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Abstracts

Carneiro, Robert L. (American Museum of Natural History)
“Amazonia, Spawner of the Ethnographic Hoax”

Something about Amazonia inspires people to leap over the bounds of truth and give free play to their imagination. Thus, over the years a number of books on Amazonian Indians have appeared which, while masquerading as fact, are nonetheless largely hoaxes. I know of six such books, from Algot Lange’s 1912 *In the Amazon Jungle*, to Florinda Donner’s 1982 *Shabono*. Moreover, in one way or another, I have been involved with half of them. Not—I hasten to add—as perpetrator, but rather as exposé. In the present paper I will discuss each of these books, pointing out their fabrications and telling my efforts, puny and ineffectual as they have been, to unmask deceptions.

Cepek, Michael L. (University of Chicago)
“Value and the Object of Cofan Politics”

Recent work has attempted to analyze Amazonian realities in holistic terms, both within and across accepted ethnic divides. This intellectual movement has employed a number of totalizing concepts, such as “deep structure”, “ontology”, and “ethos”. My paper brings the question of “value” to bear on these experiments in anthropological theorizing in order to operationalize a sociologically, phenomenologically, and psychologically sound understanding of socio-cultural totalities. I develop a schematic approach to this problem through a consideration of the processes of mobilization engaged in by the Cofan people of Amazonian Ecuador, whose current socio-political dilemmas sustain a crisis-point that demands an articulation of the key values that define their life-situation as a worthy political goal. It is in this kind of dynamic, I argue, that we can understand the “total” objects of both anthropological analysis and “native” experience.

Conklin, Beth A. (Vanderbilt University)
“From the Cannibals’ Point of View: South American Themes and Contributions”

Accounts of ritual cannibalism in lowland South America have a privileged position in the intellectual history and colonial politics of encounters between Old and New World peoples. In South American ethnology, cannibalism is a key cultural nexus at which core social and symbolic dynamics are expressed. While anthropological understandings of South American forms

of cannibalism have expanded substantially in recent decades, this work has had only limited influence in broader social theory, partly because of the fragmented, regional ethnographic orientations inherent in much of our scholarship. This paper takes a step back to consider the current configuration of South American cannibalism studies as a whole, identifying major themes and models that are emerging and coalescing in analyses of cannibalism and related issues in the study of warfare, death rituals, shamanism, and human-animal relations.

Cormier, Loretta A. (University of Alabama at Birmingham)
“The Historical Ecology of New World Malaria”

The origin and subsequent proliferation of malaras capable of infecting humans in South America remain unclear, particularly with respect to the role of Neotropical monkeys in the infection chain. First, the evidence to date will be reviewed for Pre-Colombian human malaria, introduction with African slavery, zoonotic transfer from cebid monkeys or cervid deer, and anthroponotic transfer to monkeys. Secondly, the role of demographic and ecological changes following European contact in the proliferation of malaria will be addressed, with attention to changes in the habitat of malarial vectors following the Amazonian “reforestation” between 1500-1750.

Crocker, William H. (Smithsonian Institution)
“Canela Emic Structuralism: A report on on-going field research”

I consider here Part V of my 1990 monograph [The Canela... (Smithsonian)], which presents an emic analysis of the Canela socio-cultural system. The field work was performed in 1979, and I expect to replicate the data collection among the Canela during 2005, using different informants to verify and validate this methodology and conceptualization.

During 1979, informants identified seven “traditional” oppositions, but this number and their superficiality made them unsatisfactory for reconstructing this study. Subsequently, I worked with the informants more extensively and deeply to help them verbalize- bring to their consciousness- many other oppositions and structural relationships. Thus, we structured perception of color, measurement of time, conception of spatial dimensions, positioning in festivals, kinship relations, conflict resolution, transformation in consciousness, etc. I ask you: How useful and meaningful is such analysis today?

