

GN
42
A628
ANTH

anthro notes

National Museum of Natural History Newsletter for Teachers

vol. 6 no. 1

winter 1984

ANDEAN WOMEN: UNITED WE SIT

Editors' Note: Teachers will find this article useful when discussing Latin America, sex roles, or political decision-making with their students.

During my first month of fieldwork in Sonqo, a Quechua-speaking community in the highlands of southern Peru, I found myself extremely irritated by the apparently secondary status of women. They seemed to me like a flock of morose and timid crows -- all dressed alike, hanging back at public assemblies, allowing themselves to be greeted and served last, and watching their menfolk eat at fiestas while they themselves went hungry. Frequently I had to choke back an urge to jump up and start lecturing them with evangelical zeal. None of these facts have changed, but my perception of them has. Sonqo's women no longer seem subordinate to their menfolk; indeed, one might argue, also erroneously, that the opposite is true.

Traditional Sex Roles

Traditional Andean ideology, which is very strong in rural communities like Sonqo, is based on a principle of dual organization which structures the whole of society and the cosmos. In this dualistic mode of thought, the two parts of any given entity are related in a dialectical fashion, often expressed in the word tinkuy, the encounter which creates unity out of opposition. Tinkuy refers, for example, to the turbulent convergence of two streams, as well as to ritual battles between the two halves or moieties of a community.

Obviously, this way of thinking affects the way the sexes are conceptualized and how they are expected to behave toward each other. The household, as a functioning production unit, is built around the married couple, called warmiqhari, literally



"woman-man", the fusion of two different but interdependent kinds of human being, with separate but complementary knowledge, interest and abilities. This relationship is summed up in various ways:

"Women know how to work with their hands; men know how to work with their feet." So women spin, weave and cook in or near their homes, while men plough the earth and travel.

"Women are horizontal, their place is the pampa, the flat ground; men are vertical, they perform their activities standing or sitting on seats." So the vertical upright loom with foot pedals is suitable for males, while the horizontal loom is suitable for females. The great extensive earth is female, Pachamama or Mother Earth, while the high snow-capped mountains are male, called Apus (Lords) or Taytakuna (Fathers).

"Men don't know how to take care of animals; women know how to take care of growing things." On the other hand, "Men know how to talk in the Assembly; women don't know how." So women bear and tend children and look after the animals. Men pass through a hierarchy of community offices. At public functions men sit on seats in a line, roughly in order of seniority, while women sit in a crowd on the ground.

The image of Woman evoked by these dichotomies is characterized by immobility. While the men are coming and going, building and talking, and passing vertically through a civil-religious hierarchy of offices, the women are sitting on the ground covered by layers of heavy skirts, their hands busily reaching in all directions. How beautifully this idea is expressed in dancing, as the women bend over their full skirts and twirl around in place, while the men go stamping and leaping around them! It is also well expressed in the different expressions of respect suitable for men and women: a prosperous influential man is called ghapac, which can be translated as "noble" or "mighty." The comparable term for woman is wira, which means "fat" or "substantial."

While a woman may not have a man's mobility she is neither inactive nor passive. On the contrary, she has a female way of asserting herself. Women support and anchor the life of the community and household, and it is in this that their power resides.

The All-Male Assembly

Turning to the realm of community politics, this sexual ideology would seem to (and in certain respects does) put women at a distinct disadvantage to men. The central governing body of Sonqo is the Assembly, considered the voice of the Ayllu Runa, the people of the community. The constitutive units of the assembly are households, not individuals. Each of Sonqo's 84 households is represented by its senior male member. The women in attendance seldom number more than four or five, consisting of widows and women whose husbands are ill or absent. These women sit in a group separately from the men, sometimes at such a distance that it is difficult to hear the proceedings, much less take part in them.

The President of Administration presides over the Assembly, accompanied by a Vice President and Secretary, and often by the Alcalde (mayor) with his staff of office. Often they are "assisted" by a schoolteacher or government agent. The presiding officers are elected by the Assembly and serve for a term of two years. As the President represents the community to the national government and its agents, his position provides opportunities for self-aggrandizement and exercise of personal power. Sonquenos are keenly aware of this danger and repeatedly emphasized to me that it is the Assembly and not the President or other officers that makes decisions. On one occasion the President was nearly impeached for having accepted a government loan of eucalyptus trees without consulting the Assembly.

THE BELOIT PROJECT

Editors' Note: Anthropologists, teachers and museum staff may find an applicable model in this report on an innovative anthropology teacher training institute, the Beloit College/Logan Museum Social Studies Project.

