Anthropology Students’ Association

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We would like to extend a special thanks to the University of Toronto Arts and Science Student Union (ASSU) for aiding in the funding of this journal as well as the University of Toronto St. George Anthropology Department for its overwhelming support of the ASA throughout the years.

Cover photo: Nipissing District. Photo by Anna Salazar

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Acknowledgements

From the 2012 – 2013 Co-Presidents of the Anthropology Students’ Association (ASA),

The planning, assemblage, and execution of an Anthropology Undergraduate Journal (AUJ) has long been a primary goal of the Anthropology Students’ Association. We, as co-presidents of the ASA, are proud to see the endeavour blossom to fruition thanks to the dedicated, hard work of this year’s AUJ editing team and its Editor-In-Chief Nyree Manoukian. We also extend a special thanks to Anna Salazar-Tello, whom is credited with the overall journal design and appearance, and whom also surpassed our initial expectations on multiple levels.

The AUJ, a subsidiary of the ASA, aims to exemplify the exceptional contributions of University of Toronto St. George undergraduate students to the academic discipline of Anthropology. Led and chosen by the Editor-In-Chief – whom is democratically elected annually to the ASA Executive Council – the AUJ Editing Team edits, selects, and assigns recommendations to academic articles voluntarily submitted by University of Toronto St. George undergraduate students in the disciplines of Archaeology, Biological Anthropology, Linguistic-Sociocultural Anthropology, and Interdisciplinary Anthropology. The selected articles, of whom the authors are unknown to the Editing Team throughout the whole of the editing/selection process, are assembled into a journal which is annually published online on the official ASA website and made available to the public free of charge.

The 2012 – 2013 Anthropology Undergraduate Journal displays nothing short of excellence in undergraduate academic research and we, along with the rest of the ASA, are proud of the authors of the articles enclosed here within. It is our hopes that the AUJ will continue to thrive and grow as a peer-reviewed undergraduate academic journal in the coming years, and that this year’s edition stands as inspiration for future University of Toronto St. George undergraduate students of Anthropology.

On our behalf and on the behalf of the ASA as a whole, congratulations to all the successful authors who contributed to this year’s Journal, and a special congratulations to the AUJ Team for putting it all together!

Sincerely,

Branden Rizzuto and Garrett Robson
Acknowledgements

From the Editor-in-Chief,

On behalf of the AUJ Editorial Board and Anthropology Students’ Association, it is our pleasure to present to you the first volume of the Anthropology Undergraduate Journal (AUJ), an undergraduate journal of academic scholarship on the sub-disciplines of archaeology, biological anthropology, sociocultural-linguistic anthropology, and interdisciplinary anthropology, penned by undergraduate students at the University of Toronto St. George. We are very proud of the resulting journal and have published both an online version as well as hard-copies. It is our hope that with the online accessibility of the journal, we can achieve our goal of presenting a multitude of perspectives of anthropology to a wider audience.

We were fortunate to receive submissions on different topics by students in various disciplines, particularly in inter-disciplinary research, such as medical anthropology, socio-linguistics, and urbanism/archaeology. The AUJ Editorial Board reviewed and edited all submissions through an anonymous process and we congratulate all of our contributors for their academic scholarship as demonstrated in their journal entries.

I extend my greatest thanks to our Editorial Board, all of whom are fellow undergraduate students of anthropology: Helina Gebremedhen, Dana Morrad, Kyle Forsythe, and Kate McDonnell. I would like to thank Anna Salazar-Tello wholeheartedly for her dedicative work on the graphics, photography, presentation and publication of the AUJ. Furthermore, I thank the Anthropology Students’ Association for their support in this publication, especially our co-presidents Branden Rizzuto and Garrett Robson. To all readers, I hope that you enjoy reading the articles included here within and also hope to see further submissions in the coming years.

Sincerely,

Nyree Manoukian

AUJ Editor-in-Chief
What’s In A Name?
How Names Affect Gendered Perception

By: Leah Henrickson
Introduction

Names are essential in constructing a reality that is comprehensible and meaningful to us. As Dale Spender states, “in order to live in the world, we must name it” (Spender 1985:163). It is through the act of naming that we become members of our communities, for a name identifies a person in relation to other persons, thus acting as a great force of socialization (Danesi 2008:127; Sapir 1960:15-16). Names are labels that critics argue reinforce one’s gender identity. In this paper, I will argue that one’s name affects perceptions (self-perception as well as the way one is socially perceived), and will examine the ways that names can affect gendered perception in particular. I will first address the historical importance of names, citing a study by Benjamin Whorf and cross-cultural evidence. I will then explain why analysis of names is relevant in regards to gendered perception using academic sources as well as a personal account, and will provide an analysis of popular names in contemporary society. Finally, I will offer a brief summary of the argument, concluding that although the meanings of contemporary male names generally reinforce masculine attributes such as privileged status and strength, the meanings of female names do not always do so: male names maintain characteristics whereas female names are ambiguous to the extent that they disallow strict gender characteristics.

While I believe that my thesis may be applied universally, due to a wide variety of naming practices and cultural differences between geographical regions, the scope of the research conducted for this paper has centred on Canada and the United States, with various cross-cultural references to allude to the universality of the thesis. However, more research must be done on the effects of first names in order to obtain more evidence. There is little research available on the effects of first names on gender identity; focus has primarily been on pronouns and honorifics.

In this paper, when referring to sex and gender, I consent to Suzanne Romaine’s definitions of the terms. She defines sex as “determined at birth by factors beyond our control” (Romaine 1999:1). Contrarily, she defines gender as “more a cultural performance than a natural fact: doing rather than being” (Romaine 1999:8).

Why Names Are Important

Benjamin Whorf hypothesizes that language influences one’s worldview, thus facilitating cognition. This worldview consists of perception – the raw, unorganized sensory stimuli that one is exposed to – and conception – the unconscious culture-specific inferences from sensations. Whorf emphasizes how language shapes conception and how, in turn, conception shapes behaviour. He presents the example of gasoline drums. In the first instance, the drums are labeled only as ‘gasoline drums’. Whorf states that, around these drums, great care will be exercised. In the second instance, in which the drums are labeled ‘empty gasoline drums’, more careless behaviour (which may include smoking around them) is to be anticipated. “Yet the ‘empty’ drums are perhaps the more dangerous, since they contain
explosive vapour. Physically the situation is hazardous, but the linguistic analysis according to regular analogy must employ the word ‘empty,’ which inevitably suggests lack of hazard” (Whorf 1972:135). This example illustrates the power words and their implications may have over determining behaviour in a situation. Whorf suggests that this worldview is not necessarily intuitive, but may be unconsciously socially determined; one thinks according to the language one has learned. A person’s thoughts are controlled by pervasive systemizations of their own language to which they are unconscious, which influence their reasoning and develop their consciousness (Whorf 1972:252). Hence, our linguistically determined thoughts not only correspond with our cultural ideals, but also engage our unconscious personal reactions.

These cultural ideals are reflected in names. There are numerous examples that illustrate the importance of first names throughout history. The ancient Egyptians believed that a name was a living part of an individual, shaping them in both life and the afterlife. Numerology, a practice in the ancient Middle East, was based upon the belief that a person’s name could indicate their character. The Romans believed that ‘nomen est omen’ [a name is an omen] – an indicator of the future (Danesi 2008:131). Thus, names have been recognized as more than just labels; they have been interpreted to embody connotations, attitudes, and symbolic meaning.

Names continue to be important in contemporary society, particularly in the formation of gendered perceptions. Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet assert that we do not know how to interact with, or talk about, another human being unless we are able to attribute a gender to them. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet believe that this is because gender is deeply engrained in our social practices and in our understanding of ourselves and of others. While we may not be consciously aware of it, most of our interactions are influenced by “our performance of our own gender, and by our attribution of gender to others” (Eckert 1975:17). By labelling a child with a name that distinguishes he or she as either male or female, the defining feature of sex is embedded in the child’s public identity, thus shaping their gender identity. Gender identities have become so rigid that certain countries, such as Iceland and Finland, have enacted laws to reinforce them. Iceland’s Personal Names Act states that “a boy shall not be given a girl’s name nor a girl a boy’s name”. This has been interpreted to mean that names must be unambiguous with respect to gender and, if parents would like to give their child a name that is not preapproved, they must submit a petition to a committee on personal names (Willson 2009:9). This illustrates gender as a relational term; being a man means not being a woman and vice-versa (Cameron 1997:34). Furthermore, unambiguous names make the identification of a child’s sex easier. Hence, names may be used as a method of imposing a definitive gender binary.

Names as Words

A name can serve as an identification of gender. For example, Jane is commonly recognized as a girl’s name. Historically, Jane has been a girl’s name. Naming a baby Jane makes it easy for others to identify the baby as female and
encourages, consciously or unconsciously, speakers to maintain the initial ‘girl’ attribution (Eckert 1975:15). Likewise, Adam is commonly recognized as a boy’s name. No further examination must be done in order for someone socialized in North American culture to attribute ‘girl’ and ‘boy’ attributions to children named Jane and Adam, respectively.

Judith Butler’s theory of gender as performative acknowledges that humans are active agents that may use their awareness of gendered meanings to harness the fluidity of gender identity. Butler views gender as something that has constantly to be reaffirmed and publically displayed through repeatedly performing particular acts in accordance with socially and historically constructed cultural norms that define masculinity and femininity. These gender norms, however, can never be fully internalized; they are illusory, impossible to embody (Butler 2004:114-115). Butler views names not as fixed, but as social constructions, and are therefore subject to change.

