

ANTHROPOLOGY *IN PRACTICE*

News from the Society for Applied Anthropology in Manitoba (Inc.) S.A.A.M. INC.

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President's Report

This issue of the SAAM newsletter is dedicated to the memory of our friend and mentor, **John Stephen Matthiasson**. John joined our meeting of January 27, 2001, where we were privileged to witness his fervour for an effective applied anthropology. John's passion on that occasion would not lead us to expect that within a few months he would succumb to the illness he quietly battled. He passed on with dignity, and left us with vision and hope. John would have been pleased to read the other many interesting items included in this newsletter – evidence of a community of commitment to the kinds of issues he saw important for applied anthropology.

The year was a full one for the Society. Three sessions were devoted to discussions on ethics in research and action. These were followed by three presentations based upon first-hand involvement in the field. Helal Mohiuddin reported on his work among garment workers in Bangladesh, and Susan Walsh offered a rich account of her critical assessment of development programs in

highland Bolivia. Each of these presentations contributed to our research ethics focus with critical reflections on limitations of western society constructs and expectations. Dr Bruce Martin brought our season to a close with an illuminating look into health care delivery in the North. Each of these presentations is richly summarized in this issue.

We have been served well by those who have dedicated considerable time and energy to communicate our deliberations to a wider audience, and to assure that each of us has access to an overview of our proceedings. George Fulford spoiled us with his note-taking and journalistic skill. He is responsible for the richness of presentation summaries, setting a fine example for our future reference. George now deserves a break from being taken for granted. Monica Wiest pulled together (sometimes literally "pulling" things out of us) the various strands that go into making a newsletter; this is her last issue as Editor. The unusual delay in release of this issue does not reflect her production schedule, but rather a variety of events

and conditions that subsequently interrupted our intended distribution objective.

I am pleased to acknowledge their tireless contributions, and take this occasion to remind our readers of the ongoing needs of an organization such as SAAM. Your Executive committee has assured appropriate continuity, but is always seeking talented, committed and reliable contributors. Our newsletter is a means of sharing inspirations, insights, interpretations, problems, reviews of published work, and new reading material. This issue is again rich; let us maintain the practice.

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Tribute
to
John S. Matthiasson

December 21, 1936 – June 16, 2001



Dr John Stephen Matthiasson, retired Professor in the Department of Anthropology, University of Manitoba, and founder of the Society for Applied Anthropology in Manitoba (SAAM), died Saturday June 16, 2001 at the Gimli Hospital, after a long illness (mesothelioma).

Those who attended the January 27, 2001 meeting of the SAAM meeting will remember fondly John's presence and active participation in the discussion. His encouragement and support to the Society was unwavering. In his memory, we respectfully devote this space to John Matthiasson.

It is with much sadness that I received news of the death of Dr John Matthiasson. He will be remembered by all of us at the Stefansson Arctic Institute in Iceland as a friend and benefactor. I was hoping that he would be able to honour us with his participation at the opening of The Friendly Arctic: The Vilhjálmur Stefansson Legacy and Vision Exhibit which will be at the New Iceland Heritage Museum in Gimli on July 1st. The Institute's Deputy Director, Dr Jon Haukur Ingimundarson, will be present and will in his talk include a special thank you to Dr Matthiasson.

Niels Einarsson, Director
Stefansson Arctic Institute

cautious of speech
for some too soft
to comprehend
words lingering
until analysis of life
corresponds to life itself

and now
the quiet professor has entered
the final silence

and yet
the things for which he stood
remain so audible
for those who heard
and then perceived
his cause lives on

if greatness extends
beyond the boundaries of death
then vibes of gentle John
will long be felt
even in his absence from our midst
his cause accompanied by care
endures

his quiet credibility
lives on in those once privileged
to move within his sphere

by Menno Wiebe (June 26, 2001)

I was very saddened to hear the news of Dr Matthiasson's passing. I had a lot of respect for Dr Matthiasson as a teacher, an academic, and an individual, and had the true pleasure of taking his class in applied anthropology. As a former student, I would like to express my sincere condolences to his family and friends as they mark his passing.

Trent Grindle

I would like to thank Dr John Matthiasson for introducing me to the idea of Applied Anthropology and the issues and dilemmas surrounding the practice. His quiet, thoughtful, and involved nature as a person and professor fostered a safe yet challenging environment for idea exchanges. Several years later, I remember and value the many discussions in his Applied Anthropology course. I am very thankful for being able to speak with him just prior to his passing. My sincere condolences to his family and friends.

