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A CASE OF MISSING PERSONS: CULTURAL RELATIVISM IN TODAY'S WORLD



Introduction

In the nineteenth century, ethnologists quite regularly documented "exotic" customs such as human sacrifice, infanticide, and ritual suicide. In the early twentieth century, as cultural relativism emerged as a strong value in the discipline, cultural anthropologists, for the most part, avoided writing about such practices. Rather than debating the moral issues that one encounters when learning about another culture, anthropologists concentrated on topics like kinship systems, agricultural practices, leadership patterns, and myths. Today, a growing interest in defining universal human rights has ignited a lively debate within anthropology about cultural relativism.

Cultural relativism, the principle that cultural traits are best understood in the context of the cultural system of which they are a part and, therefore, not subject to external or absolute standards, became a central tenet of cultural anthropology, particularly as anthropologists sought to dispel notions of racism and ethnocentrism in the early twentieth century. Cultural relativism asks us to engage in a "suspension" of our values so that we might interpret other peoples' customs in the context of their cultures. To do otherwise -- to judge other peoples' customs from our own culture's viewpoint -- often leads to ethnocentrism, or the belief that one's own culture and its values are superior to that of others.



Many anthropologists still hold to some form of "absolute cultural relativism" by which anything that is acceptable in any one culture has to be viewed as acceptable by an outsider seeking to understand the practice. My study of contemporary patterns of female infanticide, sex-selective abortion, and general neglect and abuse of females in India has led me to a revised view that I call "critical cultural relativism."

Studies in Mortality

Population dynamics can be grouped under three major areas of study: fertility (reproduction and population growth), mortality (death), and migration (population movements). Both population anthropology and medical anthropology address these topics, but population anthropologists have paid far more attention to studying fertility and migration than to studying mortality, until recently.

Mortality is more difficult to research in a typical fieldwork period (one year) and within the traditional fieldwork setting of a village or urban neighborhood. In one year's time, several births might occur in a village of 1,000 people, and many people may migrate in and out. But only one infant death may occur, and no murders or suicides.

Death may, of course, occur randomly, with no discernible pattern associated with a particular person's death, at a particular time, or from a particular cause. Death is often the result of biological factors that impair the body's functioning, such as a malformation in an infant's heart. In short, there often are non-cultural factors determining the time and cause of death.

Culture and Mortality

In many cases, culturally-shaped patterns play a key role in putting certain people more "at risk" of dying from a particular cause, or at a particular age, than otherwise. We only have to look at statistics on mortality from car accidents in the United States, and especially from car accidents in which alcohol is involved, to see that such deaths are not evenly spread throughout the population. Culturally prescribed roles for adolescent males that involve "macho" type display behavior, excessive alcohol consumption, and otherwise dangerous lifestyle features are obviously implicated in the much higher mortality rates they experience, compared to females and older age groups.

Starting even before birth, an infant's chances of survival are influenced by culture. In societies where women are overworked and undernourished because of culturally constructed patterns of discrimination, infants are likely to be smaller and therefore less likely to survive infancy than in societies where prenatal care receives more attention.

In some societies, once a baby is born, culture plays an immediate and direct role in deciding whether or not the child will live. Abundant evidence from around the world documents the deliberate killing of offspring as almost a cultural universal. However, infanticide is usually not a frequent or widespread phenomenon within any particular society as a whole.

The mechanisms of infanticide differ, historically and cross-culturally. Infanticide refers to deliberate killings of juvenile offspring, but the word "deliberate" is not easy to define. Marvin Harris, a leading American anthropologist of the cultural materialism tradition, has contributed much to

contemporary thinking on infanticide. He distinguishes between direct and indirect infanticide.

Direct infanticide is the intentional killing of a child, by such common methods as poisoning, exposure to weather, smothering, or strangling. Indirect infanticide is more subtle and may not be exactly "deliberate." Indirect infanticide results in the death of a child through such practices as neglect in care and treatment. For example, not feeding a baby enough leads to malnutrition and lack of resistance to disease, and not taking the child to the clinic for treatment of an illness may allow the illness to progress to a terminal stage.

In different cultures, different children are at risk of infanticide. For example, it may be children born with teeth, since they are believed to be witches, or one of a set of twins since twins are widely believed to be inauspicious, or firstborn boys. Considering all the evidence we have for infanticide cross-culturally, we can say that the preponderant cases of systematic infanticide -- infanticide that is practiced by comparatively many people in the society, through history -- are systems of female infanticide.

