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Editor In Chief

Meghan Strong

Review Staff

Augustine Tijerina

Julie Wennstrom

Kim Hinson

Celso Jaquez

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1000 E Victoria Street, Carson CA 90747

Phone 310.243.3514

Table of Contents

THEORY CORNER

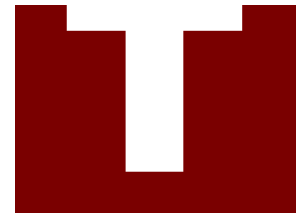
- Abstract: Marvin Harris, “Anthropology and the Theoretical and Paradigmatic Significance of the Collapse of Soviet and East European Communism”**
By Timothy Dahlum 1
- Essay: Theories of Culture Change in Anthropology**
By Meghan Strong 2-6
- Abstract: Eleanor Leacock, “Woman’s Status in Egalitarian Society: Implications for Social Evolution”**
By Kimberly Hinson 7-8
- Abstract: Leslie White, “Energy and the Evolution of Culture”**
By Meghan Strong 9

STUDENT RESEARCH ARTICLES

- Olmec Beginnings**
By Celso Jaquez 10-15
- Social Cohesions in Anglo-Saxon Literature: Gift Reciprocity in Beowulf**
By Augustine Tijerina 16-21
- Olmec Governance**
By Julie Wennstrom 22-26

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

- DANTA Primate Behavior and Conservation Field School 2009** 27-37
- Passport in Time Archaeology Survey 2009** 38-42
- Los Padres National Forest Applied Archaeology Field School 2009** 43-67
-



Marvin Harris- “Anthropology and the Theoretical and Paradigmatic Significance of the Collapse of Soviet and East European Communism”

Abstract by Timothy Dahlum

In “The Comparative Method in Social Anthropology” A. R. Radcliffe-Brown contrasts comparative method against Boas’ historical particularism. He declares historical particularism as localized details of a culture and finds the comparative method as a systematic comparison of human societies. Systematic comparison is necessary to maintain a current perspective of “the wider context of human societies”. To illustrate his case, he uses examples of comparison in totemically represented exogamous matrilineal moieties in Australia, and ultimately global representation of this type of society. These moieties are all examples of dual social order manifestations which contrast societal roles. Each moiety is associated with a totemic species, in which “the resemblances and differences of animal species translated into terms of friendship and conflict, solidarity and opposition.” Totemic moieties are “unions of opposites,” dissipating rivalries and opposition, whether created through real actions or set up within a group to create balance. An example of conflict and balance is the Chinese concept and practice of Yin and Yang, unification or balance through rivalry. There are many approaches to creating balance, some are: the use of games to replace warfare and violence, the balanced movement of wives between moieties, and gods exchange as in potlatch. In the end Radcliffe-Brown acknowledges a need for the historical method to generate specific knowledge of societies the comparative method for general theories about human society.

“Theories of Culture Change in Anthropology”

By Meghan Strong

In the course of anthropology two distinct viewpoints have emerged, the idealist and the materialist. Idealists believe that the most important aspects of a culture are exhibited through its ideology, values, belief systems and that these aspects are the driving forces behind how culture is shaped and how humans make sense of the world around them. On the other end of the spectrum is the materialist approach which states that societies are shaped through technology, reproduction, and ways of adapting to their environment. The materialists believe that the goal of anthropology is to develop law like generalizations that can be applied to all societies. In other words the materialists believe that culture is shaped by technological adaptations and the idealists believe that culture is shaped through its ideology or belief systems. In this paper I will be reviewing the work of an idealist, materialist, and an anthropologist who falls somewhere in the middle of these two theoretical standpoints. Those anthropologists are: Ruth Benedict and her article *Configurations of Culture in North America*, Leslie white and his article *Energy and the Evolution of Culture*, and Franz Boas and his article *The Methods of Ethnology*.

In *Configurations of Culture in North America* Ruth Benedict contends that cultures express a set of core values that are accepted and institutionalized and vary from culture to culture. She discusses the cultures of the Pueblo and Plains Indians of North America. She felt it necessary to study small scale societies because large societies are too cumbersome. In her discussion of cultural configurations, the terms Apollonian vs. Dionysian are used as a way to describe the Pueblo and Plains cultures. Apollonian world view, as applied to the Pueblo, means having distrust of power and excess. Dionysian world view, as applied to the Plains Indians, means believing in the pursuit of excess not only as an escape, but an entry way to the truth.

THEORY CORNER

Benedict discusses in the article the configurations of death and bereavement that reflect upon the concepts of Apollonian and Dionysian. Plains Indians have dramatic displays of mourning that often entail women slashing their heads and thighs. In contrast, are the Pueblo Indians try not to call attention to themselves even while mourning, showing as little emotion as possible.

Benedict then discusses the realist and non-realist approaches to danger. Both Pueblos and Plains are categorized as realist and can have either Apollonian or Dionysian worldviews and approach danger and contamination realistically. In the Shoshonean and Non-Pueblo Southwest cultures, however, they have non-realistic approaches to danger and are associated with Dionysian worldviews and these tend to be more common than realist approaches. These non-realistic approaches would be something similar to believing in ghosts. In the latter part of the article Benedict discusses the “deviant”. Depending on the society, one culture’s upstanding citizen is another’s deviant, because the core values and institutions are different. Benedict lays out her idealist theoretical approach in this article. She believes that the driving force behind the shaping of culture is when the core values of the society become institutionalized.

In his article, *Energy and the Evolution of Culture*, Leslie White outlines his theory on how culture develops and evolves as a result of efficiency of technology. In agreement with anthropologists such as Tylor and Morgan, White believes that culture is transmitted through symbols and not through genes or heredity. He also asserts that culture is the principal way in which humans adapt to their environment and that it affects every facet of human life. White summarizes this by stating that the function of culture “is to serve the needs of man”.

