



NEAA News

Vol. 33 No. 2
WINTER 2011

The NEAA News is a quarterly publication of the
Northeastern Anthropology Association

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MARCH 25 & 26 2011
NEAA Conference to be held at Franklin Pierce University,
Rindge, New Hampshire

Call for Papers
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Celebrating the Diversity of Anthropological Research in the 21st Century

CALL FOR PAPERS

2011 Annual Meeting of the
NORTHEAST ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

At
Franklin Pierce University
Rindge, New Hampshire

March 25-26, 2011

Individual Papers, Organized Panels, and Posters Welcome.

Cash Bar Reception, Friday Evening, March 25
Banquet, Saturday Evening, March 26

Robert L. Welsch, Program Chair welschr@franklinpierce.edu
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More Information Being Posted at <neaa.org>

2011 NEAA Student Paper Competitions:
M. Estellie Smith Graduate Paper Prize
John Omohundro Undergraduate Paper Prize
NEAA Poster Paper Prize

Each year the NEAA awards prizes of \$200 each to the best graduate and undergraduate papers presented at the annual meeting. Separate awards of \$200 are also given for the best undergraduate and graduate student poster papers. All awards are announced at the conference. Guidelines for submissions are as follows:

1. Separate graduate and undergraduate prizes are awarded for both podium and poster papers. The abstracts are published in the NEAA newsletter and publication of the articles in professional journals may be facilitated.
2. To be eligible, the podium and poster papers must be presented in a conference session by the author at the 2011 NEAA meetings at Franklin Pierce College in New Hampshire. Please make sure to complete registration and abstract forms.
3. The papers may be in any sub-field of anthropology and can be given in French, Spanish or English.
4. For the Smith and Omohundro prizes, only the “conference version” of the paper (i.e. the podium version that is actually read) is eligible; this is a paper of 8-12 pages, double spaced, exclusive of bibliography. The bibliography should be included with the paper.
5. For the NEAA poster paper prizes a 2 page, double-spaced, summary of the poster must be provided to express the entrants interest in having their poster judged at the meetings.
6. Conference version podium papers and poster paper summaries must be received one week before the conference, or by March 17, 2011. Papers can be sent via email or snail-mail to:
Donald Pollock
Department of Anthropology
SUNY at Buffalo
380 MFAC
Buffalo, NY 14261
dpollock@buffalo.edu
7. A cover page must be attached with the author’s name, address, phone number, email address, institution, department and program. Entrants must also specify the competition (graduate or undergraduate, podium or poster) that they are entering.
8. Shared student authorship papers are eligible provided that the category in which they are entered (i.e. undergraduate or graduate) is appropriate for the most senior author. Papers co-authored with professionals are not eligible for the competition.

9. All papers submitted by undergraduates must be accompanied by a note from the student's advisor or a professor from their department, indicating that the work is an original piece and that the professor believes it to be appropriate for presentation at the conference. (Such a note is required for all undergraduate papers at the conference)

10. The submissions will be evaluated by a panel of judges under the direction of the President-Elect of the NEAA. This panel convenes during the annual conference.

Northeastern Anthropological Association Student Travel Fund

Do you want to go to the NEAA conference but don't have the money...Check out the NEAA Student Travel Fund.

This fund will provide up to \$500 for individual students or student groups who demonstrate financial need to offset the cost of attending the 2011 meetings at Franklin Pierce University. These funds can be used toward any conference-related expense (travel, conference registration, rooms, meals, etc.). Recipients of travel funding can be graduate or undergraduate students or groups. Students need not be presenting a paper or poster and they are not required to stay at the conference hotel. Students who receive travel funding will, though, be required to attend the conference banquet. Individuals or groups are asked to submit electronically to Dr. Alan Hersker, NEAA Treasurer, (herskeal@potdam.edu) a letter requesting funds. This letter should include: the applicant's name and school affiliation; the mail and email address where they receive correspondence; how many individuals will be traveling to the conference; the amount of money they are requesting; the costs being reimbursed by the NEAA funding; other sources of funding that they are requesting; an explanation of their financial hardship; how they will be participating in the conference (e.g., attending, delivering a paper, presenting a poster, assisting in conference functions). All applicants must also include a recommendation letter from a sponsor or faculty member that confirms their eligibility. Letters must be received by Dr Hersker by **MARCH 1, 2011**.