Elementary school students from the Wisconsin/Illinois stateline area are finding something new and different in their social studies this year. When second graders in Beloit, Wisconsin study North American Indians, they set aside their texts as their teacher shows them examples of teepee construction, students build their own model and then compare it with an actual teepee on display at a local museum, interpreting the symbolism of decorative motifs and analyzing the origins of materials used in its construction. Sixth graders at a Rockford, Illinois school studying early man visit a museum to examine its paleolithic collection in order to complete teacher-developed worksheets; some students sit by a terminal in front of the paleolithic exhibit, as the computer sends them off to examine artifacts in order to answer its questions. And fourth graders in a rural southeastern Wisconsin school compare Plains Indian saddles to those they are familiar with on their own farms, while they study the impact of the introduction of the horse on Plains Indian culture.

These and other projects are the result of the participation of elementary school teachers in a recent program at Beloit College in Beloit, Wisconsin that has helped to create a new and exciting role for anthropology and museum collections in local elementary education. Funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), a teacher institute in cultural anthropology for elementary educators was held at the Logan Museum of Anthropology on the Beloit College Campus. The aim of the intensive seminar was to familiarize educators with the collections of the Logan Museum, and to aid them in the design of new curricular materials which integrate Logan Museum

collections into the local social studies curriculum.

Discovering a Need, Shaping a Resource

Although primarily a teaching museum for Beloit College undergraduates, the Logan Museum also saw area elementary and secondary school students as an important constituency who needed well-developed, structured museum programs rather than just guided tours. Educational outreach activities by the museum had been informal and uneven, since the Logan Museum has no museum education staff. In 1979, Jennifer Hope, a Beloit senior, funded by an NEH Youthgrant, constructed a unit of study for fourth graders on southern Wisconsin effigy moundbuilders. With the cooperation of local teachers, 500 students participated in the pilot project, which subsequently was incorporated into the regular curriculum.

The need for other such programs which could heighten the impact and significance of the museum as a community asset was addressed by a collaborative effort between the chair of the Beloit College anthropology department, the director of the Logan Museum and an assistant superintendent of the Beloit Public schools. The major problem with the expansion of museum-based programs was that the effigy moundbuilder program had depended on a small staff of informed and trained students who directly supervised fourth graders in the museum. Since the college could not assume enough students to staff any new programs, the collaborators realized that teachers would have to be trained to conduct any new programs. Accordingly, a teacher institute was planned and funding obtained for the summer of 1983. The institute syllabus was developed following a series of meetings with local school administrators, elementary teachers and

(continued on p.4)

and museum and college anthropologists.

For six weeks in June and July 1983, teachers spent three hours each weekday afternoon at the Logan Museum in a seminar led by five anthropologists. The institute provided an intensive course in cultural anthropology, covering a wide range of topics, but organized around three areas -- cultural ecology, symbolism, and social organization -- unified by the common theme of "human cultural values". Each of these perspectives was used as a context in which to interpret material culture and the group would regularly leave the classroom and move into the museum for demonstrations with actual exhibits and artifacts. Special sessions offered presentations on museum management and museum education techniques, and days were set aside for teachers to consult with staff members on their individual curriculum design projects and to work in the storage and cataloguing areas of the museum. At the close of the institute, each teacher submitted an essay based on seminar assignments as well as a written unit of study developed for their classroom. Each teacher received a stipend and graduate credit in education for their participation. Their new units of study are being implemented during the 1983-84 school year.

Taking Some Risks

The institute staff concentrated on teaching anthropology, providing solid academic work for the teachers, and challenged them to devise effective materials through which they could "translate" that anthropology to their students using their pedagogical skills and their knowledge of their own social studies curriculum. Although an education professor and a museum educator consultant from the Milwaukee Public Museum provided stimulation and expertise in evaluating the quality of their "translation", the notion that anthropology experts and elementary educators could join their specialized skills in a productive way involved several risks.



One was simply the question of whether cultural anthropology could be made useful to teachers. All the anthropology staff operated from a kind of "blind faith" and "abstract loyalty" to the notion that of course cultural anthropology is relevant to just about everything! But to make specific connections with the content of a particular social studies curriculum in a limited amount of time had the staff a bit apprehensive. Our fear was also based on the fact that so few teachers had any background in anthropology. The staff was asking a group of neophytes not only to learn from scratch, but also to find new areas of application to their pedagogy.

But this turned out to be not such a risky proposition at all. The surprise for most of the staff -- and for many of the participants as well -- was the discovery of just how much anthropology was already part of the local curriculum, although not explicitly labelled in this way. "Culture", "culture change", "social organization", "symbols", "culture/environment relations", "status/role", "technology",

and a number of other concepts were already part of the elementary social studies curriculum. What the institute seminar provided was not so much an introduction to these concepts as a holistic framework (the theme of human cultural values) for the interpretation of new pedagogical materials (museum collections) which unified and organized what many teachers had otherwise considered separate topics. To a certain extent, then, the project did not introduce anthropology into the curriculum; rather, it identified and unified "covert" anthropology, making it overt and giving teachers some new tools with which they could make new connections in their teaching materials. More accurately, then, the institute strengthened the anthropology in the local curriculum.