White contends that there are three realms that categorize our cultural responses: the technological realm, the sociological realm, and the ideological realm. White asserts that the technological realm influences the development of the sociological realm which in turn

THEORY CORNER

influences the ideological realm. He also states that the sociological realm could bring technological developments to a halt due to hierarchical class and caste systems in that realm. The formula used to illustrate the theory is the amount of energy exhausted annually (E) and the efficiency of the technology (T) that in turn determines the product or goods (P) produced. This is expressed as $E \times T = P$. This formula is considered to be an index of levels of cultural development. This means that when the amount of energy that is controlled increases and the efficiency in which it is used increases then so does the cultural development. White argues that evolutionary thought should be part of the “science of culture” as it is in the biological and physical sciences. He concludes that this theory has made clear the “mechanisms of development”, and that now the energy expended and the efficiency of the technology can be measured to determine the degree of cultural development.

White’s theoretical standpoint differs from that of Benedict in that he is asserting that cultural values or ideals are shaped through the material goods produced by efficient technology harnessed by people. One way to see the difference in the two theorists’ standpoints is to notice the line of causation. White contends that the ideological realm has the least amount of effect on the technological and sociological realm. He believes that the technological realm is the most important and that it affects the sociological and ideological realms.

The anthropologist who would fit somewhere in the middle of the spectrum of idealist vs. materialist is Franz Boas. In his article, *The Methods of Ethnology*, Boas critiques the assumptions made by those who believe in the evolution of culture and hyper diffusionism. First, the evolutionary point of view is that human culture follows “definite laws” which can be applied to anywhere in the world to any group of people. He also goes on to explain that Western European culture constructed “an orthogenetic development”, meaning that they have

T H E O R Y C O R N E R

looked at the world through the lens of comparative biology only seeing things as moving from the simple to the complex. Second, hyper diffusionism contends that development of cultural traits is a result of their distribution through migration and diffusion. Boas asserts that certain aspects of a culture can have apparent similarities with others, but that does not mean that those similarities are a result of migration or diffusion. Boas believes that the validity of these two theories has not been proven.

He then gives the example of geometric and representative designs and explains that the evolutionary point of view would arrange them so that they showed a transition from representative to geometric and hyper diffusionist would assume that the motifs that were similar to another part of the world would have the same origins. Boas proposes that in order for us to understand history we must know how things are and how they got that way. Boas believed that human society is complex and that there are not uniform stages of development. He asserts that culture stages are not stable, and that accounting for the similarities involves seeing that they can be parallel in a general but not specific way.

His approach of Boasian particularism states that in order to fully understand a culture you must view it within its particular context. Boas falls between the two theoretical standpoints of idealist/materialist because on the one hand he acknowledges that culture is shaped through its values and ideals, but in addition he takes into account the influence of environment and contact with other cultures in shaping culture.

This paper has looked at two very distinct and important theoretical positions in anthropology; the idealist and materialist. Through the review of Benedict's article one can see that she exhibits the idealist approach to anthropological studies. She contends that society is made up of a set of core values that become institutionalized and accepted. Benedict asserts that

T H E O R Y C O R N E R

ideology, belief systems, and values shape the material conditions of a society. The materialist approach of Leslie White contends that the material conditions shape the ideological and sociological realms of a society. That society develops according to how much energy can be harnessed in an efficient way. I think that I would have to agree with the in between position of Franz Boas. I believe that his approach leads to a better understanding of cultural change. Culture does not change due to one single change in values or a new environmental adaptation, but instead I think it is due to a culmination of these events occurring at once that leads to a fundamental shift in culture. I believe that one must understand the historical contexts, material adaptations, and ideological beliefs of a society to fully understand the culture. One must understand how all of these factors interconnect with one another to have a broader view of the culture being studied.

Eleanor Leacock-“Women’s Status in Egalitarian Society: Implications for Social Evolution”

Abstract by Kimberly Hinson

In her article *Woman’s Status in Egalitarian Society: Implications for Social Evolution*, Eleanor Burke Leacock argues that women’s roles in egalitarian band societies have been altered by the introduction and absorption of a capitalist-trade dependant way of life which replaced old systems of autonomy and modes of production. Leacock claims that in order to holistically analyze a women’s status in egalitarian band societies an anthropologist must take “a historical approach” to analyze the “social-economic structure as a whole” which will lead them to a less victimized view of women’s status. The “incorporation into world economic and political systems” of small, usually self-sustaining, self-producing, self-consuming bands, have caused a shift in their economic structure. In prior ethnographies women’s roles have been ethnocentrically viewed and considered private/domestic and therefore, just as in European societies, less important to the group, or state, as the men’s roles. This degradation of women’s roles and function in a society is prevalent when studying pre-class hunter/gather societies like the Montagnais-Naskapi. “From band to tribe, tribe to chiefdom, chiefdom to state, the decision-making process is seen quantitatively as progressive change toward Western forms of power and control.” Therefore similar “hierarchical patterns” from Western ideology were “found to be ‘incipient’ wherever they were not already well established.”

Leacock also fights to prove that the influence of capitalism and trade caused a change in the means of “production” from personal consumption, to production for “exchange.” More than anything else Leacock wanted people to reexamine their “teleological and unilineal” view of

T H E O R Y C O R N E R

women's roles in band societies because they continually shift when "women lose their control of their production," as they do in the ripple effect of a capitalist market.

Leslie White-“Energy and the Evolution of Culture”

Abstract by Meghan Strong

In his article, *Energy and the Evolution of Culture*, Leslie White outlines his theory on how culture develops and evolves as a result of efficiency of technology. In agreement with anthropologists such as Tylor and Morgan, White believes that culture is transmitted through symbols and not through genes or heredity. He also asserts that culture is the principal way in which humans adapt to their environment and that it affects every facet of human life. White summarizes this by stating that the function of culture “is to serve the needs of man”.

White contends that there are three realms that categorize our cultural responses: the technological realm, the sociological realm, and the ideological realm. White asserts that the technological realm influences the development of the sociological realm which in turn influences the ideological realm. He also states that the sociological realm could bring technological developments to a halt due to hierarchical class and caste systems in that realm. The formula used to illustrate the theory is the amount of energy exhausted annually (E) and the efficiency of the technology (T) that in turn determines the product or goods (P) produced. This is expressed as $E \times T = P$. This formula is considered to be an index of levels of cultural development. This means that when the amount of energy that is controlled increases and the efficiency in which it is used increases then so does the cultural development. White argues that evolutionary thought should be part of the “science of culture” as it is in the biological and physical sciences. He concludes that this theory has made clear the “mechanisms of development”, and that now the energy expended and the efficiency of the technology can be measured to determine the degree of cultural development.