Ewart, Elizabeth (University of Oxford)
“Seeing and being seen: a review of the significance of vision among the Panará”

Based on the ethnographic example of the Panará, a Gê-group in Central Brazil, this paper takes a look at the significance of vision and visibility.

Is it merely coincidental that Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's perspectival model is fundamentally visual in explaining certain features of Amazonian social life?

For Gê-speaking groups it has been suggested that while hearing and speaking are socially privileged faculties, contributing to the mature status of an individual. Seeing has been considered to be an anti-social faculty and is largely associated with the exercise of negative mystical power. While not wishing to deny the appropriateness of this association, I argue that seeing and being seen, as well as the particular visual qualities of phenomena, play an important role in an Amazonian lived world.

Fordred-Green, Lesley. (Smithsonian Institution; University of Cape Town)
"Of Bodies, Maps and Stories: Narratives of Karumna Mountain in Arukwa, Amapá, Brazil"

Many scholars have commented on the relationship between stories and maps, and much current work in cultural heritage practice is premised on the idea that spatial information contained in stories is readily placeable on maps. Yet while hunter-gatherer-agronomists might navigate without the map, the case cannot be easily made that they map with stories. Hence the question: What is the relationship between stories and maps? Are stories simply visualizations of topographic information? Is the visual mode of perception dominant in narratives of place?

Working with a canon of Palikur stories that cluster around Karumna Mountain in the Palikur area of residence known as Arukwa, in the Área Indígena do Uaçá, Amapá, Brazil, this paper argues that the story performances constitute records of bodily orientation in the landscape. These memories of movement, at once memories of bodily orientation and of feeling, constitute the link between maps and stories. Drawing connections between contemporary work in neuroscience and transcripts of storytelling performance, it is argued that spatial memory is multisensory, and that the visual record is an ancillary form of memory which is integrated into the primary memory of movement.

Giordani, Lourdes (State University of New York at New Paltz)
"Communicating with the nation and the world: Old stories, new ways among the Guaraní Ñandéva of Paraguay"

As indigenous lowland South Americans engage with government officials, NGO's, and a host of outsiders, they must embrace literacy to stake their claims. Though much has been published about the impact of writing on native Andeans, less is known about its impacts among lowlanders.

In this paper I compare two messages crafted by Guaraní Ñandéva men. The first, an oral narrative, concerns the Guaraní Ñandéva's involvement in the Chaco War. The second message, addressed to the people of the USA, is a brief written note. I argue that the Guaraní Ñandéva, like many native Andeans, have discerned the social uses of writing. However, this does not mean that

writing has or is replacing orality. The Guaraní Ñandéva seem to use both means creatively (sometimes combining elements of both).

Hornborg, Alf (Lund)

“Toward an Ethnogenetic Account of the Expansion of Arawakan Languages in Prehistoric Amazonia”

Previous attempts to explain the distribution of Arawakan languages in South America have generally been founded on models involving demic migration. There are several reasons to question such models: 1) Many and sometimes widespread language shifts have occurred in Amazonia without involving migration. 2) The areas outside their homeland in the northwest Amazon that first adopted Arawakan languages were, with the probable exception of the Upper Xingú, already fairly densely populated by that time. 3) Arawak-speakers are historically and ethnographically known throughout their range to have been active traders, often along the very rivers that have been postulated as their primary migratory routes. 4) Arawak-speaking groups are also historically and ethnographically known to have practiced extensive intermarriage with other ethno-linguistic groups. 5) Arawakan languages spoken in different areas often show more structural similarities to their non-Arawak neighbors than to each other. 6) Attempts to find correlations between Amazonian languages and genes have been conspicuously unsuccessful.

This paper argues for an abandonment of notions of migrating Arawakan ‘peoples’ in favor of modern anthropological understandings of ethnicity and ethnogenesis within regional or global systems of exchange and interaction. The scattered pockets of Arawakan languages, from the Caribbean to Bolivia, suggests the remnants of a vast, riverine network of trade language comparable to Nheengatú in later periods.