Another concern, however, was a bit trickier. The museum's role was to provide teaching materials and to broaden its educational impact. The Beloit project proposed to make all the collections, including those in storage, available to participating teachers; but the museum staff was not uniformly excited about this proposition! The staff recognized that museums strive to achieve two sets of sometimes conflicting goals regarding their collections: preservation of the holdings in perpetuity and exposure of the holdings to the public for education and enjoyment. But they were sensitive to the fact that sometimes the stresses involved in the latter goal could work to the detriment of the former.

Teachers Using Artifacts

To address this problem, teachers were formally sensitized to the risks involved in maximizing access to the museum's collections through a rating scale, borrowed from a similar system at the Milwaukee Public Museum. With this scale, artifacts are classed from "extremely durable--#1" (a pecked-stone axehead, for instance) to "most fragile- #4" (for an older feather-covered basket). Using this scale, the curator designated articles that could be held by elementary school children (#1), artifacts that

should be held by the teacher while each child gently touches the surface (#2), items that could be handled by the teacher alone for general viewing (#3), and items that should be handled by museum staff (#4). Artifacts rated #1 through #3 would ordinarily be considered available for inclusion in "kits" which could be transported to the local school classroom, while #4 items would usually be restricted to use during visits to the museum. Once this system was adopted, the teachers were then instructed in the handling of different classes of materials or objects in a diverse ethnographic and archeological collection; for example, they learned not to rub any painted surface, to be aware of pendant fringes, to respect the limited flexibility of fibers, to understand the significance of worked stone cutting edges, and to anticipate the brittleness of dried skin drumheads. With pleasure and some sense of relief on the part of the museum staff, the teachers proved to be adept at anticipating most of the problems inherent in handling even unfamiliar ethnographic materials and readily accepted the guidance of the museum staff.

In the museum galleries, each teacher was assigned an exhibit, selected by the staff to provide a cultural context, and was given selected complimentary objects from the museum collections. The teacher then presented and interpreted the subject of the exhibit in an original way to the other institute members. On the basis of this experience then, the teachers proceeded to the selection of their own curricular unit, outlined the course of study for the classroom, and, in consultation with the museum curator, prepared a list of artifacts from the museum's collections to be used to communicate in a special and immediate way the intent of the lessons. These lists were then placed in the museum's files for reference. In the future, whenever a teacher wants to implement one or another of the prepared units of study, a phone call to the museum can set the museum staff to assembling the desired kit out of the storage areas.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb. 28: "Current Research at Historic Annapolis" by Joseph Dent (Univ. of Md.) Archeology Lab, Room 18, Marist Hall, Catholic Univ., 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 28: "Bawdiness and Baraka: Oral Poetry of the Muslim Hausa" by Beverly Mack (Nigeria). Museum of African Art, 7 p.m. Free.

March 17: "Evolution." All-day Smithsonian seminar at Carmichael Auditorium, Museum of American History. For ticket information, call 357-3030.

March 20: "Cultural Contexts & Symbolic Value. A Reconsideration of the Zuni Design Controversy" by Margaret Hardin (Zuni Archeological Program). ASW Meeting, Naturalist Center, Museum of Natural History, 8:15 p.m.

March 20: "PaleoIndian and Early Archaic Technology and Settlement Patterns" by William H. Gardner. Archeology Lab, Room 18, Marist Hall, Catholic Univ., 7:30 p.m.

March 23: "Native Writings of the Massachusetts Indians" by Ives Goddard. Free illustrated lecture in Baird Auditorium, Museum of Natural History, 12 noon.

March 27: "NOHO Theatre Group of Japan." Baird Auditorium, Museum of Natural History. Lecture-demonstration free at 4:30 p.m. Performance at 7.30 p.m., \$10.

March 29: "The Real Atlantis: Ice Age Beringia" by Stephen B. Young (Center for Northern Studies). Slide lecture on the Bering Land Bridge migrations. Baird Auditorium, Museum of Natural History, 8 p.m., \$6.50.

March 31: "Awakening Land: The Circumpolar North." All-day seminar. Scientists discuss the natural resources of the land and its indigenous cultures. Baird Auditorium, Museum of Natural History. For tickets call 357-3030.

March 31: "Pemberton Hall 18th Century Studies Symposium" on material culture, archeology and social history of the Eastern Shore. Salisbury State College Salisbury, Md. For further information contact SSC's Dept. of History.

April 3: "Interface of Zulu & Western Medicine" by Shedd Williams (Univ. of D.C.). Hurst Hall, Room 12, American Univ., 4 p.m.

NEW EXHIBITS

"The Art of the Cameroon" through June 17th. Museum of Natural History.

"Nasca Lines: Ancient Peruvian Desert Art" through April 7th. Museum of Natural History.

"African Islam" through April 22nd. Museum of African Art.



