

# Southern Anthropologist



INSIDE: Special thoughts on Anorexia nervosa

Volume 28, No. 2, Spring 2002

# Southern Anthropologist

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Spring 2002]

# Southern Anthropologist

Volume 28 Number 2  
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## Editor's Corner

Welcome to the Spring 2002 issue!

This issue brings us the last Student Paper Competition winner paper from last Spring's Annual Meetings, and that is Patrick Hayden's wrestling with campus issues in "Selfhood at Sewanee." I am pleased to continue the Society's tradition of publishing the finest writing by the up and coming anthropological generation, and look forward to this spring's papers, which are being evaluated as we read and write.

Special section on Anorexia Nervosa

This issue also features a special section on Anorexia, and includes two papers presented in Nashville that caught my attention both in themselves and also as part of an ongoing anthropological discussion about the human body and its representations and modifications and the relationships between individual bodies and cultural representations of them (and modifications to make them fit perceived norms more closely).

According to the **refence**

**Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders**, Fourth Edition (also known as DSM-IV-TR), published by the American Psychiatric Association (2000), Anorexia nervosa is classified as an eating disorder, Section 307, and the Diagnostic category is Eating Disorders.. Diagnostic Features include:

The essential features of Anorexia Nervosa are that the individual refuses to maintain a minimally normal body weight, is intensely afraid of gaining

weight, and exhibits a significant disturbance in the shape or size of his or her body. In addition, postmenarcheal females with this disorder are amenorrheic. (DSM IV TR 2000: 583)

Both Smith and O'Connor in their contributions to this issue think that there is more to anorexia than meets the clinical eye and that anthropologists can make significant contributions to thinking about it. For details on their thinking, I refer you to their papers! Read on!

### Erratum

As eagle-eyed readers have noticed about the past issue of this publication (Vol, 28, No. 1), the Table of Contents was incorrect: the author of the article "Heritage Tourism and the Historical Present: African at Snee Farm Plantation" was Antoinette Jackson of the University of Florida, **not** Ms Tarkinton, whose paper was in the previous issue. My apologies to Ms Jackson.

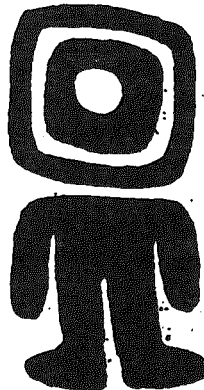
### Humor

Our staff cartoonist, Walt DisMee, has provided us with his "Kelvin and Hobs" take on modern students at the end of this issue!

### Keep in touch!

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# President's Column

Barbara Hendry  
Georgia Southern University

## Teaching in Troubled Times:

### Anthropologists Deal with September 11

What were you doing when you heard about the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11? For many of us who are students or faculty, we were sitting in a classroom, or teaching or about to teach a class. Like most institutions, my university canceled classes after noon on the eleventh, and for a couple of hours for a memorial service on Friday. We returned to classes during the rest of that week. I and most of my colleagues felt compelled to say something about the world-changing events on everyone's minds, but carefully considered what to say and how to say it.

Since then, many faculty have continued to seek strategies and resources for integrating the events of September 11, the subsequent War on Terrorism, and a myriad of related topics, into their classes. I propose that SAS members — students, faculty, and others — might want to share ideas and materials for learning and teaching about these troubled times. Several SAS-L Email listserv subscribers have already started such a conversation. This Email discussion list, as well as the *Southern Anthropologist*, could be used for further

exchanges (see instructions for joining SAS-L at the SAS website, [www.smcm.edu/sas](http://www.smcm.edu/sas)). My comments and those submitted to SAS-L by Melinda Wagner, Dan Ingersoll, Susan Stans, and John Studstill are summarized below, along with suggestions about resources noted in recent issues of the *Anthropology News* and elsewhere.

**1. History and stereotypes:** In the days following 9/11, Wagner and Hendry used the treatment of Japanese Americans after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and the establishment of the relocation camps, to promote discussion about the dangers of stereotyping people who looked Middle Eastern or Muslim as terrorists. Students talked about such incidents at both national and local levels, and about their potential roles in quelling them. Along these lines, Studstill recommended that we work against the simplistic dichotomizing of groups into "good" and "evil" by looking "at the historical and social context for causes, revitalization movements of the past, and U.S. relations with people and nations of the Middle East." A cross-cultural comparison of revitalization movements might be a fruitful way to frame discussions about Al Qaeda

and similar groups.