Few people illustrate the fluidity of gender and the importance of first names in gender identity as clearly as members of the transgendered community. In his personal account, Kenji Tokawa, a transgendered Japanese male living in the United States, describes the racialized gendering of names and how “passing [as a male] becomes more difficult with a name that doesn’t immediately communicate gender to people from English, French, Italian, Spanish, or other backgrounds of colonial power and dominance. At least with a familiar name like Adam, even if they clock you on sight, they have to do a double-take before finalizing how they perceive your gender” (Tokawa 2010:210). This change in behaviour further illustrates Whorf’s hypothesis that how something is labeled affects perception of that thing. Tokawa suggests that, with ‘a familiar name like Adam’, people would perceive of him differently than if he had a name associated with femininity. While Tokawa does not reveal his given name, he mentions that he was raised with ‘a very common, very flowery, feminine Japanese name’ that meant ‘joy and beauty’. He also mentions that his given name ended in ‘ko’, which generally signifies a female name in Japanese (Tokawa 2010:209). “This racialized gendering of names gets in the way for people who need to make their gender obvious in the dominant culture. Like my name before. Ending in ‘o’ made my name seem masculine in this culture, while in Japanese culture the name is very feminine. Ending in ‘i’ makes my new name seem feminine in English” (Tokawa 2010:210). Tokawa felt that he had to modify his gender-typed name to better reflect his chosen gender in a deterministic society. This case illustrates Judith Butler’s theory of performative gender, and further demonstrates how the performative gender work of language constitutes people as gendered subjects.

Therefore, the act of naming a child serves as an initial public display of gender that is thereafter reinforced through repeated acts of cultural norms such as wearing a dress or playing with certain types of toys. Furthermore, the child unintentionally ‘performs’ their gender by simply using their name. In regards to Tokawa’s gender transition, having a name traditionally associated with femininity hindered him in his attempts to appear masculine. Thus, a name has the ability to
publically mark one’s gendered identity, potentially limiting one’s agency by reinforcing the socially constructed and socially policed gender binary. There is a case, however, to be made for people unintentionally overlooking actions that do not align with the gender-distinguishing name. For example, a girl repairing something at home is not viewed as a carpenter but as a woman improving her home. People unintentionally look for the gender-specific actions and, equally, they note the actions that do not align with the gender. Therefore, an initial step in order to fully change one’s gendered identity is to change one’s name so that it corresponds with the desired gender. By changing one’s name, one is able to change how others perceive one’s gender identity.

Meanings of Names and Naming Trends

Names examined along with their meanings, however, are not gendered in the same way as names examined merely as words. Incorporating the meanings of names complicates the analysis as, while names by themselves may be immediately associated with either males or females, meanings do not necessarily reflect socially determined attributes of masculinity and femininity. The most popular names given to babies in British Columbia for 2010 were examined for a correlation between meanings of names and qualities traditionally associated with masculinity and femininity. The five most popular names for boys were Jacob, Liam, Ethan, Lucas, and Benjamin. Most obvious is that four of the five names are biblical, which could be a result of the great historical importance of the Bible. The name Jacob is derived from the Hebrew Yaakob, meaning ‘may God protect’, and the name Lucas has appeared in the Authored Version of the New Testament and other documents as a formal version of Luke. However, further research into the meanings of these names reveals that they are more than just biblical references. Ethan, for example, is derived from the Hebrew Eythan, meaning ‘constant’, ‘firm’, or ‘strong’. Liam, the non-biblical name, is a variant of William, which is derived from the Old German wil (‘will’) and helm (‘helmet’ or ‘protection’); William is typically interpreted as meaning ‘defender’. Finally, Benjamin is derived from a Hebrew name often interpreted as meaning ‘son of the right hand’ or, more explicitly, ‘favourite’. These male names reflect common conceptions of masculinity being associated with attributes such as strength and favouritism. Contrarily, female names do not appear to reinforce cultural conceptions of femininity as strongly. The five most popular names for girls were Olivia, Ella, Emma, Sophia, and Emily. Olivia is derived from the Latin olva, meaning ‘olive tree’; in the Bible, the olive signifies “all that is celestial, and therefore all the good of love and of charity, is the very essence or the very soul of faith” (Swedenborg 1965:422). Ella and Emma are both derived from German, meaning ‘all’ or ‘entire’ and ‘universal’, respectively. Sophia is a Greek name meaning ‘wisdom’. Finally, Emily is derived from Latin, meaning ‘striving’ or ‘eager’. The meanings of these female names are more ambiguous than the previously mentioned male names, gesturing to celestial status beyond gender, abstract concepts that are all-inclusive, or characteristics such as wisdom and eagerness that are traditionally associated with masculinity. Thus, male names reinforce pre-existing gendered representations, while there is a level

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1 Alberta and British Columbia are the only provinces in Canada to formally collect such information. British Columbia was examined because more information was available. Detailed information regarding the origin of all names examined is provided in Appendix A.
of ambiguity in female names that may be associated with cultural shifts in definitions of femininity.

These cultural shifts are also illustrated by the allocation of unisex names, such as Charlie and Leslie (which were initially male names), to females. Robin Lakoff suggests that “this is analogous to the fact that men’s jobs are being sought by women, but few men are rushing to become housewives or secretaries. The language of the favoured group, i.e. the group that holds power, along with its non-linguistic behaviour, is generally adopted by the other group, not vice-versa” (Lakoff 1973:50). This explains why, for example, women have become increasingly more comfortable wearing jeans, which have traditionally been worn by men, but men have generally remained averse to wearing skirts.

Men who do wear skirts are considered social deviants, whereas women who wear skirts are considered feminine. Thus, wearing a skirt defies masculinity and reinforces femininity and, although jeans do not deny femininity, they do not reinforce it as strongly as a skirt would. Likewise, a traditionally male name given to a female does not deny femininity, but does not reinforce it as strongly as a traditionally female name. In the pursuit of social egalitarianism, more parents may allocate names traditionally associated with males to their daughters.

However, despite dynamic social contexts, naming trends tend to remain relatively stable. As illustrated by the data from British Columbia\(^2\), of the five most popular names for boys in 2010, three of the names appear on the list of the twenty most popular names for boys in 1997. For example, Jacob was the most popular name for boys in 2010, and the third most popular name for boys in 1997. Similarly, of the five most popular names for girls in 2010, three of the names appear on the list of the twenty most popular names for girls in 1997. For example, Emma was the third most popular name for girls in 2010, and also the third most popular name for girls in 1997. This stability may be because names link people to culture and tradition (Danesi 2008:132). Alice S. Rossi suggests that naming children after kin demonstrates continuity with and a concern for the past, and creates a sense of “rootedness and belonging by the knowledge that one is a link in a long chain of kin” (Rossi 1965:509). This indicates that name choice may not be influenced so much by intrinsic meanings as it is by the desire to mark lineage.

Furthermore, as a name is a marker of identity, naming a child after someone may be an attempt to embed positive attributes associated with that person in the child. However, while cultural norms evolve or, in some instances, are purposely amended (for example, by naming girls with gender-neutral names or allowing males to participate in traditionally feminine activities), the choices of names may also slowly evolve over time to align with the altered cultural norms. This may account for some of the illustrated name displacements when comparing the most popular names in 1997 to those in 2010.

\(^2\) See Appendix B.
Conclusion

Names are markers of identity and have the ability to affect both self-perception as well as the ways one is socially perceived, thus affecting gendered perception in particular. However, while names by themselves may be associated with males or females, their meanings may contradict these associations. As illustrated, while the meanings of contemporary male names generally reinforce masculine attributes such as privileged status and strength, the meanings of female names gesture more towards celestial status beyond gender, abstract concepts that are all-inclusive, or characteristics such as wisdom and eagerness that are traditionally associated with masculine attributes like the mind and ambition. Therefore, although first names certainly reinforce gender stereotypes as words signifying socially determined male or female attributes, the meanings of these names do not always do so: male names maintain gendered characteristics whereas female names are ambiguous to the extent that they disallow strict gender characteristics. Thus, while names by themselves may limit a person by having them perceived as masculine or feminine, the meanings of names can potentially be empowering. In the pursuit of social egalitarianism, more parents may choose to allocate a name to their child that is traditionally associated with the opposite sex. Language is not unyielding; it is a human product that can be modified to reflect changing social and cultural attitudes. In naming a child this way, parents may be affecting how the child is socially perceived in regards to gender, illustrating the power of names in reinforcing one’s gender identity.
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APPENDIX A: Full Definitions of Names Mentioned

All information below has been obtained from The Penguin Dictionary of First Names; the text has not been modified from its original form. A citation may be found in the References Cited. Names are listed in order of popularity, with the male names first and the female names second.

**Jacob:** Biblical name derived via the Latin Jacobus from the Hebrew Yaakob or Yakubel, meaning ‘May God protect’. It is often popularly supposed that it is descended from the Hebrew aqeb (‘heel’) or aqab (‘to usurp’) and thus interpreted to mean ‘supplanter’ – evoking the idea of a person who dogs another’s footsteps in order to usurp him. This notion reflect the context in which it appears in the Bible, as the name of one of the twin sons of Isaac and Rebecca who with God’s approval tricks his less worthy elder brother Esau out of his inheritance and becomes the father of twelve sons (destined to be identified as the founders of the twelve tribes of Israel). It was in occasional use as a clerical name among English speakers before the Norman Conquest, but was relatively rare during medieval times except among Jews, with whom it has always been popular. The name was taken up with new enthusiasm by the Puritans in the 17th century, perhaps because it accorded with their own ideas about usurping others less worthy than themselves, but became much less frequent during the course of the 20th century before enjoying something of a revival in the 1990s (Pickering 2004:176).

**Liam:** Irish variant of William, via the Gaelic Uilliam. Long popular among the Irish, it has appeared with increasing frequency elsewhere in the English-speaking world since the 1930s. PDFN 216 (William: ‘English first name derived from the Old German wil (‘will) and helm (‘helmet’ or ‘protection’) that is usually interpreted as meaning ‘defender’ (Pickering 2004:364).

