

New Myths For Old: A Consideration of Susan Harjo's Provost

Lecture by Tom Aletto: The quincentenary year of 1992 provided the occasion for the world to take stock of the past 500 years and reflect on the consequences of Columbus' voyages. Bloomsburg University, along with nearly every major institution of learning in the Western Hemisphere, presented lectures and programs aimed at reevaluating the processes set in motion by the bridging of the New and Old Worlds. As an anthropologist whose interests lie in the cultures of the Americas, I looked forward to the Quincentenary as an opportunity to replace the often inaccurate and distorted view of the Columbian exchange portrayed in many histories and in popular culture with an understanding that reflects modern scholarship. As a member of the Bloomsburg University Native American Awareness Committee, I hoped that bringing a Native American speaker to discuss Columbus and his aftermath from a distinctive cultural perspective would facilitate this new understanding. So I was greatly disappointed when Susan Harjo, a noted political activist and poet, delivered a Provost Lecture last November which sought not to destroy the Columbus myth by interpreting it in light of sound scholarly data, but to replace it with an equally distorted version of history.

Most disturbing was her repeated misrepresentation of pre-Columbian Native American culture. The central thesis of the lecture, which served to introduce the dramatic reading of her very fine poem, "Jumping Through the Hoops of History," was that before the arrival of Europeans, Native Americans had lived in blissful harmony with nature and their fellow humans, in a paradise free from disease, vice, inequality, political oppression, social problems, and warfare. Not only is this romantic notion inconsistent with archaeological and anthropological data, but it does a great injustice to native peoples by stripping them of their humanity and making them simplistic, stereotyped caricatures of the complex people they really were. A detailed understanding of the entire range of Native American cultures makes it clear that all of the ills that Ms. Harjo attributes only to European society and culture also existed in the Americas long before Columbus came along to spoil Eden.

One might overlook Ms. Harjo's loose play with historical and anthropological facts as nothing more than poetic license or as a device to force a racist and ethnocentric society to take notice of Native Americans and the social problems that afflict them. This is a position taken by a number of my colleagues with whom I have discussed my dissatisfaction with Ms. Harjo's talk. An attitude commonly expressed is "If she got people talking and thinking about Native American issues, what difference does it make if she had a few of her facts wrong?" Would a similar point of view be expressed if a speaker were to seriously misrepresent the facts of the Holocaust? I hope not.

But Ms. Harjo's own words force the listener to hold her to a high standard of historical and cultural accuracy. At several points in her talk she stressed the need to present history honestly and reiterated her desire to set the record straight about Native Americans and Native American culture. She said that she felt compelled to write her poem on the eve of the Quincentenary "because I knew what was coming; ... myths being perpetuated, and new myths born, and Indians being written further out of history." Later she continued, "I don't mean to write people out of history because that is what has been done to us. See, we're always called the cultural revisionists and historical revisionists by the people who have distorted history and made a mockery of history as it is taught in the educational system. And it is ironic that we, then, are called the revisionists when we try to impart truth and honesty into history."

Given her stated desire to impart truth and honesty into the historical record, it is disconcerting that Ms. Harjo travels the country distorting that record, giving birth to new myths. In the interest of correcting some of the more glaring errors in her presentation and in the hope of avoiding the proliferation of new myths, I offer this critique of Ms. Harjo's Provost Lecture.

One of Ms. Harjo's central theses was that, before the arrival of Europeans, Native American society was egalitarian and women enjoyed equal political and social status with men. She argued that democracy as a political system existed in the New World before the Europeans and that class societies based on differential wealth and prestige did not exist. In her view, the European political model based on the divine right of kings, in which sovereignty flowed "from God to the kings, to some of the people

some of the time, and most of the people none of the time," was unknown among the native peoples of the Americas. She identified the "confederacies" of the Iroquois, the Muskogee, and the Natchez as the "working model" for the United States constitution.

While I will let the political scientists and legal scholars discuss the degree to which the Iroquois confederacy contributed to the Constitution, I would like to point out that the Natchez of the Mississippi Delta were not a confederacy, but rather one of the most stratified societies of North America. Natchez society was based on distinct social strata which were strictly defined by status and wealth; the lowest stratum was comprised of slaves who had almost no rights and, of course, no personal sovereignty. In addition, the Natchez ruler was held in awe by his people and treated as a divine or semi-divine person who drew his right to rule from his close association with the supernatural and his control of supernatural power. The Natchez were one of the many highly ranked or stratified societies that existed in prehistoric and historic times throughout the Americas. The Natchez, Kwakiutl, Cahokia, Mayas, Aztecs, Incas, Nazcas, Moches and Chimus represent only a few of the societies in which egalitarianism did not exist and in which people were organized into classes, castes or ranks; all of these societies kept slaves. In each case, the political power of the rulers and the ruling classes was religiously based, and it was well understood by all that sovereignty flowed from god to the king to some of the people some of the time. In the case of the Mayas and the Incas, at least, the king was a living god.