In the United States, there are substantial numbers of infant murders and untold cases of fatal child abuse each year. But victims do not seem to be consistently more of one gender than another, as far as current statistics indicate (although cases of sexual abuse tend to involve far more cases of female children as victims).

Rural India: A Case Study

Information about son preference and daughter neglect in rural India (80 percent of India's population lives in rural areas) provides solid

clues to the problem of why and how so many girls die. However, there is still much that is not known, and cultural anthropology can play an important role in generating further knowledge that might be useful to health planners. In addition, there are people in India who do not support the discrimination against females, who are working to encourage new social policies to promote equality between the sexes in Indian society today.

We know that the most extreme and widespread scarcity of girls is seen in the northwestern region of India. This pattern is similar to the distribution of direct infanticide as revealed through a study of reports from the 1800s. For more contemporary periods, census data collected by the government of India every ten years, throughout the nation, allow us to calculate "sex ratios" (that is, the number of boys per girls, so that "perfect" balance -- although this rarely occurs -- would be 100 boys for every 100 girls).

Biologists have shown that in humans, the sex ratio at conception is 120:100, with more boys than girls. Despite the fact that female embryos have a higher mortality rate than males within the first two weeks of conception, the mortality rate of males is greater than that of females at every age thereafter. By birth, the sex ratio has fallen to about 106:100 in most documented populations, and throughout the life span, the ratio continues to fall. The result is that there are more males than females in the younger generations, but increasingly more females than males in the older population.

Research on juvenile sex ratios (for under ten-year-olds) in India shows that in some areas of the northwestern plains, ratios exist of 115-120 boys for every 100 girls. This means that one of every five or six girls dies an excess

death compared to boys.

Daughters and Dowries

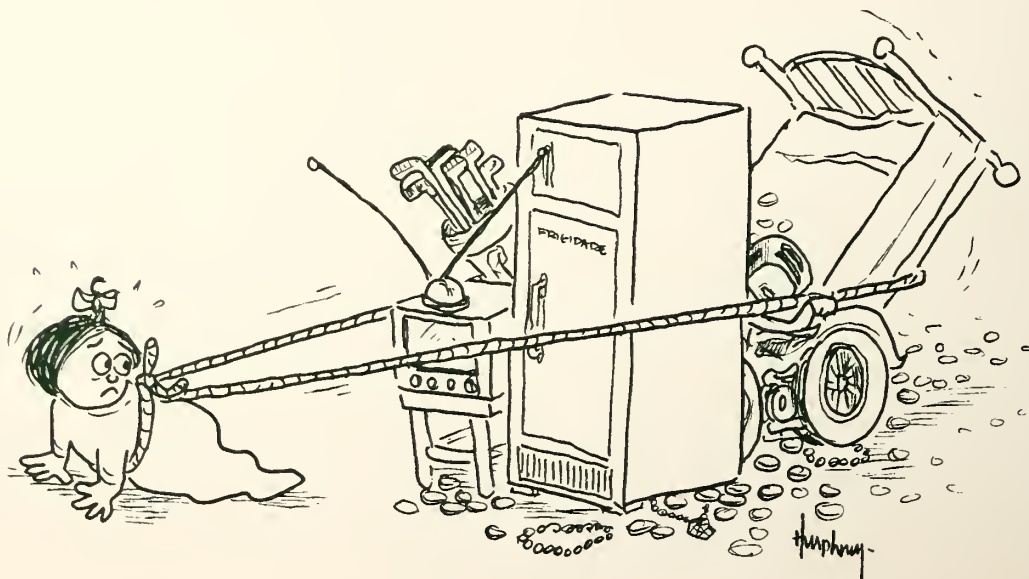
One might guess that the poverty of India drives people to kill female infants or to let them die through neglect. But in India, the scarcity of daughters has consistently been greatest among the "propertied" class -- farmers who own their land, as compared to landless agricultural wage-workers -- and upper caste groups in the north. This social pattern causes perplexity among many people in the United States, since most Euro-Americans have a "rationality" model of "child investment," a model which sees poverty, not wealth, as a force driving people to do difficult and unpleasant things to other people.

Why, then, does female infanticide and neglect make sense from the perspective of the propertied class? North Indian propertied-class cultural rules of marriage, in conjunction with the limitations for women's wage earning in this class, make daughters a very costly burden to raise. It is essential that a girl be

married, since spinsterhood is a great stigma for her and her family, and she must be married to a boy of a somewhat higher socioeconomic status, requiring a very expensive dowry. North Indian-style dowry includes goods such as furniture (refrigerator, bed, motorcycle, watch, clothing, jewelry) and, increasingly, large sums of cash. The better the dowry, the "better" the groom's family will be. If a family seeks to marry off a daughter well, the expenses will put them in debt for many years. That burden is even greater if there is more than one daughter to be married.