Izquierdo, Carolina (University of California at Los Angeles), Allen Johnson (University of California at Los Angeles), and Glenn H. Shepard, Jr. (National Institute of Amazonian Research, Brazil)

“Revenge, Envy and Cultural Change in an Amazonian Society”

The Matsigenka Indians of the Peruvian Amazon appear at first glance to have very little ritual life, but upon closer examination reveal a persistent and continuous practice of small rituals intended to ward off illness, harm, and misfortune. Most of these rituals are meant to protect the individual, the family, and the society from the harmful effects of vengeful attack against them. Illness and other types of misfortune are often attributed to revenge perpetrated by spirit beings, animals, and certain plant species, as well as other human beings. In Westernizing communities, illness is increasingly attributed to vengeful sorcery by other humans, often motivated by envy. As a small-scale, kin-based family level society, the Matsigenka view the violation of such values as likely to lead to retaliation by various agencies. In this paper we compile ethnographic

evidence of the importance of envy and revenge in Matsigenka daily life and practice. We argue in favor of the idea that envy and revenge are closely linked, universal human emotional processes that have received far less attention that they deserve, especially with respect to small-scale societies.

Lauer, Matthew (University of California at Santa Barbara)
“Fertility in Amazonia: Indigenous concepts of the Human Reproductive Process Among the Ye’kwana of Southern Venezuela”

In this talk I will discuss human fertility, comparing how demographers and other scientists have theorized it and how the Ye’kwana, an indigenous group who inhabit the Guiana Shield region of Northern Amazonia, conceive of the process. Ye’kwana ideas call into question scientific models of human reproduction that analytically separate ‘natural’ aspects of human behavior from ‘social’ or ‘psychological’ aspects. Detailed ethnographic data cast doubt on the validity of the ‘natural fertility model’ normally applied to non-industrial populations such as the Ye’kwana. Careful scrutiny of indigenous understandings of life processes as they are expressed in the myths, ceremonies, and everyday activities of the Ye’kwana reveals a much broader view of ‘fertility’ than is encompassed by our scientific notions. Rather than focusing narrowly on the capacities, actions, and decisions of childbearing couples, Ye’kwana see the growth of the human body and the human community as a single, concerted, long-term social activity.

Mentore, George (University of Virginia)
“The Enigmatic Weave: A Waiwai Strategy for Dispelling the Propensity for Violence”

The Waiwai tell of how humans can make null and void the lethal aggressive intent of the jaguar. Their narrative gives play to a political philosophy that reveals certain tenets indicative of their understanding about life, knowledge, and power.

In our Euro-American societies, when it comes to the practice of violence, we believe and act on our beliefs, at least in part, because we often do not have the confident knowledge for supporting any other theory of power than that which privileges the possession of physical force.

My naïve but hopeful presumption will be that from an alternative Amerindian understanding of power perhaps we might effectively seduce violence off center stage, out of the theater of modern-day politics, and into the abyss of the forgotten.

Moreno, Maria del Carmen (University of Wisconsin at Madison)
“Guyana’s Amerindians: Post-Independence Identity Politics and National Discourse”

In this paper, I explore the connections and complexities between Lokono cultural revival and Guyana's urban politics. I propose that while an understanding of Lokono cultural revival is gained through a historical perspective and from the elders in the community, the connections to national policies and institutions were more prevalent than initially assumed. Thus, I argue that Guyana's government policies toward Amerindians, since independence, have emphasized legislation that focuses on the socio-cultural aspects of Amerindian communities, thereby contributing to their alienation from the national political process.