Ms. Harjo attributed the supposed egalitarianism and the equal status of women that she believes pervaded Native American society to the practice of matrilineal descent. She stated that "95% of our cultures" were matrilineal. However, the ethnographic record reveals that matrilineality in North America occurred in less than 40% of the societies. The majority were patrilineal or employed bilateral kindreds. Furthermore, studies of matrilineal societies both in North America and other parts of the world reveal that in them women play a subordinate role to men in political life and are rarely their social equals. In stating that Native American societies were largely matrilineal, Ms. Harjo contrasted this with patrilineality. She implied that European societies, which brought inequality and inferior status to women to America, were patrilineal. This, however, is not true. Most of the European societies that contributed migrants to the Americas in the first several centuries

after Columbus were organized according to bilateral kindreds. This is the system that exists in European-derived cultures of the United States today. Patrilineal descent groups, which are publicly recognized entities comprised of the lineal descendants of a common male ancestor, were not characteristic of European cultures and cannot be held responsible for the absence of egalitarianism or the presence of inequality in Europe or the Americas.

Another of Ms. Harjo's theses was that cruelty, barbarism, religious persecution, forced conversion, and cultural imperialism did not exist among Native American cultures and were brought here for the first time by Europeans. She attributed many of these evils to the Spanish Inquisition, which she identified as a pan-European institution that was a driving force in European expansionism. Furthermore, she stated the "Spanish Inquisition ... had sent (Columbus) in search of other people's property and gold ...", which was taken by force when necessary. This force included not only physical mutilation and death, but cultural and psychic mutilation brought about by forced conversion to Christianity. As a result, "barbarism of a kind that my people had never known was brought here by the Europeans."

In a particularly moving part of her talk, she conveyed her sense of horror at seeing the bills of lading for the shipment of decapitated human heads taken by the U.S. Army following the massacre of the Cheyenne at Sand Creek. Some of those individuals may have been her ancestors. This incident led her to intensify her efforts to see legislation enacted to force the repatriation of Native American physical remains from federal museums. The law was passed in 1990. She said that Native Americans did not engage in terrible acts such as decapitating human beings and the knowledge that Europeans had done so made her "understand exactly how barbarous were the gifts of civilization brought to us from Europe."

Returning again to the barbarity of Europeans, their cultural imperialism and their lack of respect for other cultures, she said, "We have no word in any human language in the hemisphere for reburial or repatriation. No one in the Cheyenne history of tens of thousands of years, or in the Muskogee history, or in anyone's history in North America had ever dug any one else's grave until really recent times, just a couple of hundred years ago. No one ever did that, no one ever came to us and said that your children are going to a nightmare of a place when they die unless

they give up their beliefs, stop believing like their parents do and begin believing in a foreign way when it comes to their place in the creation. No one ever committed that kind of emotional violence on our children. And that continues today, from good people who are well loved and have pets and do good deeds. Those very people are committing that kind of emotional violence against our children today. And it is unconscionable. It is the moral equivalent of grave robbing; it is the moral equivalent of chopping off limbs and noses just to make an example."

Finally, on this issue, she said, "The white people are always wondering how vituperative the people of color (including Native Americans) are and the big question in the white peoples' minds is 'Once in control of anything, will the people of color be as vituperative and as mean to us as we have been to them?' That's not our history."

The preceding paragraphs make Ms. Harjo's argument clear: cruelty, torture, violence, terror, thievery, cultural hegemony, religious intolerance, and forced conversion were unknown to Native American cultures and societies and that they appeared in the Americas in the wake of Columbus. She presents a vision of pre-Columbian America in which neighbors loved one another, respected each others' rights, did not impose their wills on anyone; in which ethnocentrism did not exist; in which everyone had adopted the laudable perspective of cultural relativism. This view, however, is in irreconcilable conflict with the archaeological and the ethnographic records. Throughout the Americas, just as in every other corner of the world, warfare was an ancient and well developed art, in which cruelty, rape and torture were essential ingredients. This was true throughout the Great Lakes region, where native cultures waged vicious campaigns against one another long before the Europeans arrived; it was true of the horse-based cultures of the Great Plains, where social life was built around warrior societies and stealing from one's enemies. But it was especially true of the cultures of Mesoamerica and South America where, from the earliest times, native peoples left an artistic and written record of their inhumanity to their fellows.

