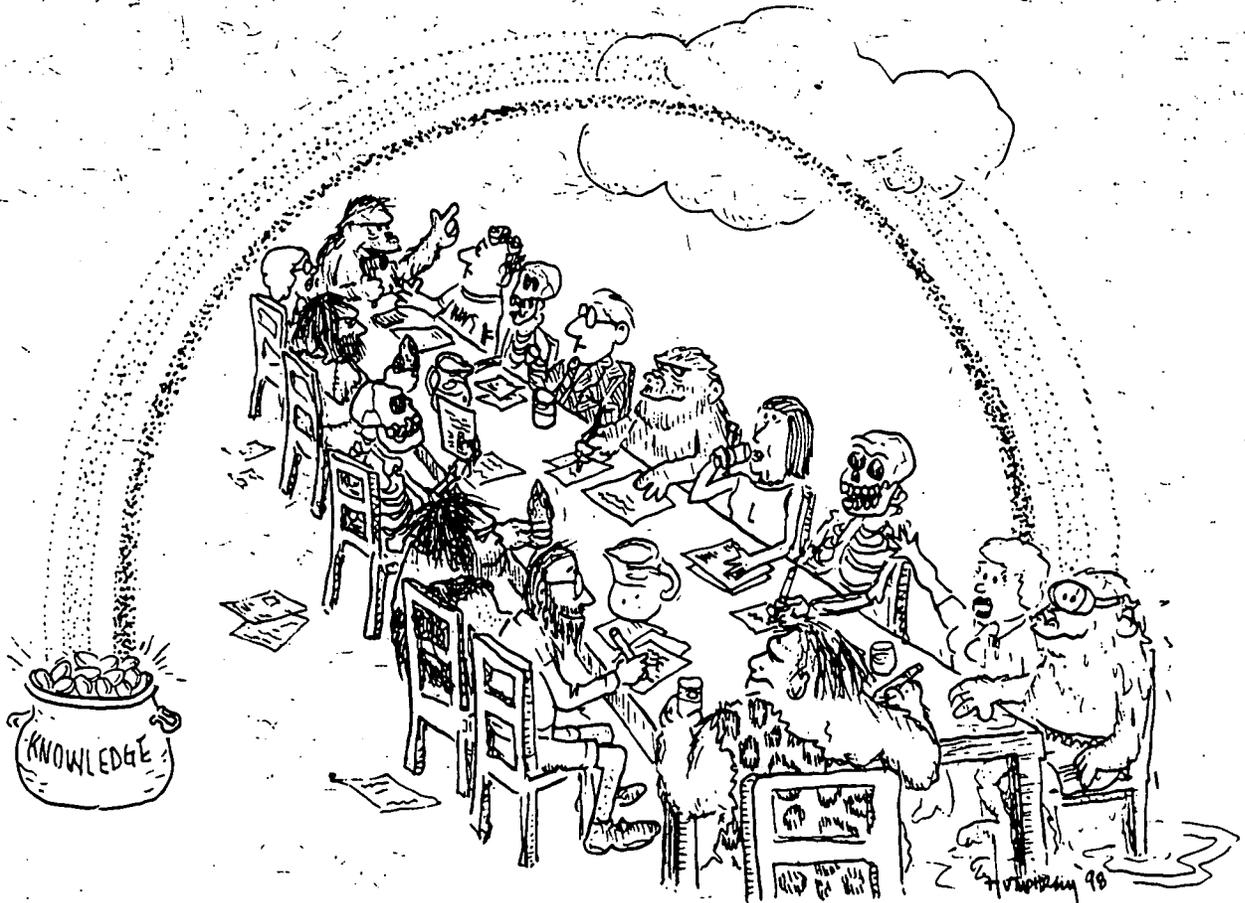
*by Bernard Wood*



It was the largest scientific gathering ever held in South Africa—the Dual Congress of the International Association for the Study of Human Paleontology and the International Association of Human Biologists—bringing over a thousand scientists from more than 75 countries to meet in Johannesburg the last days of June and the first few days of July. The Dual Congress was a marvelous way to celebrate the contributions Africa has given humanity. Without Africa, after all, there would have been no human evolution as we know it nor any human biology. The venue also reminded us that civilization means much more than cultural complexity. It means a proper respect for human dignity and a real understanding of the benefits and responsibilities of our unusual evolutionary history. We saw both of these in evidence in the “rainbow” coalition that is the new South Africa.

Human biology (the study of the patterns of variation in human physiology and morphology) and human evolution (the study of human evolutionary history) should be intellectual bedfellows, and a few scientists have international reputations in both fields. The doyen of this distinguished group, Phillip Tobias, predictably reminded the participants of the important role Africa has played in human prehistory, a role which Tobias had a major part in establishing. He also informed us that a very recent study implied that Africa also played a crucial role in the origin of mammals.

