

Dear Lilia, I looked over your thesis material and I was quite impressed. Your use of English is now quite sophisticated. YOU NEED TO LOOK AT SOME OF THE STUDIES SUMMARIZED IN THE CHAPTER ON CULTURAL ECOLOGY IN THE MAYA AREA IN MY THESIS -- IT WAS NOT PUBLISHED IN THE TULANE VOLUME BUT VIRGINIA OCHOA'S TRANSLATION CONTAINS THE CHAPTER. I CAN SEND THIS TO YOU IF YOU DO NOT ALREADY HAVE IT. I CAN'T EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NEW RADAR IMAGERY FOR STUDIES OF CULTURAL ECOLOGY IN Q.R. ENOUGH. I NEED TO MAKE BLOW UP PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE IMAGERY AND TAKE THEM DOWN WITH ME ON MY NEXT TRIP. It is difficult to read about the theoretical framework when you do not know what a study is about. Therefore you need an introductory chapter incorporating some of the ideas in Chapter 2. Let's see if I can give you a perspective on the history of anthropological ecology.

Yes I have found your thesis chapter, as you already have my abstract, I don't see where I can talk about agricultura de roza, but only as an aspect of land management and utilization of lands on good soils. In your thesis and as still is maintain by gomez pompa today and his studies in quintana roo la agricultura de roza no es destructivo. And it is interesting the diverse amount of people number (11 to 30), to have been fed per km2 from this agricultura de roza. Is also important for location and dispersment of good soils and cenotes. According to my last talks with scott I will probably be using cenotes data and soils mapping provided by Scott Fedick in the yalahau region.

First of all, there is a deep divide in Anthropology between materialists and idealists: Materialists insist that anthropology is a natural science and that humans are part of the animal kingdom. To understand any animal species, you have to learn how that species gets its food from the environment and how the characteristics of the species - fang, claw, and so on, help the animal eat (survive). Therefore to understand human groups, you must learn how their behavior helps them get their necessities from the environment. Idealists insist that humans are different from the animals because humans think. In order to understand humans, you must understand their thinking, their motivations, and their ideology. Why did the Maya create the monumental architecture and art that makes them a civilization? [Sociologists insist that by themselves, humans are weak and puny but in groups they have the strength to move mountains. For that reason, the essence of human behavior is social organization. By the way, Human Ecology usually refers to Sociological

Studies of the different areas in a city.] Anyway materialists hate idealists and vice versa. Materialists are often equated with communists in the United States especially when stratification is under discussion. Materialists view religion as mumbo-jumbo or chicanery to fool the masses while religion is view as the strongest human motivation by the idealists. The anthropologists at Harvard and Tulane are strongly idealist and so you will hear little about Marvin Harris from Tulane students. I have always my students that there are three main ideas in anthropology. The following words are from the syllabus that I made up for an introduction to anthropology class: Anthropology builds empathy for other peoples and tolerance for foreign life styles by examining reasons for human similarities and differences. We emphasize three principles:

- 1) Culture constitutes learned behavior. [THIS IS THE MAIN IDEA OF THE BOASIAN SCHOOL OF AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGY] Anthropologists entertain their students by recounting exotic ways of native peoples. The films and readings they assign show that some of our most cherished expectations about how humans should live, die, work, carry on business, fight, eat, perform bodily functions and pray are violated by the traditional behavior of other societies. Those who have adopted practices contrary to our own, however, insist that their conduct is right and correct. When people accept and practice a custom, they assume that their way of doing things is the best and the "natural" manner to act.

Specific language is very important for any study, in my case i think the anthropological uses of learned behavior i see comes since the boasian school. Although it is a concept i am not focusing on but it is related to behavior or conduct. In my research i have as my Object of study: cenotes-distances- minimal effort. Research Question: transmittion of AIK (accumulated intergenerational knowledge).

