


PARTICIPANT OBSERVER



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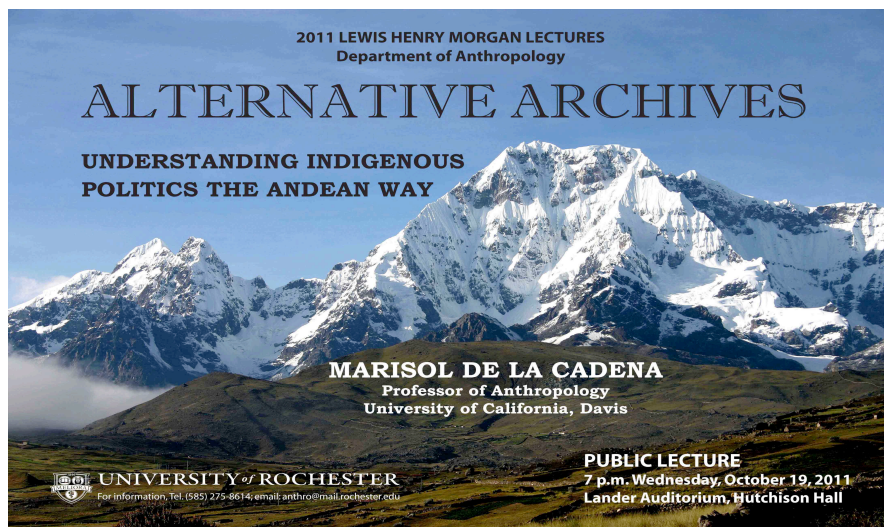
LHM Lecture: “Alternative Archives: Understanding Indigenous Politics the Andean Way” Marisol de la Cadena

Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Davis

Delivers 50th Morgan Lectures October 19, 2011

by Dan Reichman (Assistant Professor of Anthropology)

What counts as history? When Western scholars attempt to understand how non-Western peoples explain their histories, what makes an historical archive? On Wednesday, October 19th, Marisol de la Cadena, Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Davis, explored these questions and more in the 50th edition of the Lewis Henry Morgan Lecture Series. Professor de la Cadena's lectures were based on fieldwork with two renowned father-and-son healers in the Peruvian Andes, Mariano and Nazario Turpo. A generation later, Mariano's son, Nazario, became something of an international celebrity, using his skill as a shaman to fight for the rights of native Andeans by working with tourist groups, non-governmental organizations, and the Peruvian state, which now embraced native Andeans as a valued symbol of the country's multicultural identity. In the 1950s and 60s, Mariano, the father, was instrumental in the Peruvian land reform movement, which ended a system of debt peonage under which native people were essentially bound to the *hacienda* on which they were born. *(Continues on next page)*





Marisol de la Cadena, Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Davis presented The **2011 LEWIS HENRY MORGAN LECTURE** titled "Alternative Archives: Understanding Indigenous Politics the Andean Way" on October 19, 2011.

LHM Lecture Continued

Through the biographies of these remarkable individuals, de la Cadena traces macro-level changes in the politics of indigenous people in Peru. In less than fifty years, native peoples went from being denied most basic rights to being celebrated as part of the very core of Peruvian life.

Over the course of her work with the Turpos, de la Cadena was led to reconsider how she thought about history. She had access to Mariano Turpo's archive of paperwork that documented his role in the land reform, yet Turpo continually emphasized that this archive was "just paper" that was more valuable as a fire-starter than as a means to understand history. For Turpo, historical change was always the result of the power of inanimate spirit-beings, like the sacred mountain Apu Ausangate that actually made things happen in the world. De la Cadena uses this alternative vision of historical causality to consider what a "decolonized" vision of indigenous history would look like.