Tobias, emeritus professor of anatomy at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, is the president of both organizations, and he used his dual presidency to propose a joint meeting in the “new” South Africa. Organizing such a meeting is a tough assignment in any context, but to do this in a country



facing economic and social "growing pains" was a special challenge, but one to which the nation and its scientists rose. From the words of the Minister who spoke at the opening ceremony to the inevitably more emotional speeches at the closing banquet, it was clear that South African politicians had achieved a perspective on the apartheid years that made them into statesmen and stateswomen. It was a perspective that had a perceptible maturity and moral strength, and it made many of us from so-called "more developed" countries yearn for men and women of equivalent stature to be our political leaders.

Why do scientists attend a continual round of meetings, each packed full of formal presentations? Small workshop meetings are designed to bring together scientists in a particular specialty, to help individuals present new research findings or plan new directions or avenues for their research. But large conferences are not designed to accomplish anything quite so tangible as developing new research direction. Such large meetings are different; they are much more like "jamborees," meetings of enthusiasts who come together to share mutual interests. But we never call them jamborees. Perhaps it would be more difficult to raise the airfare to go to a "jamboree" than to the more lofty sounding "Joint Congress."

To use a nautical metaphor, people do not attend conferences to plot a new course for their research; they go to check their present bearings, to make sure that the assumptions they made when they plotted their present course of research are still valid. Such meetings are also a fine opportunity for younger researchers to make the personal connections that are so valuable in science so that when you need data or tips about a better method, you can call up someone you have met face to face. At this most recent Congress, there was little science presented, but I took a young post-doctoral researcher with me and in the few short months since the Dual Congress he has begun two new collaborative projects resulting directly from contacts made at the meeting, probably over a beer late in the evening.

The conference had its amusing moments. A TV company was making a program about Elaine Morgan, author of the "aquatic ape" hypothesis. The hypothesis maintains that this is a scenario that would explain a range of alleged human peculiarities, from the distribution of body fat to the direction of hair on our backs. She argues that support for her hypothesis ranges from the absence of

any evidence for human origins between five and eight million years, to the association of the earliest hominids after 5 mya (million years ago) with lake shore locations. The difficulty with the hypothesis is that it is one of a number of superficially attractive explanations of the events of human evolution that, for the present at least, are not testable and do not deserve to be labeled a "hypothesis." Other arguments are more plausible: there is little fossil or geological evidence of any kind for the period between 5 and 8 mya in Africa, and stable lake shores are more likely than many other environments to accumulate bones over time, whether from predation or from natural deaths.

The TV program's thesis was that science is a cosy male clique that has systematically and ruthlessly given the "cold shoulder" to Ms. Morgan and her hypothesis, primarily because she is a woman, and, secondarily, because she is outside conventional academia. Those who have met Elaine Morgan will know that she is a tiny doughty sparrow of a lady whose advanced years have not dimmed her, or her supporters' abilities to literally pin you against the wall so that she, or they, can make their point. Any refutation to Morgan comes less from an "anti-Morgan" conspiracy than simply from a strategy for survival! At the meeting, the session that Elaine Morgan was to speak at was quite ruthlessly stage-managed with "planted" questioners whose interventions would ensure that the conspiracy thesis would be supported by the session itself.

What was the Congress like for me, a British born and trained paleoanthropologist, formerly Dean of the Medical School at the University of Liverpool, and currently holding a joint appointment at George Washington University and the Smithsonian Institution. Like many of those attending, I presented a 20-minute talk and was the coauthor on another talk and poster. I also organized one of the 18 half-day colloquia, titled "The Diversity of Early *Homo*." I was asked to do this because one of my research interests focuses on the early stages in the evolution of our own genus, *Homo*. Some of the papers in the colloquium, mine included, reiterated material that is soon to be published, but two of the contributions were original and thought-provoking. Not a bad ratio of "pain to gain."

I had not expected a theme to emerge from the colloquium, but it did. The point of my contribution

was that since the very first fossil species was attributed to our own genus *Homo neanderthalensis* in 1864, we have been redefining *Homo* to make it more and more inclusive. In my paper I tried to make the case that as it is presently defined, *Homo* makes little sense as a genus. In technical terms, it is not a "clade" as it is not currently limited to the descendants of one common ancestor but includes species from several related lineages. Nor is it a "grade," for it includes species that show a variety of adaptations, rather than species that have common diets, habitats, or locomotor patterns. For example, *Homo habilis* still maintained a considerable ability to use its arms, hands, and feet for scrambling around in trees. I argued that to ensure that *Homo* is both a clade and a grade two of the most ancient species presently assigned to it, *Homo habilis* and *Homo rudolfensis* (see *AnthroNotes*, spring 1996) need to be excluded. As a result, *Homo ergaster*, also known as "early African *Homo erectus*," would be the most primitive and oldest (ca. 2.0 myr) member of *Homo*. If the label *Homo* is restricted to committed bipeds with high quality diets and an ability to disperse over large areas, then the emergence of our genus was as recent as 2 mya. This would mean that as the first stone tools occur prior to this date, they were made by a creature that was still, in terms of adaptations, an australopithecine.