Therefore, having a limited number of daughters is a poverty *avoidance* strategy for those who are *not* poor. The problem with having more than one daughter is not that the family cannot afford to feed them as children, but that they cannot afford to get them married properly later on.

Consider in the North Indian propertied group context the difference between having sons versus daughters. If you have a son, you can expect that he will "bring in" with his bride a



substantial sum of money and goods, because in this kinship system, daughters "marry out" of their natal family (exogamy) and take up residence in their husband's natal home or village.

As dowry is evolving in India in the 1990s, more and more of its contents goes to the groom's family rather than to the newly-married couple. If a family has several sons, it is likely to be in very good financial shape. Incoming dowry through one's sons' marriages can be used, in turn, to pay for the dowry of one's own daughter(s). Given this system, a parent wants to have more sons than daughters.

Among the poor, although dowry has become more common since the 1970s, daughters were traditionally married with no dowry, or even with the transfer of bridewealth or brideprice. Bridewealth is usually a cash amount of a fixed rate which is transferred from the family of a groom to the father of the bride. Compared to dowry, brideprice is a much smaller amount, and a prospective groom can work to earn it himself rather than being totally dependent on his family to provide it. Imagine, in this system, if you were the parent of several daughters; the prospect of receiving bridewealth would make a big difference in your attitude about having daughters.

Impact of Modernization

Modernization theorists claim that with increasing urbanization, industrialization, and education, discrimination against girls and women declines. But over the past several decades, the scarcity of girls in India has been spreading, both regionally and socially. Comparison of unbalanced juvenile sex ratios from the decade 1961-1971 revealed that a substantially greater number of districts had "suspiciously high" sex ratios in 1971 than in

1961: from one fourth of all India's districts up to one-third. Geographically, the problem is spreading outward from the northwestern core area into all directions.

Another major change since the 1980s is the increasing use of medical technology to learn the sex of a fetus and to seek an abortion in the case of a female fetus. This technology is now widely available in India, even though its use for sex-selection purposes was recently banned by the national government. Statistics from a large study of births in northwestern India reveal that people are aborting female fetuses in large numbers. Sex ratios at birth are reaching 115-120 boys per 100 girls, similar to what was previously the result of indirect infanticide in the same area. (Compare the expected "normal" ratio of about 106 boys to 100 girls.)

Recent evidence of direct female infanticide has also emerged in several rural areas of the state of Tamil Nadu in far southern India. It is not currently known whether this is a new practice or whether it has been going on for a long time and simply unnoticed by researchers and health care workers. The state government of Tamil Nadu, which is relatively progressive concerning women's issues, has taken several steps to help stop this practice, including setting up "drop boxes" for unwanted female babies who can then be adopted, and offering to pay marriage costs for daughters once they are grown.

The Anthropologist and Social Policy

Should anthropologists who study groups made vulnerable by societally defined conditions of inequality become involved in policy and action that alleviates such inequalities? Emphasis on key areas of research can add much to our understanding of how and why people are systematically

disadvantaged by their culture and anthropologists can suggest ways to improve their situation.

According to absolute cultural relativism, anything that goes on in any culture is "just fine" because, it is said, no one has the right to judge the rightness or wrongness of any behavior or belief, and such judgment would be ethnocentric. According to this view, anthropologists should maintain their objectivity and remain uninvolved in policy or social action.

Consider where this position leads by looking at one of the horrors of the twentieth century: the Holocaust during World War II. Millions of Jews and other minorities in much of Eastern and Western Europe were killed as part of the German Aryan supremacy campaign. The absolute cultural relativist position would hold that the Holocaust was undertaken according to the values of the culture in which it occurred, so who are we to say anything about it?

Can anyone feel truly comfortable with such a position? We have to ask, "Whose culture supported the values that killed millions of people on the grounds of racial purity?" It was not the culture of the Jews and the Gypsies. It was the culture of Aryan supremacists, who were a subgroup primarily of Germans. We have a much more culturally complex picture than a simple absolute cultural relativist statement can take into account. There was not "one" culture and its values involved. Rather, we see an example of cultural imperialism at work, whereby one culture claims supremacy over minority cultures and proceeds to exterminate the latter in the interests of the former. We can perceive oppressors and victims.