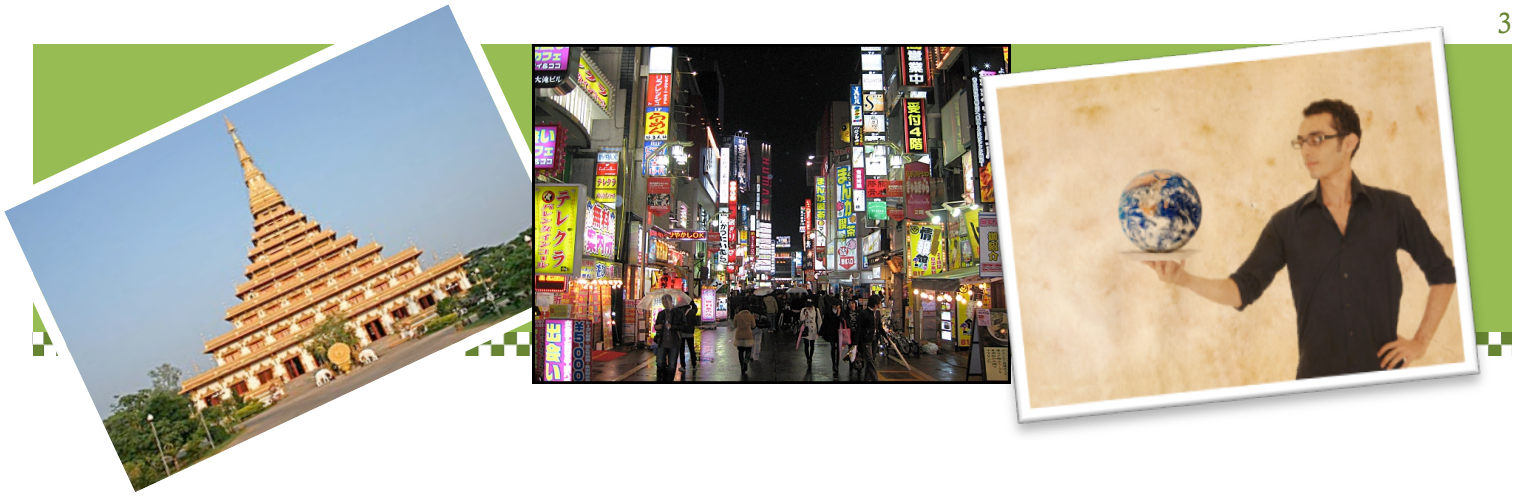
De la Cadena's lecture carried on one of Lewis Henry Morgan's most basic insights: that a serious encounter with indigenous systems of knowledge and belief can lead us to reimagine and reconsider core assumptions of Western thought. Her talk was a welcome and stimulating challenge to commonly held definitions of history.

First-Year Reflections

You Want to Study What?

by Brittany Sherman (2015)

When I first started telling everyone that I wanted to major in anthropology I was met with blank looks - "You want to major in what?" Most didn't even know what it was and the few that did (or thought they did) always asked me if I was going to "be like the scientist lady on the TV show *Bones*". When I chose to study anthro I assumed that I knew exactly what being an anthropologist entailed: traveling the world, study interesting people, and writing about it all. However after my first semester taking 101 I realized that there is so much more to the discipline. To study anthropology is to cultivate a new mindset and learn to re-evaluate how you look at the world. The term cultural relativism, which we learned the first day of class, was new to me. I didn't truly grasp the importance of the term until the professor and TA's put on a skit for us, reenacting the traditional welcome ceremony of an exotic South American tribe. To my mind, the skit appeared to depict male supremacy and female deference within the group: only men were allowed to wash their hands before eating and the women were sitting closer to the ground. While in America we often think of the ground as dirty and impure, to this tribe the dirt was life giving and sacred. This particular tribe views women as pure and natural and therefore more connected with sacredness of earth. Men would pollute the ground and food, and therefore had to wash. Obviously, things aren't always what they appear to be - we each have our own cultural lens through which we view the world and it can color how we perceive others. Being able to interact, observe, and interpret effectively requires you to set aside your own personal beliefs - a beneficial lesson for anyone to learn, but one especially crucial for aspiring anthropologists. If my first anthro class was this eye opening, I can only imagine what else is to come.



Studies & Fellowships Abroad

First-Year Reflections Continued

Discovering My Anthropological Lens

by Andrew Baca (2015)

Living in the heart of the Midwest, I can attest to having a strong connection with nature, but not necessarily the same connection with diversity. Although kindness and politeness are two rural-American values instilled in every young boy from my area, understanding is a trait that can surprisingly be ignored. Arriving on the first day of class, I situated myself in the front row before a professor proclaiming that this course would change the way I viewed the world. Although I accepted these claims with a healthy dose of skepticism, my interest had undeniably been piqued. As the semester progressed, my worldview began to slowly transform and I started to survey the world through a different interpretive lens. As concepts of kinship and hegemony were introduced, I found myself making valuable connections between the academic material and the real world. Where I had once seen polarizing differences as divisions between groups of people, I now perceive these distinctions as integral parts of our shared humanity. What were once dissimilarities are now simply distinct manifestations of our commonality. The same boy who planned to study the natural sciences has seen a full turn-around in his interests. I now see a major in anthropology as both inevitable and exciting. My professor was right: Cultural Anthropology really did change the way I viewed the world.