**Ethan:** Biblical name derived from the Hebrew Eythan, meaning ‘constant’, ‘firm’, ‘strong’, or alternatively ‘long-lived’. It appears in the Bible as the name of four minor characters, the most significant being the wise man Ethan the Ezrahite, whose wisdom is surpassed only by Solomon. It was taken up on a fairly restricted basis by Puritans on both sides of the Atlantic from the 17th century and increased a little in frequency during the 19th century, proving the most popular in the USA (Pickering 2004:110).

**Lucas:** English first name derived either from the surname or else from the Roman Lucas, also the source of Luke. During the medieval period it appeared in the Authored Version of the New Testament and other documents as a formal version of Luke. It came into vogue among English speakers briefly in the 1930s but has otherwise remained relatively rare (Pickering 2004:224).

**Benjamin:** English, French and German name derived from a Hebrew name variously interpreted as meaning ‘son of the right hand’, ‘son of the south’ or ‘son of my old age’, but often interpreted as meaning ‘favourite’. It appears in the Bible as the name of the youngest of the sons of Jacob and Rachel, who became the founder of one of
the twelve tribes of Israel. It made occasional appearances among English speakers in medieval times, often being reserved for children whose mothers had died in childbirth (as the biblical Benjamin’s mother Rachel did). It was taken up with renewed enthusiasm by Puritans in the 17th century and has remained in fairly regular use ever since, having long since shed its rather gloomy medieval implications. It is also a well-established Jewish name (Pickering 2004:33).

**Olivia:** English and Italian first name derived ultimately from the Latin *oliva* (‘olive tree’). It appeared in medieval times in the variant form Oliva – as borne by St Oliva, the patron saint of olive groves – and was promoted in the English-speaking world through William Shakespeare’s character in *Twelfth Night* (1601) and subsequently by Oliver Goldsmith’s Olivia in *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766). The name was, however, in relatively modest use in the English-speaking world until the 1970s, since when it has enjoyed a strong resurgence in popularity (Pickering 2004:271).

**Ella:** English first name derived via French from the Old German Alia, itself from the German *al* (‘all’). It is often considered to be a diminutive form of such names as Eleanor and Ellen. It came to English with the Normans in the 11th century but it was not until the 19th century that it began to appear with significant regularity on both sides of the Atlantic. It has suffered a marked decline since the early years of the 20th century (Pickering 2004:101).

**Emma:** English first name derived from the Old German *ermen* (‘entire’ or ‘universal’). It was in use among English speakers during medieval times and was at its most frequent in the 19th century. It has remained in regular use ever since, with a recent peak in popularity in the 1980s (Pickering 2004:105).

**Sophia:** Greek first name meaning ‘wisdom’ now common to numerous cultural traditions. St Sophia is a saint in the Eastern Orthodox Church – she was probably not a real person but came about rather as a result of a misinterpretation of the phrase *Hagia Sophia* (‘holy wisdom’). The name spread from Greece through Hungary to Germany and was taken up by English speakers in the 17th century, promoted by James I’s granddaughter Sophia, Electress of Hanover (1630-1714), who gave birth to George I. It reached a peak in popularity in the 18th century but suffered a decline from the late 19th century (Pickering 2004:331).

**Emily:** English first name derived from the Roman Aemilia, itself from the Latin for ‘striving’ or ‘eager’. It was adopted by English speakers in the 18th century and enjoyed a peak in popularity during the 19th century, but suffered a lapse in frequency in the 20th century. It has enjoyed a marked revival since the 1970s (Pickering 2004:105).
APPENDIX B: Charts Illustrating Name Popularity in British Columbia

The information below has been obtained from the Vital Statistics Agency of British Columbia. A citation may be found in the References Cited.

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**Baby’s Most Chosen Names in British Columbia, 1997**

20 most popular names in order of frequency

**Baby’s Most Chosen Names in British Columbia, 2010**

20 most popular names in order of frequency
The Coca Leaf is Green:
International Perceptions and Policies surrounding Coca and Andean Well-Being

By: Felicia Perricelli
Introduction

Coca is a plant endemic to the Andes, which optimally grows in the low-altitude, tropical foothills. Beyond generic, botanical or ecological definitions, common perceptions of what coca is, are as varied as the people who hold them, and it is in the intersection of perceptions that coca is surrounded with conflict and confusion. As a wild plant, coca has existed further into the deep past than humans can account for. The archaeological record presents coca in ritual context of pre-Colombian peoples and is interpreted as “one of the sacred plants of the gods” (Ratsch 1992:67). Coca was once a symbol of Incan royalty, its consumption reserved only for the elite. Under Spanish rule, it served purpose in the enslavement of locals as laborers in agriculture and mines. The Spanish increased coca production enormously, by 450% (Allen 2008:267), and distributed it to locals as their life-sustaining “currency” and nutrition. As colonizers reaped the economic benefits of coca, missionaries recognized coca as an intrinsic part of Andean religion and considered its eradication. After liberation, coca became a symbol of a new, indigenous identity that emerged from the tragic encounter of the Incas and Spanish. Complexity and pluralism surrounding coca continues today, as international perceptions and policies of coca center around narcotics trafficking and disregard the identity and health of Andean communities.

I will demonstrate that there is an ignorance of the integral role of coca in the health and harmony of Andean communities, exhibited in the international community’s self-important and ethnocentric perceptions and policies surrounding coca. In order to understand the impacts of international perceptions on coca and Andean well-being, an understanding of traditional Andean practices is necessary, which I will discuss in conjunction with the Andean relationship to coca. I will discuss contemporary international policies and perceptions of the coca plant, and connect their effects on Andean communities. Finally, I will discuss a resistance movement that has emerged, challenging the dominant, international discourse surrounding coca by examining an image from popular culture.

The Andean Relationship to Coca

*Runakuna* is the self-given name of Quechua-speaking communities living in the Andes mountain range. In such communities, to be a *runa*, a ‘real person’, is to do *hallpay* (chewing coca leaves), in accordance with traditional ceremonial practices. *Runakuna* is simply the plural of *runa* (Allen 2008:20). The *runakuna* inhabit a vast geographic area from Colombia to Argentina and community distinction does exist, exhibited in subtly varying expressions of the Andean collective identity. The “unity of Andean diversity” (Salman & Zoomers 2003:xiv) formed within the collective historical experience of the monarchical Incan empire of the 1400’s and was further solidified through the Spanish conquest of the Incas (Allen 2008:266). Today, coca, alongside the Quechua language and traditional dress, is identified as one of 3 distinguishing symbols of the Andean collectivity (Allen 2008:266). For the purposes of this paper, I use the word “Andeans” to refer to all of the indigenous communities in the Andes.
In the same manner that coca-chewing acts to define Andean identity, its importance in Andean well-being cannot be overstated. Coca plays a central role in Andean nutrition, medicine, social relationships and cosmology, and it is through the integration of these parts that Andeans create wellness and harmony. This can be observed through the framework of the social body concept, applied to Andean existential understanding of the universe via the microcosm of the body (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1986:15-16; Bastien 1987). The social body concept acts as the underlying web from which individual health topics relevant to the holistic Andean approach to health can be examined. In presenting the holistic nature of Andean well-being, I aim to illustrate the depth and interconnectedness of the impacts that coca deprivation has to Andean communities. A very brief overview of the Andean wellness practices surrounding coca follows.

**Coca and Nutrition:**

Coca chewing is the main form of coca consumption in Andean communities. Adults in rural communities are seen to chew coca after “their three daily meals and in addition pause in mid-morning and mid-afternoon for a coca break” (Pacini et al. 1986:36). To a lesser extent coca is consumed as a tea and more recently ground coca leaf is being used as an ingredient in cookies, chocolates, breads and other prepared foods (Otis 2011). Andeans have taken advantage of the nutritional benefits of coca for millennium and coca is acknowledged in nutritional studies as a rich source of vitamins and minerals, specifically vitamins A and B1, calcium, iron, phosphorous and vitamin C (Allen 2008:269). Andeans rely on such nutrients to complete their carbohydrate-heavy diet. Andeans also benefit from the boost of energy coca provides, which is often likened to the effects of a cup of coffee (Allen 2008:270). Nutrition and energy are important to Andean well-being, as work in rural Andes is laborious and they do not typically have the financial or geographic access to other dietary supplements. Removal of the coca plant from Andean communities results in a lack/decline of complete nutrition, whose impacts are innumerable.

**Coca as Medicine:**

Coca is identified as having a long, central and widespread use in Andean medicinal practices (Bastien 1987:51). It is most commonly used to treat stomach illnesses, sicknesses arising from exposure to cold, swelling, and pain. Although some treatments are employed by recognized healers, it is also observed that “every Andean household has coca and uses it for common maladies without consulting herbalists” (Bastien 1987:58). Coca plays a central role in popular and folk health sectors. Coca deprivation therefore also inhibits Andeans from treating their illnesses in traditional ways.

**Social Harmony and the Rituals of Respect:**

Aside from coca’s physical benefits, the social ritual involving coca illustrates the “moral foundation of Andean culture” (Pacini, et al. 1986:44), in that the exchange or offering of coca leaves indicates qualities/values like good intentions,
loyalty, well-wishing and commitment to the community. This is an especially sym-
bolic symbol in communities that practice reciprocal labour. *K’intus*, leaves pre-
presented in 3, are exchanged between community members at festivals, community
meetings, visits to healers, before agricultural tasks and at weddings (Bolin 1998;
Allen 2008; Bastien 1987). Andeans say “*hallpaykusunchis*” (English: let us chew;
Bolin 1998:182), before they share the coca chewing experience, all of which “car-
rries a heavy load of meaning” (Pacini, et al. 1986:44). Coca, for the Andeans, rep-
resents a social unity and harmony and as such, for individuals “to be without coca
is literally a kind of excommunication” (Pacini, et al. 1986:44).