TEACHER'S CORNER: FAMILY FOLKLORE

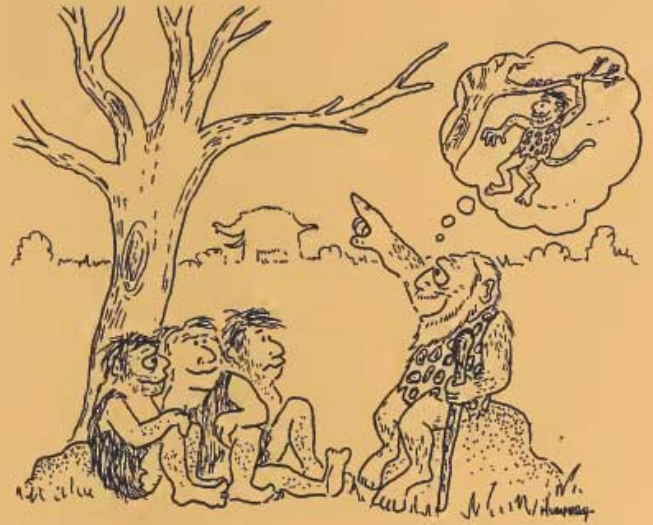
Editors' Note: This month's "Teacher's Corner" grows out of the research and writing of the staff of the Smithsonian Institution Folklife Program. The interview questions and many of the ideas are drawn from A Celebration of American Family Folklore by Steven J. Zeitlin, Amy J. Kotkin, and Holly Cutting Baker (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982).

"I'm a Lucky Man"

"There's a story on my father's side of the family about how the family got its name, which is Glickman. Evidently when my great-grandfather, or a relative of his who came over to the States maybe a few years earlier, was passing through Ellis Island sometime around 1904, he was asked by some official what his name was. He was standing in the line and he didn't understand what was being asked; he didn't have any English at all, just probably spoke Russian and Yiddish. And he said something like, "I'm licht man," which means "lucky man." His name was written down as Glickman."

Ralph Glickman
Silver Spring, Maryland

Over the last decade historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and folklorists have begun to focus attention on community studies, teaching us much about the varied traditions flourishing in America. Within our country we must look to the experiences of ethnic and religious minorities, the lives of women and children, the history of regional and occupational groups, and even to our own family folklore to find the creative and cultural expression of the American past. "For every famous literary and photographic work, there are hundreds of thousands of stories and snapshots in which Americans have invested a large portion of their creative genius. Family tradition is one of the great repositories of American culture. It contains clues to our national character and insights into our family structure." (Zeitlin, Kötkin, and Baker, p.2)



Family folklore, then, consists of family stories, expressions, customs, traditions, and photographs that characterize a family's life. Having students collect, record, and write about their family folklore can be an exciting and meaningful way for them to connect themselves to broader American culture and history, as well as help them sharpen their skills in social studies and language arts.

How to Begin

Since family folklore consists of traditions, stories, artifacts, and photographs, each of these categories can be the focus of class projects.

1. Holiday Analysis: Explain to students that a family tradition is a special practice that a family reenacts in approximately the same way day after day or year after year. A birthday or New Year's celebration, Passover Seder, or Thanksgiving dinner may give rise to family traditions as may other holidays such as the Fourth of July or Labor Day. On a chart have students make a list of all the holidays they or their families

celebrate, and briefly describe what traditions are associated with each. For example, students can list what foods are eaten, when and where the holiday meal is served, and who usually attends. What games, if any, are played? Are certain objects or dishes always present? Are gifts exchanged, and if so how, when, and where? Are songs sung, music played, dances danced, prayers offered, or speeches given? Is the national flag displayed? Is a religious service attended? After compiling their individual charts, students should be ready to discuss the meaning of holidays and the various ways each is celebrated. It should become readily apparent that holidays originate for a variety of reasons, but that while students share some traditions with one another, other traditions are unique to each person's family. Some of this interesting variation arises from regional, racial, religious, and ethnic background, but some of this variation also arises from family history. As students share their common and different experiences, a rich blending of family and cultural history should emerge, along with new understanding that both the yearly cycle, and our personal lives are marked by continuing celebrations and rituals.

2. Interviewing Family Members:

The next project might be the recording of a student's own family history through information gained by interviewing another family member. Every interview will be different, and students should be encouraged to formulate their own questions. Ethics: Because of the personal nature of folklore, students must be careful to protect the privacy and rights of all family members. Before initiating a unit in family folklore, it is a good idea to explain to your students' parents the class project. Assure parents that students will interview only willing family members. Explain the purpose of the unit; for example, that the class is studying family folklore as part of their study of American culture, and that students will learn about writing, analyzing, and reporting information they gather through research and interviews. Before any interview, students should ex-

plain to the person being interviewed the purpose of the research.

Interview questions below should be useful in helping students conduct successful interviews.