Olmec Beginnings

Celso Jaquez

Department of Anthropology

The origins of the people we've come to know as the Olmec continues to be one of much heated debate. Not far from the top of issues related is whether or not they should occupy the lofty and distinguished title of "Mother Culture." All we have is the archaeological evidence to assist in the decipherment of this incredibly complex mystery, with that mystery being further compounded by the location choice for habitation selected by the enigmatic Olmec. Still enough has survived that a fairly clear picture has emerged, and much can be intelligently surmised to allow researchers to make a well educated *guess* at the story of the origins of the people of the land of Olman.

The Archaic and Early Formative cultures have been, as Dr. Chris Pool of the University of Kentucky explains, considered invisible to researchers, "though their existence.....long has been suspected." Referred to as pre-Olmec, the period 1450 B.C. to 400 B.C. is represented by a culture which is now being considered as the progenitor of that which we have come to know as Olmec. Nevertheless, finds such as charred remains of maize cobs in the Tuxla region, dating from about 1500- 1400 B.C. tells us of habitation within the now acknowledged heartland.

Perhaps the greatest problem in uncovering more detailed information about these early Olmec ancestors is that due to the problems involved in recovering evidence amidst the muck

STUDENT RESEARCH

and mire of the coastal swamplands. Archaeologists have spent more time and resources on the large primary sites, with their more easily accessible and productive locations.

This has not meant, however, that spectacular finds from the alluvium have not contributed greatly to our knowledge of early Olmec culture. In fact, it is largely due to the fact that the Olmec deposited so much evidence of their material culture in and around the bogs within their heartland that we know as much as we do. One such location is the site of El Manatí in the Mexican state of Veracruz.. In 1988, three amazingly well preserved wooden busts were found, quite accidentally by workers digging a fish pond. It is most fortuitous that they thought to wrap the pieces and keep them submerged in water until anthropologists from Veracruz could examine them. All three share the distinctive and classic Olmec artistic motifs of elongated rounded heads with pronounced downward turned mouths. A team from the National Institute of Anthropology and History began the task of thoroughly excavated the swampy site, revealing to the world a cache of ritual offerings which startled Mesoamerican scholars.

Mesoamerican researchers had long been familiar with the work in stone produced by the Olmec. Their monumental basalt carved heads and thrones had for decades been the hallmarks of their artistic expression. This discovery in 1988, however, while adding examples of Olmec aesthetic, it has also left researchers with new questions regarding the meaning of placement and purpose for creating these artifacts.

Along with the wooden busts the team found a variety of ritual offering which were dated to 1700 B.C. to 1200 B.C. These included plant remains and 14 rubber balls in an incredible state of preservation. The balls are the earliest known from Mesoamerica, and support the theory that the ritual ballgame had its origins among the Olmec. Subsequent digs turned up a large

STUDENT RESEARCH

amount of jade axes, deposited aligned with the four cardinal directions, along with even more rubber balls.

But perhaps the most startling find was the discovery of human infant skeletons. According to Pool and other Olmec scholars it is thought that these were ritual sacrifices along the lines of later Aztec sacrifices to Tlaloc and Chalchuitlicue, the gods associated with rain and water. A popular theory explaining this practice being that the tears of children being sacrificed inspired the gods to send life insuring rains. The skeletal remains were dated to about 1200 B.C. These are the earliest known examples of sacrifice in Mesoamerican.

While much had already been discussed regarding the controversy of Mother versus Sister culture, I thought it worth mentioning the recent discovery of David Cheetham at the site of Canton Corralito in the Soconusco region, almost 250 miles from the contemporary site of San Lorenzo, the seat of early Olmec authority. There is now enough evidence coming from Canton Corralito to put an end to the speculation over whether or not the Olmec established colonies outside their heartland. This evidence comes in the form of pottery and figurines unearthed there and dating to about 1400 to 1200 B.C. These are not only exact duplicates in design and appearance to those being produced at San Lorenzo, but Dr. Cheetham states chemical composition analysis puts many of the pieces as coming from objects made in San Lorenzo. Analysis continues today.

There are a couple of points concerning Olmec iconography which have been the subject of new interpretation in recent years. The first will be themes repeated in Olmec iconographic sculpture. The most written about and most debated is that of the “were-jaguar” motif. According to Chris Pool, and others who studied early Olmec symbolism posit a shamanic connection between the anthropomorphic figure and the role of leadership and high status. Pool,

STUDENT RESEARCH

Michael Coe and Richard Diehl all now cite the were-jaguar motif as one conjuring the image of transformation of shamans to jaguars and back again. The jaguar was held by all Mesoamerican cultures as being a most sacred creature whose domain transcended the arboreal, terrestrial, and watery worlds, while occupying the very top of the food chain. It is therefore not surprising that among the earliest artistically inspired works in Mesoamerica, the jaguar would figure largely in the representation of religious and political authority.

A second, less discussed motif is the earth monster or as is often described as the “Olmec Dragon.” Representations of this iconic figure date to as early as 1200 B.C. and shares several features with the aforementioned were-jaguar figures. Both are designed with the flame eyebrows and the cleft in the middle of their heads. Originally thought to represent a sky serpent (ala the Aztec Quetzalcoatl, or the Maya Kukulcan) Dr. Pool as well as many other Olmec scholars now favor the association as being with a supernatural caiman or crocodile and the harpy eagle. The cleft found on the carved figures is now felt to symbolize an early representation of the maize god and/or the rain god, with the corn stalk showing up quite clearly on many early and middle formative works. It is abundantly clear that these figures held an important association with religious and political authority as its presence, in one form or another can be found contained within the majority of carved reliefs, and sculpture. The alter/thrones are adorned with both were-jaguar figures interacting with humans, with the earth monster and sky band also sharing largely the visual design.