**Feeding the Cosmos:**

Andeans view themselves as children of the *Pacha Mama* (mother earth),
and their bodies as an extension of the land and the cosmos (Bastien 1987). The
Andeans appease the voracious appetite of the Earth and numerous other deities
with continuous offerings of food, liquor, hand-made objects, animal parts and
coca. They usually give offerings in conjunction with their own acts of nourish-
ment, meals and coca chewing, which expresses the inseparability of body and
cosmos in Andean belief (Allen 2008:184-187). It is through ritual and offering, in
which coca is a primary ingredient, that Andeans ensure the well-being of the rela-
tionship between the land, the cosmos and their own bodies.

Coca provides essential physical and symbolic well-being to the Andean’s
holistic health approach. Through an understanding of coca’s varied roles, one can
see that inaccessibility, removal or criminalization of coca targets numerous health
issues simultaneously, disintegrating the Andean web of well-being.

**Structural violence and self-serving policies**

The subjugation of Andean peoples well-being lies in international, main-
stream perceptions of coca that have been forged via dominant political organi-
zations, that lump the coca plant and its indigenous use into a broad category of
narcotics. Their dialogue and “supporting investigations” are made public through
various forms of media (television, newspapers, websites), which dominate the
construction of “educated” and “informed” perceptions of the international masses.
The eradication, prohibition and criminalization policies that such organizations
create physically inhibit cultivation and circulation of coca, legitimize their narcotic
claim perspective, and create social stigmas that are manifested in discrimination
and racism. Governing organizations make use of the power constructs of wealth,
authority, legal action and access to media to legitimize claims that are not sup-
ported by consideration of affected parties, namely the Andeans, or evidence of
any kind (Farmer 2004; Otis 2011).

The damage that results to the Andean people can be seen through Farm-
er’s concept of “structural violence”, a violence that is “exerted systematically”
(2004:307) and “is the natural expression of political and economic order that
seems as old as slavery” (2004:317). The neglectful and oppressive approach,
taken up by the UN and other governments, is rooted in efforts to deal with a
dramatic conflict in their own society, namely cocaine trafficking, cocaine addiction and associated criminal activity. It is the modality in which the narcotics problem is addressed that fails to consider the Andean peoples’ lifestyle and health maintenance, deeming it unimportant and less worthy of attention than the cocaine conflict. However, I do not wish to undermine the seriousness of widespread cocaine addiction. By 1900, cocaine was widely abused in European, North American, South American, Asian and Oceanic cities, largely stemming from medical overprescription (Pacini, et al. 1986:66). Purposeful action by governing bodies to control toxic substances was and is within the constructs of a responsible government, but, decisions must be based on substantial research and ethical consideration of all affected parties. The code of responsible policy making was not and is not upheld for the Andean people.

Arguably, the most important example of the structural violence surrounding coca occurred in 1961, when the UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs identified coca on their list of dangerous narcotics. The UN established that, “The Parties shall so far as possible enforce the uprooting of all coca bushes which grow wild. They shall destroy the coca bushes if illegally cultivated,” and, that, “Coca leaf chewing must be abolished within twenty-five years from the coming into force of this Convention” (HCLU 2008). At the same time UN official, Howard Fonda, publicly claimed that coca chewing is “thoroughly noxious” is the “cause of racial degeneration … and of the decadence that visibly shows in numerous Indians” (Otis 2011) International law (based on a “much criticized study” from 1950 (Otis 2011)) and racist, authoritarian opinion were used to carve a dominant perspective on coca and acted to legitimize all further actions taken up by governments, social organizations and individuals while fighting a “war on drugs”. Explicit racism and disregard for the Andean lifestyle, seen in UN policy and commentary, marked the beginning of uninformed and ethnocentric, public opinion regarding Andeans and their coca practices, while politically governing bodies pursued self-serving agendas.

Over time, the word “coca” came to mean, in international mainstream dialogue, the illicit drug compound, cocaine (the cocaine process, invented in Germany, extrapolates and refines 1 of coca’s 14 alkaloids, requiring 300 units of coca leaf to produce 1 unit of cocaine (Allen 2008:270). Efforts to control the “war on drugs” mainly surround USA negotiations with Andean countries to enact strict coca-eradication plans using military force. The USA uses its financial power and political position to encourage the less stable Andean nations (Pacini, et al. 1986:72) to cooperate in the “war on drugs” and effectively become accomplices in structural violence against their own people.

Thirty-four years after the UN blacklisting of coca, a case study carried out by the World Health Organization (WHO) regarding cocaine abuse found that, “the traditional use of coca appears to have no negative health effects, and that it serves positive therapeutic, sacred and social functions among indigenous peoples in the Andean region” (HCLU 2008). Findings were presented to the World Health
Assembly, but were never published, as the US representative threatened suspending financial support to the WHO (HCLU 2008). The financially empowered US uses their dominant position to keep global coca perceptions tainted, disempower Andean communities, and further the US’s self-important agenda.

More than 50 years of systematic deception and structural violence surrounding the coca plant has amounted to dozens of killings, hundreds wounded and imprisoned (HCLU 2008), the masking of truth about coca’s positive nutritional and medicinal potentials and the degradation of Andean well-being (Pacini, et al. 2008:44-45). Over time, coca in the Andes has become scarce due to taxation, transportation restrictions and eradication enforcement by local officials. Coca deprivation has created internal conflict in Andean communities and individuals, where people are left with a difficult choice: to illegally obtain coca to practice their way of life, or stay on the side of the law and leave their culture and health behind (Allen 2008:274). Some Andean individuals following the politic understand the international agendas, and have been left angry and disheartened. They question why problems regarding cocaine trafficking and addiction habits of foreign societies should deprive Andeans of coca and consequently, their ability to practice their culture (Allen 2008:273).

In similar instances where coca deprivation has persisted, Andean peoples have “tried to compensate with alcohol, cigarettes, and with the ubiquitous phrases of affection and trust that are said to indicate harmony in social relationships. But, they have lost their cultural balance and the marked ritual that gave coherence and meaning to their lives” (Allen 2008:274). As earlier noted, it is within the Andean balance of body, social relationships and connection to the cosmos that well-being exists. Andean well-being has been sacrificed by governing bodies whose self-righteous, ethnocentric perceptions and actions perpetuate negativity surrounding coca.

Realigning Perceptions through Resistance Imagery

Structural violence, targeting Andeans and their “prodigious” coca plant, does not go unnoticed (HCLU 2008). As a people whose identity was founded in collective oppression and whose daily survival relies on a delicate balance of harmony and reciprocity with their ecologically particular lands, Andean resiliency is unquestionable. Their spirited pride inspires a “resistance to the dominant social order” (Farmer 2004:307), which appears in mediums ranging from protests, NGO initiatives, blogs, poetry, music, artwork, presence in international spiritual collectives and ceremonies, and acts of political resistance from Bolivian coca-farmer/president Evo Morales (Otis 2011). The resistance is, undoubtedly, accelerated and strengthened through globalization, technology and cultural-tourism.
Iconic phrases and imagery play a role in the resistance. The most classic example is the slogan, “Coca Leaf is not a drug.” The slogan’s prevalence in the Andes can be likened to the image of Che Guevara in Argentina or Bob Marley in North America. The slogan, printed on merchandise, allows locals and foreigners to publicly express their stance on coca and allows retailers to capitalize on the movement.

Another example of popular culture confronting mainstream and international perceptions of coca tells the viewer to reconsider their stance. The image I wish to address, “The Coca Leaf is Green”, can be viewed on ENCOD’s webpage (Caceres Santa Maria 2003), however, it is important to note that the image’s original source cannot be located. Rather, this image circulates on blogs, posters and social media as a piece of iconic imagery belonging to the coca resistance.

The image uses short phrases and a bold, simplistic graphic quality, much like an advertisement, which allows the image to be interpreted easily and quickly. It reads, “Coca is not white. Coca is not black. Coca is green. Consume coca leaf: nourishment and medicine.” The image identifies 2 popular misconceptions about the coca plant, often held as a dominant perception by those with little awareness of coca’s traditional uses; the image assertively and unambiguously states that coca is not cocaine and coca is not the popular soda beverage, Coca-Cola. In the image, both of the commonly held coca associations respond to the US - the white powder alluding to the “war on drugs” and the Coca-Cola drink representing a recognizable American brand.

Thirdly, the image validates coca as a green leaf. The validation of the coca leaf asks the viewer to only consider coca when it appears in its most natural form - the form associated with Andean tradition. The image challenges viewers to question common associations and dominant dialogue surrounding coca and in this way, the image is a reassertion of the Andean claim to the coca leaf. The last portion of the image, simply tells viewers to consume coca leaf for nourishment and medicine, but it does not expand on any further details.

The image’s use of visual organization, adoption of the “power of 3” in repetition of phrase and clear pictorials create a simple and powerful impact. It allows for the target audience, presumably the Spanish-speaking masses, to quickly understand the message. The image does not use complex symbols or extensive text, and as such, speaks to no one particular socio-economic group, but rather a broad audience. Even within the linguistic limitation (ie. Spanish), the image is so “user-friendly” that people of many languages could begin to understand the message via the visual cues.

Where simplicity works for the speed and clarity of the message, it fails to thoroughly educate or present multiple viewpoints. The image does not address Andean tradition or international politics, but merely alludes to them, hoping that the viewer will be inspired to fill in informational gaps. The image may work well as a simple acknowledgment of a particular viewpoint, but does not serve to
discuss coca’s complexity and therefore is not a, sufficient base for the viewer to develop a stance on.

The image’s superficiality and widespread availability combine to present a problem. Open access allows for masses to use the image in any context and “take up the cause,” potentially promoting a stance that may not be reflective of a depth of knowledge or genuine concern. In this context, romanticism of a revolutionary nature can cloud the realities and discredit the seriousness of health issues and pragmatic acknowledgment of injustices surrounding coca. The image will therefore be most useful in a context of deeper understanding of coca conflicts or presented alongside more information.