There are very few universal human patterns of behavior, however, so it is hard to argue that any one pattern for getting things done reflects "human nature". When students begin to play their future roles on a global stage, they must remember that most people on earth do not to think or act exactly like members of our own society. Moreover, their exotic ways are not necessarily inferior to our own.

Í think í would like to find out more about this human patterns of behavior do you recomend some reading? And absolutely, people says one thing but does another, this is reflected in the archaeological remains, í am interested in how they behave in relation with resources utilization and how the use and transmittion did travel, not in how they tought.

Anthropologists believe that the human brain is a "blank slate" at birth. Adults fill the minds of babies with information about how to cope with their natural and social environment. As they grow, children learn special ways of living from their society. This explains why we have a world filled with different customs. Anthropologists base their thinking about human diversity on the proposition that the ancestors of a population invent or modify a life style and then teach it to their offspring. Socially acceptable human behavior is therefore learned and not instinctive or innate. Any human child can learn the ways of any tribe or nation. Orphans raised in typical American homes learn to speak, eat and behave like Americans, even if their natural parents were Chinese or Transylvanian. This proves that a culture or way of life is the social heritage of a human population rather than its genetic or biological inheritance. Life styles are learned and not part of an individual's racial or genetic makeup. Different kinds of human existence found around the world constitute social traditions that one generation teaches to the next. 2) The way of life of a people or culture is a system of interrelated parts. [THIS IS THE BASIC IDEA IN FUNCTIONALISM]. A culture forms a coherent, integrated whole that should be studied as a comprehensive package rather than piecemeal. Social scientists explain apparently incomprehensible human behavior by showing how it is linked to other ways of thinking and acting. For example, malls are important shopping places in the USA because autos make individual transport convenient. Understanding foreigner custom and tradition requires finding out how one kind of behavior is tied to other aspects of life. Cultural anthropology is the study of these links.

Í don't think í am focusing on ways of thinking and or acting, but yes, í am interested in how they utilized resources, in specific cenotes. would this be taking action upon them? Then í will be doing cultural anthropology. But if í see culture terms and use culture terminology as an adaptive system then í will be doing anthropological ecology. Í am not sure yet if í want to talk of adaptation. Í think at some point í am. But more emphasized in how this

adaptation it is based on the knowledge of the resources available to be utilized.

3. Culture is an adaptive system. [THIS IS THE MAIN IDEA IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ECOLOGY.] The living and working patterns that together form a culture serve to facilitate human life in the environment occupied by a society. All humans must eat, and the most basic techniques for survival that they learn are the ways to get food from nature. Different environments require different technologies and different ways of organizing people. The core behavior of a culture enables a society to exist in their part of the world. Adaptation is the change in life forms that make them better suited to use the resources in their ecological niche - the part of the food chain they exploit. Cattle evolved special stomachs to digest grass and wolves developed legs to catch up with rabbits and teeth for eating their prey; these of course are anatomical changes. Most human adaptations, however, are cultural changes: Eskimos have perfected the techniques for seal hunting and the San of the Kalahari Desert have learned to recognize the best wild food plants. [PERHAPS TODAY WE SHOULD ADD A FOURTH PRINCIPLE TO COVER STRUCTURALISM - THE IDEA THAT UNDER THE VENEER OF CULTURE, ALL HUMANS THINK BY USING THE SAME PROCESS - WHICH IS COMPARING, CONTRASTING AND SYNTHESIZING OPPOSITE: WE CANNOT DEFINE GOOD EXCEPT AS THE OPPOSITE OF BAD, BEAUTIFUL MEANS THE OPPOSITE OF UGLY, AND SO ON]

This is very important for as a base for my research. That all humans think by using the same process of comparing, contrasting and synthesizing. But again I don't want to use too often the term think but the use of the term utilization, which is based on the same process of thinking, selecting or comparing, decision-making, then utilizing. Can you explain more about this fourth principle, is it a principle within structuralism?