**2. Ritual and Symbolism:** Ingersoll reported that he “changed the order of class lectures and introduced Durkheimian interpretation of ritual to consider the instant profusion of flags, etc.” in his class last semester. Noting the upsurge in attendance at religious services following 9/11, and the multitude of memorial services that were organized, Hendry discussed the “functions” of ritual in providing meaning and comfort, and in promoting *communitas*. In a class on nation building, the roles of rituals, symbols such as flags and anthems, and the creation of distinctive “others” through warfare and other strategies, were discussed as critical components in fostering national sentiment, using examples from the responses to 9/11. Current attempts to promote a national sentiment in Afghanistan across disparate and traditionally hostile groups could also effectively be used to demonstrate processes of nation building.

**3. Conflict Studies:** Students are doing class projects on religion and conflict in Wagner’s Anthropology of Religion class this semester. She notes that “the WTC situation is one of the conflicts; still another one is the conservative Christian interpretation of the WTC versus mainstream America’s interpretation.” Former SAS President Alvin W. Wolfe discusses the usefulness of network analysis for developing programs for conflict resolution and prevention in light of the events of 9/11 in

the Nov. 2001 issue of *Anthropology News* (p. 17). A good resource for teaching on this topic is the SAS Proceedings volume, *Contributions of Anthropology to Conflict Resolution*, co-edited by Wolfe and Honggang Yang (1996 U of GA Press).

To promote critical thinking on the topic of terrorism, Jeffrey Sluka’s edited volume, *Death Squad: The Anthropology of State Terror* (1999, U of PA Press) is recommended. Several authors in this volume consider the role of the United States in supporting regimes which perpetrate terrorism on their own people in various parts of the world.

**4. Folklore and Practice:** Stans and her students discussed urban legends which have developed around the events of 9/11 (e.g. “A picture from an email ... ‘Tourist Guy,’ of someone having his picture taken on top of the WTC with a picture of the plane below.”). This suggests the possibility of having students document popular responses to the events. The American Folklife Center already completed such a project, by collecting audio recordings of immediate reactions, as well as peoples’ homemade memorial creations placed at the WTC and Pentagon sites (Hardin and Hoog, *Anthropology News*, Nov. 2001, p. 14). This project, as well as the efforts of archeologists to organize volunteers to help sort through the debris from the WTC at the Staten Island landfill (*AN*, Nov. 2001, p. 17), provide examples

of the uses of anthropological skills in documenting the events for posterity.

**5. Additional Resources:** Recent issues of the *Anthropology News* (Nov. 2001 - Feb. 2002) contain a variety of provocative pieces on various topics related to 9/11 and the aftermath. Several potentially useful resources are also cited:

\* *September 11: Contexts and Consequences*, a 600 page anthology designed for students and the general public who have little knowledge about US/Arab and Muslim relations before 9/11. This was produced by two graduate students at UC-Berkeley (*AN*, Feb. 2002, p. 24).

\*The Middle East section of the AAA has set up a new website on the Sept. 11 tragedy ([http://people.hofstra.edu/faculty/daniel\\_varisco/wtc.htm](http://people.hofstra.edu/faculty/daniel_varisco/wtc.htm)) with links to Web sources (*AN*, Dec. 2001, p. 48).

\*The Social Science Research Council created a website "After September 11: Perspectives from Social Sciences" ([www.ssrc.org/sept11](http://www.ssrc.org/sept11)) (*AN*, Jan. 2002, p. 13).

\*Lutz (*AN*, Feb. 2002, p. 6) suggests the need to critically analyze the news and to seek alternative sources, citing the Websites [www.pitt.edu/~ttwiss/irtf/Alternative.html](http://www.pitt.edu/~ttwiss/irtf/Alternative.html) and [www.agmnews.org/media\\_links.html](http://www.agmnews.org/media_links.html).

In addition to these sources, William C. Young, a colleague who specializes in the anthropology of the Middle East, recommends Arthur Goldschmidt Jr.'s *A Concise History of the Middle East* (2001, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., Westview) for general background informa-

tion.