Ethics and Non-Violence

The dominant dialogue surrounding coca in the international and mainstream spheres has shaped policies and perceptions of coca’s nature and its uses in the traditions of Andean peoples. To fully understand the scope of negative consequences for Andean well-being, a well-rounded understanding of the interconnected health elements, where coca plays a central role, is needed. It is from this place of consideration and understanding that perceptions and policies should be based, if the international community wishes to create non-violent systems and extend ethics to Andean people. As history shows, anything less will directly disintegrate Andean harmony and reflect poorly on governing bodies.
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Monumental Architecture in Early State Formation:
A Comparison Between Mature Indus Valley Civilization and Bronze Age China

By: Michal Laszczuk
Introduction: Programming Social Order into Monumental Facets of Urbanism in Early State Formation

In urban societies, monumentality in architecture, urban planning and craft specialization are pinnacles of all ancient social systems that ultimately require a cohesive demarcation of power in order to be sustainable. There is no one standardized way or singular developmental trajectory according to which ancient states were socially organized/followed. Thus, different states arranged their urban systems in varying ways and the archaeological record serves as the most effective indicator of differences between various cases of primary state development. To demonstrate how processes of social organization utilize monumentality in urbanism in different ways, an examination of the Mature Indus Valley Civilization (2600–1900 BCE) and China in the Bronze Age (1600 BC–1046 BCE) provides effective comparisons. Through varying mechanisms of social development in urban contexts, these two state organizations ultimately worked towards establishing a predesigned social order. Monumentality in urban environments transformed social organization in distinct ways when comparing the South Asian and Chinese archaeological contexts. In the Harappan case, this transformation into an urban state environment was manifested in fostering a communal organization working as an integrated system. In China, the transformation of social relationships into a state organization was rather engineered by hegemonic control imposed by an elite class that was specifically removed from the populace. These two differing trajectories in the transformation of social relations in the urban landscape both ultimately formulated a cohesive social organization that provided the foundation for early state formation.

Demarcation of Important Sectors in the Urban System.

First, an archaeological investigation of the demarcation of important sectors in the urban structure of Harappan cities and ritual centres of China in the Bronze Age serves to highlight the different means in which social relationships were transformed with the rise of state formation.

The Indus Valley Civilization was formed around principal urban centres, which functioned as integrating mechanisms enacting social order onto the people. Rather than being a restricted domain for the elite, the citadel sector in Harappan cities was utilized as an integrated complex, which supported ritual ceremonies (McIntosh 2008:225). In the citadel sector of Mohenjo-Daro in Sindh, the Great Bath presents one of the best cases of a ritual structure in any Harappan archaeological context. Instead of focusing on the actual bath structure itself, which was executed in such finely sealed brickwork indicative of craft specialists, assessing entry points into the bath precinct better indicates how the structure was designed for ritual ceremonies (Agrawal and Kharakwal 2003:34-35). Jansen (1989:185) notes how three concentric walkways encircled the entire complex and provided a setting for participants to circumambulate the sector in a likely ritualized fashion (Figure 1).
Entrances to the citadel complex itself were designed to delegate visitors towards specified buildings in the site including the Pillared Hall and the Great Bath (McIntosh 2008:226). A gateway in the southern sector of the citadel purposefully led people to the Pillared Hall while a western gateway delegated people to the Great Bath and the other structures in the northern part of the citadel (McIntosh 2008:226). Thus, instead of restricting who entered the complex, these gates rather designated how people would get to specific ritual buildings in the citadel that were most likely used for a religious function. The citadel sector in Mohenjo-Daro was not built as a domain for the elite, since the residential structures in the precinct follow the same architectural typologies witnessed in the lower town to the east hence indicating no radical disparity in class structure (McIntosh 2008:225). Instead, a ritual precinct was integrated into the residential fabric of the citadel district at Mohenjo-Daro.

An examination of another citadel district in Kalibangan (KLB-2), Rajasthan, serves to demonstrate how schemes of urban integration in Harappan cities were standardized on a regional scale, transcending the sole major urban centres. The site of Kalibangan follows the same standard urban layout, consisting of a western citadel and eastern lower town, which is also found in Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa (Tharpar 1973:92). Kalibangan presents one of the best instances of a city with a specialized ritual precinct among the Harappan urban centres that was actually integrated within the rest of the urban system even though it was physically separated from other parts of the citadel and the lower town.

The ritual precinct comprises five to six monumental mud brick platforms in varying sizes (one measuring 50 by 20 metres), that contained wells and charred pits interpreted by Tharpar (1973:94) as fire altars. The ritual precinct was utilized for some form of sacrificial ritual as indicated by a deposit of bovid bones with antlers in one of the “fire altars”, which was likely used to burn animal remains (Figure 2) (Ratnagar 2006:98). This strikingly ceremonial precinct was accessible to the common citizens of Kalibangan via a large southern gate that measured 2.60 metres in width and was flanked by two towers built out of mud brick veneer (Tharpar 1979:200). In the lower town district to the east, a western entrance specifically linked the district to the citadel hence bridging the two seemingly isolated sectors into a unified urban system (Figure 3) (Tharpar 1973:98). Therefore, at Kalibangan, Tharpar (1973:85-104) stresses how the ritual precinct was not constructed to support a program of imperial aggrandizement in an isolated manner but was rather constructed as a public arena for rituals provided with a large and accessible entrance.

Rather than integrating a precinct as an arena for public rituals, the ceremonial districts in urban centres of China in the Bronze Age present an inherently different approach towards urban organization. Preceding the mature Shang period (1400 BC–1046 BCE), the city of Zhengzhou in Henan presents a sticking program of elite aggrandizement facilitated through the construction of ceremonial precincts during the Erligang Phase (1600 – 1400 BCE) and they served to contain a private domain for the elites (Chang 1980:277). This large urban centre,
measuring 25 square kilometers, was enclosed by two sets of walls; the outer wall spans several kilometers on the south and west sides of the greater city and likely contained common residential quarters (Thorp 2006:67). Contained in this outer wall, the inner fortification wall was a monumental building project enacted by the elites of Zhengzhou. This construction required a large group of labourers for the construction of earthenware walls that measured 22 meters in width at its base and at least 9 metres in height (Figure 4) (Bagley 1999:166). Such a large wall visibly enclosed a sector that only housed architectural complexes associated with elite palaces and temples, whose earthenware foundations were recovered in the northwestern part of the precinct (Chang 1980:276).

Since the site of Zhengzhou is located beneath the modern city of the same name, an investigation of another walled enclosure at the site of Huan-bei in Henan allows for a more complete understanding of palace structures that were located in monumental enclosures. Under archaeological investigation by Jigen Tang, Zhichun Jing, and George Rapp (2000: 479-480), this site houses the largest recovered enclosure wall discovered to date from the Bronze Age in China encompassing 470 hectares (Figure 5) (Tang et al. 2000:480). Thus, the construction of monumental walled enclosures as seen in Zhengzhou was replicated in different sites like Huan-bei before the establishment of the Shang capital at Yinxu. Huan-bei houses a palace complex, palace J-J measuring 174 by 90 metres, containing a large gatehouse in the south which led to a large court* flanked by a main hall to the north (measuring 85 by 14.4 metres) (Figure 6) (Thorp 2006:132). This hall encompasses 9 individual chambers, which likely housed ancestral tablets, and the entire enclosure also contained several sacrificial pits (Thorp 2006: 132). Therefore, such a palace complex at Haun-bei was a centre for ritual activities involving sacrificial rites, and was purposefully symbolized as an elite domain that was physically separate from the common residential districts outside the monumental enclosure wall.

This exclusionary practice in the demarcation of ceremonial precincts in Bronze Age cities in China was not solely defined by the construction of monumental enclosure walls. At Yinxu in Henan, the ceremonial precinct of the elites was not actually bounded* by an enclosure wall but rather, a moat diverting the Huan river, running 1100 metres southward before turning at a right angle east extending 650 metres back towards the river (Figure 7) (Thorp 2006:135). Thus, such a moat, measuring 5 metres in depth and 10-20 metres in width, enclosed and isolated the royal precinct to an even greater degree since the use of water as a barrier most likely restricted access to a few select bridges (Thorp 2006:135). Furthermore, Thorp (2006:138) notes how a series of workshops were located within the northwest sector in the precinct bounded by the moat, which included large quantities of stone and jade debris associated together with specialized carvings of tigers, turtles, and ducks (Figure 8). Thus, the elites at Yinxu established several workshops within the precinct, which allowed for powerful individuals to control the production of specialized wares used for individual aggrandizement. Such a precinct was not created for public events as witnessed at Mohenjo-Daro and Kalibangan, but was rather designed as a prime setting for Shang royals to safely maintain an economic powerbase within the city thus preserving hegemonic order.
Social Order in the Urban Landscape

After considering how special precincts were demarcated and used in urban centres of the Indus Valley Civilization and China during the Bronze Age, it is also worth examining how social order was promulgated into the organization of cities on a broader scale. This organization of the urban social system was either arranged according to an integrative approach focused on an urban community as seen in Harappan cities or an approach that emphasized elite control over the populace as witnessed in cities of China in the Bronze Age. The Indus Valley Civilization has often been deemed as an egalitarian social organization by past scholars; Wright (2010:234-235) offers a new approach that views social order in Harappan polities as integrative but not egalitarian. Her approach stresses the incorporation of all social classes under an urban order that functioned as an apparatus, which depended on varying specialized socioeconomic occupations (Wright 2010:235). Thus, even though the Indus Valley Civilization may no longer be viewed as egalitarian, the foundation of Indus society was still based on an integration of all social groups in the drive to support monumental infrastructure projects.