The Mayas of Mexico and Guatemala are perhaps the best example of this. The painted murals of Bonampak show graphic scenes of battle in which combatants are being captured, tortured, mutilated, murdered, and decapitated by the victors. Sculptures at the great cities of Palenque, Yaxchilan, and Tonina, to name a few, show kings and warriors standing on

bound captives, throwing captives down temple steps, and excising the still beating hearts of their defenseless enemies. Throughout the Maya world, it was necessary for a king to sacrifice a captive as part of his coronation ceremony.

The practice of decapitating enemies, which Ms. Harjo identifies as a singularly European atrocity, is of great antiquity in the Americas. It was practiced throughout much of North America, with the practice of scalping representing an early historic variation on the theme. In South America, the iconography of such cultures as the Moche and Nazca contains thousands of images of decapitations and ritual torture. Warriors are depicted going to battle with the severed heads of their victims hanging as trophies from their belts. Severed human heads with cords strung through their skulls have been recovered in excavations in the dry deserts of northern Chile and southern Peru.

While it may be true that words for reburial and repatriation are alien to Native American languages, the practice of grave robbing and desecration of human remains is not. Excavations throughout Mesoamerica have shown that many tombs were defiled and ransacked in prehistory. Recent work in the Temple of the Feathered Serpent at the site of Teotihuacan shows that the grave of the person buried in the pyramid was looted, and that his physical remains were desecrated, over a thousand years ago. The same occurred at many Classic period Maya sites.

Defilement of human remains also was a central aspect of Aztec culture. Every year throughout the Basin of Mexico, thousands of war captives were put to death by heart sacrifice. Their remains were not returned to their communities and families for a proper, dignified burial, but instead were put on public display. The bodies were decapitated, and the heads were skewered on posts in skull racks in the central plaza of every city. The skull rack in the capital of Tenochtitlan contained thousands of heads.

Cultural and religious imperialism and forced conversions were common throughout the Americas, with the Aztecs and the Incas providing just two well documented examples. In the case of the Aztecs, the destruction of the pyramids dedicated to the gods of their enemies was such an important aspect of their warfare that a burning temple was the symbol used in their writing system to indicate the subjugation of a

population. Upon entering the city of a newly defeated rival, the Aztec warriors removed the sacred images of the local deities from their sanctuaries and destroyed the idols by casting them from the top of the pyramids. In their places the Aztec priests placed images of the true supreme god, Huitzilipochtli.

The Incas also forced their subjects to accept and pay homage to the cult of their primary god, Inti. However, rather than destroying the images of the deities of their defeated rivals, the Incas carried them off to Cuzco where they were held for ransom. In exchange for obedience to their new king and for cooperation in the administration of the empire, the Incas promised to conserve and protect the idols and to allow the faithful periodic visits to see that they were well cared for. In the event that the sequestration of the sacred images was not sufficient to insure the allegiance and peaceful collaboration of the defeated people, the Inca frequently resorted to an institution called the *mitma*. The *mitma* involved the relocation of rebellious or recalcitrant populations to distant corners of the empire through forced marches reminiscent of the Trail of Tears. Often the Incas divided the offending communities into a number of parts, sending each to different districts of the empire with the result that close family members were separated permanently from each other.

Without in any way diminishing the horrors and depredations that the Europeans visited on Native Americans over the last 500 years, the preceding examples illustrate that cruelty, lack of respect for human life, lack of concern for the cultural and religious traditions of others, and general barbarity were well established features of life in the Americas long before the Europeans arrived. As such, Ms. Harjo's statements that Europeans brought "barbarism of a kind that my people had never known" to the New World and that vituperation "is not our history" are unfounded.

In light of these and other gross misrepresentations of the archaeological and ethnographic record, it is hard to see how Ms. Harjo's presentation achieves her goal of imparting "truth and honesty into history." In the end, Ms. Harjo is the cultural and historical revisionist that she protests not to be. She has missed the opportunity to replace the old myth of Columbus as conquering hero, which she so justifiably despises, with a view that more accurately reflects historical fact. Instead, she has offered up a new myth that portrays all Native Americans as saintly and Europeans as the source of all the world's ills. This fairy

tale is inaccurate and unacceptable. To admit that Native American cultures - like all of the cultures of the world in 1492 and before - contained repugnant and morally repulsive elements in no way minimizes or justifies the horrors visited upon them by Europeans.