The three fundamental principles of anthropology explain human diversity: People around the world have different customs and traditions: 1) because they have been taught differently, 2) because their rules for doing things are linked together, forming an internally consistent package, and 3) because their culture is suitable for existence in their geographical setting. THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL ECOLOGY SEMINAR I TOOK IN 1970 FROM ROBERT DENTAN Robert Dentan is famous for his excellent book on the Semai, a mountain people in Malaysia. I will try to get you a copy one if I can. He presented an

excellent summary of anthropological ecology at the start of the seminar by dividing the field into three parts: 1. Cultural Evolution including the 19th century thinkers such as Morgan and Tylor, sometimes called Unilinear Evolutionists (perhaps we should add the later and more sophisticated neo-evolutionism of Leslie A. White) and the Multilinear Cultural Evolution of Julian Steward (heavily influenced by Karl Wittfogel). 2. Cultural Ethology [ethology is the study of behavior], a school of thought that is often called "Cultural Ecology" when perhaps it should carry the name "Non-cultural Ecology" as advocated by Marvin Harris, Anthony Vayda, and Roy Rappaport. [I AM VERY SURPRISED THAT YOUR BIBLIOGRAPHY DOES NOT MENTION HARRIS.] This school is dedicated to the study of what people do and not what people say they do. It is modeled on the study of human primates: you cannot ask a monkey what he is doing or why he is doing it; instead all you can do is watch what the monkey does and observe how that behavior helps the monkey exploit his environment. 3. Ethnoecology, the study of relationships between humans and their environment based on linguistics. The model for this kind of research was the study of Hanunóo [a group in the Philippines] swidden cultivation which suggested that slash-and-burn farmers practiced patterns of behavior designed to conserve the forest (in contrast to the general notion that milpa horticulture is wasteful and inefficient).

Í probably have not read et all about Harris but í have about Vayda and Rapaport. You got a book for me while here in merida on el desarrollo de la teoria antropologica by Harris. And has a last chapter on cultural materialism: cultural ecology. So í am reading this.

As í am understanding anthropological ecology trend or branch includes the cultural ecology school, which focuses more in what people do more than in what people says they do. Í want to analyze the location of what people do reflected in sites locations, in relation with the location of cenotes within the sites.

In the other hand, ethnoecology, a discipline between humans and environment based on linguistics relates to what í want to do, by bringing up the diverse terminology that indigenous gave to soils conditions. And how certain terminology upon these resources was transformed into information that could be transmitted.

My own views on the history of cultural ecology were more or less rejected by Robert Wauchope - at least he did not publish the chapter on cultural ecology

in the Maya area with my thesis - in part at least because it was particularly long. I think you have a copy with Virginia Ochoa's translation into Spanish. I insisted that the idea of the Classic Maya collapse and the Black Legend (writings dedicated to explaining the early colonial population decline in New Spain) were some of the oldest problems in the study of cultural ecology and an inspiration for later work. After the Biologia Centrali Americana outlined the Classic Maya Collapse problem, Cook, Cooke, Morley and many others tried to explain the collapse in environmental terms. Ok, I have written you quite a bit. I hope you find some of these notions helpful. I think that it is important for you to read some of Julian Steward's work directly; I will try to find something that is quick and easy. You need to know more about the work of Marvin Harris (even if it gets you into trouble with your instructors) - whose is at his best showing that the sacred cow complex in India is perfectly well understood in ecological terms. I think his Wars, Witches, Cows and Pig has been translated into Spanish; if not, the English is not too difficult. Basically he says that wars are fought over scarce resources related to population growth; Witches were scapegoats used by the medieval elite to divert the attention of people from their problems just as Bush is using Gay marriage as an issue to divert attention from Iraq, etc. Cows refers to his studies of the Sacred Cows in India and Pigs recounts the Rappoport study of the Melanesian Great Pig Feasts.

If possibly, according to soils survey provided by scott and photo imagery will allow to see if studies on soils are related to scarcity of good ones, and or are related to poor other resources in the area of study.

Thank you very much for your continuous support.

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