Funding decisions will be made by March 15, 2011 by a committee of NEAA Executive Board members. Student Travel Fund recipients must submit original receipts along with a letter explaining each receipt within two weeks of the conclusion of the conference. Funds will be distributed by the NEAA Treasurer by check after the required documentation is received. Recipients will be able to receive their travel funds at the conference itself. These funds are competitive and will be awarded to those who demonstrate the greatest need. If you have any questions on the NEAA Student Travel Fund please contact Dr Alan Hersker (SUNY Potsdam) at 315-267-2720 or herskeal@potdam.edu.

Educating Children in Our Institutionalizing Epoch

This is to provoke anthropologists attending the upcoming 2011 Northeastern Anthropological Association's 51st Annual Meeting at Franklin Pierce University to contribute sessions that critically examine connections between children, institutions and education.

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Educating children in our institutionalizing epoch

We encourage developing scholars to leave little to chance, but chance brought me to Rhode Island in 1978. To be sure the research agenda that prospered around Narragansett Bay is based in the quantitative survey, excavation and analysis protocols that define archaeology. Thus, academic archaeologists intentionally worked to develop a systematic body of data on the indigenous peoples. We consciously applied experimentally based techniques to unearth hunting camps and farmsteads, laboring decade upon decade to record small-group behavior and traditional Narragansett life-ways. Hundreds of studies now fill file drawers at the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission.

And, chance guided me to the State Home and School for Dependent and Neglected Children. This Progressive Era institution housed custodial children removed from their parents between 1885 and 1979. Every state has similar institutions, but in small Rhode Island there was just one. Over 10,000 children passed through the gates, drove up the drive, slept, ate, worked and played in "The Grove." These facilities - gates, drives, buildings and grove -are still with us. Chance brought me to these grounds only to discover that essential techniques for examining this remarkable place were missing from my bag of carefully honed skills.

For example, I have exchanged information for the past year with a former resident of the State Home who is well over ninety years old. He lives in Pennsylvania. I know him only through irregular exchanges. Last year I mailed him a memoir written by Dorothy Hayden, daughter of a State Home superintendent. She lived at the State Home from 1928 to 1932. A few weeks ago he called and we talked. In the early 1930s he lived at the State Home. Then, in 1932 he was deported to England with his parents, who were not American citizens, and eleven siblings. At the start of World War II he enlisted in the American army in England, which brought him back to the United States.

We write and talk on the phone because he still has unanswered questions and conflicted memories. He seeks answers where he can find them, even from an archaeologist. His efforts are not unique; familiar places we exhume are significant for vast numbers of ordinary citizens. Former residents and their extended kin want information about this institution, their home.

The State Home closed in 1979, but the institutional experiences of everyone continues to expand. How could I have missed this? Students in my Food and Culture class talk passionately about memories of sit-

down meals with close loved ones. They are concerned that our day-to-day dietary habits are now honed in the fast food drive thru, not around the kitchen table. Too many eat alone in parked cars while waiting for their next class.

Students in my Introduction to Archaeology class are frustrated by an exercise that asks them to explore social relationships through objects that are exchanged. Ordinary objects of exchange – notes, money, gifts or even food – are less evident in this ecommerce world. Sometimes our most personal confessions are shared with efriends. Sometimes clickers replace voices in eclassrooms. Many of our new institutions are not really places. Electronic bracelets confine pets and felons to areas without walls.

We can quibble about the substance of sociability and whether anything has really changed. However, in this most ceremonial period of the year we are regularly reminded about the importance of exchanging objects. Consider the October 28, 2010 letter from Rhode Island Governor Donald Carcieri now sitting on my desk. He writes:

This difficult economy continues to affect us all but the teens in our care remain hopeful someone will remember them at the holidays.

Here, youth in “our care” means children in state custody and “remember” means a gift that is more substantial than an ecard. Institutions continue to define social relationships and object exchanges. In 1910 children living at the State Home had few personal possessions; shoes, shirts and coats were communal. Every holiday toy car or marble passed through institutional channels, from stranger to child. Objects were impersonal; exchange partners were anonymous.

If this is indeed an era defined by institutions that increasingly connect anonymous people through impersonal exchanges, then what responsibilities do anthropologists face? Many of us remain connected to informal small-groups and families through our daily decisions and actions, as well as our research. Anthropologists do offer views of child treatment, gender roles, labor, civility and human dignity within familial settings that are increasingly challenged in this globalizing world. Even Progressive Era institutions such as the State Home were designed not to replace, but to support families, to be surrogate homes and schools for dependent neglected children.