By ignoring these unseemly aspects of Native American culture, she not only falsely depicts and simplifies very complex cultures, but she also undermines her own integrity as a knowledgeable advocate for other Native Americans and their causes. This is unfortunate since the issues she addresses in her poems and her lectures - political disenfranchisement, teen suicide, racial and cultural prejudice, lack of economic opportunity - are serious ones that need to be much better understood in the larger society. However, when Ms. Harjo clearly knows so little about much of which she speaks, or chooses to intentionally misrepresent history, she stands naked before the public with little credibility.

(Editor's note: quotations from Ms. Harjo in this essay were taken from a tape recording made of her talk by University Relations.)

Love & Culture: The January 18, 1993 issue of NEWSWEEK contains an article, "Isn't It Romantic?", which talks about the universality of love and which criticizes anthropologists for failing to pay enough attention to romance in other cultures. The article correctly notes that anthropologists have often pointed out that the basis for marriage in most cultures is something other than love - such as keeping property within the family or providing an heir. But then the article goes on to suggest that anthropologists failed to realize that love existed in those cultures, even if it wasn't expressed in marriage. Anthropologists are accused of that most heinous of crimes in modern academics - being Eurocentric - in presuming that romance has been predominately a feature of Western culture.

In this essay, we would like to present the anthropological perspective on love, suggesting in the process that the anthropological discussion of love is more complex than the NEWSWEEK article suggests. The anthropological discussion of love generally does not start with the history of romance or with sexual chemistry, but with a fundamental issue in human culture, the struggle that goes on in every society between the rights of the individual as opposed to the rights of some larger social

group, such as the family. Human nature creates this struggle: we are at every moment both unique individuals with personal ambitions, goals, and needs, and members of a social group, dependent upon one another for our economic and psychological well-being. The two facets of our being pull at us; do we do what we want to do or do we do what the group wants us to do? Anthropologists point out that no human society entirely resolves this struggle, but that ordinarily a society chooses to emphasize one or the other, the individual or the group, as having the edge in social life. Americans live in a culture which emphasizes the rights and privileges of the individual; most other cultures emphasize the rights and privileges of the group - the family, some other kinship group, the community, or whatever. In a culture where the group is emphasized, the individual is socialized to believe that their needs are secondary to those of the group. To use an example often seen in the United States in the interaction between a middle class health care provider and a minority patient, the individual patient shrugs off his/her health care needs if the family decides that it has other priorities.

Anthropologists have often noted that there has been a correlation between a culture's emphasis of individual or group rights and romantic love. In general, cultures that favor individual rights encourage romantic love; those that favor group rights downplay it. In a sense the fit between individual rights and love is a natural. In a culture that favors individual rights, a key right is the one to choose one's own spouse; what better mechanism, given the cultural emphasis, than love as the basis of choice? Love is first and foremost individual and personal; how else can some matches be explained? Love bonds individuals to each other; the maintenance of the bond is a personal issue. If romance disappears, the bond falters, and divorce often occurs. This scenario is not strictly an Eurocentric one. It can be found in any culture that favors individual rights. Other examples include many American Indian cultures, especially those of the Great Plains, and the Igbo people of West Africa.

But if a culture favors the rights of the social group, then personal attachments are seen as dangerous to those rights. Marriage is once again the prime example. In a culture favoring group rights, marriages are arranged between family elders to suit family needs. A good example is cross-cousin marriage, a common pattern in many cultures, where the point is to keep property within the family. In other cultures, marriage becomes a way of cementing economic or political alliances for a family.

In these cases, individual choice is secondary to family choice, and there are often institutions to keep young unrelated people of the opposite sex apart so that sticky, personal entanglements which might interfere with family wishes are kept to a minimum.

However, as that last thought suggests, the fact that families may have rights over individuals does not rule out the possibility of romantic love. Both the anthropological literature and the folklore of cultures favoring group rights are full of stories of people meeting accidentally, falling in love, and then either being driven apart by family obligations or the couple conspiring to overcome family objections. A earlier issue of this newsletter described a Chinese movie video popular among Chinese Americans in which a martial arts hero saves a beautiful princess from bandits and falls in love with her at first sight only to find that she is from a rival clan to his and therefore unavailable. The anthropologist who describes this tale found her Chinese American informants to be sympathetic to this tragic romance, but firm in their conviction that the couple had done the right thing by separating. (see Jesse Nash, "Confucius and the VCR," NATURAL HISTORY, May 1988, pp 28-31.) But the anthropological literature shows that in reality a love couple sometimes gets their way, even in a culture that denies the possibility. Similarly, there are many cases in the West of marriage being more a matter of obligation than of personal choice, as Charles and Diana could probably attest.