The management of water in Harappan cities was based on monumental urban projects such as the drainage system witnessed in Mohenjo-Daro and the reservoir system at Dholavira in Gujarat, which required the active participation of different urban classes as an integrated social organization. The drainage system at Mohenjo-Daro can be understood as a sophisticated apparatus that allowed for a rather seamless use of water in both utilitarian and ritual contexts (Wright 2010:237). As observed in Jansen’s (1989:189) investigations of the sewage system, all drains were sloped downward towards an outlet that further delegated water to a larger canal running alongside principal streets (Figure 9) (McIntosh 2008:236). Furthermore, there actually were two separate drainage systems at Mohenjo-Daro; one was delegated for transmitting biological waste out of homes while the other was utilized for carrying water used for drinking and baths (Wright 2010:238). Grills were built into open outlets in drains in order to avoid contamination between drains carrying biological waste and drinking water (McIntosh 2008:237). Kondo et al. (1995:135) stress how drains in Mohenjo-Daro transcended utilitarian functions and were actually critical facets for a ritual infrastructure that supported the seamless use of water in monumental ceremonial structures like the Great Bath in the citadel. Such a ceremonial use of water in a public context was an important component of daily life in Mohenjo-Daro and maintaining such a complex drainage system also required a communal endeavor manifested in a large workforce that would have kept the drains clean and functional (Jansen 1993:121). Since the drainage system was such a large urban apparatus that was made out of several components, maintaining such a system demanded the attention of a specialized class of labourers who were responsible for keeping the drains clean and running (Jansen 1993:121).

Therefore, the whole city of Mohenjo-Daro was largely designed around a monumental drainage system programmed into the urban infrastructure, which allowed for residents to participate together in a communal social
organization indicative of Indus cities. Other Indus cities also organized monumental urban systems in the drive to control the output and storage of water as attested in Dholavira. The city of Dholavira encompassed a citadel comprising a “castle” and “bailey” alongside a lower town, which was surrounded by a massive reservoir system measuring 24 metres in width and 5 metres in depth excavated down to the bedrock at the site (Bisht 1999:393-442). Small dams were constructed alongside a seasonal stream that would relay water towards the massive reservoir complex at Dholavira thus supplying an effective source of water during the dry season (Wright 2010:167). Each reservoir unit was built at a progressively lower level in order to facilitate the even distribution of water and this whole complex took up 17% of Dholavira’s total area (Wright 2010:124). This reservoir system may resemble a sort of moat however this body of water encompassed the whole city providing access to water for all inhabitants and was not built solely around a specialized precinct as witnessed with the moat at Yinxu (Figure 10).

Apart from urban infrastructure projects built to control water, monumental platform mounds constitute a critical base for many Harappan cities including Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa, and Kalibangan. At Mohenjo-Daro, Jansen’s (1984) investigations of monumental platform constructions across the city have revealed the existence of a massive infrastructure project that literally provided a base upon which the city was built along with the drainage system to protect the urban centre from periodical floods (Figure 11). In the MS and DKG sectors at the site, Jansen (1984:15) notes two massive platforms that were built out of clay embellished with a series of bricks built on top. The construction of such platforms demanded the excavation of large trenches measuring 5 metres in depth for over 60 hectares, which would accumulate in 4 million cubic metres of clay sediment (Jansen 1985:168). Such a massive excavation of clay sediment would have created large trenches surrounding the city and Jansen (1985:168-169) has found such trenches as indicated by the recovery of ceramic fragments in deep deposits that constituted rubbish heaps in these excavated trenches (Figure 12). Thus, the whole base of Mohenjo-Daro was built on top of a large platform, which would have required a considerable workforce that produced a structure housing all residents in the city and not just the elite class.

Observing the different methods in which administrative order can be programmed in an urban social sphere allows one to highlight the different mechanics involved in achieving this social cohesion in either an integrative or exclusionary manner. In China during the Shang Dynasty, the city of Yinxu presents a series of archaeological manifestations that reflect an elite program that was founded on aggrandizement as a source of legitimacy. The prime mortuary precinct at Yinxu located at Xibeigang is positioned 1 km away from the urban core and measures 450 by 250 metres in area (Bagley 1999:184). Each burial was designed according to a cruciform plan with a series of radiating ramps that were utilized during funerary ceremonies (Figure 13). Thorp (2006:146) notes how the number of ramps at each tomb, varying from 2 – 4, was an effective status marker since it indicated how much labour an individual could have amassed for the tomb’s excavation. As witnessed in tomb M1001, an early grave at the site that may have belonged to King Wu Ding (1250 - 1192 BCE), 10.5 meters of sediment had to be removed
in an area encompassing 66 by 44 meters for the construction of the mortuary pit with four ramps, hence indicating the high status of the tomb owner (Bagley 1999:187). A monumental workforce had to be amassed to excavate and then later refill such a large tomb complex using the hangtu pounded earth construction method that was also used for structural foundations and walls (Bagley 1999:192). The mass excavation of such a site was not in the interest of the community rather, this whole urban project was specifically directed towards providing a mortuary abode for the king, which would ensure spiritual security in the afterlife.

It must be noted that the common populace was also inherently involved in the construction and utilization of monumental buildings at Yinxu. Although, instead of engaging people in an integrative system through monumental urban projects as seen in Mohenjo-Daro and Kalibangan, thousands of individuals were utilized as sacrificial victims placed in deposits that provided a sanctified ground appropriate for building palaces and ancestral temples. At Locus North, the ceremonial centre of Yinxu, buildings interpreted as ancestral temples by Chang (1980:95) were associated with a number of sacrificial deposits, which were concentrated in the middle and southern group buildings. As it can be seen in Figure 14, a multitude of sacrificial deposits were neatly organized into rows surrounding the middle group buildings and are interpreted by Shih (1951) as caches containing sacrificed humans which provided a sanctified ground upon which the temple was built. Chang (1980:95) further notes how the southern group of buildings at Locus North also had a highly concentrated amount of sacrificial deposits containing both humans and animals and hence constituted a quarter reserved for ceremonial rites. Thus, Shang kings practiced these sacrificial rites as a symbolic means to mark monumental facets of the urban landscape as arenas of dominance enacted over the subservient populace.

Alongside these urban projects, which symbolically dominated the urban populace through coercive labour and sacrificial rites, examining the cities of the Erligang and Shang Periods on a more holistic scale demonstrates how urban organizations were designed in a disjointed manner that served to emphasize royal dominance. The city of Zhengzhou from the Erligang period provides a notable example of a disjointed urban system composed of a ceremonial core, and the (which was surrounded by) numerous residential hamlets that ranged in distance from a few hundred meters to 8 kilometers from the urban centre that surrounded it (Figure 4) (Wheatley 1971:34). These hamlets were ancillary settlements composed of subterranean houses which were often built around an industrial complex as seen with a ceramic production centre comprising 14 kilns which was located 1200 meters west of the ceremonial core (Wheatley 1971:35). The Erligang mound, located 1 kilometre southeast of the royal precinct, comprised a whole residential neighbourhood of commoners who were still linked to the urban fabric of Zhengzhou (Chang 1980: 279). The Shang capital of Yinxu exhibits a similar disjointed urban system, which included several isolated economic centers that produced specialized wares that were relayed to the urban core (Thor 2006: 140). Miapou North is such an economic district at Yinxu located 1 kilometre southeast of the city core and it housed an entire bronze foundry (Figure 15) (Thor 2006: 140). This foundry produced special bronze vessels amassed by the hegemonic elites to further
strengthen a powerbase built on production that restricted economic benefits to a small group of people rather than an urban community as witnessed in Harappan cities.

Discussion

This archaeological case study of early urban formations amongst the Indus Valley Civilization and China during the Bronze Age emphasizes how various social mechanisms implemented monumentality in the urban system in divergent ways. However, these divergent social systems both ultimately achieved an urban order that supported the preservation of the state apparatus.

The way in which specialized sectors were demarcated amongst Harappan and Chinese cities during the Bronze Age indicates divergent functions, which were attributed to these precincts in early state formation. At Mohenjo-Daro and Kalibangan, an assessment of entry points into the precincts indicates how public processions were meant to be relayed into arenas built for public events (McIntosh, 2008:226). At the citadel of Mohenjo-Daro, the western entrance facilitated public entry into the Great Bath, which was further flanked by various colonnades that fostered circumambulation of the precinct by large crowds (Jansen 1989:185). Similarly at Kalibangan, a large public entrance, measuring 2.60 metres on the southern part of the citadel, facilitated direct access to an open ceremonial enclosure constituting a series of platforms used for sacrificial rites (Ratnagar 2006:98). Cities of the Shang and Erligang periods in China were rather built around precincts that were solely designed for the containment of an elite class that was only involved with the common populace in practicing hegemonic order. In Zhengzhou and Huan-bei, a large hangtu enclosure wall of pounded earth spanning several kilometers effectively hid an entire ceremonial precinct from view since the fortifications likely measured several metres in height (Tang et al. 2000:480). Furthermore, the ritual enclosure at Yinxu was even more effectively removed from the populace since it was surrounded by a large moat channeling water from the Huan river hence restricting access points to a few bridges, which would have been strictly controlled (Thorp 2006:135).