Monica Wiest

John and I both came to Manitoba about the same time in the late 1960s. We had adjacent offices for a number of years and this occasioned many and varied conversations from anthropological issues to modern jazz to the US's bombing of Cambodia. Soft spoken but with an incisive mind, John was dedicated to serving his students and the community. An elegant writer, he constantly championed the relevance and importance of applied anthropology and won the devotion and respect of several generations of students.

We all mourn his untimely death and are saddened by the thought that he still had an immense amount to contribute. Nevertheless, we must all be thankful that we had the privilege of knowing him and be grateful for his many contributions and accomplishments.

Tom Shay (29 June 2001)

John Matthiasson – colleague and friend – leaves an indelible memory. Our association went back many years, to the time of reorganization of the our department and our curriculum in the late 1960s and early 1970s, through personal and academic struggles, and on to the approach of retirement. Differences in areas of specialization and theoretical leanings never interfered in cooperative efforts with students or open and frank discussions.

John's talents and knowledge offered special enrichment to those who knew him personally. There was John the former champion swimmer, John the former jazz trumpet player, John the artist – the painter, and John the jazz enthusiast. To John goes the credit for my appreciation of jazz.

I pay special tribute to John's gentle encouragement of student efforts; his inspiring work with talented students who went on to successful professional careers in applied anthropology; his skill with the written word; and his untiring efforts to *apply* anthropology. He was instrumental in organizing and leading applied anthropology in Canada, and particularly in Manitoba. I will never forget his last written words of encouragement to me as President of SAAM.

Raymond Wiest

S.A.A.M. Presentation Summary

February through April 2001

The Garment Sector in Bangladesh: Reflections on Field Experiences and Ethics in Research

On February 24, **Helal Mohiuddin**, a PhD student in Anthropology at the University of Manitoba, presented the results of the first phase of his research into the impact of globalization on the garment trade in Bangladesh. Mr Mohiuddin heads a team of five female researchers who are conducting field research on the impact of globalization on the garment trade in Dhaka (the capital of Bangladesh and a centre of the garment industry).

With a population of nearly 130 million, Bangladesh is one of the poorest and most densely populated nations in the world. Most Bangladeshis live in rural areas and are employed in agriculture. However, a rapidly increasing population, frequent and disastrous flooding of low-lying agricultural land during the monsoon season, and the rapid recent growth of the industrial sector has resulted in a tremendous migration of people from rural areas to the major cities.¹

Twenty-five years ago the garment trade accounted for an insignificant percentage of exports from Bangladesh. Beginning in the late 1970s investors from other Asian countries began setting up garment factories to take advantage of cheap labour costs in Bangladesh. The majority of garments manufactured in Bangladesh are made from imported cotton and exported to North America. Bangladeshi garment factories are extremely lucrative, with many

investors making back their entire capital investment in two years or less. Thus, according to Mr Mohiuddin, by the mid 1990s the garment trade accounted for approximately 58% of country's exports.

Most of Bangladesh's roughly 6,000 garment factories are located in just three cities: Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna. Mr Mohiuddin noted that about 85% of the workers in these factories are women, most of whom have recently migrated from rural areas. One reason for this is the political and economic oppression faced by Bangladeshi women. Whereas Bangladeshi men will typically only accept jobs with regular hours and a fixed wage, women's expectations are much lower. Thus Bangladeshi women are more inclined than men to accept the low-paying non-unionized jobs in garment factories. Lacking self-esteem and assertiveness, such women can be compelled by their bosses to finish consignments in very short periods of time (often by working overnight and for more than 12 hours per day). They are often laid off with little or no advance notice and are summarily dismissed if they complain or stand up for their rights.

Large Export Processing Zone (EPZ) garment factories in Bangladesh subcontracted by multinational companies have poor working conditions when compared to North American garment factories, even though these factories are subject to international labour codes. Small factories owned by Bangladeshi entrepreneurs are subject to national labour codes, but since Bangladesh does not strictly practice national labour regulations, workers in these small locally-owned factories are often exposed to even more deplorable working conditions than workers in the EPZ factories. Government patronization designed to stimulate international and national investment in the garment trade has enriched factory owners at the expense of addressing the poor working conditions.

¹*The World Factbook 2000*: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/bg.html>

Mr Mohiuddin described the typical Bangladeshi women garment workers as being unmarried, in their early 20s, illiterate and lacking any formal education. Such women typically come from poor rural families. During periods of peak activity in the factory they work 14 hours a day 7 days a week, earning an average of Taka 750 (Cdn \$23) per month.² But the minimum cost of basic necessities in the city is estimated to be about Taka 1,000/month (Cdn\$32). Thus, these women must find secondary sources of income to cover shortfalls between their income and expenditures.