Suggested Interview Questions:

- 1) What do you know about your family's last name? Its origin? Its meaning? Has it changed in the past? If it changed, what was it before and why was it changed? Are there any traditional first names, middle names, or nicknames in your family? How did they get started? When your parents married, did your mother keep her own last name? What does her last name mean? What is its history? How did your parents choose your name? What will you name your children?
- 2) How did your parents, grandparents, or other relatives come to meet and marry? Are there any family stories of lost loves, jilted brides, unusual courtships, arranged marriages, elopements, runaway lovers?
- 3) What stories have come down to you about your grandparents or parents? For example, what do you know of their childhood, schooling, marriages, occupations, political activity, religious affiliation, hobbies? How many different occupations can you name from your family? Are there any special talents or hobbies which have come down in the family such as playing a musical instrument, needlework, painting, etc.?
- 4) Ask some of your older relatives what they studied when they went to school? What did they dream of becoming when they grew up? What happened in their lives which made those dreams possible or impossible to fulfill? Where have they traveled? What unusual people have they met in their lives? What are the most important things they've learned in their lives?

(continued)

5) Are there any family stories about mysterious, eccentric, notorious, or infamous characters in the family? Any family heroes from the past? What stories have been handed down about these special people? Do you think the infamy or fame of the ancestor has grown through time?

6) Have any historical events affected your family? For example, how did the family survive the depression? How have past wars affected the family?

7) Does your family have any heirlooms; paintings of famous ancestors, objects of sentimental or monetary value which have been handed down? Are there stories connected to them? Do you know their origin or line of passage through the generation? Are there special tools that have been handed down? Does anyone use them today?

8) Does your family have photo albums, scrapbooks, slides, home movies? Do you know all the family members in these pictures? What can you find out about relatives who died before you were born? Whose responsibility in the family is the upkeep of the diaries, albums, etc. When are they shared or displayed? Are they specially arranged, edited, designed, and if so by whom?

9) Does the family have any unique expressions, folk sayings, home remedies or special recipes which have been passed down through the generations?

3. Family Stories: Once students have conducted interviews, they will be in a good position to share and analyze their family folklore. Researchers have detailed certain recurrent themes in family folklore stories such as the "crossing over" or the migration west; stories of family heroes, rogues or misfits; stories of parents' youthful antics or courtship and marriage; or stories of family misfortune, feuds, or escape from near death. Ask students to share their stories and see if they can identify any of these or other common themes.

Additional Family Folklore Projects

1. Classroom Exhibits: Students can build classroom exhibits using posters, photographs, artifacts, and stories drawn from their own family folklore to illustrate topics such as "Western Expansion"; "Immigration"; "Jazz Age"; "The Depression;" or "The Vietnam War."

2. Scrapbooks or Photojournals: Scrapbooks or photojournals can be organized in a variety of ways using family trees, genealogical charts, photographs, family stories, jokes, expressions, games, nicknames, songs, etc. Much of what students learn through interviewing older family members can be included. Some students may choose to focus this project more on their own personal history if they cannot gather enough material on their larger families.

3. Keepsakes: Have students find out what objects they have which are family keepsakes. Have them find out the history of these objects and the stories behind these family treasures. Students can then write descriptions or imaginary stories about these important and symbolic objects. How do the keepsakes connect past, present, and future? What do they reflect of the family and the larger culture? Students can make a "Class Collection" of objects which could become keepsakes for a future generation.

4. Crafts: In many families hand skills are carried down through the generations. Students can try to learn a handicraft from an older member of their family or research an earlier method of production from a specific period they choose. Once the research is completed, students should try to replicate the method as closely as possible for such crafts as: candle dipping, soap making, hide tanning, quilting, basket weaving, ham curing, vegetable canning, jelly or bread making.

(continued on p.10
right column)

(continued from p.5)

In this way, a local museum with limited staff can overcome the lack of an education department to carry the rich learning potential represented in the collections to the school populations of the surrounding communities. Perhaps, most importantly, the project has convinced all involved of the potential for further systematic and structured cooperation. The challenge now is to devise new ways to continue and expand the success realized in this first step.

Lawrence B. Breitborde
Associate Professor of
Anthropology and Chair
of the Department

J. Edson Way
Associate Professor of
Anthropology and Director
of the Logan Museum of
Anthropology

A Museum Education Anthropology: Perspectives on Informal Learning. A Decade of Roundtable Reports.

Susan K. Nichols, Editor; Mary Alexander and Ken Yellis, Assoc. Editors.

The most comprehensive volume currently available on museum education. The approx. 272 pgs. will also include reflections, updates and assessments of the state-of-the-art as well as a complete Subject-Author-Title Index to Roundtable Reports. Publication date June 1, 1984. Prepublication price \$12.50, after June 1st - \$15.00. Available through the American Association of Museums, 2306 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007.

(continued from p.9)

5. Class Banquet: Students bring in a variety of favorite family recipes, and together the class plans and prepares a "feast" made up of family foods and other traditional meal customs. Students who cannot contribute food can often contribute these customs, a prayer before the meal, or a game or song to come just after the banquet.