What is neglect today? Santa Claus and Ronald McDonald are our children’s most recognized and trusted friends. New types of organizations fill voids opened by declining voluntary associations; global enterprises serve clients who once frequented local small businesses.

So, new institutions are created and recreated. I encourage attendees of the upcoming NEAA meetings to explore the new technologies they teach, to exchange information on new research opportunities they notice. Where can we best intentionally apply our skills in this epoch of expanding institutions?

Why Can't We Count Past Two? Comparing the New Animism, Language and Cultural Views of Gender

By Denice Szafran, SUNY Buffalo
dszafran@buffalo.edu

Despite mounting evidence to the contrary, both historically within our own culture and comparatively in cross-cultural examination, Euro-American society acknowledges only two options of gender identification: male and female. This was not the case until 150 to 200 years ago. What made society render invisible the many people who identify as other than male or female? An examination of animistic views of personhood and gender, and a look at linguistic theories, shows a parallel between language and our society's binary thinking.

Animism, Personhood, and Gender

For animists, the answer to the problem of dualities is not the assertion of unity, but the celebration of plurality. While celebrating embodiment, animist persons are not determined by sex or gender (Harvey 2006:203).

Many anthropology textbooks continue to introduce the concept of animism, through the eyes of forebears like Tylor, as a tribal societies' belief in souls and spirits, or the belief in the divinity of non-human living things (Bird-David 1999:s67). New examinations of animism explain it not as those things, but as a belief in a broader relationship between Nature and Culture, a non-dualistic pre-modern knowledge that humans are not the only "persons" to inhabit this planet (Ingold 2000, Harvey 2006, Bird-David 1999, Hornberg 2006). The reasons why, the creation stories of living things, differ from culture to culture, as do the acknowledgments of what is an object and what is a subject. Some indigenous languages express dualism in what is alive and what is not, others have markers for gender or genders. Those discussed in neo-animistic analyses all show lexical existences of pluralities of personhood, something Western Euro-American languages seem to lack.

Cross Cultural Supernumerary Genders

Many animistic societies have common names for intersexed individuals, those people neither male nor female; in Western culture, the term "supernumerary sexes" was first assigned to these extra genders by Martin and Voorhies (1975). The Pokot of Kenya have the term *serrer* to refer to "male and female, yet neither male nor female" (Eskridge and Hunter 1997:5). Navajo peoples have the *nadle*, and they even distinguish between "real" *nadle* and those who pretend they are *nadle*. The *Hijras* of India are a respected separate gender of phenotypic males. There are four genders in tribes such as the Pima (males, females, males who act like females, females who act like males)(Eskridge and Hunter 1997:5). Will Roscoe's extensive studies of third and fourth genders in historical cultures provided evidence ranging from the *Galli*, the ancient Roman priests of the Goddess Artemis, to the *Berdache* genders of a number of Native American tribes. Manly-hearted women and the Zuni man-woman did not behave like men or women but as a gender unto themselves; Roscoe's work defined gender without depending on sex through evidence of consistent labeling by other cultures of a class of individuals separate from both male and female (1995:2).

Historical Euro-American Gender Identification

“The idea that male and female bodies are fundamentally different is relatively new. Historically, women’s sexual organs were believed to be the same as, but less developed, than a man’s” (Bing and Bergvall 1998:4). Based on the writings of Hippocrates and Aristotle, “many early writers accounted for sex differences as a distinction between complexions, or humors: hot, cold, moist, and dry” (Bing and Bergvall 1998:3). In medieval Christian Europe, mystic Hildegard of Bingen expounded on Aristotelian theories delineating four types of humors that constitute humans, and described four different types of males and an equal number of females. From their characteristics she determined whether or not they were suited for mundane life or sacred life (Allen 1989). Then again, one of the most heinous eras of history, the Inquisition, definitely acknowledged gender differences when they specifically arrested and executed individuals of alternative gender behavior. This was a far cry from the earlier and more enlightened mystics of the Church.

As the Christian Church grew less dominant over the lives of Europeans, the single sex ideology became a threat to the social order (Bing and Bergvall 1998:4). It became imperative to define women as inherently different than men in order to maintain the same social hierarchy that the Church ordained previously. Instead of a variety of males, society consisted of only two genders that correspond to phenotypic sex, those of male and female.