Given the economic hardship faced by most garment workers, why do rural Bangladeshi women continue to flood to the city to work in garment factories? According to Mr Mohiuddin, they do this to supplement household income as well as to escape domestic violence directed against women that is part of the “patriarchal exploitation” found in most rural households. Such exploitation, he says, is rooted in the rural custom of women paying their husbands a dowry, which has recently become transformed into a “marriage business” for men and has led to an increase in the practice of polygyny in the countryside. The prevalence of vicious gossip in rural areas about the chastity and modesty of women garment workers means they cannot return to their rural life-style.

Unlike their rural counterparts, Bangladeshi women living in cities are free to shop and plan their own budgets. But the price of this newfound sense of freedom is economic exploitation. The patriarchy of the rural household is replaced by the patriarchy of the factory floor and that encountered in newly formed conjugal relationships.

² According to Mr Mohiuddin, a typical female garment worker comes from a rural family the head of which earns about Taka 1,000-1,500 (Cdn\$32-48) per month.

Mr Mohiuddin made a number of recommendations about how the plight of Bangladeshi garment workers could be ameliorated. These include provisions for government subsidies for low-cost housing, nighttime transportation, daycare, technical training, and unemployment insurance. In addition, labour legislation is required to establish fixed working hours, fair and uniform pay scales, and the use of binding written contracts between employers and their employees. Legislation is also required to establish a program for employer contributions to employee benefits in areas such as low-cost subsidized housing and medical care.

At the end of his presentation Mr Mohiuddin reflected on some of the difficulties he and his team have encountered in conducting their research. He remarked on how hard it is to build rapport with informants. Reasons for this include the limited amount of time researchers have to interview garment workers as a consequence of the long hours that garment workers work. Indeed, the only time to do interviews is at night, and researchers often feel insecure travelling alone in the slums of Dhaka at this time. In addition, male family members and neighbourhood leaders often invoke *purdah* (the practice of veiling and secluding Muslim women) to obstruct researchers from talking to female garment workers. Female garment workers must frequently change their residence in order to escape from pressures to become prostitutes or to be carriers of illegal drugs. The transient nature of garment workers’ lives thus makes it difficult for researchers to find and maintain long-term contacts with informants.

Mr Mohiuddin noted that many informants experience harassment and intimidation in their home and workplace. As a result, they are generally suspicious of formal questions and tape-recorded interviews. In addition, informants tended to be extremely reluctant to provide signatures (usually a

thumb print) on documents requesting their informed consent to participate in Mr Mohiuddin's research project.

In response to a question about whether there are other areas of the Bangladesh economy that might be developed to provide more humane employment and better export-earning capacity than the garment trade, Mr Mohiuddin replied that one potential sector could be in computer technology and telecommunications. He observed that in India the government has developed policies to facilitate a shift from garment trade to "hi-tech" sectors. "India got rid of their [economic] dependence on the garment sector," he stated, "because of the negative social impact it had in terms of living in and growing up in slums and being faced with illegal activities." Such hidden costs do not make the garment trade cost effective in the long run. However, until the social cost of the garment trade is acknowledged it is likely that in Bangladesh the number of young women toiling in oppressive working conditions will continue to grow.

Impacts of Western Capacity-Building Programs among Andean Potato Farmers

On March 17, 2001, **Susan Walsh**, a doctoral student in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Manitoba, delivered a presentation entitled "Assessing the Impact of Western Capacity-Building Programs among Andean Potato Farmers: Emic, Etic, Ethics, and 'Egad'!" Her presentation focussed on her fieldwork among the Quechua of highland Bolivia and, in particular, the ethical challenges she faced conducting participatory-action research. Offering the audience with a rich pictorial review of her field research experience, Susan underscored the enriching and

yet humbling challenge of her research. In her words, "an ethical, participatory approach to a study of the emic and etic of development institutions and the communities they assist is far easier said than done – an 'egad' experience that can leave one's head spinning!"

Accompanied by her husband Pat Mooney and daughter Kelsey, Susan spent a year in the eastern part of the Bolivian province of Chayanta, where she hoped to explore the impact of literacy training on the success of rural development programs. She began her fieldwork in Sucre, constitutional capital of Bolivia, where she interviewed bureaucrats in the Ministry of Education, members of the Quechua People's Organization and individuals in UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Food Program. During this phase of her research Susan came to realize that literacy programs were only one of many factors that determined the success of development programs. Susan focussed her fieldwork in the vicinity of Ravelo, a small market town about 100 km. or three hours northeast of Sucre. From Ravelo Susan made periodic 1-4 day visits to farming hamlets located at 3,500 meters elevation – Chimpa Rodeo (39 families, about 200 people) and Mojon (62 families, about 300 people). Both communities were accessible by dirt road, but Mojon was inaccessible during rainy season due to flooding.