Critical Cultural Relativism

An alternative conceptual option is what I term *critical cultural relativism*. This perspective is situated within the general framework of cultural relativism, whereby we try to view all cultures empathically from the inside. But it is more specific. It prompts us to understand the plural interests within any society (whether it is between Nazis and Jews, the old and the young, the rich and the poor, men and women, the able and the less able) and to understand the power relationships between these interest groups. We must critique the behavior of these groups from the standpoint of some set of more or less generally agreed upon human rights.

French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss commented that "No society is perfect," even when considered from what that society claims as moral values. He pinpoints the difficult position of the anthropologist who looks from one culture to another. The predicament is how to maintain what could be called scientific objectivity. Lévi-Strauss claims that the task of the anthropologist is to study "the other" without passing judgment. Other anthropologists claim, to the contrary, that since one cannot ever achieve true objectivity, the best we can do is examine and expose our own biases, and then try to treat all cultures equally, to look equally critically at all cultures -- one's own and "others." Critical cultural relativism tries to do this in terms of a set of universal human rights.

Cultural anthropologists following a path of critical cultural relativism face the challenge of what might be considered universal human rights; that is, rights that should be guaranteed to all people everywhere regardless of their culture. Defining human rights in a cross-cultural perspective may seem like an easy task. For example, we might argue that the

right to food and health care should be universal. But the case of India's missing millions of girls illustrates just how difficult this might be.

Extreme cultural relativists argue that a balanced sex ratio, or even gender equality in health and welfare, is ethnocentric, and since they do not seem to apply to India, then they are not appropriately applied there. In such a view, an unbalanced sex ratio -- achieved through female infanticide and neglect and sex-selective abortion -- is culturally appropriate and acceptable.

Indian Activists

One can argue to the contrary, though, because many people in India are "egalitarianists" and do not support the inequality that does exist. As the following story, told to me by a long-time medical doctor serving in the rural areas of northern India, indicates, little girls who are discriminated against are also able to express their unhappiness with the situation, at least through their tears:

In one village, I went into a house to examine a young girl, and I found that she had an advanced case of tuberculosis. I asked the mother why she hadn't done something sooner about the girl's condition because now, at this stage, the treatment would be very expensive. The mother replied, "then let her die, I have another daughter." At the time, the two daughters sat nearby listening, one with tears streaming down her face.

In India, activists are working on many fronts to try to equalize life chances for males and females, from political lobbying against sex-selective abortion to grassroots work with parents, teaching them the value of daughters.

Cultural anthropologists can contribute to a more precise understanding of just where, and in which groups, little girls are at most risk of dying so that appropriate action might be taken to remedy the situation. And they can help with better understanding of how and why this happens, so that policies might go to the root of the problem and not just the surface. Cultural anthropologists could carry on research in the following arenas, showing:

1. How schooling affects attitudes toward sons and daughters and other matters such as dowry marriage and women's work. While many scholars insist that "education is the key," ironically the data for India show that, in northern India, the poorest and least educated people are less discriminatory toward daughters than many more well-off and educated people. In India, being educated goes with middle and upper class lifestyles, and such are not necessarily egalitarianist; indeed, they may be extremely conservative when it comes to women's rights.

2. How more and better health care provisions might affect female child health and survival. Some scholars argue that if more clinics were available, then parents would care for children of both genders more equally. Currently, however, studies show that parents in the northern part of the country are using better health care facilities for their sons, not their infant daughters, even when the distance to the clinic is not great.

3. How women's work affects gender patterns of child survival. Development studies demonstrate that, worldwide, children's welfare responds more positively to an increase in maternal earning power compared to an increase in paternal earning power, because mothers more than fathers use their income for household welfare expenditures. In northern India, where strong negative

sanctions exist about women's work for rural middle and upper-class families, it is difficult to know how women's earnings could be enhanced and if women would have the intrahousehold power to allocate earnings toward equal treatment of children.

4. How mothers deal psychologically with the loss of children. Is maternal grief a Western luxury that rural Indian mothers are socialized against? How do parents and other household members speak about the deaths of children, wanted or unwanted? And how is this changing, given the now widespread availability of television with its international messages about behavior, emotion, and discourse?

Although more is known now than fifty years ago about the cultural dynamics of India's missing females, the entire story is only slowly and unevenly unfolding. Much more needs to be known. In the United States, in addition, we must face the fact that increasing numbers of parents are seeking sex-selective abortion. The problem of gender-specific reproductive wishes is not just "over there," but increasingly in our own culture. Critical cultural relativism helps us to better understand cultural practices and actions desirable to take, given certain norms of universal moral behavior and universal human rights.