Intersexed individuals ceased to be acknowledged and became redefined as a medical problem. With the shift to the two-sex view of the body, differences rather than similarities became emphasized, organs such as the vagina were given names of their own, and hermaphrodites subsequently became pseudo-hermaphrodites whose “true” sex had to be discovered by doctors (Bing and Bergvall 1998:4).

Linguistic and Anthropological Theories

“Theorists borrowed the term gender from linguists to refer to behavior that was socially acquired rather than biologically innate” (Bing and Bervall 1998:1). This borrowing has a definite impact on the way we categorize gender identification in Euro-American societies. A brief summary of linguistic and anthropological theories points out the differences in our view of language and thought, and consequently, gender.

Since each culture and each language differs from others, the mental categories and methods of classifying the universe will differ from society to society. Relativism, advocated by anthropologist Franz Boas, stated that culture produced mental categories, not innate mental structure. The difference in languages, then, is the product not of differences in capabilities, but in differences in the emphasis of those things held important by a society. Edward Sapir, Franz Boas’ student, theorized that classifications are not “labels affixed by individuals to give structure to this pre-given world, but that the world as experienced is culturally and socially mediated unconsciously by the language habits of the group” (Foley 1997:197). Abstract concepts may not occur in certain languages, not because the culture or the language is incapable of speaking them, but because they are not important or prominent in that culture. Therefore their culture, in imposing categories to make sense of the world, does not impose categories for those things that are not vital to their culture. Because grammatical categories vary across cultures, these differing languages must think of these concepts in different ways.

Benjamin Whorf, Sapir’s student, states that we organize concepts the way we do because of a mutual agreement in our culture to do so. The grammars we employ point us towards different types of observations, which in turn point us towards different interpretations of the observable world. The

grammatical differences in the way events are talked about will actually pre-dispose speakers to conceptualize them in different terms (Foley 1997:203).

These organized concepts then provide us with a paradigm, an ordered set of rules about particular classifications that gives us categories. It is a guide to particular cultural categories, a method under which we operate mentally to classify and categorize the world around us. It is the “normal operating procedure” that we learn from our culture, our families, and our environment. How you engage the environment, and others in your environment, to produce meaning in a given situation is the backbone of the phrase “structural coupling.” Structural coupling endows language with meaning based on environmental interactions. It is an activity that is fluid across cultural phenomena, overlapping with all other areas of cultural expression, and in turn deriving influence from them as well. According to Maturana and Varela, structural coupling hinges on the history of interactions between an individual (or an organism, in their description) and its environment that leads to changes in the nervous system of that individual and produces a learned behavior (Foley 1997).

The approaches of the innatist and structuralist schools are quite different. Noam Chomsky views language through innate grammars, a set of rules imposed by pre-existing mental categories universal to humanity (1957). His ultimate goal in the study of language is to develop a theory of linguistic structure that can be presented and studied abstractly. Language, according to Chomsky, is a set of sentences, finite in length, constructed from a finite set of elements. Nothing in this description gives any weight to any other cultural phenomenon in the formulation of language, nor is meaning of the utterances considered either. To Chomsky, language is a mental structure fleshed out by the addition of different words in grammatical strings.

Cognitive anthropology states that culture, too, has a grammar, and can predict how we organize ourselves. Levi-Strauss completely divorced social context from language, stating that meanings are based on opposition, that words make sense only when compared with one another. He claims that the basic structure of languages is the same, and that the differences are merely superficial. If he considered meaning in with language, it would skew his theory that the basic structure of language could be applied to other social phenomenon, such as kinship systems, by imbuing them with layers of material that may defy simple structural analysis (Levi-Strauss 1995).

Jakobson, in the tradition of the Prague School of the 1800s (Foley 1997:95), proposed that all contrasts were binary, that is, that they existed as opposites ends of a continuum. There are no shades of gray in this theory; like a computer, a feature is either “on” or “off”, either is present or not. For example, the difference between the phoneme /p/ and the phoneme /b/ is the presence or absence of voicing. Jakobson also proposed “markedness” in his binary features. We note the phoneme /p/ as –voice, and the phoneme /b/ as +voice, stating that one is more basic than the other and is used to define the feature.

Berlin and Wierzbicka are innatists as well, applying the structural rules of language to taxonomies of folk ethnobiology (1973). These classifications provide clues to the organizing principles of the brain; language gives us a window into the innate structure of the mind. Categories of organization, then, are innate, reflecting a shared understanding of how to classify the world. While Berlin makes the assertion that these taxonomies exist across categories, Wierzbicka limits it to our classification of the natural world; only these items are universal in their categories (1992). There are other types of classification for artifacts and abstracts. These methods of encoding experiences show how we organize the sensory input, but not why; this is something that the enactionists quoted by Foley insist is essential to understanding how and why language works (1997).