Susan secured support from the local farmers' union in the communities. She conducted semi-structured interviews with officials and then did participant observation and household surveys in the two local communities. Participant observation included planting and harvesting, the Fiesta de la Virgen de Guadalupe, All Souls and All Saints Day. She lived with the family of the local union head in Chimpa Rodeo and with a teacher in Mojon.

Susan briefly reviewed the backdrop of Spanish colonization of Bolivia and the shameful legacy of exploitation. Llamas were the primary livestock

among indigenous people. The Spaniards introduced sheep and goats – now the primary livestock – that eat the roots of grass for a devastating environmental impact; the region is severely eroded. Erosion and soil depletion is a consequence of high deforestation due to goat and sheep herding, minifundio, lack of terracing, etc. Most families have at least one cow (or share a cow with another family) used to plough fields. On festivals, when animals are sacrificed, the people eat meat. Small greenhouses, built with NGO support, produce some green vegetables. Otherwise the diet is made up mostly of potatoes, supplemented with corn and wheat.

Not only a cash crop, potatoes are a part of the culture and spirituality of these people. Traditional varieties of potatoes were grown separately, but are now grown together. Most families cultivate 3-20 different varieties. They practice crop rotation every three years, with potatoes, wheat and *tarwi* (an indigenous grain) being rotated, followed by a year of fallow. Commercial production increases pressure to reduce the rotational cycle. Local plants are being replaced. With monetization of the potato culture prices reflect needs in the metropolis, not local needs, and potato overproduction has lowered the value of potatoes.

Interested in biodiversity preservation, Susan collected about 65 varieties of indigenous potatoes at an agricultural fair for analysis by an agronomist. Potato variety, potato use, and knowledge of potatoes was at the core of Susan's participatory action research. She presented her project to the community and worked with small groups on the impact of outside interventions that began around 1980. Together, they assessed whether things had improved since these interventions. Consistently, the people felt that their situation had deteriorated. Three factors were highlighted: soil condition, variety of potatoes being produced, and effects of

commercial production. They say, "Our lands are tired and we need better soils". Conscious of deteriorating conditions, the people exhibit a renewed interest in preserving indigenous varieties of potatoes.

Low literacy skills made the use of charts and narrative drawings especially valuable. Narrative drawings were made to depict the history of the potato, using major historical events (Chaco War of 1939, major droughts, etc.); elders also were consulted to talk about these early periods. The drawings corroborated the results of the first exercise. Identifiable icons were used to represent various elements and conditions important to the people; for example, the range of qualitative assessment was represented by 1 to 5 potatoes. The number of potatoes to represent a qualitative assessment was derived through consensus. The use of drawings and charts allowed people to rapidly conceptualize; feedback on the 1-5 potato scale was valuable to assess effectiveness of these protocols. Most participatory methods are descriptive and have little effect on communities. These exercises were appreciated, Susan said, because the people knew they needed to learn about planning so that they could cope more effectively in the world in which they are living. Research reports are generally donor-driven for the sake of funding agencies. Susan's objective was to introduce participatory planning exercises for the municipality. Giving people a choice and involving locals in research are new but rapidly growing concepts.

Susan noted some particular challenges of her research: physical (fleas, pink eye, sunburn); logistical (busy time at planting/harvesting, blockades, storms); institutional/political (gringos, teamwork, political considerations); scientific (timing of potato collecting, dependence on agronomists and botanists); and ethical (contracts with union

leaders, hesitancy to being tape recorded, centrality of building trust). She ended her talk with observations about ethics in research, and how the new Tri-Council ethics guidelines do not fit well outside North America. The idea of a written contract is a western construct; how do we develop a local ethical guideline? She noted that in the rural Bolivian context there was no way to get written permission forms or tape recorded consent to interview without creating serious problems. Suspicion of government means there is a great reticence to sign anything. Consequently, she worked with senior people in the local union movement and built on community consensus decision-making. The emphasis of informed consent was its use for individual and local empowerment through expression of knowledge and reflection upon it.

Reflecting on the importance of participatory action and capacity-building research, Ms Walsh closed with two revealing citations. “True knowledge is full of politics and dreams and actually arises from rebellious struggles to change the world and ourselves. When people are masters of inquiry – the owners of the questions under study – their research becomes a means of taking risks, of expelling visible and invisible oppressors, and of producing actions for transformation” (Paulo Freire in Smith et al (eds), 1997). “Science not only mirrors the society from which it emerges, but recreates these mirrored images in other societies to which it turns its attention” (Collins 1986:654).