Preparing for Khon Kaen, Thailand Spring 2012

By Anaise Williams (2013)

I was first attracted to anthropology because of the way the field requires one to think. After reading ethnographies and speaking to anthropologists, it became apparent that to be successful in this academic area is to be humble, unbiased, approachable, attentive to detail, and resilient. I have always been interested in people with different backgrounds, ideologies, cultural traditions and outlooks. However I've learned from taking anthropology classes that it is only the first part of being able to study culture. The second part is the challenging ability to balance and acknowledge your own morals, background and feelings and an attitude of not being ethnocentric, judgmental, or invasive. The more different the studied culture is from your own, the more difficult it can be. This winter I'm going to Thailand, I am incredibly excited because I have never visited anywhere besides Europe. In many ways I feel more comfortable with my own culture after studying anthropology, including its attributes and its flaws. This I believe is actually the first step to understanding the values and traditions of a foreign community, which I hope to accomplish while studying abroad.

Studies & Fellowships Abroad Continued

Two Months From Tokyo Spring '12 and Fall'12

by Ramsey Ismail (2013)

Lately I've been waking up in the middle of the night, my sleep punctuated by dreams of some obscure flight to Tokyo, in which I land and walk through the halls of the UofR surrounded by what seems to be only Japanese people. The decision to study abroad is definitely easier to make than to follow through with. In retrospect the duration seemed like a long vacation, in preparation it seems like a lifetime. However, even in my state of pre-departure nerves, I know anthropology has prepared me for this trip beyond any of the other disciplines I have studied. First and foremost, it has taught me to remain humble in the face of a new cultural experience. My home-stay packet reads that many Americans go abroad expecting a family that adjusts to them, and whose structure and daily life mimics theirs, with only racial and linguistic difference. Even though I may find it difficult to adjust to a family schedule in a different cultural context, I know that this will be a crucial part of my study abroad. This aspect of my immersive experience will give me at least some idea of how people live in Japan.

I know I'm bound to feel homesick and alienated at a certain point in time, but reading a work like "Deep Play" lets me know that at some point, I will not feel like a complete outsider. It also assures me that in time I will be able to connect with the people around me. Furthermore, I know to put myself into a culturally relative position. In the case that I encounter a practice I disagree with, anthropology has prepared me to inquire as to why it might exist in the first place. I've wanted to go to Japan since I was really young, and after taking anthropology classes for three years, and with a couple of months until I go, I feel much better prepared to engage with and learn from a different culture.

Humanity in Action Fellowship in Berlin Summer 2011

by Mara Chinelli (2012 and Take-Five Scholar)

As I sit down to reflect on my summer in Berlin with Humanity in Action (HIA), I realize how many moments of intellectual fulfillment and inspiration I had throughout the experience. Where can I start? As soon as I arrived, I quickly became acclimated to the typical HIA schedule of lectures, seminars and engaging speakers. We began with a focus on the Holocaust and national collective memory, and then shifted gears to the current debates on German migration, education, and assimilation. Throughout the program, I became acquainted with individuals and organizations of German civil society. I acquired an understanding of the challenges they face in working towards social change in their communities. Each speaker incited extensive conversations that continued as we shuffled onto the U-Bahn in between sessions.

Overall getting to know my fellow HIA fellows from Bosnia, Germany, Poland, Ukraine and the U.S. made my experience most enriching. Before beginning the program, I did not know the extent to which I would be both engaged and challenged by a dynamic group of young people. Every seminar and discussion revealed to me the unique intellectual qualities of my new colleagues and friends. Furthermore, I developed an appreciation for each fellow's distinct perspective on the various issues we investigated. I cannot compare the kind of mutual respect I felt amongst them to any other experience I have had learning in a group setting. I honestly believe that in no other context would I have obtained the kind of education I received this summer in Berlin. Critical engagement, collaboration and reflection are the qualities that distinguish the HIA program from other educational experiences in my academic career.

Alumni Updates

Harry Melkonian (BA 1971)

Harry Melkonian was awarded a doctorate in law from Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia in April 2010. The title of his thesis was *Free Speech and the Opportunity for Convergence of English and American Defamation Law*. Harry adds that he continues to teach and practice media law in Sydney.