The citadel sector in Harappan cities was utilized as a public arena supporting ritual structures like the Great Bath of Mohenjo-Daro and the ritual platforms at Kalibangan. These ritual precincts essentially integrated the participating populace as a community that facilitated the execution of monumental state events. Ceremonial enclosures in cities of the Erligang and Shang periods in China were rather utilized as restricted sectors that were arenas for elite aggrandizement. Such restricted precincts also allowed for elites to safely develop an economic powerbase as indicated by the construction of specialized workshops within the ritual precinct at Yinxu, which would be under direct elite patronage (Thorp 2006:138). Thus, even though ceremonial precincts in Harappan and Bronze Age Chinese cities were used for different social purposes, both allowed for the ruling body to promulgate a predesigned social order that essentially dictated how people were to behave in the urban system.
Additionally, examining the way in which the common populace was actually involved in the facilitation of monumental urban features in cities of the Indus Valley Civilization and China during the Bronze Age unravels inherently different mechanics in social organization. Infrastructure systems were programmed into Harappan cities like Mohenjo-Daro where different drains and canals were built together to form an apparatus that demanded constant maintenance on a communal scale (Jansen 1993:121). Furthermore, the reservoir system at Dholavira surrounded both the citadel and middle and lower cities as an integrated whole instead of being situated solely around sectors of the city that may be deemed as “elite” domains (Wright 2010:124). Apart from urban systems involving water, the construction of platforms at Mohenjo-Daro was a monumental endeavor involving the mass excavation of clay sediment literally providing a base that protected the whole city from periodic floods (Jansen 1984:15). Social systems imbued into the urban fabric of cities in China during the Bronze Age present a program of elite aggrandizement which essentially created cities where the concerns of the elite class was treated as a foundational element of urban life. Tomb construction at the Xibeigang district in Yinxu was a monumental state project that demanded workers to excavate mass tracts of sediment not for the betterment of the city as a whole but to secure a proper abode for the mortuary cult of the king (Bagley 1999:192). Furthermore, sacrificial deposits of humans were a critical feature that provided a sanctified ground for elite palaces and ancestral temples which were significantly detached from the commoner districts in a greater urban area comprising a series of dispersed hamlets that were linked into the urban fabric at Zhengzhou and Yinxu (Figure 16) (Wheatley 1971:34).

Therefore, the urban fabric of both Harappan centres and cities of the Erligang and Shang periods of China was organized in a manner that promulgated a social order which was designed to delegate how the populace was meant to behave in the city. However, as it has been demonstrated, these cities from both respective regions achieved this urban cohesion in entirely different ways. Harappan cities were programmed for the integration of the populace as a community working towards the greater good through the development of infrastructure projects. This urban infrastructure, involving hydraulic systems and platform construction, may have been necessary to protect cities from environmental threats such as the flooding of the Indus and Ghaggar-Hakra rivers and prolonged periods of drought (Wright 2010:235). Cities of the Shang and Erligang periods in China were not designed to combat environmental disasters as a commune, but rather, elite interests were ideologically promulgated as a fundamental pivot of the urban system. Thus, these cities in China were inherently designed to easily facilitate programs of aggrandizement on an urban scale, which was a driving force behind the management of a hegemonic state apparatus.

Conclusion

The transition towards sedentary life in an urban society was closely linked together with the construction and promulgation of monumental urban projects, which transcend sole buildings and encompassed an urban system that was designed by a political authority. Transformations of social relationships in the
urban sphere can develop according to integrative or hegemonic trajectories and urban cases from the Indus Valley Civilization and China in the Bronze Age provide effective contrasts that dispel any notion of one standardized system of state formation. Although these urban societies thus developed according to divergent social trajectories, the ultimate organization of the populace, according to a predetermined model in the context of the region, was achieved in both early states of South Asia and China. The city was really a landscape of predesigned order that featured greatly in the daily lives of all social classes albeit in very different ways. People resided in an apparatus designed to support the interest of the state encompassing either a large commune or a rigid social class.

Divergent modes of governing the people have always existed in human societies and survive to this day; different governments, whether they are democratic or authoritarian, seek to organize the populace in a manner that benefits a certain type of powerbase. This archaeological examination demonstrates that divergent social systems have always existed and the urban landscape provided a most effective arena for the integration of monumental buildings and infrastructure together with a predetermined social ideal enacted onto the populace. Thus the urban landscape in the Indus Valley Civilization and China during the Bronze Age was utilized as an arena for a monumental promulgation of an idealized social system. Such a system was manifested in divergent ways and thus monumentality in the urban fabric was utilized in both integrative and exclusionary methods that both served to transform a group of people into a social foundation that allowed for the sustenance of early state formation.
Figure 1: The Great Bath complex at the citadel of Mohenjo-Daro, which was situated within three concentric passageways that facilitated circumambulation of the entire precinct by visitors (Jansen 1989:178).

Figure 2: A sacrificial deposit of bovid remains in one of the monumental platforms encompassing a ritual precinct in the southern part of the citadel in Kalibangan (Tharpar 1973:95).
Figure 3: The southern portion of the citadel sector in Kalibangan. Note the main entrance that leads into the sector from the south and the western entrance in the lower town to the right, which provided public access between the two districts (Possehl 1979:xiii).

Figure 4: Plan of the Erligang city of Zhengzhou. Note the large fortification wall encompassing a polygon in the centre, which was surrounded by a series of commoners’ hamlets that were specifically removed from the ritual precinct (Chang 1980:282).
Figure 5: A map showing the monumental square enclosure that surrounded the ritual precinct in Huan-bei which was built before the Shang centre of Yinxu located in close proximity (Thorp 2006:132).

Figure 6: A plan of palace J-J located in the ritual precinct of Huan-bei. Note a large gatehouse and main hall containing ancestral tablets, which effectively surrounded a large open court (Thorp 2006:133).
Figure 7: Plan of the ritual precinct in Yinxu, Locus North, which encompasses a series of palaces and ancestral temples which are bounded by a large moat which turns at a right angle, as seen in the bottom left-hand side of the figure, enclosing the entire precinct (Thorp 2006:128).

Figure 8: Jade and stone carvings from a specialized workshop that was located within the royal precinct of Yinxu and was thus under direct elite control (Thorp 2006:140).
Figure 9: An integrated drainage system from the lower town in Mohenjo-Daro, which encompassed several individual drains running from separate houses that further joined a principal drain which ran alongside the main street in the district (Kondo et al. 1995:132).

Figure 10: Plan of the city of Dholavira, which was effectively surrounded by a reservoir system constituting a series of rectangular basins enclosed by the outer fortification. This reservoir system surrounded the lower town, middle town, and “castle” complex in the city (Wright 2010:116).
Figure 11: A general plan of the city of Mohenjo-Daro. Note the thin shaded area encircling the whole city, which represents an embankment that constituted the monumental platform on which the whole city was built upon (Jansen 1989:178).

Figure 12: A plan presenting the trenches surrounding the city of Mohenjo-Daro which were excavated to supply the necessary clay sediment needed to construct the city platform (Jansen 1985:169).
Figure 13: The Xibeigang mortuary precinct in Yinxu encompassing a series of large excavated tombs that either had 2 or 4 ramps, which effectively symbolized elite status (Bagley 1999:186).

Figure 14: A map of structural foundations at Locus North in Yinxu, which features a notable concentration of sacrificial deposits around the middle group buildings (Chang 1980:96).
Figure 15: A map of the districts surrounding the ceremonial core of Yinxu together with present features of the city of Anyang. Note how the Miaopu district in the bottom right corner is significantly removed from the centre of the city (Xiaotun) but was still incorporated into the urban system as an industrial precinct (Thorp 2006:118).

Figure 16: A diagram representing the disjointed plan of the city of Yinxu with various residential and industrial pockets surrounding the central district (Chang 1980:130).
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The Social Meaning of Laughter and Joking: When and How Does Joking Fail?

By: Elisabeth Feltaous
Introduction

Analyzing laughter and joking often seems counter-intuitive. Explaining a joke to an audience never quite captures the essence of the reasons behind the humour, or why some people will laugh and others take offense. Nevertheless, the topic of joking and laughter is a rich site or source of cultural symbols, indicating how different societies construct and reflect meaning, hierarchies, and create solidarities or maintain distance. Joking and laughter cannot be correctly interpreted without a firm grasp of the cultural milieu it reflects; multiple perspectives will perceive and interpret joking differently, sometimes within the same society, despite a common pattern of symbolic coding. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, Mary Douglas, Ivan Karp, and Sigmund Freud all offer their interpretations, and they complicate and complement each other’s perspectives. They also forestall a linguistic interpretation, one that also reveals nuanced hierarchies within the family unit. A close analysis using all three anthropologists’ theories, as well as the use of linguistic tools, provides the most accurate interpretation of a failed attempt at joking in my own extended family unit.

Both Radcliffe-Brown and Karp were influenced by Durkheim’s comparative approach. Radcliffe-Brown found generalized patterned behaviour across different societies, and in comparing them, asked what kind of work this patterned behaviour accomplished on a social level. He did not, however, seek instances of digression from the general pattern; instead, he was selective in analyzing the data that confirmed a theory of social cohesion. As a result, individual agency is never addressed in moments of laughter, nor how laughter contributes to or mitigates inequality. In contrast, Karp actively seeks moments of digression from a social pattern in his comparative study. Drawing on the work of Evans-Pritchard, he emphasizes moments of individual agency in order to discern what the resulting behaviour reveals about the society.

Radcliffe-Brown believed deeply in Kropotkin’s theory that ideal societies could thrive without centralized and stratified government. His investment in this system can be reflected in his study of social cohesion among African tribes. How is the potential antagonism found in in-law kinship relations solved through joking and laughter? Radcliffe-Brown provided an answer through an exploration of “permitted disrespect,” stating that, “it is evident that the whole maintenance of a social order depends upon the appropriate kind and degree of respect being shown towards certain persons...” He began with a situation of social disjunction and extrapolated based on the observations noted across several different studies, concluding that joking relationships were another form of social organization and cohesion, like kinship, marriage, and political alliances. The assertion reflected a preoccupation with structural functionalism that did not take into account a temporal exploration of how practices changed over time. The level of his analysis did not progress beyond the kinship relationship, and so subsistence patterns, or economic status were also not addressed. Any inherent power inequalities were only addressed through the means of seniority within the kinship dynamic, and linguistic nuance in the joking or avoidance relationship remained unobserved. The overarching impression was that these static communities did not change nor were they influenced by the creation or distribution of meaning and behaviour.
In contrast, Karp was deliberate in his use of contextual evidence and individual agency. He explicitly critiqued previous approaches of structural functionalism, marking a clear shift away from the Radcliffe-Brown school of thought. Karp preferred an approach where notions of consistency were eschewed for more complex behaviour, and actively sought the instances where behaviour did not conform to the social norms. By specifically looking at moments of digression from structure, he emphasized individual agency for social control through laughter. His interpretation of joking behaviour within the ritual context, like marriage ceremonies, was a way to subvert ritual behaviour, and impose alternate meaning within this context. Karp termed this subversion as “metamessaging.” Individuals needed to recognize the hegemonic meanings of the ritual or social behaviour, and then ironically refer to it, within the confines of the joking ritual itself. The layering of meanings that occurred simultaneously were then either recognized or shared by the participants. For Karp, the agent and the context were penultimate; the social cohesion or resulting laughter was secondary. By taking this approach, he recognized that creating and teaching meaning was a fluid process that changed depending on the time, place, context and agents involved. In addition, there was no opportunity for a static interpretation, since the approach recognized an implicit capacity for change through internal or external influences.