In May 2001, Susan returned to Bolivia to show her slides and present results of her research.

NMU is on the Forefront of Promoting Health and Wellness in the North

On 7 April 2001, **Dr Bruce Martin** spoke to members of the Society for Applied Anthropology about the J. H. Hildes Northern Medical Unit. Dr Martin is a medical doctor and Director of the Northern Medical Unit (NMU), which is part of the Department of Community Health Sciences in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Manitoba. Established by the late Jack Hildes in 1970, the NMU serves 15 remote First Nations communities in northern Manitoba, as well as eight Inuit communities in Nunavut. The NMU consists of approximately 20 front line general family practitioners and 60 consulting clinicians, nurses, rehabilitation and occupational therapists, social workers and other health professionals.

Dr Martin noted that First Nations and Inuit communities are demographically distinct from the rest of Canada and that this has important consequences for the provision of health care. Whereas provincial and national population trends are characterized by relatively low birth rates and a large population of aging “baby boomers,” First Nations and Inuit peoples have the highest birth rates in the Canada.

“Many of the clinical and research issues in the North address women’s and children’s health issues,” according to Dr Martin. Infectious diseases are reduced thanks to good immunization program and now chronic illnesses are major issues.

Dr Martin noted that First Nations and Inuit children in the North have a mortality rate which is four times higher than that of children in southern cities. He pointed out that a successful strategy to promote good health in the North must take into account lifestyle factors such as diet and exercise as well as the prevention and treatment of disease. Furthermore, socioeconomic factors such as low

family income, modest levels of formal education, substandard housing, and extremely high rates of unemployment can and do have a profound impact on health and wellness in the North.

Diabetes and diabetes-related health issues such as strokes and amputations are particularly prevalent among elderly First Nations and Inuit people. Health care practitioners require special training to recognize and deal with these needs. Towards this end, Dr Nichole Riese, also from Northern Medical Unit designed a one-day accredited workshop for physicians on management of diabetic foot problems, to help prevent lower limb amputations.

One of Dr Martin's greatest challenges as Director of the NMU is the recruiting and retaining physicians. Since changes to Canadian medical training programs, Canadian graduates often enter specialty training without working up north for a period of time first, as was the practice in the past. Thus the NMU relies heavily on overseas recruiting. Recently, a large number of clinical practitioners working for the NMU have come from South Africa. These young physicians have excellent clinical skills, but Dr Martin worries that they may face difficulties adjusting to life in remote First Nations and Inuit communities. In the near future he hopes to introduce cultural awareness training for new recruits to better prepare them for their new life in the North.

As part of a recruitment program, medical students at the University of Manitoba are provided with many opportunities for northern placements to learn about work and life in the North. Northern Medical Unit also participates in educating medical students at the medical school. Dr Martin notes, "we introduce cultural and spiritual information about First Nations and Inuit peoples at the undergraduate teaching level." For example, every first year medical student at the University of Manitoba has the opportunity to participate in a sweat ceremony

and is exposed to cross cultural awareness training. In addition, medical students explore cross-cultural issues in mandatory small-group problem-solving sessions. The Health Sciences Centre is trying to encourage practicing physicians to attend a two-day workshop on cross-cultural awareness.

In response to a question by Menno Wiebe about how native perceptions of disease aetiology could be reconciled with the Western biomedical model, Dr Martin noted that in the past physicians visiting northern communities were disinclined to accept indigenous theories. However, over the past decade NMU physicians have become less adamant about biomedical theories of disease and more accepting of Indigenous ones. For example, during an outbreak of *Escherichia coli* in Arviat in 1991, health practitioners and local community leaders disagreed on the cause of the disease. This disagreement may have hampered effective treatment of people in the community. However, during a second outbreak of *E. coli* several years later, local physicians tried to accommodate the local understanding of what caused the disease. As a result, more people visited the doctor and received treatment .

Reflecting on the Arviat *E. coli* outbreaks, Dr Martin speculated that individuals' understanding of illness is influenced by their own culturally-mediated belief systems as well as by what physicians might tell them. Denying local belief systems can impede a patient's feeling of well-being, thereby delaying their road to recovery. In addition, misunderstandings and disagreements over the causes of illness can lead to mistrust which may hamper a physician's ability to conduct an effective clinical practice.