6. Time Lines: Ask students to make an illustrated time line of important moments in their own lives: birth, birthdays, first school, pets, hobbies, travels, new skills, etc. Then ask them to make an illustrated time line of their family's history beginning with the birthdate of the oldest member of the family. The line should include important births, marriages, and deaths, but also significant events such as migrations or moves, occupational changes, educational achievements, travels, etc. Family photographs or drawings can be used for illustrations.

Through these projects described, students should gain an appreciation of tradition and continuity from one generation to the next, and the value of preserving traditions, objects, and ideas from the past. Through family folklore a teacher can bring history to life and life to history as well as help students connect their personal and family past to broader cultural and language arts study.

HOW HUMANS ADAPT

"Man is a singular creature. He has a set of gifts which make him unique among the animals: so that unlike them, he is not a figure in the landscape -- he is a shaper of the landscape."

Jacob Bronowski

"This ancient pattern of restrained reproduction appears optimal for the production of healthy, intelligent young. A return to such a pattern after nearly 10,000 years of high fertility is not in opposition to human nature or reproductive biology. It would, in fact, be most compatible with the patterns of parental investment and reproductive biology shaped by millions of years of evolutionary history."

Jane Lancaster

How do we adapt to booming population and disappearing resources? How can we unlearn cultural prejudices that keep us from adapting for long term survival? Can our knowledge of how humans adapted biologically and culturally in the past give us insights for the future? Do we no longer have the biocultural checks and balances of the past? These serious and wide-ranging questions are explored with varying pessimism and optimism buttressed by scores of research cases in a recently published interdisciplinary collection of essays, How Humans Adapt: A Biocultural Odyssey (Donald J. Ortner, editor. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1983, pb. \$9.95).

This stimulating book records the Smithsonian Institution's Seventh International Symposium of the same title, organized by Donald Ortner, at the National Museum of Natural History, November 8-12, 1981. Such renowned scholars as René Dubos, James V. Neel, Jane Lancaster, L.L. Cavalli-Sforza, Asa Briggs, Lawrence Angel, Betty Meggers, Napoleon Chagnon, Stephen Toulmin, and Mary Catherine Bateson joined with about 45 other participants in the scholarly dialogue on how humans did, do, and will adapt. Included in the published volume are essays, bibliographies, commentaries, and discussion notes. Brief editorial summaries highlight the major ideas in each essay. Anthropologists, geneticists,

historians, biologists, philosophers, economists, demographers, and theologians ponder human's past and possible fate in hopes that collective insight will bring new understanding, if not new solutions.

The essays move from the past behavior of hominids and the consequences of agriculture to an analysis of present



earth resources, health changes, urban environments, and food in developing countries, and end with the future of democracy, education, and ethical issues. No one agrees on what should be done about the many problems raised but several often contradictory solutions are offered.

For secondary school teachers this book is an excellent reference and a window on an international meeting of scholars debating intriguing topics with spirited and sometimes humorous exchanges. For the anthropologists How Humans Adapt shows how other disciplines treat adaptation. The scholars good naturedly criticize each others' methods, challenging for example, whether an anthropological or historical approach better illuminates the unconscious pattern of marriage choices.

Running through most of the essays are nagging worries about the disastrous rate of population expansion and the threat of nuclear war and tensions about the value of individualism and the validity of sociobiology (see especially the exchange between Toulmin and Chagnon). Most essayists wrestle with the relationship between culture and biology; one is surprised by the emphasis on cultural adaptation by Cavalli-Sforza, the geneticist, and Kenneth Boulding, the economist. All agree that agriculture led to more and more births and altered attitudes to favor unbridled fertility.

Looking for insight from the past, Jane Lancaster, a primatologist, reviews non-human primate data and asserts the value of hunter/gatherer reproductive and child care patterns for humans today. For example, unlike non-human primates, human females have a camouflaged time of ovulation which means a male worries less about competition and spends more time with a female and her children. Human juveniles, unlike other animals, do not feed themselves and in hunter/gatherer groups juveniles are not expected to contribute to the food supply. There is a high level of care with adults indulgent toward the child, and menopause, apparently unique to humans, allows the last child to reach adulthood under her/his mother's

care. The hunting/gathering pattern consists of: 1) a long period of sterility following menarche, 2) late age for first birth, 3) continuous nursing (two or three times an hour), 4) long lactation (often 4 years), 5) low natural fertility, 6) four year birth-spacing, 7) low frequency of menstruation, and 8) early menopause. Unlike most women today who spend much of their reproductive years menstruating, hunter/gatherer women spend most of their time nursing. Lancaster encourages us to return to the hunter/gatherer model as one way to control population expansion that is especially plaguing Third World countries.