Oakdale, Suzanne (University of New Mexico)
“ ‘Alterity’, History and Subjectivity”

This paper discusses the life histories of two (Tupi-speaking) Kayabi men. Both were influential figures, playing key roles in encouraging groups of Kayabi to relocate to the Xingu Indigenous Park in the 1950's as well as, through their work in pacification missions, encouraging other groups to move to the park. One of these men, Sabino, was known for his participation in the early administration of the park and the other, Pepori, was renowned for his shamanic skills. My focus is how two life histories, narrated late in the lives of these men, give a sense for the ways in which the concept of ‘alterity’, usually employed at the level of larger scale socio-cultural characterizations, can also be useful when employed at the level of individual subjectivities and specific historical situations.

Opas, Minna (University of Turku)
“Food, sexuality, and socio-cosmological relations among the Piro of Eastern Peruvian Amazonia”

This paper examines the roles of food, closeness, and sexuality in constructing and deconstructing social relations between humans and non-humans among the Piro of Peruvian Amazonia. The Amazonian anthropology it has been noted that the human body and its different constitutive elements (food, beverages, body paints etc.) play a decisive role in the formation of social relationships. I suggest that this is fundamental also to the relations the Piro have with different non-human beings. The central argument is that in the human-non-human relations characterized by food and sexuality, or the lack thereof, the Piro shape their personhood and adjust the liminal boundary between humans and non-humans, as well as constitute and renew the boundaries of living well among one's kin.

Rival, Laura (University of Oxford)
“Maleness, Femaleness, and the Attachment of the Soul to the Body among the Huaorani of Amazonian Ecuador”

Despite their general acceptance of pacific coexistence and village life, the Huaorani are still living in a social world structured by the continuous efforts they need to deploy in containing homicidal rage and mitigating the ravages of violent death. Death is often interpreted as having been caused by some human or human-like agency, which in turn drives men to kill blindly. This paper explores the cultural constructions of sex and gender found in Huaorani society, and more particularly the funerary rites. It shows that because men are particularly susceptible to the predatory call of supernature, society works to embed them within matrifocal house-groups. Huaorani perspectivism, which articulates the point of view of the prey, not of the predator, associates the soul with maleness and predation, to which it opposes the body as femaleness and resistance to victimhood.

Rubenstein, Steven L. (Ohio University)

“The Shuar Federation, Plurinationalism, and the Re-imagining of the Ecuadorian Nation-State”

According to Francis Fukayama, the end of the Cold War signaled the end of history, by which he meant the permanent establishment of liberal democracy. Throughout the Americas, however, Native Americans are challenging the very conception of the liberal modern state. Although political theorists typically characterize this challenge in terms of the clash between the autonomy of the individual and collective rights, I argue that the real issue is the clash between the autonomy of the state and culture. The plurinational political movement in Ecuador, spearheaded by Ecuadorian Indians, seems to provide a practical example of this view. Although plurinationalism presents a powerful alternative to homogenizing political and social ideologies like populism and mestizaje, though often suffers from tensions and conflicts among different Indian groups and organizations. I argue that far from being weaknesses, such tensions are the inevitable. I argue that culture itself must be reconceived as heterogeneous and pluralistic, but what kind of state will result remains to be seen.

Ruedas, Javier (Wheaton College)

“The concept of ‘consensus’ in the anthropology of indigenous Latin America”

Descriptions of indigenous Amazonian decision making commonly portray decisions as being made by consensus. In this paper, I critically analyze the concept of consensus, as it is applied to decision making in indigenous communities, in an effort to determine what are the various meanings that ‘consensus’ can take. Some anthropologists have presented community consensus in decision making as evidence of indigenous egalitarianism. For example, Pierre Clastres stated that “normal, civil power is founded on the consensus omnium.” In this perspective, decision making by consensus is seen as the exemplification of individual autonomy and freedom. ‘Consensus’ has

also been used to refer to a situation where the decisions of an elite cannot be challenged because they are considered to represent 'tradition'. For example, June Nash has described how the concept of consensus in some Maya communities of highland Chiapas serves to reinforce control by elites, enforced by harassment, expulsion, and assassinations. In this perspective, 'consensus' is the exemplification of oppression and the subordination of a silent majority to the decisions of an elite.