Another major challenge faced by the NMU pertains to the matter of governmental jurisdiction over health services in First Nations and Inuit communities. The federal and provincial/territorial

governments have not clearly resolved who is responsible for paying for Inuit and First Nations health services. This issue has been further complicated by the ongoing devolution of health services from the Department of Indian Affairs to local bands and tribal councils. Although the NMU has contracts with the federal and provincial/territorial governments for the provision of health services in northern communities, it is not presently empowered to negotiate with First Nations governments. As a result of this administrative quagmire, patients sometimes fall through the jurisdictional cracks. This is particularly problematic in the area of non-insured health benefits such as wheelchairs.³

Each year NMU places more than 20 medical students in summer placements in northern communities. While the primary job of summer students is to assist local nurses and doctors in their clinical practice, through participation in a variety of local activities they also gain invaluable insights into local cultures. For example, last summer a medical student in Norway House participated in a first aid stand at the “York Boat Days” summer festival. New acquaintances made that day became friends and by the end of the summer the visiting student had various invitations to go on picnics, fishing trips and family meals.

NMU physicians are actively engaged in circumpolar health research. One project being conducted involves a comparative study of the incidence of congenital hip dislocation among Inuit and Cree populations. According to Dr Martin, far

³ Providing wheelchairs with batteries that work in the cold is another challenge faced by the NMU. The fact that most northern communities lack sidewalks and paved roads also presents unique challenges to wheelchair users.

more Crees than Inuit suffer from this disorder and it is likely that differential Cree and Inuit traditional practices in carrying children may have been responsible for this.⁴

Doctors working for the NMU often find themselves at the cutting edge of community based medical research. Twenty years ago NMU doctors in northeastern Manitoba began noticing an abnormally high incidence of rickets among Oji-Cree children. Rickets causes bone deformation in children and is related to a dietary deficiency of vitamin D. Traditionally, Crees obtained vitamin D through the consumption of bone soup, fish guts and fish heads. But beginning in the 1970s these traditional foods were eaten less frequently and the incidence of rickets began to increase. In response, physicians in the Island Lake area of Manitoba began introducing high dose vitamin D capsules to pregnant mothers and newborn babies. The result of this intervention has been dramatic. In 1995, before vitamin D therapy commenced, the doctor in Island Lake reported 35 cases of rickets. Since the commencement of vitamin therapy, only one case of rickets has been reported in the community.⁵

⁴ Whereas Cree mothers traditionally strap their babies into cradle boards, Inuit mothers carry their babies loosely in a large pocket called an *amauti* which is part of the hood of their parkas. The legs of Cree babies in cradle boards are strapped tightly in a straight position, while the legs of Inuit babies in their mother’s *amauti* are loose and in a bent position. Cradle board use, Dr Martin concluded, may exacerbate congenital hip dislocation among Crees.

⁵ In the 1950s rickets was virtually eliminated in southern Canada through addition of vitamin D to milk. But in northern communities where many children are lactose intolerant and thus do not drink milk, this means of controlling the disease has been ineffective.

NMU physicians are also collaborating with a research team studying Glutaric Acidemia Type 1 (GA-1) – an autosomal recessive genetic disorder which influences the metabolism of glutaric acid and can lead to neurological disability. NMU staff in a northern Manitoba community with a particularly high incidence of GA-1 have assisted researchers who have identified the carrier gene for this disease and developed a screening test which successfully identifies those who carry the defective gene. Through screening and early intervention NMU staff are hopeful that they may be able to delay and perhaps even prevent onset of this devastating genetic disease.

As Director of the NMU, Dr Martin spends much of his time as an advocate for improved clinical services in Northern communities. Through public talks he hopes to educate both health practitioners and the public about the special health needs of First Nations and Inuit populations, as well as the distinctive cultures of Canada's Northern peoples.

Contributions

Commentary, Poetry and More

The following contributions are a demonstration of our interest and desire to include many voices in this newsletter. If you wish to put forth a new idea, a response to S.A.A.M.'s activities, or if you have interesting insights or a story to share, contact us!

Poems, like stories, narratives, and other forms of creative writing, are not only creative but serve to communicate thoughts, ideas, circumstances of places in time and space, promoting cross-cultural awareness. This recognition has prompted some social scientists to increasingly incorporate such forms into ethnographic research writing.

Monica Wiest, Editor

S.A.A.M. as Social Monitor?

To initiate a new chapter of S.A.A.M., Ray Wiest, its newly elected president, convened a wide open meeting last September. The leadership transition from Chodkiewicz to Wiest seemed a good time for some assessment, probing and projecting. Duly acknowledged and evaluated were S.A.A.M.'s earlier efforts at addressing issues pertaining to cross-cultural encounters. Among these were sessions on medical practices, northern industrial projects, urban housing projects, especially as these affected other than mainstream societal peoples. The focus had been on the very nature of intersections of cultural bodies.