One common solution to unexpected love in a culture that favors group rights is elopement. Anthropologists have often discovered couples who have run off, trying to create a *fait accompli*. Sometimes it works; in some cultures it is a grudgingly admitted alternative to accepted marriage forms - disreputable, but not impossible. Couples who follow this path often are forced to sever their ties to their families and may carry the scent of scandal with them throughout their lives, but the alternative exists. In other cases, families may reassert their rights, tracking down the fugitive pair, separating them, and exacting harsh punishments, including occasionally death, to make the point that group rights come first.

For instance, Longina Jakubowska, in a 1989 article in THE WORLD & I, examines a case of elopement among the Bedouins of Jordan which illustrates this point. The Bedouins have historically been a culture of

nomadic camel herders with a fierce code of family honor, but in the modern world, many live as laborers in Middle Eastern cities. In this case, the young man was a construction worker; he and his lovemate made off into the night in an old Chevrolet. Seeking asylum, they turned themselves over to the respected family head of a clan unrelated to either. To maintain his family honor, the family head separated the two, put them under the equivalent of house arrest, and notified their families.

Jakubowska notes that often families will accept elopements, particularly if the couple has had sex, but in this case, the bride was still a virgin and her father chose to assert his authority over the couple. After lengthy negotiation, she was returned to her father's household, most likely to remain single for life as punishment for having gone against her family's wishes, while the young man and his family were assessed a fine of \$75,000 in a traditional court. This, of course, is serious business, and traditional cultures often have gone to great lengths to avoid messy cases such as these by keeping young unmarried men and women carefully chaperoned and separate.

In the modern world, as cultures come into contact with more and more ideas from outside their traditional arenas, culture change becomes inevitable. Anthropologists have noted that all over the world there is cultural movement towards greater individualism, and with that, greater emphasis on romantic love. The NEWSWEEK article gives a good example: "Anthropologist Victoria Burbank reports that when she first visited an Australian Aboriginal community in 1977, village elders were blaming Western films for the growing number of adolescents running off to 'love each other,' in defiance of prearranged marriages. Elders told her that, actually, affairs of the heart long predated the arrival of Westerners, but when European missionaries did show up in the 30's espousing romantic love as a requisite for marriage, the idea gained legitimacy." The assertion of individual rights leads to the belief that one has the right to fall in love, as well as do other things for one's own benefit, often over the objection of family elders.

British War Brides: Even in the West, love and love-making are not the same from culture to culture. A recent article by Juliet Gardiner reprinted in TALKING ABOUT PEOPLE, edited by William Haviland and Robert Gordon (Mayfield 1993), talks about the differences in approach to love and dating that occurred during World War II between American GI's and young British women. The first American servicemen began to appear

in Great Britain in 1942; by the end of the war, over 1 million American men would have had prolonged stays there. And British women fell for these Americans in droves, a fact which alarmed both British and American authorities. To try to determine what was going on, the U.S. War Department hired anthropologists, including Margaret Mead, to study the situation.

These anthropologists found major differences between Americans and the British with regards to dating and sex in the 1940's. In general, they argued that in the United States the pattern was for males to push for sexual favors while females had the responsibility of drawing the line. Thus, American females were socialized to resist the advances of their eager paramours. But in Great Britain - at least in the 1940's - males were taught to restrain themselves, to keep their sexual desires under control. As a result British females did not learn to resist men's sexual come-ons; they didn't need to. And when an American serviceman and a British woman got together, the American found that the woman gave in much more easily than he ever expected, no doubt to his delight. Mead ties these patterns ultimately to sex imbalances in the two populations. In 1940, there were many more American men than women, but in Great Britain, marriageable women significantly outnumbered men.