Florida State University set up a Teach-In Website about September 11 and related topics (<http://www.fsu.edu/~wtcteach/FSU%20meetings.htm>) which contains interesting comments from a Sept. 21, 2001 forum by FSU anthropologists (Robert Shanafelt, personal communication).

Teaching students about anthropological perspectives related to these recent and current events can equip them to more critically evaluate the often oversimplified and dichotomizing rhetoric they hear from politicians and in the media. In addition to sharing ideas, sources, and strategies for teaching, we might also consider the influences of political ideologies and theoretical orientations on our selection of class materials. I hope this column will catalyze continued discussion and debate.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Hearty thanks to those most directly responsible for the success of this year's annual meeting: Lisa Lefler, Local Arrangements Chair, Margaret Bender, Program Chair and Key Symposium Organizer, and Beth Higgs, Student Paper Competition Chair. Kudos to the many others who devote time and energy to the SAS. This entirely member-run organization depends on individuals to volunteer for a variety of tasks, so contact me or another SAS officer if you would like to become more involved.

The 2003 Meetings will take place in February in Baton Rouge, La., and are being organized by Miles Richardson and Helen Regis. Helen Regis will also organize the Key Symposium. We need meeting places and Key Symposiums for 2004 and beyond. Also, consider contributing to the

SAS endowment fund, maintained by Max White, if you have not yet done so. This fund will help to pay for the student paper competition awards and Mooney award. It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve as President of SAS and I look forward to working with many of you in the years ahead.

### **SAS Endowment Campaign for Education and Outreach in the South**

The Endowment is now in its seventh year of fund-raising towards a \$30,000 goal.

The purpose of the endowment is to:

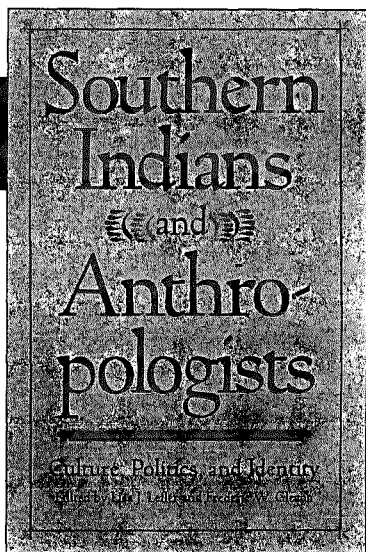
- support student participation in the meetings and the student prize competition,
- expand the knowledge of anthropology in and of the South and to smaller colleges and universities which do not yet offer courses in anthropology,
- bring the message of our discipline to minority institutions through a dynamic speakers bureau,
- encourage minority participation in the field and at our meetings, and
- reward outstanding scholarship in the anthropology of the South with the annual presentation of an enhanced James Mooney prize.

At present the Endowment is about one-third of the way to the goal, so your contributions are needed!

**Please take time to make a campaign pledge or donation and send it to:**

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## Winning Entry 2001 SAS Student Paper Competition: Undergraduate

# Selfhood at Sewanee

Patrick Hayden

Sewanee

### Introduction: Situating the Self

Between their own critical wills and those social and academic expectations which meet and direct them at Sewanee, students imagine a self. "Self" is a sign of individuality for Sewanee students, a marker that divides and protects them from the surroundings - or so it seems. Much of my research unearthed much evidence suggesting the contrary, that the student self was most apparent when expressed in connections to the student body at large, in the form of academics, activities and various extracurricular outlets. Goffman (1961, 168) similarly finds the self as a marker of connectedness:

The self...is not a property of the person to whom it is attributed, but dwells rather in the pattern of social control that is exerted in connection with the person by himself and those around him.

In fact, the richness of self as a sign reveals itself as it changes settings; while all the students I have interviewed somehow articulated the self's presence in their lives, the forms their narratives take, and those textual settings in which they cast the self, reveal its status as what Geertz (1973) calls an "experience-near" (57). While students detect the presence of the self, it seems difficult for them to speak of it conceptually, because they cannot easily isolate it from the rest of their experiences. Thus the self acts as a treaty between culture and agency, through which one may recognize the other, and believe it controls the other. A medium and not an actor, the self represents an American ideal of simultaneous connectedness and autonomy, which

may explain its prominence in students' understandings and ideals of their lives and surroundings. Attempting to exude a balance of individualism and social investment, students constantly switch and modify their modes of self to fit the demands of their social context, while social interaction must be regulated to allow for the expression and exchange of selves. In this way the self demands a constant amount of "joint ceremonial labor" (Goffman, 28), both from individual agents' creative expressions and the contextual norms they take place within.