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About Barbara Miller

Barbara Miller first became interested in India in elementary school and as a senior in high school took a course in cultural anthropology at a local college. While an undergraduate at Syracuse, she participated in a year-long study program in Banaras, India. She received her PhD, with distinction, from Syracuse University in 1978. She plans to return to India for extended research in the future.

Barbara's research interests include child survival, women's health status, the cultural construction of morbidity and mortality, migration and mental health, intrahousehold dynamics, public policy regarding the household, and rural development in relation to population dynamics. She has done field research in India, Bangladesh, and Jamaica, and has coauthored a book on Sri Lanka.

For Further Reading

Jeffery, Patricia, Roger Jeffery and Andrew Lyon, *Labour Pains and Labour Power: Women and Childbearing in India*, London: Zed Books, 1988.

Miller, Barbara D. *The Endangered Sex: Neglect of Female Children in Rural North India*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981.

Rohner, Ronald P. and Manjustri Chaki-Sircar, *Women and Children in a Bengali Village*, Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1988.

Waldron, Ingrid. "Why Do Women Live Longer than Men?" *Social Science and Medicine* 10:349-362, 1976.

NEW RESOURCES: NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS AND ARCHAEOLOGY

AnthroNotes editors highly recommend three recently published books that can help teachers and students gain a greater appreciation of Native peoples of North America, while gaining a better understanding of the various approaches to learning about other cultures, past and present. The three books, reviewed below, are:

The First Peoples of the Northeast. By Esther K. Braun and David P. Braun. Lincoln Historical Society, P.O. Box 6084, Lincoln Center, MA 01773-6084. 160 pages, softcover, 90 illustrations, time line, resources, bibliography, index. To purchase, send \$19.95 plus \$3.00 first book, \$.50 each additional book (postage and handling).

Earthmaker's Lodge, Native American Histories, Folklore, Activities and Foods. Edited by E. Barrie Kavasch. Cobblestone Publishing, Inc., 7 School Street, Peterborough, NH 03458, Tel. 800-821-0115. 160 pages, softcover. map, glossary, index, and pronunciation guide, illustrated with original art. To purchase, send \$17.50 plus \$3.00.

Discovering Archaeology, An Activity Guide for Educators. By Shirley J. Schermer. Special Publication, Office of the State Archaeologist, Oakton Hall, The University of Iowa, Iowa

City, Iowa 52242. 1992. vii + 54 pages, glossary, references, appendices, illustration credits. To purchase, send \$6.95 plus \$3.00.

The First Peoples of the Northeast

The First Peoples of the Northeast, designed as an archaeological and cultural overview for junior high-level through adult readers, provides an introduction to the geography and original peoples of New England, New York and the Canadian eastern province. This handsomely illustrated and beautifully printed volume serves as an excellent introduction to archaeology, a subject of increasing interest to precollege teachers and students. Well written and heavily illustrated with maps, photographs, and original drawings by Carole Cote, the *First Peoples of the Northeast* is highly recommended for school libraries, museums, educators, and classroom use.

Synthesizing recent archaeological research, the book traces chronologically the peoples of the Northeast from the time of the Ice Ages through the development of diverse cultures, covering the broad span of time from the region's first human occupation to the period of European contact. Written in clear, non-technical language, the book focuses on the peoples and cultures of the region, while showing how those cultures are revealed and interpreted through archaeological evidence.

Seven chapters detail the culture history of the area, beginning with chapter one, "The Ice Ages and the First Americans," and ending with a chapter on "European Contact," which details the impact of contact on various societies throughout the region. The eighth chapter, "Archaeology and Conservation," describes three reasons why there is so much difficulty documenting the development of

Native American cultures before contact: the lack of written records and more recent disappearance of much of the oral history; the fact that archaeology is a young science with few means by which to understand the evidence that does exist; and the destruction of the archaeological record, which is creating a massive loss of potential information.

In a plea for site conservation and stewardship, the Brauns write: "You can think of the archaeological record as if it were an ancient book, the only copy left. Already many pages are missing, torn, written over, or faded...often...someone or something comes along and tears out a page or more, or tears out a chunk, or writes over a page... Soon we will lose what little is left."

Following the main chapters of the book, the Brauns offer two extremely helpful appendices: "How Archaeology Works," and "Places to See Archaeology Exhibits and Report Archaeological Finds." The first provides an excellent introduction to the discipline of archaeology, with sections on "Goals of Archaeology," "Finding the Evidence," "Testing and Excavating a Site," "Studying and Dating the Evidence," and "Understanding Past Ways of Life." Following this appendix is a listing of places where one can learn more about the archaeology of the Northeast, with address and phone numbers as well as resources available.