To operationalize the concept of consensus, I present information on political meetings observed during fieldwork among the Marubo in 1997-1998. Marubo village meetings appear open to anyone, since anyone present may speak, and decisions are not made until everyone who wishes to speak has had the opportunity to do so. I present data on how many people are present, how many people speak, and what decisions are made in order to understand how these meetings can be related to the concept of consensus. The evidence points to a situation somewhat less democratic than Clastres' conception, while less oppressive than that of Nash. At a time when the challenge of indigenous peoples to globalization takes the potentially double-edged form of strategic essentialism, often incorporating concepts of community that imply decision making by democratic consensus, it is particularly important to develop an empirical understanding of the full range of indigenous decision making processes and to understand the multiple meanings that 'consensus' takes in anthropological writing.

Scherberger, Laura H. (University of Cambridge)

"The Janus-Faced Shaman: The Role of Laughter in Sickness and Healing Among the Makushi"

The paper explores the relationship between laughter and bodily pain in everyday life and ritual among the Makushi of Guyana. It focuses on the complementary opposition between two forms of laughter, 'collective' and 'directed'. The former, which is shared in common and this emphasizes principles of equality, plays an instrumental role in the production of moral sociality and the prevention of bodily pain. The latter, which operates on a principle of exclusion by targeting a particular person as its object of humor, signifies amorality, social illness, and the infliction of bodily pain. I argue that this 'two-sidedness' of laughter stems from the inherent ambivalence of shamanism, with the capacity to both heal and injure. The social personhood ascribed to the light and dark shaman, pain, and plant-animal spirits among the Makushi supports other theories on Amerindian relationality, where that which we refer to as 'Nature' participates in the social world.

Shepard, Jr., Glenn (East Anglia)

"Baskets of Plenty: Gender, markets, and the sustainability of Marantaceae fibers in Baniwa agroforestry, upper Rio Negro, Brazil"

Marantaceae (arrow root family) fibers represent a core socio-environmental resource in the cultural ecology of the Baniwa and other Amazonian indigenous groups. *Ischnosiphon arouma* and *I. obliquus*, the main species used by the Baniwa in basket production, are found in disturbed and anthropogenic environments, especially agricultural fallows. Basketry woven from these plants occupies a central place in Baniwa culture and economy. Utilitarian objects such as baskets, sieves, and the tipiti (a woven tube used to squeeze toxic residues from manioc mash) are indispensable in the detoxification of bitter manioc and preparation of food staples including manioc flour (*farinha*), cassava bread, and tapioca. Decorative baskets displaying geometric designs were once an important aspect of ritual, and remain a significant source of cash income. Basket production highlights gender relations in Baniwa society: baskets are woven mostly by men, and used mostly by women in food preparation. Gender complementarity is also reflected in the agroforestry cycle: men are responsible for felling primary or secondary forest to make swidden plots, which are tended by women to produce bitter manioc, which is processed by women for human consumption using Marantaceae baskets, which are woven by men from fibers harvested in swidden fallows, which revert to secondary forests that are in turn felled by men to initiate the gendered agroforestry production cycle yet again. The result is a positive socio-environmental feedback loop that ensures the ongoing availability of both bitter manioc and the basketry fibers necessary to render it edible. As commercial production of basketry has increased in recent years, Baniwa men and women have modified their agroforestry practices in ways that enhance the availability of the plant species involved in basket production. This paper presents results of an interdisciplinary study on the socio-environmental impacts and sustainability of Marantaceae fiber harvest among the Baniwa of the Içana River, Upper Rio Negro, Brazil.