What was intriguing was that two other talks in the colloquium, by Leslie Aiello and Susan Anton, set out the details of research on hominid adaptations and on dispersal patterns, respectively, that was consistent with my hypothesis. On the basis of body shape (large gut, not waist) and size (small), Aiello argued that the australopithecines shared a lower "quality" (high bulk,

low energy per gram) diet with *Homo habilis* and some apes, while *Homo ergaster*, with a taller, leaner silhouette, had made a transition to higher dietary quality. Anton used information on body mass, home range and diets in primates to suggest that *H. ergaster*, with its larger body size and quite different diet, would have been the first member of our lineage with the ability to travel and spread over large areas without much diversification into different forms. This major transition point in human evolution resulted in the first hominid dispersals out of Africa by as early as ca. 1.8 mya.

As with most meetings, my ability to sustain a fresh mind for each session fell off alarmingly as the days went by and 'people fatigue' set in. The most interesting conversation of my five days was on the bus-ride back to the airport!

Conferences rarely follow any predictable pattern, and some of one's most productive research liaisons may be over dinner. At least the venue for this Congress, Sun City, gave us little other than gambling as alternatives to the sessions. Never believe anyone who attends a conference in Paris and then claims he or she went to every session! Scientists are human too.

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SHAKING THE FAMILY TREE

(*"Human Rights" continued from page 5*)

married in Nigeria as they would be socially unacceptable women. These arguments persuaded the judge in 1997 to suspend deportation and to consider a positive case for asylum for the family.

#### **"Avoidance of Harm" Key Standard**

Harm may be considered to take place when there is death, pain, disability, loss of freedom or pleasure that results from an act by one human upon another (Gert, 1988:47-49). It is the notion of harm done to individuals or groups that can be used to explore the terrain between universal rights and cultural relativism. *When reasonable persons from different cultural backgrounds agree that certain institutions or cultural practices cause harm, then the moral neutrality of cultural relativism must be suspended.* The concept of "harm" has been a driving force behind the medical, psychological, feminist, and cultural opposition to female genital mutilation.

Avoidance of harm has been the key concept in the development of ethical guidelines in medical and biological research and also in federal regulations regulating research in the behavioral sciences (Fluehr-Lobban, 1994:3). Philosophers have also refined concepts of harm and benefit; however, the discussion more frequently occurs around the prevention of harm rather than the promotion of benefit.

Even the most experienced anthropological field worker must negotiate the terrain between universal rights and cultural relativism with caution, to avoid the pitfalls of scientific or discipline superiority. The anthropologist is capable of hearing, recording, and incorporating the multiple voices that speak to issues of cultural specificity and universal human rights, as some have done admirably (Dwyer, 1991). When various perspectives are taken into consideration, still in the end a judgment may have to be made when harm is a factor.

#### **Case Study: Domestic Abuse**

The concept of *darar* in the Arabic language and in Islamic family law translates as harm or abuse and is broadly applied in Islamic law (Shari'a) and specifically in three different cultural settings which I have studied, in Sudan, Egypt and Tunisia (Fluehr-Lobban, 1987). *Darar* comes from the same root as that which is used to describe a strike or a physical blow. However, *darar* in Muslim family law as a ground for divorce has been

interpreted to include both physical harm and emotional harm, the latter usually described as insulting words or behavior. It is probably most clear to make a determination between human rights and cultural practice when physical harm or abuse is taking place. It is simpler to stand against physical abuse of women within a marriage. Indeed, Western ideas of physical and mental cruelty as grounds for divorce mesh well with the concept of harm as reflected in "talaq al-darar," divorce due to harm or abuse. A woman who comes to court, alleges harm, proves it with her own testimony or that of witnesses, and is granted a divorce is probably a woman who has experienced the abuse for some time and is using the court, as women often do in Muslim settings, as a last resort.

The divorced husband often does not acknowledge the harm, as is frequently the case with abusive husbands in other countries where the "right" of a husband to discipline a wife is a cultural norm. A relativist position might attempt to split the difference here between the cultural "right" of the husband to discipline a wife and the wife's right to resist. Moreover, the relativist's position would be upheld by cultural institutions and persons in authority, judges for example, with the legitimate right to enforce the norm of "obedience" of wives. My own research shows that wives have often "disobeyed" their husbands and repeatedly fled from abusive domestic cohabitation (Fluehr-Lobban, 1987:120-25). Historically, the frequency of such cases in the Islamic courts led to practical reform favorable to abused wives whereby "obedience" orders to return to their husbands were issued a maximum of three times only. Ultimately, in the Sudan and in Egypt the "house obedience" (Bayt al-ta'a) law was abolished, largely due to feminist agitation and reformist political pressure.