But American servicemen also found, often to their dismay, that after one or two dates, their British companions were expecting marriage as a natural outcome: "But I thought we were just having a good time!" This was due to differences in dating. In the United States, then as now, men and women started dating early and spent years in each other's social company before marriage became a viable option. To support this practice, dozens of institutions catered to the date, e.g., the corner maltshop (Remember, we're talking about the 40's!) But in Great Britain, young men and women socialized separately. Many schools were segregated by sex, and even those that weren't deliberately kept males and females apart. Males and females didn't talk with each other much, and they seldom dated. Flirting, sexual joking, and even polite conversation between males and females was pretty much missing from British culture. When men and women did get together, it was usually in their late teens or early 20's, and one or two encounters led to the young man being taken home to meet the folks. Interviews from the time showed that British women thought American servicemen were incredibly witty and fun to be with; the servicemen thought the women were shy and tongue-tied - and

way too serious!

Following these anthropologists' studies, the U.S. War Department tried to inform American servicemen about what to expect, using a host of cartoons, circulars, talks and film shows. They also created places for dates - light refreshment rooms with soft drinks, low lights, continuous dance music and a pleasant atmosphere. American GI's were told to teach British women the American dating game. Maybe it worked, but 70,000 Americans came home with British wives.

Problems With Translation: As the global economy continues to emerge, more and more stories come out about misunderstandings due to problems of translation. All too often, translations are literal, word for word transcriptions without taking into consideration cultural nuances or social context. Sometimes the consequences are serious. For example, when Soviet Premier Krushchev made a speech at the United Nations in 1958, he was translated as having said (with regards to U.S./U.S.S.R. competition), "We will bury you!" This shocked Americans and helped underwrite a generation of fear about Soviet intentions. Unfortunately, the verb Krushchev used does literally translate as "bury" but without all the negative connotations. A better translation of the Russian verb would have been "to surpass." Since Krushchev was talking about world economic growth and competition, his speech would have been seen as less of a threat in the context of the Soviet Union surpassing the U.S. as a producer of exports.

Happily, most mistranslations lead to humorous outcomes. Witness this announcement from a Yugoslavian hotel: "The flattening of underwear with pleasure is the job of the chambermaid. Turn to her straightaway." Or what about these directions on a packet of convenience food from Italy: "At last, for a safe success in cooking, shed the remnant sauce, cover the baking pan, and put her in the oven." Another example comes from a Japanese translation of an American's speech in which the American said "I'm tickled to death to be here." The Japanese translation was "I'm scratching myself until I die."

In the world business arena, American businesspeople are finding that they have to be careful with their advertising, since slogans do not always translate well. The classic example of this was Pepsi's "Come Alive With Pepsi" slogan which translated into Mandarin Chinese came out as "Pepsi

brings your dead ancestors back from the grave." Or the famous slogan, "Body by Fisher" which in Flemish became "Corpse by Fisher." A favorite example of this writer's is a Nike ad from some years ago which shows a Samburu tribesman from Kenya wearing Nike hiking shoes. At the end of the ad, the Samburu speaks into the camera in his own language, followed by the Nike logo, "Just Do It." The viewer is left with the impression that "Just Do It" is what the Kenyan said when in fact he says "I don't want these. Give me big shoes!"

Compare that example with this Japanese interpreter's translation of an American's speech to a group of Japanese businesspeople:

"American businessman is beginning speech with thing called joke. I am not certain why, but all American businessmen believe it is necessary to start speech with joke. (Pause) He is telling joke now, but frankly you would not understand it so I won't translate it. He thinks I am telling you joke now. (Pause) Polite thing to do when he finishes is to laugh. (Pause) He is getting close. (Pause) Now!"

The audience not only laughed, but in typical generous Japanese style, they stood and applauded as well.

It's appropriate perhaps to end with this Chinese proverb: "We get sick from what we put in our mouths, but we get hurt by what comes out of them."

BU Anthropologists are Busy: Over the Christmas break, Tom Aleto and Karen Elwell traveled to the Mexican state of Chiapas where they visited important Mayan archaeological sites such as Palenque and Yaxchilan. They also visited contemporary villages in that part of Mexico where preColumbian customs are still maintained and the various Mayan languages are still spoken. Tom took 26 rolls of film during the trip, which he is eager to share with his students and colleagues.

Over Christmas Dee Anne Wymer completed her report of the archaeological work done at the Serpent Mound in Ohio during the summer of 1991. The report has been submitted to the journal AMERICAN ANTIQUITY for publication. Dee Anne is receiving preliminary radiocarbon dates from the Serpent Mound site which seem to confirm her suspicions about the site, but she is not ready to publish the dates until all the

samples she sent out have been analyzed.

Dave Minderhout received the news that the entries he had submitted to the new ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MULTICULTURALISM have been accepted for inclusion in the volume. The encyclopedia is scheduled to be published by Salem Press during the summer of 1993.