The last point I like to make involves the question of monument mutilation on which Pool has written extensively. From all the evidence available the practice of monument mutilation took place in early Olmec antiquity, and continued through the end of the pre-classic. Animal and human sculptures were decapitated or dismembered. Many of the great stone

S T U D E N T R E S E E A R C H

thrones had huge portions gauged from them. This practice extended ever to many of the great colossal head were mutilated and tossed from their places of honor. Many distinguished Mesoamerican scholars believe that these were the acts of hostile invaders, or perhaps an internal rebellion. However, as Dr. Pool points out, David Grove in 1981 offered another explanation. He suggested that there was a ritualized component to the act of mutilation, perhaps tied to death of a given ruler. Grove speculated that the purpose destruction was possibly to “neutralize” the supernatural power which many believe these rulers were seen to possess.

Pool, however, is quick to point out a pivotal weakness in Grove’s argument. Not all, in fact a fair number, of ruler portraits and thrones were not marred at all. John Clark in 1997 came up with an alternative explanation which seems to allow for a peaceful compromise. Clark has theorized that while the goal may indeed have been to neutralize supernatural power, the associated mutilation may have been reserved for deposed rulers with hereditary claim to rule was erased along with their effigies. Those rulers who remained in favor had their monuments preserved.

No matter which part of the Olmec legacy we delve into, the fact remains that we will probably always wind up with more questions than answers. New interpretations derived from fragments of new evidence will no doubt add new insight, but the bottom line is we just might not ever fully know or fully understand who the people of the land of Olman really were.

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Social Cohesion in Anglo-Saxon Literature: Gift Reciprocity in Beowulf

Augustine Tijerina

Department of Anthropology

England between AD 449 and 1100 was volatile and anarchic, filled with intertribal violence and warfare, as well as attacks from outside forces such as the Vikings (Bede 6). This was a bleak time for the inhabitants of England, but thanks to the honorific code of the Anglo-Saxons, the Comitatus, strong social ties bound inhabitants together under the leadership and authority of valiant warrior lords. The Comitatus acted as a support system based on the premise that warriors, thanes, commoners, and slaves were bound to oaths of loyalty to their lord. In turn, the lord would provide protection to the people of his social group and distribute his wealth to them. In this essay, I will analyze the “processes of giving, receiving, and repaying (reciprocity)” (Williams 401) witnessed in the texts of Beowulf, and The Battle of Maldon and how this idea of mutual reciprocity confirmed group inclusion in the patronage system of medieval Anglo-Saxon society.

The social support process of reciprocity described not only in Beowulf, but The Battle of Maldon as well, occurs within the space of the ancient Anglo-Saxon meeting place, the mead hall. The mead hall was a symbolic building meant to foster good will and camaraderie between the feudal lord and his thanes. In other tribal and paternalistic cultures around the world, the men’s home, or place of meeting, is a sacred and exclusive area where confidences are kept and rituals performed (Picchi 102). The Anglo-Saxon mead hall functions in the same manner where men congregated and engaged in gift-giving rituals. In Beowulf, Hrothgar’s problems stem from the devastating attacks wreaked by Grendel, and the subsequent disuse of the mead hall as a

meeting place. As the narrator explains, “then it was easy to find a thane who sought his rest elsewhere, farther away [from Heorot the mead hall], a bed in the outbuildings” (Liuzza 41). Because the mead hall is such an important facet of male Anglo-Saxon life during this time period, it would have been a sign of weakness and humiliation for men to have to sleep with women and children outside of the boundaries of the hall.

The most important function of the mead hall however is the gift giving and boast making rituals that place. According to Holly Ann Williams, “receiving social support [in the form of gifts]...creates an emotional cost for the recipient and alters his/her perceived status as an independent member of the social group” (Williams 401). By receiving a gift, the receiver becomes indebted to the gift-giver and is morally obligated to repay the gesture. In the case of the Anglo-Saxons, the giving of gifts and treasure is accompanied by the making of boasts to alert the gift-giver as to how their gift will be repaid by the receiver. In The Battle of Maldon after the Anglo-Saxon lord Byrhtnoth was killed in a military operation against the invading Vikings, the young warrior *Ælfric* says to his fellow thanes:

I remember the speeches we made over mead when we raised our boasts on the benches,
heroes in the hall, about hard struggle; now he who is bold has to prove it (Liuzza 98).

Based on what *Ælfric* says, we can see that once a boast is made and an action promised, it has to be performed. Hrothgar confirms this when he addresses his thanes at Heorot by saying, “here each earl is true to the other, mild in his heart, loyal to his liege-lord, the thanes united, the nation alert, the troop, having drunk at my table, will do as I bid” (Liuzza 55). Because Hrothgar gives gifts, he can reasonably expect that his gesture will be reciprocated. Failure to repay will result in a breach of the unwritten rules that govern society.

This is the reason that Beowulf visits Hrothgar's kingdom. In the text, Hrothgar tells Beowulf that Ecgtheow, Beowulf's father, killed a member of a rival tribal kingdom and was subsequently exiled to avoid war. Hrothgar then took Ecgtheow into his court and paid the *wergild* or replacement bounty for the man killed (Liuzza 45). This made Ecgtheow morally obligated to repay the wergild by swearing an oath of loyalty to Hrothgar, that is later passed onto Beowulf since Ecgtheow was unable to fulfill the oath for unknown reasons (Liuzza 45).

However, Beowulf can not simply come to Hrothgar and take on his father's debt; he also has to affirm his relationship to Hrothgar and to Hrothgar's men. Beowulf is reminded of this by Unferth, one of Hrothgar's thanes who feels slightly insulted by Beowulf's presence in the mead hall. According to the text, Unferth is "sorely vexed...for he did not wish that any other man on this middle-earth should care more for glory than he himself" (Liuzza 45). As a result, Unferth chastises Beowulf asking whether he, Beowulf, was the same man "who strove with Breca in a swimming contest on the open sea, where in your pride you tried the waves and for a foolish boast risked your life" (Liuzza 45). Since Beowulf is an outsider and not a born member of Hrothgar's Danish tribe, he has to prove his usefulness and earn his place at the mead benches. In this particular situation, Beowulf has to show that not only is he mighty, he is also intelligent. If he answers Unferth's challenge unsatisfactorily he will lose face and prestige in the Anglo-Saxon society whose idea of identity is tied to one's honor (Liuzza).