Brad Henson (BA 2005)

After attending the U of R, I went to law school, spent a year as a law clerk to a trial judge, and have since been working as a public defender in the Washington, D.C. area. Undergraduate coursework in anthropology attuned me to the role culture plays in the motivations of many of my clients, regardless of their nationality. It is much easier to understand actions and ideas of someone that are divergent from one's own when you come to the table with an open and inquisitive mind. I credit the department with helping to foster that approach in all its students. Yet another example of the many uses to which one can put a B.A. in anthro!

Adam Machson-Carter (BA 2007)

Hello! Whew, it has been a while. It's been a busy few years since I last saw everyone. (Has it been three years?) I think the last time I saw Professor Gibson & Carter I had just returned from 3 months of traveling in Guatemala and Mexico... Well, since then I've been working at non-profits in Boston and organizing in all kinds of different ways, from organizing a delegation last year that brought 250 youth and adults to the US Social Forum in Detroit, MI to now working at non-profit in Somerville, MA supporting a group of youth to do Environmental Justice work. But the non-profit road has been hard and unstable so after a couple years of this work, I am beginning to think about returning to school. I am considering masters and doctoral programs, mostly in education, with the eventual goal of teaching either in high school or college. I continue to stay connected to David Ladon (BA 2007) and Dan Rudolph (BA 2007), both of whom live here in Jamaica Plain. Dave is now in three bands (His main band "The Doctor's Fox", a children's band named "Animal Farm," and a third project) and continues to teach after school in Brookline. Dan has just finished two years of teaching middle school at a school in Boston and is now making plans to get his MFA in Creative Writing! I hope all is well in the Anthro department and in Rochester. I miss the place dearly, from Lilac Festival to just thinking about the streets, friends, protests, and lots of learning. I hope to see you all soon. And if you are ever in Boston, please look me/us up!

Colette Carmouche (BA 2008)

I've found my niche for the time being. I'm usually a little bit restless, so I'm always on the look out for new adventures. I'm working on a certificate in Historic Preservation, which I've been enjoying and once that is complete I will have permanent status for the National Park Service. I'll have more flexibility to work at other NPS sites after that or take a break and start working on a masters. But all and all I'm blessed and glad to be working within the anthro field and enjoying my time in DC.

Joanna Fischer (BA 2010)

Johanna Fischer is currently living and working as a volunteer English teacher at a local government community center in Ibarra, Ecuador. Ibarra is a small city in the Andes 2.5 hours north of Quito, Ecuador's capital and 2 hours south of the Colombian border. She is excited to be living here with a host family, speaking as much Spanish as possible and to finally be rid of her uninspiring office job. After finishing her year here she will likely return to the States to live in the NYC area and apply to graduate school for social work. She continues to think about and use anthropology every day and hopes to continue doing so in the realm of social work and women's rights - and maybe, someday, graduate school for anthropology. Feel free to check out her blog about her time in Ecuador at <http://johannamitaddelmundo.wordpress.com>.



Professor Emeritus Grace Gredys Harris Dies at 85

Grace Gredys Harris, professor emeritus of anthropology and of religion at the University of Rochester, died Dec. 20. She was 85.

Professor Harris arrived at the UR in 1961, and was appointed a full-time associate professor by 1968. She rose to professor in 1977 and served as department chair from 1977 to 1983. She helped establish the doctoral program in anthropology in 1963.

Her struggle for a professional career in the University informed her "concern about the place of women in academia," says Dean Harper, professor emeritus of sociology, former colleague, and friend for many decades.

Professor Harris's former colleagues say she was a maverick in many ways. She made her mark initially exploring "spirit possession" among the Taita of Kenya. Her 1957 paper describing the symbolism of that ritual has been widely cited by anthropologists.

A memorial service will be held at the Chapel of the Episcopal Church Home on Thursday, April 12, 2012 at 3:30.