For other scholars the past does not illuminate the future. Mark Cohen, an archeologist and commentator, cogently argues that crowding stresses humans because they lose control of their actions and privacy and are overwhelmed by too many interactions and too many decisions. Humans have devised ways to handle these stresses which the hunting and gathering way of life did not have to deal with at all. Cohen asserts this lack of crowding explains the lack of sturdy shelters, clothing, and other formal ways to divide and schedule interactions among hunter/gatherers. For James Neel, a geneticist, the present genetic problems are not ones that our ancestors struggled with. From studying the Yanomamo and other groups, Neel argues that beneficial genetic diversity has decreased due to the decimation of "primitive" groups and that disadvantageous diversity has increased due to improved medical care for individuals with birth defects and to increased mutation rates from nuclear warfare.

Disavowing Neel's gloomy view, Cavalli-Sforza, as a "geneticist of culture" champions the supremacy of cultural adaptation over biological. He points out that the recent studies in the U.S. (1974), U.K. (1976), and

(continued)

France (1982) indicate that poor children adopted in families of high socio-economic standing show practically no intelligence difference from children born and raised in higher classes. Recent twin studies in 1981 and 1982 have revised the estimate of genetic heritability of I.Q. from 70% to 80% down to 30%. Cavalli-Sforza states we exaggerate our problems. Both advances and problems are increasing he argues but cultural evolution is rapid and more solutions exist today than ever before.

Echoing the idea that cultural adaptation is quicker and more flexible than biological adaptation, Ortner rejects cultural laissez faire and thinks cultural innovation is "crucial to the future of human society". So whatever encourages responsible and informed individual creativity may help solve future problems.

What can be done about the desperate shortages of food and energy today exacerbated by rising births in many less developed countries? Edward S. Ayensu, a biologist, encourages use of all edible foods, low technology with the exception of inexpensive imported computer technology, and avoidance of heavy dependence on steel production. Nevin Scrimshaw, a nutritionist, focuses on increasing the variety of foods and reducing our dependence on animal proteins. If people do not have enough nutritionally well-balanced food to eat, they will not be able to do as much productive work and will be more susceptible to disease. A former physician in India, George Carstairs, warns that high technology is not the answer, either, in medical care in developing countries.

For the future the essayists argue the moral necessity of curbing individualism, while paying more attention to the community. Global cooperation and sharing are needed, values interestingly integral to the lives of hunters and gatherers. More effective family planning is necessary of course, and education needs to foster individual creativity. The city will be home for more and more people and, according to Asa Briggs, our stereotype of the city as a hostile environment is false.

Although the general educated lay audience will not find How Humans Adapt easy to digest given the length (560 pages) and the scholarly language used in many articles, the book is useful for persuading us that modern culture cannot sustain the reproductive behavioral patterns that were suited to the first agricultural societies. The book encourages us to break out of our often tunnel vision by revealing many interdisciplinary insights. The dialogue of scholars suggests that we are biocultural beings for whom, as Kenneth Boulding argues, catastrophes are part of human adaptation and peace may be more probable than destruction -- because it is a better idea. Who can argue with that?

JoAnne Lanouette

ANTHROPOLOGISTS & TEACHERS MEET

Pre-college anthropology is in better health than imagined if recent meetings are an accurate thermometer. Over a dozen anthropologists and teachers from Tanzania to Canada shared ideas on how to promote and use anthropology in schools at the 11th Intl. Congress of Anthropology and Ethnological Sciences in Quebec City, August 1983. All agreed anthropological materials are very effective in teaching scientific methods of thought. The Dept. of Anth. at St. Mary's Univ. in Halifax, Canada boosts pre-collegiate anthropology with historic archeology projects, the Teaching Anthropology Newsletter, and changes in teacher certification requirements.

Did you know that at the Nov.'83 AAA Annual Meetings, 3 separate sections were held on pre-college anthropology?

(continued from p.2)

So the individuals who hold political office are not supposed to wield political power; they simply proclaim and carry out the collective will. The Alcalde (mayor), in particular, with his staff of office, is validator and by his presence makes the Ayllu's decisions official.

But what is the Ayllu? Is it the group of men and few silent women who meet at intervals to argue and vote? Initially this seems to be the case, for watching the Assembly gives the impression that decision-making is vested in a group of young and middle-aged males, with females and old men excluded from the political process. But this is a mistaken impression, similar to that created by a play, which fixes our attention on the actors on the stage and makes us forget that the observable action is produced and directed from behind the scenes. In Sonqo, while vigorous men play out the public drama of political life, the women and old men are the invisible production crew. While we focus our attention on the public stage we miss half the action, and inevitably must fail to understand how community politics function.

Although during my fieldwork I lived in the President's house and attended the Assemblies, I usually had the feeling that the way things were "really" getting done was eluding me. I wondered whether there was a "council of elders", but eventually I realized that no such council exists. Decision-making goes on through seemingly casual visiting, as influential men and women (the qhapag and the wira) call on each other in the evening or before breakfast, to chat and chew coca, or as they talk soberly during communal work parties while younger men work noisily at the heavy tasks.