As any sign forged from such an essential opposition, the self remains a complex symbol embedded in the students understanding of themselves. It proves to them that they exist, and their narratives surrounding it help them detect the passing of time, continuity and change. It also marks their own sense of belonging to a group or job or place, simultaneously standing for a part of them which begins where those around them end. To satisfy these seemingly disparate demands, the self takes many forms, and appears ubiquitously in student discourse, as well. In his account of college life at Rutgers University in the late 1980's, Moffat (1989) documents the rhetoric of countless students who believe college as the place they have come to "find themselves," though they also understood their "true self" as something best kept hidden from social interaction (41):

You had to come to know, or to construct, your "real" personal identity as you came of age. At the same time, you had to polish the practical skills of masking the same true self in the public world.

The public world, then, dictates much of how the private self can operate. The self shifts in shape and demeanor between the dorm rooms, where close friends share "true selves," in the classrooms where students must appease university standards, and in what Moffat calls "the intermediate zone" (36) between those two, where the most formulaistic labor is demanded.

In attempting to catalog the appearances of selfhood in student life, it was necessary to both address the issue by name, and to avoid it. Both interviews and observation were poignant glimpses into Sewanee selves, and their myriad demands on students. In inspecting the results of my searches for Sewanee selves at the intimate and intermediate levels of social interaction, I find the self signifying at once a narrative, paradigmatic and oppositional personhood, imposed upon discourses of time, place and agency, as well as the American norms of "intimacy, autonomy and anger" which Perrin (1988, 132) sees at stake "in every significant human relationship."

### **Interviews: Selves in Their Own Terms**

Sewanee draws hundreds of adolescents each year away from the fixity of family life into close quarters with strangers, mostly their own age, for the sake of an environment where the rigors of academic growth may supersede all other priorities. In the plainest, spatial sense, the university orients student life around the classroom, assuming responsibility for providing students food and shelter. Overseeing these basic spheres (work, shelter, food) the school assumes an influence students previously only allowed their parents. Accordingly, the social outlets Sewanee provides students play a large role in their generation of identity. The freshmen, foreign to college life, must contend with a sometimes traumatic passage into new networks of identity and meaning in their attempts to establish academic and social autonomy.

In hearing students' accounts of their Freshmen years, I noticed a general lack of reference to the classroom. I wondered, could the classroom, situated so directly in the center of Sewanee, play so little a role in a freshman's experience? And if so, what *did* matter? My informants unanimously presented their freshman year as invaluable important to their "finding a place" at Sewanee, though their testimonies largely focus on differentiating their individual likes and desires from those catered to by Sewanee's various social outlets. The clarification of these apparent contradictions comes only with attention to these informants' constructions of such ideas as self, Sewanee (institution), and their peers (society).

Each in their own way, my informants stressed a distance between themselves and those surrounding them; between their social wants and those outlets offered them early freshman year. Paradoxically, the informants' dissatisfaction provides a common bond among accounts. This common rhetoric of alienation from an abstract social standard, evoked sometimes in peers and other times in institutional processes, appeared consistently. The "true" self of these informants, conjured up in intimate, lengthy interviews, depicted both the institutional demands placed upon it, and the social arenas it was forced to pass through, as alien and threatening to their personhood.

Consider the informants' initial reactions to Sewanee, both those formed on school-sponsored tours and orientations, and in their own personal perceptions of college opportunities. "It looked really fake," said Todd, a sophomore from Birmingham, Alabama, talking about the facade of Sewanee shown on the tours for potential students. "They make a point not to show you the seamier side." Todd was quite intimidated nonetheless by initial glimpses of students in the library, whom he took for "a bunch of highbrows." Passing normalized landmarks of the Sewanee infrastructure like the student post office and library, such banal images

comprise formative impressions of Sewanee as an institution, and resound in the evocations of its student-critics.

Following a tour similar to Todd's, Thomas, a mild-mannered, intellectual senior, attended an interview where he was told by an admissions officer that he "fit the Sewanee profile." Once an academic underachiever, but always intellectually engaged, he hoped that college, particularly Sewanee, would provide an academic setting where "you cross the line into seriousness. The austere quality of Sewanee's architecture reinforced Thomas' faith:

I saw Gothic architecture everywhere  
and thought, 'People must be serious  
here - there are spires!'