The authors are an interesting mother-son team. Esther, a graduate of Wellesley College with an MA in Education, spent many years, before retirement, teaching math, science, and social studies in the Lincoln, Massachusetts Public Schools. David Braun, a graduate of Harvard University, received an M.A. and Ph.D. in archaeology from the University of Michigan. He went on to pursue a career in archaeology, publishing numerous articles and

chapters in thirteen different books, while teaching at Southern Illinois University and Northern Arizona University and working as a Fellow of the School of American Research in Santa Fe. Ten years ago, the two decided to collaborate on this book, which has been a labor of love for them both, a unique contribution from an unusual and talented team.



The First Peoples of the Northeast presents a remarkable combination of important strengths: a lively writing style; helpful, numerous illustrations and maps; a clearly conceived organization. There is a rare combination of attention to a narrative that focuses on real people's lives during real periods of time while at the same time explaining the scientific methodology that gave rise to the information presented. The emphasis on conservation is particularly noteworthy given the impact that the "Save the Past for the Future" effort has had within the Society for American Archaeology, and the importance of building an ethic of stewardship, not only towards archaeological sites but towards our whole natural world.

Earthmaker's Lodge

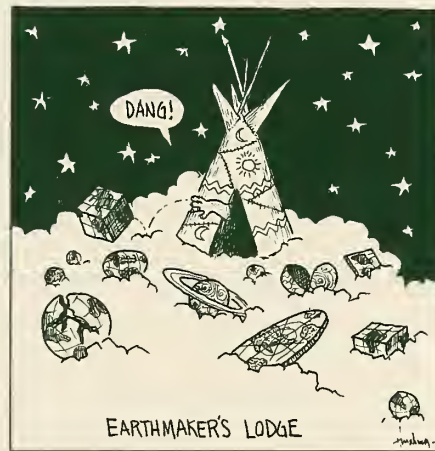
Offering another view of Native American life, *Earthmaker's Lodge* is a classroom and library resource book, arranged by topic and geographical region, of Native American peoples from the arctic to Mexico. Some of the material is adapted from Cobblestone publications (*Cobblestone*, *Faces*, *Odyssey* magazines), while other parts are written specifically for this collection, much of it by E. Barrie Kavasch, author and illustrator of *Native Harvests: Recipes and Botanicals of the American Indians*, herself of some Cherokee and Creek Indian descent.

Earthmaker's Lodge is geared to grades 4-9, and is recommended for incorporation into social studies, reading, and language arts classes. The book's approach, along with its Index organized by tribal culture areas, and its Glossary of Native Peoples, makes the collection particularly useful for teachers.

An introduction welcomes the reader, describes the book's format, and explains that *Earthmaker's Lodge* "symbolically embraces North America in the relaxed, informative ways traditional to our tribal storytelling." The collection encourages teachers to introduce Native American stories to their students as "links between our surroundings, our imaginations, and our creative understandings." The title of the book refers to Earthmaker, the creator of earth and sky and of all the inhabitants of the world, in the Winnebago, Osage, Cherokee, and Pima Indian traditions. Other traditions recall the Creator by other names, and fortunately many creation stories are included in the collection.

There are five main sections to the book. Part I, "Stories, Dreams, and Spiritual Objects," describes the place of stories, dreams and spiritual objects in the lives of North American

Indians and offers activities that young students can do, such as making a story bag, keeping a dream journal, or creating a spirit plate. Part II, "People, Places, and Legends," is the longest section, and includes many original North American Indian stories and legends organized within twelve geographic, tribal culture areas: Pueblo, Navajo, California Indians, Iroquois and Algonquian Tribes of the Northeast, Cherokee and Other Southeastern Tribes, Great Lakes and Mississippi Valley Tribes, Plains Indians, Nez Perce, Sioux, Northwest Coast Indians, Eskimos, and Hawaiians. The stories explore the concepts of ancient times and how people, plants, and animals came to be. Each area varies in its treatment, but, in general, original stories and legends are combined with short, well written introductions to the culture area and its varied tribal groups.



Part III, "Projects and Crafts," includes instructions for teachers for twenty-four different activities; while Part IV, "Puzzles and Games," continues an activity approach with descriptions of twelve different games of skill and chance traditional to different Native American societies. Finally, Part V, "Recipes" offers contemporary recipes from different regions, reminding us that Indian societies continue today as vital, creative communities. As W. Richard West, Jr. Director of the

National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, concludes in his introduction to the book: "*Earthmaker's Lodge* is an excellent means for sharing the vibrant customs and cultures of American Indians with all people. By presenting the history, stories, and the many foods and crafts of American Indians, this book shares the gifts of the Indian peoples and opens the doors into their world. I ask that you read this book with an open mind, remembering that American Indian cultures are living cultures with a dynamic past, an active present, and a promising future."