Comparing Linguistics and Gender Identification

The words sex and gender have traditionally referred to biological and linguistic classifications, respectively (Bing and Bervall 1998:1). When society borrowed the term gender from linguistics, it came loaded with binary features and dualistic tendencies that accompany structuralist thought. From Christian morality we borrowed dualist characteristics, and from Relativism the notion that language affects thought and culture.

The English language lacks gender markers on verbs or nouns, unlike many languages; remnants of this distinction exists only in personal pronouns. “Because the terms male and female insufficiently categorize our experience, English also includes tomboy, sissy, cross-dresser, transvestite, bisexual, gay, lesbian, hermaphrodite, androgyne, etc.”(Eskridge and Hunter 1997:5). These terms are metaphors, and substitutes for actual names for these states of being. Metaphor is the ability to make comparisons between the known and the unfamiliar, the capability to describe more abstract ideas in terms of shared cultural knowledge. It is more in line with enactionists’ views that we create language through direct experience of the surrounding world; since our culture does not acknowledge alternative gender, no non-metaphoric terms exist.

One may liken the establishment of a gender role through encounters and transactions to the establishment of a native language. “Once imprinted, a person’s native language may fall into disuse and be supplanted by another, but it is never entirely eradicated”(Eskridge and Hunter 1997:5). In some societies, according to both Will Roscoe’s studies and Claude Levi-Strauss’ work, infants “are considered ‘raw’ and ungendered until cultural intervention makes them ‘cooked’, gendered adults” (Roscoe 1995:3). Biological phenotypic sex is irrelevant compared to the ritual and social interactions that transform raw infants into cooked adults. However, in Western society, both sex and gender are important factors in determining an individual’s identity, and this helps to explain why a gender role can vary from a biological sex role. “That is, gender can vary from physical sex – but it shouldn’t and it’s our job as moral citizens to make sure it doesn’t” (Roscoe 1995:4).

Sex and gender categories are not universal. “Languages would develop distinctions and categories that are needed to deal with the reality surrounding the people who speak them” (Duranti 2001:11). As outlined in theories of Linguistic Relativity, these categories are constructed by the culture and language of each separate society, and may or may not have parallels in other languages and other societies. Attempts by innatist and structuralist anthropologists and linguists to show that mental categories are innate and universal, and subsequently to extend, as Levi-Strauss and others did, these categorizations to other social phenomena fail to acknowledge the existence of these multiple genders in some societies, but not others.

So, Why Can't We Count Past Two?

How we get to know things is nested within culture and practice and takes multiple forms (Bird-David 1999:s79).

The new animism, according to Harvey, poses questions not of the “relationship of mind and matter, consciousness and materiality, humanity and others” but “who is personal and how persons might act well towards one another” (2006:205). Persons are not minds living in bodies, “but embodied in diverse and particular ways. This is one meaning of animist discourse about ancestors and of the various roles gender and gendered bodies play in particular cultures” (Harvey 2006:192).

“Different conceptual systems represented in different languages would direct their speakers to pay attention to different aspects of reality, hence, language could condition thinking” (Duranti 2001:11). Our language has conditioned our reality, rendering invisible the individuals whose gender identification is other than with their phenotypic sex. “Language is a self contained creative symbolic organization which not only refers to an experience but actually defines an experience ... because of our unconscious projection of its implicit expectations onto the field of experience” (Duranti 2001:12).

Who you are is a reflection and a reaction to who everyone/everything else is, according to enactionists in the linguistic field. Foley asks “do cross-cultural variations in the pragmatic conventions for speaking languages lead to ... different understandings of personhood being constructed and inculcated linguistically in the habitus?” (Foley 1997:282).

The answer in this case is definitely yes. Because of Eurocentric and Christian dualist morality influences on our society, coupled with the binary categorizations of linguistic theory, our language does not acknowledge more than two sexes/genders. In interactions with our environment/community, then, we linguistically deny the existence of alternative or supernumerary gender identification, in much the same way we have trouble acknowledging the existence of persons who are other than human. Much like societies that consider speaking a deceased person’s name taboo, we hold taboo the naming of other genders. Without a name, they do not exist, and we cannot count past two.

NEAA NEWS VOLUME 33 NUMBER 2

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