All four informants touch upon the promised autonomy of college life as a giant potential benefit, and cite their eagerness to move on towards "real life." They see college as a "final educational stop before entering "real life," a transition towards the same seriousness Thomas evokes above. But here their newfound freedom from parental supervision inspires greater agency in this process of socialization. Freshmen enter Sewanee more willingly critical of the (surrogate) authority before them than they once were with parents.

A regular at Stirlings, the student-run coffeehouse, Crystal admits to arriving at Sewanee, after four years at boarding school, with a "bad attitude" towards much of the early orientation to life at Sewanee. She made friends quickly with upper-classmen involved in the optional two-week pre-orientation for incoming freshmen, but notes that already she began drawing a distinction between "the people and the place." Clearly, Crystal's idea of "the place" refers not to a geographic location, but Sewanee as an institution. When I asked her how she came to draw that distinction, she told of waking up one exemplary morning, and having to "put on her fancy clothes," for her class picture. After the more casual pre-orientation, this seemed backbreakingly

formal, for no purpose she could detect, and meaningless.

Among all the informants, the most explicitly occupied in finding herself was Adrian, a sophomore who left an urbane existence in Washington D.C. for "something new," in "the middle of nowhere," Sewanee. She was also among the most dramatically distraught in the face of early classroom and extracurricular experiences that did not satisfy her desire "to be challenged." Everywhere she looked, "everyone looked the same. Nobody seemed 'interesting or challenging.'"

Similarly, Thomas found his peers not as "academically enthusiastic" as he hoped. Almost immediately, he noted peer "society, seeping into the classroom:"

It was really cool to show up unprepared  
and talk about where you were going to be  
drunk Friday night.

Thomas locates his first few nights spent "going out" to parties in fraternity houses and dorm rooms as the time he realized his expectations of college life were not being met. Nonetheless, he cites the drinking so synonymous with student social life as embodying the promised autonomy of life at Sewanee. For Todd and Adrian, who both abstained from drinking their freshmen years, early social outings were downright exclusionary. Todd describes drinking alcohol as a "practically mandatory" vehicle for freshmen mingling, and found himself surveying a social landscape full "of people getting shitty," and wondering, "is this how it's going to be in four years?" Even now, Adrian claims that "ninety percent" of her friends care mostly about the drinking and social life. "People forget that they're in college, here" she says, in doing so suggesting the prevalence of competing forms of "college life" on campus.

As a freshman, Crystal associated the University with the formal, sometimes spectacular structures with which it mediated interaction between her and her peers. Giant, crowded concerts held on

campus "disgusted her." She spent those nights, dejected "almost physically ill" at the sight of "lines of people, drunk, and rubbing each other" before the music. Smartly noticing the irony of how, at such events "you're surrounded by people, by not really taking part in anything," Crystal paints a picture akin to what Adrian calls the "front screen" of Sewanee society. This is that first wave of social options allotted students, such as university-sponsored concerts and fraternity parties.

While all four informants expressed distaste at such "front screen" events, they nonetheless presume that, for most of their peers, such social outlets did not fall short. Qualifying his opinions with the caveat, "I am abnormal," Thomas imagines an easily amused student majority comprised of the soon-to-be rich. Referring back to his matching "the Sewanee profile" for an interviewer, I asked if Thomas thought the administration knew what college was for most of its students. "I think they really believe people are enthusiastic," he said. "They probably were proctors here," he continued, again evoking a curious mingling of peer and authority status to the part of "Sewanee" he opposed. The informants speak positively of their classes, though downplaying academics overall as significant in their freshmen experience.

When asked how they ultimately came to establish social networks outside of those "front screen" contexts, each informant cited simple proximity; each of their first friendships were formed with others who lived in their dormitory. This suggests that, despite the informants' feelings of "abnormality" in the face of various perceived norms of campus life, the college nonetheless supplies the building blocks of social networks in students' own backyard. Both Thomas and Todd, in particular, claim that upperclassmen in their dorms were responsible for their participation in those social arenas—in this case, clubs and fraternities—that satisfied that essential freshmen need Thomas mentions, "to find an identity." Todd's older neigh-

bors convinced him to try singing in the choir, which led him to joining his current fraternity. Ever since then, Todd adds, Sewanee has "felt like home." He recounts his time reunited with family and high school friends over Christmas break as surprisingly unfamiliar, claiming the position of a "leader, not a follower like I used to be." He understands this new assertiveness as the payoff of freshmen immersion, calling Sewanee a "very individualistic school" which encourages his propagation of a now "strong and forceful" personality.