The cultural "right" of a man to discipline, slap, hit, or beat his wife (and often by extension his children) is widely recognized across a myriad of different cultures throughout the world where male dominance is an accepted fact of life. Indeed, the issue of domestic violence has only recently been added to the international human rights agenda, but it is firmly in place since the Vienna Conference of 1993 and the United Nations Beijing Women's Conference in 1995. This relatively new dialogue intersects at a point where the individual rights of the woman clash with a potential cultural defense of a man practicing harm, and is a dialogue that anthropologists could inform and enrich tremendously

by their first hand knowledge of community and family life. Violence against women, against children, against people, is not acceptable on moral grounds nor is it defensible on cultural grounds, although an examination of its many expressions and facets is very useful knowledge for both social science and public policy. The future development of a cross-cultural framework analyzing domestic violence would serve both scientific and human rights work.

### Conclusion

The terrain between universal rights and cultural relativism can be puzzling and difficult to negotiate, but the use of the idea of the "avoidance of harm" can help anthropologists and others map out a course of thinking and action. We are coming to the recognition that violence against women should be an acknowledged wrong, a violation of the basic human right to be free from harm that cannot be excused or justified on cultural grounds. Likewise, children in every culture have the right to be free from harm and to be nurtured under secure and adequate conditions. Understanding the diverse cultural contexts where harm or violence may take place is valuable and important, but suspending or withholding judgment because of cultural relativism is intellectually and morally irresponsible. Anthropologists cannot be bystanders when they witness harm being practiced upon any people they study.

Anthropologists can aid the international dialogue enormously by developing approaches to universal human rights that are respectful of cultural considerations but are morally responsible. For anthropologists a proactive interest and participation in human rights is desirable. Areas of human rights that might come to our attention in our work include cultural survival, rights of indigenous peoples, defense against ethnic cleansing, or interest in the rights of women and children and persons in danger of harm. Instead of the more usual negative reaction to public disclosure of gross violations of human rights, anthropologists could position themselves to play an "early warning" role that might prevent or ameliorate harm to human beings. Simplistic notions of cultural relativism no longer need impede the engagement of anthropologists in international human rights discourse.

In this spirit anthropologists could be among the best brokers for inter-cultural dialogue regarding human rights. We have moved beyond the idea of a value free social science to the task of developing a moral system at

the level of our shared humanity that must at certain times supersede cultural relativism. Reassessing the value of cultural relativism does not diminish the continued value of studying and valuing diversity around the globe.

Anthropologists can lend their knowledge and expertise to the international discussion and debates regarding human rights by playing a brokering role between indigenous or local peoples they know first-hand and the international governmental and non-governmental agencies whose policies affect the lives of people they study. Anthropologists also can write or speak out about human rights issues in public media where their expertise might inform positions taken by human rights advocacy groups, or decisions made by governments or other bodies that affect the well-being of people they study. If they choose, they can provide professional advice or offer expert testimony where culturally-sensitive matters intersect with human rights issues, such as with female circumcision, or with a cultural defense or justification of domestic violence. In these and other ways anthropologists can engage with human rights issues without the limitations that cultural relativism may impose.

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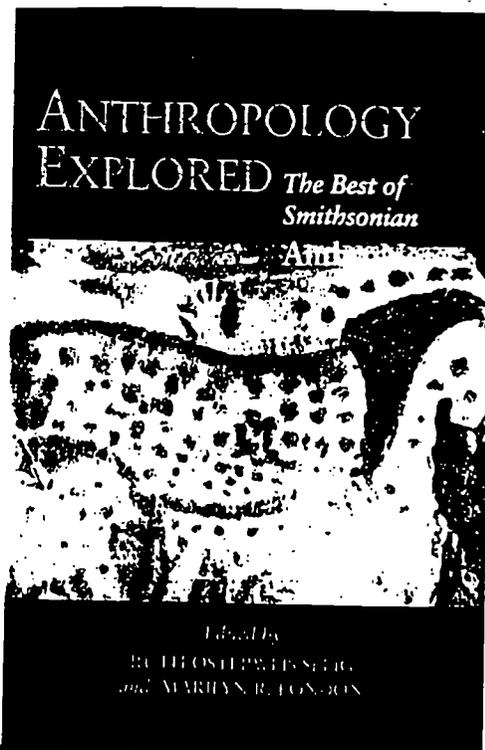
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