Discovering Archaeology

A concisely written, clearly organized, and highly informative publication, *Discovering Archaeology, An Activity Guide for Educators*, should prove helpful to teachers in a wide variety of classroom situations. Designed as an activity guide for middle school students (grades 5-8), this book is an excellent introduction to archaeology for teachers of elementary, junior high, and high school students. Collaboratively developed by archaeologists and educators, all activities have been field tested and then revised through teacher workshops.



The organization of the book makes it particularly easy to use with students. An introductory two page statement, "What is Archaeology," is followed by six sections, each one including a short introductory statement with between one and three related, illustrative activities. The introductory statements, read together, provide a concise yet quite comprehensive overview of the field: "Evidence from the Past," "The Work of Archaeologists," "Pottery," "Prehistoric Use of Natural Resources for Tools, Shelter, and Food," "Birds in Prehistory," "Archaeological Ethics and Law."

Discovering Archaeology is more than an activity guide, serving as an excellent short introduction to archaeology. The book could be used as the basis for a two week archaeology unit in the middle school, junior high school, or even high school curriculum, or incorporated into courses about Native Americans, American History, state or local history, or the environment. Diagrams and pictures help students and teachers visualize the written descriptions and carry out the various activities. The six introductory statements are clearly written, with all technical terms bolded and defined in a short glossary that follows the main portion of the text. A Reference Section serves as a guide to further resources, and includes subsections on archaeology books for teachers and students; teaching materials, curriculum guides and activities; American Indian mythology; magazines and journals; and materials available from the Smithsonian Institution.

The activities are excellent: interdisciplinary, inductive, straightforward, creative and fun. Students should enjoy participating in these activities, and teachers will find most of them easy to set up and carry out -- no small consideration for the extremely busy teacher who is with students most of the day.

Activities include learning what artifacts are and how archaeologists learn to identify their attributes and functions (Activity 1. What is an Artifact); the difference between practical and symbolic objects (Activity 2. Symbolic versus Practical Objects); how archaeologists survey and collect materials (Activity 3. Picnic Ground Archaeology); how archaeologists use stratigraphy to date objects (Activity 4. Garbage Can Archaeology); excavation procedures including field notes and artifact sketches (Activity 5. Simulated Archaeological Dig); prehistoric pottery making techniques (Activity 6. Pottery Making); prehistoric use of natural resources (Activity 7. Resources for Tools and Shelter); environment as the source for satisfying basic human needs (Activity 8. Resources for Food); identifying animal skeletal materials (Activity 9. Bird Identification); archaeological ethics and law (Activity 10. Archaeology and You).

Overall, *Discovering Archaeology, An Activity Guide for Educators* is an excellent addition to the growing list of high quality archaeology materials for the precollege classroom. Such materials respond to the growing interest among educators and students in including more archaeology in the precollege curriculum--in units, for example, focusing on prehistory, heritage studies, local history, Native Americans, and the environment. For all levels, from elementary through high school, this book can assist the precollege classroom teacher interested in introducing archaeology to young students.

Ruth O. Selig

ANTHROPOLOGY AS A CAREER

Anthropologists at Work: Careers Making a Difference. Produced by Dawn Bodo and Elizabeth Briody. VHS Color Video, 40 minutes. American Anthropological

Association and EXPOSE: Communication Network. Cost: \$25 (students and NAPA members), \$30 (professionals, non-NAPA members), \$35 (organizations, institutions). Make checks payable to American Anthropological Association, and send to: American Anthropological Association, Careers Video, 4350 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 640, Arlington, VA 22203-1621.

The National Association for the Practice of Anthropology and the American Anthropological Association have developed a video, *Anthropologists at Work: Careers Making a Difference*, which will help future anthropologists decide how to approach the field as a career. Since nearly one-third of new PhD anthropologists and the majority of new MA graduates now find employment outside of academia, this is a timely production.