I have not gathered enough data to make a generalization of great consequence regarding freshmen life at Sewanee. Still, what seems clear enough to note is how the social institutions which meet the needs of these informants were not those rigorously structured by the university, like classes or large concerts, but instead those students found for themselves, over time, such as dorm life, work and philanthropic opportunities, and the Greek memberships not allowed until spring semester. While my informants all voice criticisms of many of their peers' values, and voiced their individuality against those values, they nonetheless proved susceptible to those identities the university offered. In some way, each of these students faced up to the fact that "We cannot escape the social vortex" as Thomas quipped, maintaining as he did that "some holes are better than others." The freshmen self, forced to figure out who he/she is while simultaneously figuring out what "college" is, struggles to build networks and name enemies. In early attempts to navigate the social signs and institutionalized norms of the college landscape, they occasionally reduce even their peers to symbols of social category, and targets of angst.

### *Self as Totality*

Two interviews I conducted while searching for the formal elements of the sign of self were conducted under the explicit heading of, "crises of self." Therein, I hoped to glean the form and dimensions of student selves as embedded in their

explanations of significant changes in their lives. Searching my fieldnotes, I found the following question I had scribbled previously, apparently with a great deal of anguish:

*Which came first, the crisis or the self?*

In the following narratives, evidence accumulates suggesting that I had the question all wrong. While the self may change shape in the eyes of the society it dwells among or those agents who attach themselves to it, it retains a hidden, consistent form. The self is an interpretation of another crises, that of societal norms and individual imagination.

A transfer senior, Becky claims her "strength of self" has come from her life, "having moved around so much." Her family has largely been the inspiration for her travelling as her parents' professional careers have resulted in constant relocation across the country. Thus Becky cites her family as a "source of social and financial security" amidst constantly changing setting and anxieties for the future. In fact, Becky's presence at Sewanee owes itself largely to her parents moving here during her year off from schooling. I spoke to her in the kitchen of their large, remote house.

During her year off from schooling, Becky lived with a friend in Bellingham, Washington. She paid the rent by waiting tables. After several months, she left for the Mexican desert, and an experience in an "outdoor leadership" program she believes changed her life. Forced to rely on (and ultimately lead) a small group of travelers in a remote, harsh environment, Becky learned "what I was" and "how I appeared to people." The counselors' "straight up" judgments of Becky's character and performance "broke down...part of me that thought I was too good for everything. Believing they "told me things about myself that I knew but did not know how to say," Becky affords the counselors great influence in her construction of self. As she puts it, "they broke me down, so I had to immediately build myself back up."

A frightful consequence of her constant

moving about the country for Becky has been her inability to become attached to her current setting. In her own words, this stems from "never being able to walk down memory lane when I walk down my street." This sense of homelessness burdens Becky's thinking about the future, which Becky admits leaves her "freaking out." Having long expressed an interest in law, she is now "not sure" about a professional life." The maintenance of family ties and creation of new ones resounds in her desire "to meet someone who will sell art with me, and live in the country, raising goats."

At present, Becky believes her "strength of self" to be on the decline. Worrying that "getting attached to people" at Sewanee "endangers" her, she nonetheless laments her increasing dependence on her parents, and recent joblessness. For her, "the insulated experience of school and class" makes Sewanee "not a real atmosphere," downplays the inner "reflection" allowed her in the desert, and threatens to leave her further down "in the hole" of "dependence on other people."

Equating self with "purpose," Karl spoke of summers of his high school years spent working as an electrician. It was "a relatively controlled and settled" time, when he "was not awkward." "Confidently exercising the judgment an electrician should," Karl was at home in the workplace, proof positive for him that "you do not need to have an awareness of self to have one."