To monitor the dynamics of mainline–marginal encounters was among the projections of S.A.A.M.'s future agenda. One line of thought went approximately as follows:

Since industrial ventures in northern Canada tend to proceed by converting raw resources into marketable commodities with profit as a bottom line, and since government, even democratic ones, are dependent on majority vote for the continuation, and since much of Canada's resources lie in territories of cultural minority groups, but because of their minority status, are rendered voiceless, they are left virtually without access to significant decision-making, yet are the most seriously affected by adverse environment impositions.

Programs in urban settings, too, arrant assessments regarding the degree and quality of participation by the very peoples for whom programs are designed. It appears that S.A.A.M.'s track record in addressing issues of cross-cultural intersections has demonstrated the need for keen observation, analysis, monitoring and consequently, advocacy.

If both government and industry proceed with interests vested either in profiteering or in sustaining a mainline vote, then S.A.A.M.'s role as monitor without vested interest in either, seems warranted and relevant. If the phenomenon of culturally based communal behaviour is the purview of anthropologists, then theirs is the discipline with which to assess whether programs of any sort foster or undermine community.

Acquaintance with relevant information and competent assessment are preconditions for credible monitoring. Similarly, the development of trust with the people affected is a condition. Once these competencies are attained, S.A.A.M. could well serve a most valuable function in mediating conflicts and recommending culturally viable alternative undertakings.

Menno Wiebe

Alternatives to Mainstream Development

For about a hundred and fifty years, anthropologists have documented the severe deterioration of indigenous political, economic, and spiritual systems, which are effects of Western colonization and imperialism. Many researchers have demonstrated that such domination has resulted in a significant decrease in population, individual independence, community interdependence and the overall health of indigenous societies. The incredibly massive exploitation of human labour, minerals, trees, land, and animals for the purpose of building a Western market economy and materially wealthy state societies has been very successful from the Western point of view but has been extremely devastating from an Indigenous point of view. The Western world view, which sees the

earth and people as merely a resource for economic gain, has directly resulted in wars, pollution, the creation of impoverished communities and the destruction of basic human rights. Put simply, an industrial and imperialistic world view has no respect for life, community, independence or diversity. Moreover, this world view is very limited due to its focus on short-term thinking, compartmentalization of human experience, exclusion of other legitimate world views and its insistence on domination and authority. This view of reality dehumanizes us—you cannot do what we do if you saw the world as a connected interaction of people and ecology. To me, imperialism is against the principles of anthropology, i.e., understanding all cultures within their own context as legitimate survival mechanisms, long-term thinking, and holism. If most of Western civilization is anti-anthropological, it is no wonder that many anthropologists fear stepping outside of academia. There simply is not the support, both moral and financial, to be applied anthropologists. Or at least there hasn't been support for many years. However, there are some windows of opportunity opening up.

This past year I have been very busy. I've been teaching anthropology courses in various Northern communities (Community-based education is very much in demand right now). I have also written various proposals for research and community development efforts and have been working with an aboriginal consultant/educator who has created an alternative socio-economic development program. We are currently in month seven of a two-year community development process. The philosophical basis comes from the belief that a community cannot develop meaningful socio-economic relationships before the root issues of conflict and crisis are recognized and addressed. One of the most prominent effects of the Indian Act and the creation of reserves has been the dissolution of relationships and trust between community members.

Although I have been involved in so much this past year, I feel extremely limited in what I am able to pursue. Part of this is due to the fact that there are so many opportunities for community action. For example, currently there is an increased attention by industries such as mining and paper companies to “develop” the East side of Lake Winnipeg. This will create high-paying professional jobs for many Canadians and many low-paying labour intensive jobs for Natives. It will disrupt migration patterns of large animals such as moose and deer. It will limit trappers economic livelihood and it will drastically affect community-based plans to develop ecological tourism and non-timber forest product industries. There is a need to help facilitate these community initiatives and protect community interests that may run contrary to the interests of more organized industries. Some other areas that have much potential to help facilitate and develop are preventing diabetes (a pandemic disease), providing adequate health care, development of community governance, preventing violence against women, preventing sexual abuse, and land claims. There is an interest in archaeology, history of the area and a reintegration of the language (Ojibway) and traditional values into the culture.