Faculty Updates

Interview with Professor John Osburg

by Ramsey Ismail (2013)

When I sat down to interview Professor John Osburg in November, I began with the key question:

"Why Anthropology"? He replied that as someone interested in people and places, he had found himself drawn to it as an undergraduate. Professor Osburg also mentioned that he appreciated the theoretical side of the discipline. He discovered his research interests while teaching English in China, where he encountered

a contradiction in the values of a wealthy entrepreneurial class existing in a society devoted to socialism. Professor Osburg added that the issue was brought to his attention by some of his students, which helped him develop a research question. Since arriving to the University of Rochester, he noted that the most resonant part of his first year teaching has been seeing students process anthropological questions he has been asking for a long time. While engaging them in anthropology, he jokes: "It's like doing fieldwork on a daily basis." Professor Osburg also mentioned that teaching continues to help him approach his research in new ways, and has given him food for thought as he makes his final revisions on his book "Anxious Wealth: Money and Morality Among Chinese New-Rich." In the future, he hopes to continue tracing the issue of the "moral vacuum" in the Chinese economy.



2011 American Anthropology Association Conference

AAA Trip Fall 2011

by Ramsey Ismail (2013)

Going to the AAA's was a unique experience for undergraduate anthro majors. After looking at the conference schedule, we all became excited to hear from anthropologists whose texts we have read in class. While the conference topics engaged each of our different interests, it was definitely significant in all of our college experiences. For the freshmen, getting such early exposure to the variety of issues relevant in contemporary anthropology was eye opening. As an upper-classmen with an area interest in Japan, I was able to see what anthropologists are researching there, and the types of questions they are asking. For example, hearing about post-tsunami projects and the depth of Japanese material culture gave me ideas about potential research questions related to the issue. I found that Anne Allison's talk was the most insightful because it clarified some critical questions to several subject matters I previously had trouble understanding. Furthermore, her presentations gave me an idea about contemporary ethnography being done in Japan, in addition to specific subjects I might want to examine there in the future. To have been able to learn about the broad scope of anthropological literature in an area of my interest was totally worth waiting until Sunday night to do my Chinese homework.

2011 Anthropology Undergraduate Research Grant

Identity and Agency: Where Farm Work and Fieldwork Converge

by Sorchha Dundas (2012)

As an anthropology major, I perceive my studies to be a form of translation between cultures—a way to understand people from other places and practices. However, my cultural understanding was stretched beyond the theories of anthropology and the texts of ethnography this summer as I interned with the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program (VRRP) and lived with a newly resettled Bhutanese family who had spent the past 19 years in a refugee camp in Nepal. My academic interest in refugees stems from an anthropology course, *War and Migration*, in which I read about refugee policy, and the experiences and identities of those who are forced to leave their homes. Conducting my own ethnographic research, made possible by the Samuel's Award, I analyzed agriculture as a means of perpetuating traditional culture and integrating refugees into a local environment. Facing the reality of refugee experiences and immersing myself in this culture through a home stay was not an easy experience as I became directly involved in the resettlement process of a family who had suffered torture and statelessness and was now trying to gain a foothold in a new country. Though my research began with simple questions about the relationship that refugees form with the new environment within which they are resettled, I became very aware of my own assumptions in asking these questions. While I had originally seen agriculture as a means through which refugees gain agency by having the power to produce their own food, my own idealist views were challenged through the reality I faced at home as well as through my interactions with humanitarian organizations. These observations and interactions with refugees and humanitarian agencies have led to my current research question that seeks to understand the ways in which agency is created and destroyed within the refugee identity.

Opening the Research VALVE

By Byron Miller (2012)

As I sat on Seattle's King's County bus #245, it occurred to me that every budding anthropologist must make a trip like this. It's the first step out into the field that is, though perhaps not under the same circumstances or to the same ends, nevertheless incredibly important. The space outside of the comfortable and familiar is a place of incredible intellectual growth, and to get there I'd spent the last thirty-six hours in transit on nearly every form of public and private transportation known to man. My nerves were fried, my wallet was empty, and the weight of the entire discipline seemed to hang over me. I was anxious, as the first round of interviews I'd done at another company earlier that day had been difficult and awkward, and it took the remainder of my energy to simply convince myself that it wasn't a reflection of my preparedness or ability. Though strangely enough, in the face of all of this, I found a sort of lunatic calm. It was adventurous and exciting, was it not? I was about to be allowed unprecedented – at least in my life – access to a community that I'd worked incredibly hard to obtain. I had hundreds of questions that I wanted to ask, and I knew many more would spring up in conversation. The day was only half over, and I'd already been able to relate my observations to concepts present in the texts I'd read. As students we are incredibly fortunate that the anthropology department, and by extension the University as a whole, recognizes the importance of student research. I'm thankful for the encouragement and support that the faculty and staff offered to me in my trip to Valve Software, and the genuine interest that the Valve employees showed for my research.

The Participant Observer

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