Beowulf is quick witted though and without pausing to think lets Unferth know that "never would Grendel have worked such terror, that gruesome beast... if your [Unferth's] courage and spirit were as fierce as you yourself [Unferth] fancy they are...I will show soon enough the strength and courage of the Geats in war" (Liuzza 46). With this statement Beowulf puts Unferth in his place, while at the same time making a boast that he, Beowulf, will be the one

that defeats Grendel and brings peace to Hrothgar's kingdom. Since Beowulf is an outsider this would have been humiliating to Hrothgar's thanes, but it would have affirmed the social ties between Beowulf and Hrothgar, bringing the two closer together.

Making a boast and keeping it are two different stories though. By making a boast, or promise, Beowulf has entered into a reciprocal social agreement with Hrothgar at the mead hall, Heorot. But he can not be considered a complete member of the social group until he completes the task he boasted of. Throughout medieval Anglo-Saxon literature there is much condemnation of those that make promises, take in gifts, and fail to repay the generosity of their lord. In The Battle of Maldon, Godric is criticized as being "the first in flight... [abandoning] the good man who had often given him many horses" (Liuzza 98). Among the Anglo-Saxons the most humiliating thing that could possibly be said of someone was that they were disloyal and a coward. In this instance, Godric flees the battle field on his lord's horse causing many in his vicinity to believe that it is Byrhtnoth, Godric's lord, fleeing the field. As a result, the few loyal soldiers remaining are mercilessly slaughtered and left without help. So Godric is generally seen as a weak and cowardly person for his treachery. Mirroring this line of thinking, Ælfric, speaking among his fellow thanes tells them that "thanes will not mock me among my people, that I would go away from this army, seek my homeland, now that my lord lies cut down in battle" (Liuzza 99). If Beowulf fails to complete his "deed of manly courage," either by running away or general weakness, instead of being accepted into Hrothgar's social group, he will be excluded and possibly killed (Liuzza 47). However, Beowulf rips off Grendel's arm and shoulder and hangs it under the mead hall roof for all to see (Liuzza 49). By doing this, he is accepted into Hrothgar's social group, and is welcomed "like a son" and a kin of the Danes, with Hrothgar praising him "as the best of men" (Liuzza 51).

To reiterate, reciprocity is the system of social support where “giving and receiving are essential elements” (Williams 401). In Beowulf and The Battle of Maldon, giving and receiving helps to affirm relationships between Lords and Thanes, especially in dire circumstances where the lord uses gift giving as a means of prepayment for future feats of greatness or for protection. By paying Ecgtheow’s wergild, Hrothgar is assured that either Ecgtheow, or a member of his social unit, will repay the gesture. Giving and receiving then is not done for fun, but rather as a means of male ritual bonding done within the confines of the sacred men’s home or mead hall. Once the entire transaction is completed, including the giving, receiving, boast making, and repayment, the gift recipient and the gift giver become bound to one another in a reciprocal and mutual agreement and are considered family, just as Beowulf was considered kin to Hrothgar after killing both Grendel and his mother.

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Olmec Governance

Julie Wennstrom

Department of Anthropology

There is much debate about the civilization known as the Olmecs. There was no known writing system at that time, which can make understanding this culture very difficult. The one thing that archaeologists do have is an immense amount of art uncovered from this group of people. It turns out this art is directly related to the governing system exercised throughout the heartland.

It is thought that there was a king who ruled all the major Olmec cities with nobles and priests who helped govern the population. These sites include San Lorenzo, Laguna de los Cerros, La Venta, Las Limas, and Tres Zapotes. They believed in several different deities and also believed that the king could communicate with these gods. The people wanted to make the gods happy so they all participated in public work and art projects obediently – without physical force from the rulers. Control of the mind turned out to be the principal source of controlling the people of this highly stratified society. It was also a goal to instill a sense of fear and awe for the hierarchical rulers.

The first and largest society in Mesoamerica was at San Lorenzo. This is where the first stone monuments and colossal heads were created and constructed. There was also construction of a 50m high plateau, houses, and several stone drainage systems. The people also constructed roads, bridges, ramps, and rafts for transporting the enormous stone carvings. Massive amounts of hours were put into the making and carving of these works of art. This shows that the Olmec people were well controlled and disciplined by their ruler and their beliefs in supernatural gods.

One very important god was the maize god, whose character is depicted on many stone artifacts. Maize was a main crop of the Olmecs and the king's ability to communicate with this god was of the utmost importance. It assured that there would be abundant crops and plenty to eat. The Kings did have to make sure that all their servants were loyal to them, and they did so by purchasing their loyalty. Gifts such as ilmenite cubes, cacao, and obsidian blades were given to ensure loyalty and prevent uprisings in the kingdom.

There is not really any evidence of rituals involving succession, ceremonies, or dedications. However; there is some evidence of anti-rituals, involving the destruction of the stone carvings associated with royal power. Many figures of men have been completely decapitated, and some stone heads have been mutilated. The stone artifacts with pictures of supernatural creatures received very little damage, if any. The destruction was not limited to just the Olmec heartland, which raises eyebrows as to why any of this took place. Some believe that when each king died, his sculpture had to be defiled to prevent his power from coming back into the kingdom. Some people think that a king could have been dethroned if his particular monument was destroyed. There could be a strong tie between the power of having the throne and the actual stone carving associated with that throne. There is evidence of at least two throne carvings that were recarved into colossal heads. This is thought to be evidence of a strong rivalry and struggle for power within the elite.

Evidence shows early Olmec kings were artistically portrayed as very simple, with headgear and some ear ornaments. This would imply that they were perceived by their people as warrior-like rulers. Later Olmec kings were portrayed wearing elaborate headdresses with supernatural god characteristics, jewelry, and sometimes staffs. This different appearance implies

that the rulers were looked at as powerful shamans with superhuman qualities and the ability to communicate with deities.