Referring to his family life while growing up in New Orleans as "a cuckoo's nest," Karl feels "terrified I'm becoming my parents' child" in accepting their values. He went to great lengths cataloging the failures and frustrations of his father, a man of independent wealth who remains "jobless, gambling on the stock market, trying to keep up his inheritance." This unemployment fosters the perpetually "confused," bewildered state in which his father dwells:

My father has always fallen short of self-affirmation, to put it very

abstractly...In a much more basic sense, he's fallen short of really being able to do anything.

"More acted upon than acting," Karl believes his father "has nothing to show for himself." While Karl goes to great lengths to distance himself from his father's troubled legacy, a similar inability to act plagues him. Unhappy with Sewanee, where he came mostly "riding the wave of my mother's sentiment," Karl attempted to transfer elsewhere. It did not work:

I wanted to leave Sewanee, and had that purpose...but I got depressed, and subsequently did no schoolwork, so I couldn't go.

Karl's debilitating depression and its origins led his talk "back to the topic of knowing what to do."

I know that I am all that I do...now, what do I do? It seems that the price of self is not knowing what to do.

Karl enacts a "consistent cycle" of self-doubt. He fears that while the occasional, ephemeral "pitstop" occurs in the form of a close friend's visit, or an encounter with poetry, this cycle may be his fate:

I can remember this shit going on as early as sixth grade...searching and feeling lost...I remember questioning things early on...I remember not getting answers.

Hoping to "get out of this unnatural world" of campus life, Karl has begun participating in community service. The leader of this activity represents a well-adjusted self for him, reflected in "how much the people around him love him" and how "everyone looks up to him." Karl lacks faith in his social worth, twice inquiring during our interview if he was even supplying me with "anything to work

with."

As Karl says, "the self is not a product...but a kind of effort." In the above narratives, self is a representation hovering between individual will and social expectations. Labored upon mutually by social pressures and individual agency, it exudes some mediation of the two forces. Forced to render their selves in narrative form, my informants constantly resorted to timeless abstract paradigms such as work and family as causal factors on the self. Faced with a life of changing setting, Becky embraced the consistency of her familial form; encountering a home life plagued by guilt and failure, Karl found a liberation in a vocation. They both suffer in Sewanee, inert and anxious in the face of the future, ultimately convinced their agency is an unquestionably totality, and that the future is their responsibility. They do not realize that the self is a far more persistent medium. It is both the form in which culture imagines it in inhabitants, and the form in which individuals imagine their choices.

#### *Modes of Self*

The interviews summarized above occurred in relative privacy. Enacting them, I attempted to draw the informant's ideas of selfhood to the surface of our dialogues. As a deferent audience to their notions and expressions of selfhood, I hoped to enable them to talk of their true selves as they imagined them, without participating in the more ritualized giving and taking of self enacted in their usual everyday encounters. As generally would only be the case with best friends, the informants were allowed to indulge and investigate the expanse of their selfhood without necessarily being obliged to indulge others involved. Their rhetoric, their way of explaining who they were, how they differed from those around them, and how their choices and passions inform their lot in life, consistently identified the self within three formal dimensions. The autobiography they weave came together at an interface of narrative, paradigmatic, and oppositional

images.

The **narrative** qualities of self appear within the autobiography as a marker of change in attitude, passing of time, and coming of age. In a narrative sense, the autobiographical self is an autonomous accumulation of events and choices. Thus Becky stresses how she has always admired and gotten along with older people, like her siblings and counselors, and allows them to "break her down." At a narrative standstill, Karl fears his indecisiveness will keep him from fulfilling his "potential." This attention to potential lines up with Tocqueville's (1840) notion of democratic societies being "naturally too liable" to "expand the scope of human perfectibility beyond reason." The embedded ideology of "an ideal but always fugitive perfection" places an unreachable horizon towards the autonomous self, but nonetheless demands progress. The self must maintain this dynamism, to underline its separateness from the apparent fixity of its surroundings.

Conversely, the self also takes the form of an individual's connectedness to certain places and social milieus. For Becky, her family's constant migration across the country has afforded her great loyalty to her parents while denying her a constant setting. For Karl, whose intellectual dilemmas plague him into inertia, a job allows a set of operations in which he "is not awkward." Similarly, students' freshmen experiences largely address the traumas of adapting to a new social paradigm after leaving a more intimate, personalized one. It is necessary to stress the constant interplay between these first two modes of self: clearly, changes in narrative self consistently are set against a cohesive milieu, and the abandoning of one social paradigm for another inevitably effects narrative format.