In this elusive process of sub rosa decision-making, the opinions of the substantial women (wira warmi) carry

a great deal of weight. In Assemblies, the Mamakuna (mothers, mature women) and Kuraq Taytakuna (Elder Fathers) are a significant, albeit invisible, presence. The men in the Assembly do not represent themselves as individuals, but represent their households, including their wives and aged parents, and are accountable to them. This makes the decision-making process difficult to understand for the government agent, school teacher or anthropologist who watches only the public drama.

The Power of Women

But what about situations in which women have to enter the public arena to achieve a goal that cannot be achieved otherwise? Clearly a woman without a husband for a mouthpiece, or who is seriously at odds with her husband, is at a great disadvantage. The most unpleasant incidents I witnessed in Sonqo were those in which women tried to address the Assembly as individuals, inevitably without success. In one case, a woman who had married into Sonqo but returned to her natal community after her husband's death, showed up in the Assembly to demand her widow's rights of seed potatoes and labor. She was rejected without hesitation, and her gift of trago (cane alcohol) was returned unopened by the President.

Having failed to press her case as a single woman in a male forum, the Widow changed her tactics. She did have a certain amount of sympathy from other women who had married into Sonqo. At the next communal work party these women appeared among the kinswomen of the hosting officials, bringing food and chicha (corn beer) for the laboring menfolk. After the work was finished, the gathering divided into the usual male and female groupings, who sat around chatting and chewing coca.

(continued)

At this point the Widow appeared again, and was loudly welcomed by the women who sympathized with her. Sonqueños consider it impossibly rude to turn away a guest who has been invited by even one member of a party, so -- while most of the men and many of the women were quietly displeased -- the Widow settled down and was offered coca and chicha. After a few minutes she presented the President with two bottles of trago. To my surprise he accepted them, and had them served to the gathering. The husband of another woman, who had also married-in, rose to argue the Widow's case. Even before he began it was clear that she had already won, and the ensuing debate centered not on whether she would be helped, but on how much she would be helped.

Later I asked the President why he accepted the trago, when it committed the Ayllu to an unwelcome contract it had previously refused.

"The Mamakuna (mothers, mature women) accepted her," he answered, "so we had to accept her too."

The Widow achieved her goal by confronting the men -- not on their own terms -- but on a woman's terms. She recruited a collective base of female support at a gathering properly attended by both sexes. This group of women cleverly maneuvered the men into risking a serious breach of etiquette. Finally, they exploited a male representative. This collective female support with a male mouthpiece won the day before a word was spoken.

In another incident a woman proved able to enforce the Ayllu's will when the men were unsuccessful. In 1975 the Alcalde-elect announced that he would not accept his office. In spite of his public election and unremitting pressure from his elders and peers, he stubbornly held out into December, only a few weeks before his inauguration. Backed by a group of women, his mother coerced him into serving, exploiting a religious feast day, another occasion on which both men and women

gather to eat and drink together. Seated next to a big jar of chicha, surrounded by a crowd of women, she began to scream at her son, "What are you? Are you a Quechua person?", continuing with a long stream of condemnation. Although most of the men agreed with her, they begged her to be quiet in a subdued chorus. Eventually she subsided, and the feast continued. The next day the word was out that the Alcalde-elect had agreed to accept his office.

To summarize, female power is exerted collectively, and consists essentially in the power of veto and commentary. Those who have spent time in Quechua households will find this familiar -- recalling how as a man of the house prepares his family's offering to Pachamama and Apus, his wife sits at his side selecting the ingredients and correcting his invocations; how as a man tells traditional stories, his wife coaches him and he accepts her corrections. The political sphere is not essentially different, except that in the Assemblies the Mamakuna are not physically at their husbands' side -- but their invisible presence weighs heavily nonetheless. When, in extreme cases, women as a group decide to "go public," they cause a kind of social earthquake -- an upheaval of the private substream of public life.

This way of operating does not sit well with a modern professional woman, eager to meet men on her own terms in a public forum. But there is much to be learned from it; that this is not a simple matter of female subordination but something much more subtle and complex; and that the powers as well as the limitations of Sonqo women are inherent in the total socio-cultural system -- a system whose resilience and strength resides to a great extent in the invisible, elusive -- and potentially violent -- character of female power.

Catherine J. Allen
Assistant Professor
George Washington
University

ANTHRO·NOTES is continuing through the generous support of the National Museum of Natural History and the Smithsonian Educational Outreach Program. Anthro·Notes was originally part of the George Washington University/Smithsonian Institution Anthropology for Teachers Program funded by the National Science Foundation. The newsletter will continue to be distributed free-of-charge in 1983-84. To be added to the mailing list, write Ann Kaupp, Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560.

ANTHRO·NOTES STAFF: Ann Kaupp, JoAnne Lanouette, Alison S. Brooks, Ruth O. Selig, editors;
Robert L. Humphrey, artist.
Illustrations © Robert L. Humphrey 1983.

Kaupp NHB 363
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20560

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE. \$300

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION



FIRST CLASS MAIL