Anthropologists at Work shows how anthropologists in all four subfields (ethnology, archaeology, physical anthropology, and linguistics) apply their skills to a wide variety of jobs, from the traditional academic research position to industrial anthropology, with a broad spectrum of careers between. The popular image of an anthropologist is usually an "Indiana Jones" character involved in adventurous and glamorous archaeological investigations, or a diary-keeper, studying small, nearly-extinct tribes in remote areas of the world. As NAPA notes in the press release, however, this video "captures anthropologists at home and abroad in diverse settings: from government and human services, to archaeological excavations and forensic work, to manufacturing industries; conducting research; implementing policy; teaching and providing expertise in the areas of health, education, development, and the corporate world."

The video focuses on four major points.

1) Skills developed as anthropologists, such as interviewing, statistical analysis, knowledge of foreign languages, writing, and problem solving, can be applied to almost any career. 2) There are professional opportunities in anthropology for women and minorities which may be unparalleled in any other field. 3) Anthropologists take a holistic approach to their careers, incorporating methods and theories from all four subfields. 4) It is extremely rewarding to apply one's anthropological background to improving other people's lives.

Case Studies

Anthropologists at Work presents about a dozen vignettes, interviewing anthropologists in all four subfields about their background, their jobs, and their impact on the world around them. For example, Cindy Mahrer, who is with the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, DC, discusses the effectiveness of a two-way bilingual education program. In this program, immigrant students are taught English, but the English-speaking students are also taught the immigrants' language. Neither group of students feels disadvantaged, and each group tends to help the other. All of the students benefit not only by learning a second language, but also by gaining insights into another culture.

Miguel Vasquez, an agricultural anthropologist from Northern Arizona University, works with the Hopi to restore abandoned terrace gardens. Traditionally, Hopis worked cooperatively on these gardens, providing a focus for socializing as well as producing food. As mass-produced products have become available, the Hopis have neglected the gardens, and the community focus has suffered. By researching the methods used by earlier generations and involving younger members of the tribe,

Vasquez has been able to help restore a part of the Hopi culture which might otherwise have been lost.

General Motors employs Elizabeth Briody as an industrial anthropologist. Briody analyzes the work culture at GM, finding where employee groups have problems and helping management to solve them. Michael Blakey, at Howard University, works closely with the community to help protect historical materials found in the African Burial Ground site in New York City, and to educate the public about the historical significance of the site. A Smithsonian Institution Curator, Douglas Ubelaker, uses his training as a skeletal biologist to work with law enforcement agencies to help identify human skeletal remains. By accumulating data from many cases, Ubelaker shows how an individual's lifestyle can affect his skeleton and teeth; this information, in turn, can be useful in future cases. Each of these vignettes, as well as the others not mentioned in this review, provides students and their advisors with specific information about how to apply the skills, methods, and theories of traditional anthropology to developing and implementing problem solving strategies in a wide variety of careers.

Marilyn London
Department of Anthropology
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THE ETHNOGRAPHER - ADMINISTRATOR



MAYAQUEST: AN INTERACTIVE LEARNING EXPEDITION

In February 1995, the MayaQuest team, a group of four cyclists led by adventurer Dan Buettner, will embark upon a wholly kid-directed bicycle expedition into the Maya world of Guatemala, Mexico, Belize and Honduras. The goal of the three month expedition is to let kids and their teachers help unravel one of the greatest mysteries of all time: the collapse of the ancient Maya civilization. Archaeologists have long known that the Maya perfected the most complex writing system in the hemisphere, mastered mathematics and astrological calendars of astonishing accuracy, and built massive pyramids all over Central America. They had a complex system of government and were experts in farming the jungle environment. The expedition will provide a context for teaching about ancient civilizations, math, science, geography, art, architecture, and the links between the Maya and present day civilizations. Laptop computers and satellite equipment will link the cyclists to schools and homes where kids will interact daily with the team and Mayan specialists at archaeological sites.

From anywhere in the United States, students can use personal computers to interact with the team and actually help make decisions regarding everything from what the team should pack to which of a dozen prearranged research sites they should explore. These experts will count on kids for their library skills and their fresh insights into ancient mysteries.

Access to the team will be available through Classroom Prodigy; TIES of Minnesota and MECC will host a school based "MayaQuest Internet Center;" CNN Newsroom will feature weekly updates from the field. Regular MayaQuest updates will be available by calling toll-free 1-800-919-MAYA.

To receive a free curriculum guide, wall map and a resource list for tracking the expedition, send a self-addressed 9" x 12" envelope with \$1.24 postage to MayaQuest, 529 South 7th Street, Suite 310, Minneapolis, MN 55415.

Sponsors of the expedition include MECC, Prodigy Service, PentaPure water purifiers (WTC Industries, Inc.), Native "O" apparel, Target Stores, 3M Foundation, and Nystrom, Division of Herff Jones.

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