There is much evidence that suggests the contact and influence of the Olmec culture with that of other surrounding cities that lie in the hinterland. Such evidence includes pots and bowls with mythical dragon representations carved into them, clay human figurines, and even public buildings and housing structures. San Lorenzo was by far the biggest and most advanced of the communities in terms of buildings and art. It is suggested that surrounding hinterland communities merely adopted the ideas of the Olmecs and were not actually conquered and converted by them. It is also suggested that the Olmecs not only influenced these cities but had trade relationships with them to receive goods they could not attain from their own locations. The biggest evidence of Olmec influence is seen at the site of Mazatan. It started with actual influence, but over time there were Olmec inhabitants of this region – suggesting a possible takeover.

Clark concludes his article by stating that he believes in the idea of the Olmecs being the “mother-culture”. He does point out that the Olmecs did not takeover all of their neighbors, only some. He also makes it clear that more research must be done before any real conclusions can be made on the mother-sister debate.

There were many similarities I found between Clark’s article, our book, and our class lecture. One subject I found missing from the article was that of burials. I found this surprising because one would assume that the burials of the kings and the elite would be extravagant. The book and lecture both talked about burials and the importance of artifacts and sculptures being buried with the deceased. There is also talk about the large pyramid at La Venta being used as a means of becoming closer to the gods, or possibly for burial purposes. I also noticed that only in

the book is there mention of the carved drawing at Chalcatzingo. It depicts a female ruler with a headdress, sitting on an altar in the mouth of the earthen god. The book suggests this symbolizes both power and fertility. The Cascajal block was also not mentioned in the article. If there was some sort of writing system within the Olmec society it would maybe be assumed that it was created by the king and his servants. Since this tablet has yet to be deciphered I guess Clark found no significance in mentioning it. There is a definite consensus between all three sources I have examined; the Olmecs were the first Mesoamerican civilization, they used art to depict ideology and govern the population, and they believed in supernatural powers and deities.

Bibliography

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DANTA Primate Behavior and Conservation Field School 2009

The organization DANTA: Association for the Conservation of the Tropics (www.danta.info) hosts field schools during the summer in primate behavior and conservation and ornithology in Costa Rica. The courses are geared toward those students interested in field biology and primatology. I participated in the primate behavior course. The course lasts four weeks and during the course you learn about the field of primatology and conservation issues facing us today. You also gain knowledge of various data collection techniques during hands on field exercises. Once you have obtained all the skills necessary you are directed in an independent research project on one of the three primate species at the field station those species being: mantled howler monkeys (*Alouatta palliata*), spider monkeys (*Ateles geoffroyi*), and white-faced capuchins (*Cebus capucinus*). The project culminates in a presentation given in the field and a research paper due after the course is completed. This course was a great experience for me and I would highly recommend it to anyone interested in the field of primatology. I learned so much and met so many wonderful people. It was the experience of a lifetime.

Meghan Strong



Meghan Strong



View from the trail just before dawn.



El Zota Biological Field Station.



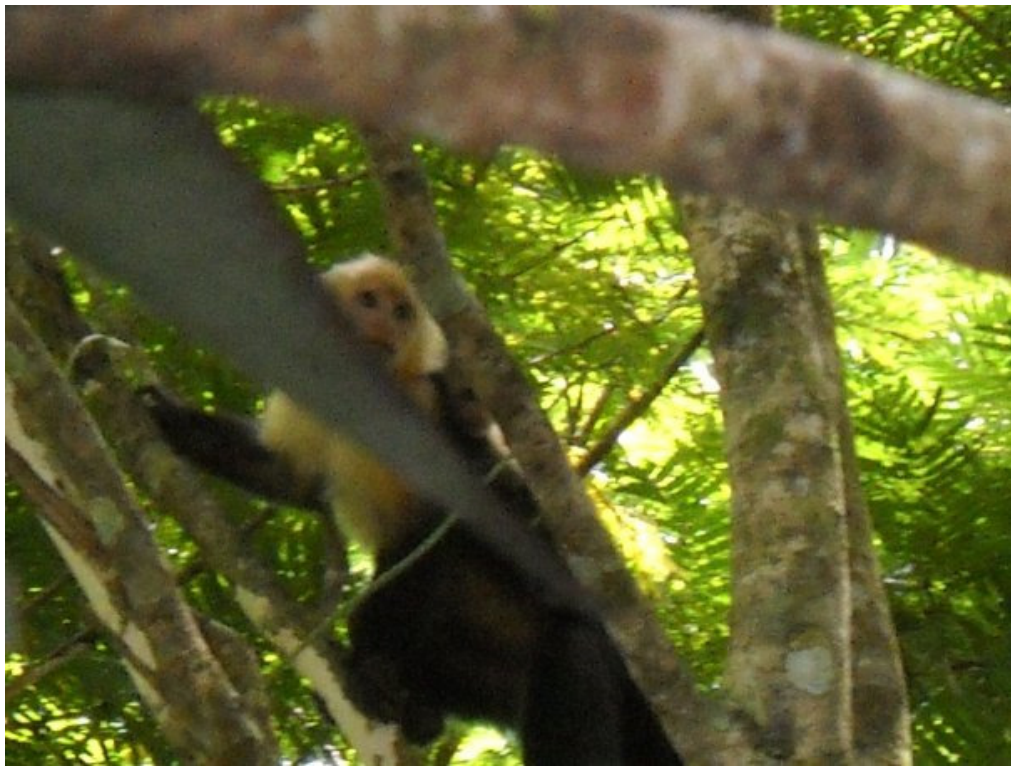
Director Kim Dingess (Right front), Cook Marbelly (Back right), Instructor Marni LaFleur (Left front, and Instructor Stacy Linsheid (Back left)



Spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*).



A pair of mantled howler monkeys (*Alouatta palliata*).



White-faced capuchin (*Cebus capucinus*) and baby.



Tent bats under a leaf of the heliconia plant.



Green and black poison dart frog.



Hiking in the field.



Sloth.



Cleaning up recycling facility. In this photo: Meghan Strong



Day at the beach with the class.