Mary Douglas published her paper before Karp, and although it is not referenced in his article, many of her ideas can be seen/are reflected in his work. Douglas was firmly in the structural functionalism camp, but as she developed her ideas, much of her writing focused on individual agency in the creation of symbolism and meaning. In her essay, “The Social Control of Cognition,” her ideas corresponded to both Karp and Radcliffe-Brown. She furthers Radcliffe-Brown’s ideas that joking is a form of social cohesion, stating that moments of laughter could assist in controlling apprehension: “…[It] lightens for everyone the oppressiveness of social reality, demonstrates its arbitrariness by making light of formality in general and expresses the creative possibilities of the situation.” Mary Douglas was careful to clarify that joking rituals were not only about maintaining the social equilibrium that Radcliffe-Brown emphasized, and went on to expand the context. Douglas also incorporated the relatively new theories of Sigmund Freud as part of this idea.

Freud challenged the idea that laughter was a consciously motivated occurrence, arguing instead that laughter was an expression of the breakdown of control over the subconscious. Douglas included this idea to argue that laughter can mean many things. In this way, she anticipated Karp’s notion that laughter can be disruptive, can undermine, and can be subversive.

In addition, she posited that a joke’s true meaning could not be understood without understanding the social, political, and economic environment from which it sprung. The joke was created within an environment where there was a level of dissonance between the core belief and the performance of the belief, and acknowledging the gap formed the basis for many instances of laughter. The correlation between Douglas and Karp becomes clear when applied to his analysis of the Marriage ritual in Iteso country, other detail. Karp’s interpretation hinges on
paradoxes inherent in the marriage rituals, and where the contradictions manifested
themselves through laughter: “In Iteso society men and women seek to control
the bodies of women for agnatic good. The paradox is that those bodies originate
outside the lineages they reproduce and that men are excluded from the most
fundamental contexts in which their lives are reproduced.”10. Douglas theorized the
same idea years earlier, when she stated, “...a successful subversion of one form
by another completes or ends the joke, for it changes the balance of power.”11.
The inversion of power was not an idea that had occurred to Radcliffe-Brown, but
it is certainly present in Karp’s analysis. Still, Douglas didn’t wander too far from
Radcliffe-Brown’s theories when she referred to the social perception and control
exerted surrounding the joke exchange, especially in instances of jokes told in
poor taste, that were “too near the bone” or improper.12 Douglas’ identified the
dichotomy of the joke and the obscene, and placed the two in opposition, proving
her point about the necessity of context. She stated that a differentiation between
the two could only occur against the backdrop of the social and moral environment
of the joke itself.13

Through this discussion, she made a final point of correlation: the archetype
of the Joker. There were two possible positions that a Joker could inhabit: a liminal
space, or a more heightened role that she mused was a sort of “minor mystic”14.
Joking could be performed with immunity, and without fear of repercussion for
a poorly timed or told joke. And although the joking was a means to release the
tension of an “oppressive” social construction, the Joker often did so by subverting
the symbolic meanings of the culture, a notion that again preempts Karp’s ideas by
twenty years.15

Of the three theorists quoted, all seem to agree on a few key points. Laughter
can be used in potentially problematic situations in order to diffuse tension, or
create solidarity. Laughter and joking involves a dissonance between the symbolic
belief and the performance of that belief, what Radcliffe-Brown indicated led to
“permitted disrespect” and what Karp would have called, “metamessaging” be-
tween participants. Finally, the joking is instigated through individuals occupying
a liminal place in the exchange. Douglas terms this individual, “The Joker”; Karp
evokes the older woman in the Iteso example; Radcliffe-Brown explores this idea
through the removal of one generation between joking partners.

Linguistic anthropology uses the term “communities of practice” to reference
exchanges where common knowledge of symbolic meaning is developed as well
as “ways of relating to each other, [and] ways of talking.”16 Communities of prac-
tice rely on a close examination of the exchanges, how the self is represented and
accepted, where topics are accepted or rejected in conversation, and how solidar-
ity or distance is created and maintained through types of speech. Along with the
three complementary points above, this idea is useful when analyzing a failed at-
tempt at joking within the family of my partner’s lineage.

The wife of my partner’s brother, “Claire,”17 had announced separately that
she would be retiring soon from her business as a hairdresser. During a lull in the
conversation, I congratulated her on the life event, and asked if she had any plans
for retirement. She mentioned a series of operations that she would need on her hands for repetitive stress syndrome. I joked that she would become a “kept woman” and smiled. My partner’s sister, “Donna”, came out of the kitchen and quickly commented that plans were not needed and that Claire should enjoy the break. Claire agreed and said that after working nonstop for 35 years, she was looking forward to some downtime. Donna replied when she was ready, she could always volunteer, and pointed to her own experience after retirement leading an exhaustive schedule volunteering, and then, before returning to the kitchen, said, “you’re not a ‘kept woman’.” After a pause, I apologized and said that the comment was intended as a joke. Claire said she had understood the intent, “Oh, I know.”

All three anthropologists provide insight into why the teasing exchange failed with my sisters-in-law. The intent in the original teasing comment can be aligned towards creating solidarity, and with Radcliffe-Brown’s theories. As the newest and youngest member of this family, my position within the extended family is tenuous at best. Since I have returned to school, I can easily fit into the role of a “kept woman” myself; likewise, Claire will no longer be a wage earner in her household, while her husband will continue to work. The teasing was an invitation to create meaning through the ironic reference to traditional women’s roles within the household, which we will both occupy once she retires.

Here, however, my audience roundly rejected the “permitted disrespect,” and a closer analysis of the social context and accepted norms of behaviour is needed in order to discern why. My partner’s family privileges hard work above all else. This social meaning is created through the endless stories about how hard work allowed for the success of members of the family, and any derision is expressed first and foremost by inferring laziness. My comment “metamessages” this family context, and unwittingly subverted it. I also believed that I was allowed to make the comment since I occupied a liminal place within the family. I am not joined to the family by formal marriage, but linked nonetheless through partnership with a family member. However, in the context of this family, the very marginality of my role prevented me from teasing or joking, as seen in Donna’s reaction. Mary Douglas would nod wisely and state that it was, “too near the bone”, which is why the family viewed it as obscene. Likewise, Radcliffe-Brown would agree that the appropriate level of respect was not shown. Claire also references her history of hard work, and in retelling a known history, Claire indexes my marginality in the family unit. Donna repeats my phrase, “kept woman” as a form of protection to Claire. Karp would be fascinated by the exchange because the intended targets rejected the attempt at solidarity, a moment of complex behaviour that did not conform to ideal social norms that create cohesion.

Within the extended family’s community of practice, I have observed and absorbed the symbolic meaning of hard work, success, and laziness, but failed to incorporate it with my own liminal role. Similar teasing about this subject matter has occurred by other family members, those who occupy a more prominent role in the immediate family, or who have been married into the family for longer. In this situation, the line between what is appropriate and what is obscene is blurred
because of the community of practice and established rules. This blurring serves as a marker for the hierarchy within the family, where only those who are entitled may participate in the joking ritual. Communities of practice illuminate how smaller groups create meaning, using individual agency as the dominant point of analysis. In joking relationships and instances of laughter, a finely detailed linguistic analysis at the individual level is useful to interpret how conflicting and paradoxical meaning is created to reflect on the social environment and create instances of social control. And while joking and distance patterned behaviour can be noted across many different social environments, the reasons behind its success and failure can be as diverse as the dynamic relationships in which it occurs.

1 (Radcliffe-Brown 1940, 196)
2 In this case, the example is the problematic in-law relationship, where a member from a different lineage is integrated into the family. (Radcliffe-Brown 1940)
3 “The second reason for ignoring the performance of irony is that anthropological discourse has tended to exhibit a bias towards order.” (Karp 1988, 36)
4 “We are no longer so interested as we once were in how social institutions restore equilibrium. Nor are we so convinced that they achieve it so easily.” (Karp 1988, 37)
5 (Karp 1988, 38)
6 (Karp 1988, 38)
7 (Douglas 1968, 372)
8 (Douglas 1968, 364)
9 “My argument will be that the joke form rarely lies in the utterance alone, but that it can be identified in the total social situation” (Douglas 1968, 363)
10 (Karp 1988, 49)
11 (Douglas 1968, 365)
12 Douglas argued that jokes in poor taste were recognized by all present, and then roundly rejected at the same time (Douglas 1968, 366).
13 (Douglas 1968, 372)
14 Douglas’ invocations of a ritual leader or religious figure, set apart and leading the audience through a ritual cleansing of laughter, echoed Durkheim’s ideas of collective effervescence. Through ritual laughter, conscious or subconscious tensions were released, and a greater morality was expressed and taught to the audience experiencing the joke. (Douglas 1968, 373). Radcliffe-Brown would have agreed with this idea of social cohesion.
15 (Douglas 1968, 369, 372)
16 (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2007, 57)
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