Turner, Terry (Cornell University)

“A forty-year comparative genealogical and household census of two Kayapo communities: Theoretical and political implications”

Successive household and genealogical censuses of two Kayapo communities have been conducted at roughly ten-year intervals beginning in 1963 for one of the villages (Gorotire) and 1965 for the other (Porori, which has since moved and changed its name, first to Kretire and more recently to Mentuktire). The latest censuses were done in summer 2003. The two communities in question represent opposite extremes of interaction with Brazilian regional society, Gorotire being the most engaged with the regional economy and society, and Mentuktire being one of the most insulated from direct regional contacts (although dependent upon the PNx and FUNAI for important services). The census data reveal significant continuities and variations in basic features of Kayapo kinship and domestic group organization, such as matri-uxorilocal post marital residence, household size, the conception of household units, and the relations with men’s house groupings. Theoretical

implications of these findings for the interpretation of Kayapo social structure and political-economic interaction with Brazilian society will be suggested.

Poster Abstracts

Chernela, Janet (University of Maryland)

“Filiation and Affinities in the Anthropology of Lowland South America”

An examination of the history of anthropology in Lowland South America reveals shallow genealogies, solidary age cohort, and a limited number of Pater Familias. In this interactive, collective endeavor, an attempt is made to reconstruct that history and the networks of influence among anthropologists.

Ehrenreich, Jeffrey D. (New Orleans)

“Shamanic Ritual in Everyday Life Among the Awá People of the Ecuadorian Littoral Lowlands- A Photo Essay”

The Awá people live in widely dispersed households and settlements, scattered throughout the isolated foothills and lowlands of the wet littoral region of Ecuador (now in a protected biosphere reserve are in Ecuador and also Colombia). For more than ninety years, they have had intermittent and continuous contacts with outsiders, though their territory remains relatively isolated and remote on the Ecuadorian side of the border. During the year, local shamanic rituals are performed regularly to cure the ailments of body and disease, and to heal the rifts of political and social relations. For the Awá, both bodily and social sickness are tied to beliefs and practices of witchcraft and sorcery. Through photographs (taken in the late 1970s to the early 1990s) the poster explores Awá shamanic practice and social relations.

Hern, Warren M. (University of Colorado at Boulder)

“Yushin Huemena: Visions of the Spirit World, Art, Design, Medicine and Protective Spirits in Shipibo Ritual”

Among the Shipibo of the Peruvian Amazon, the creative spirit is known to the world through highly stylized painting, especially on ceramics, weaving, and designs on fabric. The designs, according to the Shipibo, are inspired by visions that come in the healing ritual “jonibuensuate” and the ingestion of “oni!”, known among outsiders as “aya huasca”, sometimes translated as “dead man’s vine”. The decoction of *Banisteria caapi*, with its active hallucinogenic ingredient, harmine, is widely known and used throughout the Amazon in different forms by many indigenous Amazonian peoples. This monamine oxidase-inhibitor, chemically related to LSD, produces powerful visual, auditory, and somatic hallucinations. “Oni!” is taken by Shipibo shamans during healing sessions (“jonibuensuate”) after many hours of boiling the vine, *Banisteria*

caapi, after which the alkaloid in the decoction becomes increasingly concentrated. The intensely vivid visual hallucinations often include intricate three-dimensional and powerfully colored designs, but also other extremely realistic scenes. The experience is interpreted by the Shipibo as a journey into the underworld and confrontation with the yushin, a spirit that threatens to kill both the sick person and the muraia (“seer”) or shaman, who sings “jonibuensuatehuehua!” (“healing songs”) in order to summon the aniyushin (“large spirit”) who teaches the muraia what songs to sing and what medicines to give to the sick patient. When a novice muraia describes the patterns among other visions, the patterns are described by more experienced Shipibo as “quinquin jaconrau” (“puro medicina”), or “pure medicine”. “This is what we paint on our faces, on our pots, on our weapons, on our houses; this protects us.” It is also clear from narrative and practice that the Shipibo paint their inspired designs on any object that will retain paint or engraving because it’s fun and they like it. Some women who are not shamans ingest “oni!” because it helps inspire their art and craft painting, weaving, and pottery. The designs are often painted on the faces of newborn children to protect them from disease and death. The designs also help make the child beautiful and identify it as a Shipibo child.