Demonstration of chocolate making process.



A reenactment at the Bri Bri reservation.



Presentation day.



At the airport about to go home.

Passport in Time Archaeology Survey 2009

of Early 20th Century African-American Town of Allensworth.

The pictures below are from a Passport in Time (PIT) project. PIT is a “volunteer archaeology and historic preservation program of the USDA Forest Service. PIT volunteers work with professional FS archaeologists and historians on national forests throughout the U.S. on such diverse activities as archaeological survey and excavation, rock art restoration...archival research, historic structure restoration, oral history gathering, and analysis and curation of artifacts” (PassportinTime.com). This PIT project took place in June of 2009 at Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park under the direction of Steven Ptomey, M.A., RPA, State Park Interpreter. The town of Allensworth previously hosted an African-American community that flourished in the early 1900s. However, the community died out and all we are now left with are trash dump sites—filled with china and glass bottles—and housing foundations. Acting as surveyors, we were on the lookout for historical artifacts mentioned previously. We were very fortunate in our finds! PIT is a great volunteer organization where it’s free to sign-up and free to attend. Please visit their website at PassportinTime.com and browse the upcoming PIT projects!

Katie Nicole Stahl



Wooden foundation of a door discovered during survey by Katie Stahl



Sign at Allensworth.



Foundation of a house.



Unidentified bottle found at a midden site.



The last day of survey participants participated in a reenactment as town citizens of early 20th century Allensworth.



Surveying.



Possible china found.



The whole group together.

Los Padres National Forest Applied Archaeology Field School 2009

The 2009 field applied archaeology school was a four week, onsite, Applied Archaeology Field School in association with the Los Padres National Forest. We were performing excavations at the ethnographic village of Najalayegua, an interior Chumash village, near the Santa Ynez area, who came into contact with the Spanish in 1790. As students we were exposed to a variety of archaeological problems, methods and approaches relating to archaeological survey, excavation, artifact analysis and spatial analysis. The work we did while at the 2009 archaeology field school has added to my understanding of prehistoric land use by the Chumash and has taught me what it is like to actually work in the field. The purpose of our excavation was to determine and document the areas of the archaeological deposit and areas of disturbance in order to properly identify and protect the site from further destruction.

Our finds included large quantities of marine shells and fish bones, hundreds of shell beads, dozens of glass beads, ground stone fragments, bifacial lithic tools, lithic flakes, a hand poured horse shoe, a 1892 quarter, a Mako shark tooth, a piece of crab exoskeleton, an obsidian projectile point (bottom half), a steatite bowl fragment, stone pestle, and 3 different stratigraphic layers that may be floor surfaces, to name a few. As students, we were exposed to a variety of archaeological problems, methods and approaches relating to site survey, excavation, artifact analysis and spatial analysis.

From attending field school I was able to learn more about native Chumash culture, environmental interactions, trade, excavating, mapping, surveying, cultural resource management, and adaptive management from Dan Reeves, Joan Brandoff-Kerr, and Dr. Jerry Moore. These experiences have transformed my outlook on my educational, career, and life goals and will prove useful in my Ph.D in Archaeology. Here are some photos from my field school experience.

Kim Hinson

Photos from my field School Experience

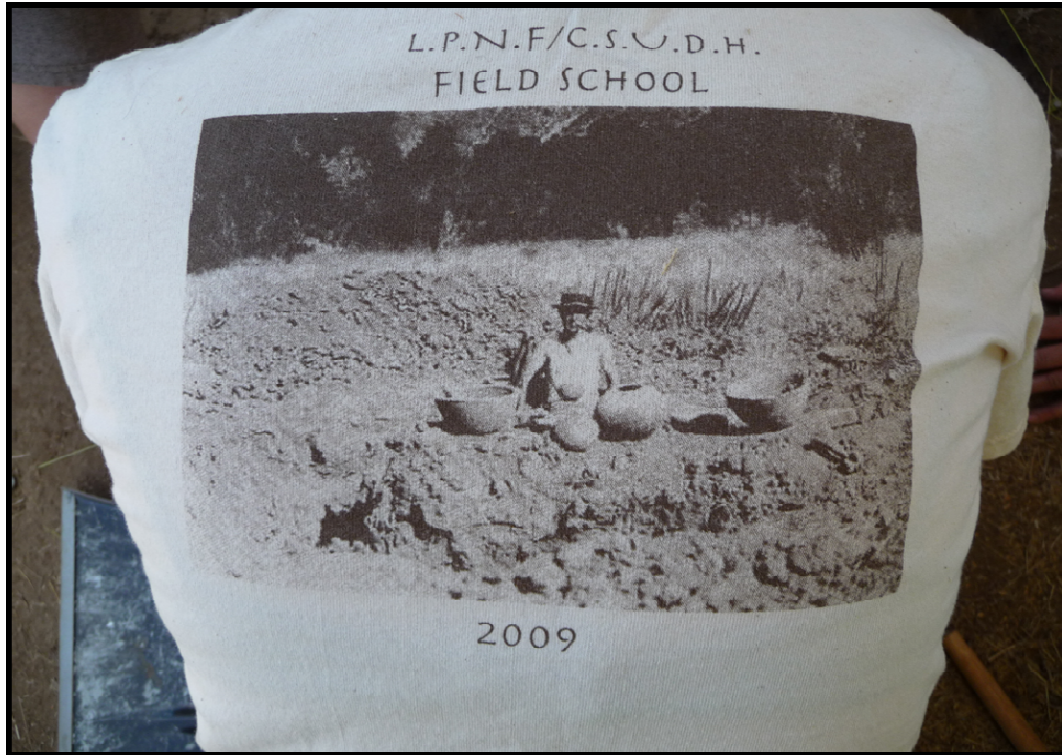


Image 1 2009 Tee-Shirt with a picture of a looter, taken near our site



Image 2 Mission Santa Barbra, 6 am, established 1786

CSUDH Students



Image 3 Scott Bigney, Me (Kim Hinson), and Jason Murphy, CSUDH Archaeology students
Photo by Liz Majchrowicz