My point is that anthropologists can help facilitate real community action. But we must be careful to avoid being co-opted into just another version of imperial thinking. When applied anthropologists look at social issues as problems in their own right rather than seeing them as expressions of resistance or symptoms of colonization and imperialism, they cannot make meaningful contributions to social justice or even social analysis. It is here that I find Canadian applied anthropology as different than most American applied anthropology. In many American journals, applied anthropology perceives social issues as if they were problems to the successful administration of the Western system. Most of

what I have read fails to include a participatory model or praxis theory. Canada has a different social environment and I have read many articles by Canadian anthropologists who seem to be much more comfortable and fluent in participatory and praxis oriented research and action. I think that this may have something to do with our history and the fact that concepts and issues of nationhood are much more prominent and malleable in the collective consciousness of Canadians than that of Americans.

I sincerely believe that we have great opportunities before us. What I want out of SAAM and from this new generation of applied anthropologists are opportunities to work together. I would like to work with applied anthropologists with entrepreneurial thinking (who recognize a need and initiate action to address that need), with proposal writing skills, with an ability to deal with ambiguous and often frustrating situations (isn't this what fieldwork is?), with basic knowledge of social issues and their roots, and with needs assessment, evaluation, research and writing skills. Most importantly, I need people who have a keen interest and commitment to address social justice issues and who love doing it.

Kevin Spice

prairie elevator

**shrine of the prairie scene
protruding from the long horizon
in angular relief
drawing crops and people to its core
magnet of the neighbourhood
social flow
going with the grain**

**globe's elusive distances draws grain and
peoples' hearts away
eliminating fabric
of communal life
neutralizing magnets
of a peoples' solidarity
the elevator falls**

**with elevated heart
brave dreams arise
that probe new heights
of revised community**

by Menno Wiebe

Book Review

The Animals Came Dancing: Native American Sacred Ecology and Animal Kinship by H. L. Harrod. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000.

In *The Animals Came Dancing*, H. L. Harrod sets himself the worthy task of contributing to "the broader process of reimagining our relationships with the nonhuman world" (xiv), the necessity of which the ecological crisis has made more and more evident in recent years. More specifically, he sets out to examine what can be learned about "our own" relationships with animals from a study of the "sacred ecology" of the Native American groups inhabiting the north-central plains of North America in the late nineteenth century.

The greatest strength of his work is contained in Chapters 2-5, which provide a detailed comparative ethnography of the religion, myths and rituals of northern plains peoples, especially as they

concern human-animal relationships. These chapters compare and contrast the origin myths (often featuring pre-existent animal figures), myths of human-animal marriages and of the offspring produced by such unions, hunting rituals and their resonance with this mythology, and the rituals of world renewal enacted by the various northern plains tribes. Each chapter provides a different and compelling picture of the deep sense of kinship and relatedness which these Native American religions and rituals extended not only towards animals, but towards all of nature.

The first and last chapters, on the other hand, attempt to develop a critique of the dominant utilitarian/capitalist ethos, and to interpret the significance of the foregoing for contemporary relations with the natural world. These discussions would have benefited greatly from some reference to two literatures which are directly related to the central problem with which Harrod began.

The first is the holistic and relational approach suggested by more ecologically oriented anthropological theorists, such as Gregory Bateson (1979). It was he who first proposed that an examination of the epistemologies of non-Western cultures may help us to better understand both the causes of, and the solutions to, our present ecological problems. Such an orientation is also closely connected to critiques of the modern, mechanistic world view provided by ecological philosophy (Berman 1984), and to studies of the traditional ecological knowledge of contemporary Aboriginal peoples (Berkes 1999), both of which would have aided Harrod in developing his critique.

The second school of thought which is relevant is recent and contemporary Native American literature, which is abundant even for the limited ethnographic area upon which Harrod chose to focus (Black Elk 1971, Lame Deer 1972). Reference to this literature would undoubtedly have provided a much deeper sense of the meanings

which Native American myth, ritual and philosophy had, and continue to have, for Native Americans themselves, and would have greatly assisted his interpretive efforts.

This literature could also have demonstrated the continuity and continued importance of "traditional" philosophies among Native peoples, and their connection to the rise of ecological philosophy. Instead, Harrod's account leaves the impression that only those traditions "uncontaminated" by contact with Western culture are relevant to the question at hand, since his account relies almost exclusively upon the earliest non-Native ethnographic sources.

In conclusion, then, is Harrod successful in achieving his goal? The answer is—yes and no. For while his comparative ethnography provides an excellent source for those who would like to pursue the question of "reimagining our relationships with the natural world," they will have to look to someone other than Harrod for realistic ecological inspiration, and for a discussion of the links between Native American philosophy and the development of ecological philosophy over the past century.

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