Instructors of LPNF/CSUDH Field School



Image 4 Instructor Joan Brandoff-Kerr Me and



Image 5 Professor Dr. Jerry Moore and Me

Photo by Liz Majchrowicz



Image 6 Instructor Dan Reeves and me



Image 7 Instructor Steven Wintergerst and me

Photo by Liz Majchrowicz

Around Camp



Image 8 Classroom, dining room, and game room



Image 9 My private Idaho for four weeks

Speakers and Guests



Image 10 Frank Dominguez, Chumash Tribal dancer, Chumash language expert, and our site monitor, taking a picture with Escee Noah (CSUF)



Image 11 Receiving blessings before we break ground, Adalina Aldacoldella and Dan Reeves

From the Field



Image 12 Unit A, strung up and about ready to break ground



Image 13 Unit A, Unit B, Unit C. Ariel shot of the site from a knoll, facing towards the west



Image 14 Ground shot of all three sites, Joan Brandoff-Kerr (center), Knoll in background



Image 15 A Team worked in unit A. Our dirt was very hard and compact



Image 16 Unit A, level 2 (10-20 cm) North East Quadrant, Hand poured horseshoe



Image 17 Stone Pestle used for grinding acorns and other hard forms of food (level 4)



Image 18 Me dry screening using 1/8 inch mesh

Photo by Shauna Gould



**Image 19 Mark Buie (Texas A&M) wet screening the North East quadrant of Unit A, level 2
(10 -20 cm)**



Image 20 around 50 cm down, Unit A hit bedrock, had to close down early. Back to front: Mark Buie (Texas A&M), Shauna Gould (CSUS), Michelle Piggott (UCF), Scott Bigney (CSUDH), Escee Noah (CSUF), me (CSUDH).



Image 21 Unit B, (Top) Cassandra Young (CSUN), Edgar Alarcón Tinajero (U. Chicago), Jason Murphy (CSUDH). Gloria Brown, Margie Homko, Tanya Burrows



Image 22 Unit C, (to R) Andrew Stück (Biola), Liz Majchrowicz (ASU alumni), Michelle Liles Trevino, Lindsay Clark (Western Washington), Dan Reeves, Cal Lehman, Steve Wintergerst (Biola), Bridgett McKee (SJSU).

Weekends Free to Explore the Local Area

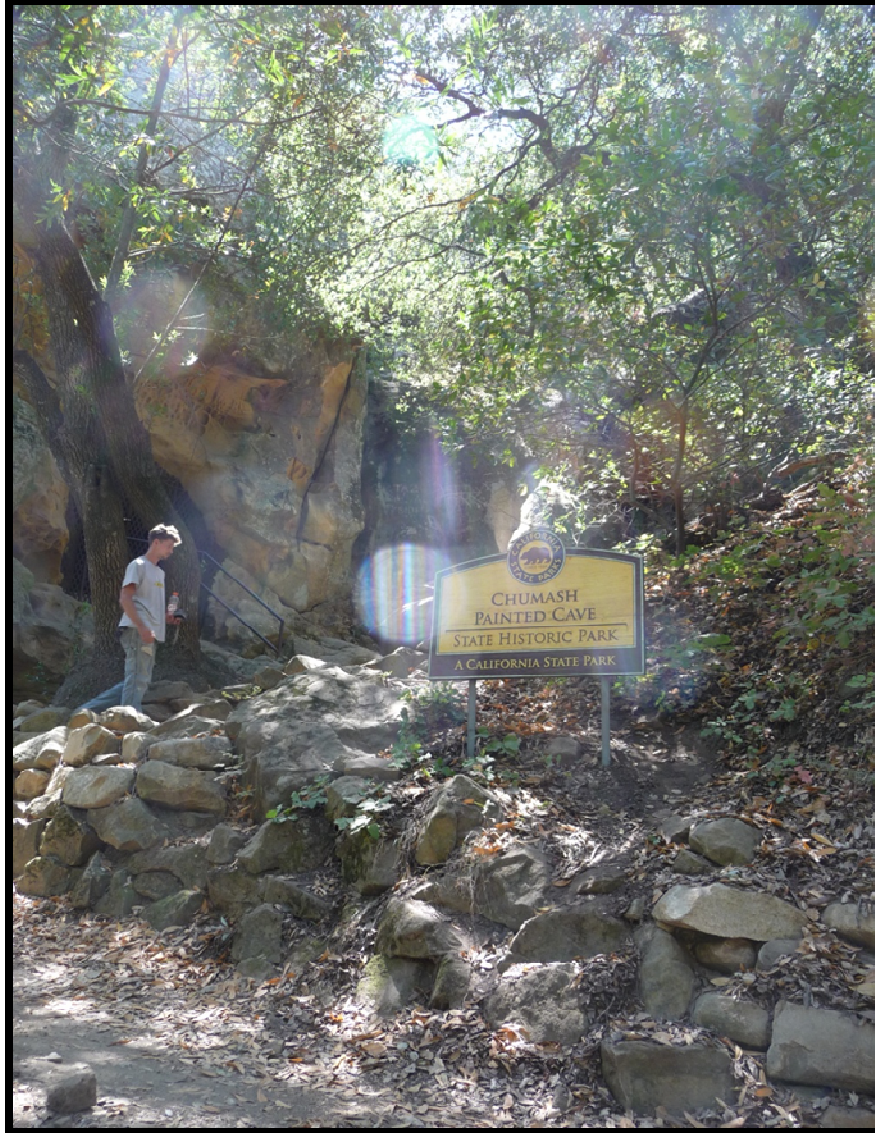


Image 23 Day trip to the Chumash painted cave



Image 24 Inside the cave



Image 25 Me in front of painted cave



Image 26 Michelle Piggott, Shauna Gould, and I at Santa Barbra Mission



Image 27 Chumash lavendaria. Figure in on basin is a mountain lion made of sandstone



Image 28 Liz Majchrowicz (ASU alumni), Scott Bigney (CSUDH), Me (CSUDH)
Photo by Natalie Kann



Image 29 Warren and me on Jameson Lake



Image 30 Jameson Lake, Ca



Image 31 Just off the "Chumash Highway" (154)