The self takes an **oppositional** form in students' constant distancing of those qualities they embody from those they dislike. The informants stress their selves in describing pressures placed upon them from without. Becky scolds herself for "having

fallen back in the hole of dependence on other people" at Sewanee, while Karl, already skeptical of his parentage, admits begrudgingly to have chosen Sewanee "largely on the wave of his mother's sentiment." As my interviews suggest, the self manifests anger typically in relation to the university or some embodiment thereof. Nobody I spoke to would want to be thought of as a "typical" Sewanee student. The numerous allusions to the "unreality" of the University reflects a desire not to personalize much one's experience at college. This may be due to the idea shared among students of college as a passage into adulthood, and not the long-term work-paradigm shared among those employed by the university as a whole (Moffat, 26).

Furthermore, the oppositional patterns in autobiography illustrates the combating narrative and **paradigmatic** modes of self, the tension Perrin (1993) notes between American ideals of intimacy and anger that linger after separation with one's family.

The resonances of that first relationship are impossible to duplicate with another person; the contemporaneous bond is with another species. Should that tone be sought with other people it is likely to transform into a kind of hum, an undercurrent of expectation charging adult intimacies with static... When intimacies are altogether avoided, the disappointments at the ending of symbiosis have been turned into distrust. (129)

Thus the narrative and paradigmatic pull at one another as do our drives for both intimacy and autonomy. Within the medium of autobiography, the self is safe to display anger at this conflict, often embodied in an expressed opposition to its social and institutional surroundings. However, cast within a venue less self-oriented, demanding the sharing of space and signs, these angers and oppositions must be

muted.

### Social Theater

The friendliness or the unfriendliness of an undergraduate collectivity is not calculated by adding up all the individual sentiments in the group; it is a matter of visible collective behavior. - Moffat (1989, 121)

Outside the classroom and their dorm rooms, Sewanee students navigate themselves and one another in social settings neither institutionalized nor intimate, neither entirely foreign nor nurturing. Encountering a peer with whom one is not acquainted, students recognize academic and geographic commonalities, but detect as well an otherness; behind generally familiar clothing and conversation, students nonetheless suspect an active critical will in each of their peers. This context, and the tension it inspires, demands a rigid rubric of social norms. It comes in what Michael Moffat calls the "friendly self" (43).

Friendliness, in Moffat's mind, manifests itself in that "intermediate zone" between home and school, and expresses itself as a motivation neither entirely punitive nor altruistic. It takes place among students without personal association or any outward loci of power among them. The Americans who practice it "know perfectly well that they cannot actually be friends with everyone, but in many daily contexts most of them still feel obliged to act as if they might be" (43). Friendliness then is not an authentic manifestation of the intimacy friendship evokes, but instead its *representation* through "regular abbreviated performances" (43). The implications of Moffat's word "performance" will resonate throughout this section, as an insight to the form of Sewanee students' friendly or intermediate self.

In attempting to narrow down my study of this intermediate self, I thought of Stirling's coffeehouse almost immediately as a potential site for

observation. Having worked there my four years at Sewanee, I recognized it immediately as a place students go before, after, and between classes, sometimes to study, other times to find distractions. Many park their cars there, before class. Others stop in for caffeine prior to writing a paper or studying. From an extracurricular point of view, Stirling's offers a venue for local art and music, as well as an alibi for social interaction; while many students go to Stirling's to find friends and conversation, if they do not, they still have an excuse (coffee, food) for entering the place. While one may enter and leave alone, they will be held under less scrutiny for doing so than at other social outlets on campus.

The price of this comfort zone for students, or perhaps its greatest benefit, is the formulaic behavior visible within it. Parallel with the front door, directly facing the counter where transactions took place, I witnessed entrances, exits, diatribes and soliloquies fit for a stage.

### *Stirling's Playhouse*

I observed the coffeehouse several mornings during the school week, each time encountering students largely conforming to Sewanee's standard of class dress; those who did not meet this standard were generally those who I assumed were nonetheless involved in the school day, though critical of the wardrobe tradition. They carried bookbags and spoke of forthcoming classes. They articulated their academic stress, seemingly wanting it to be heard more than they wanted to relieve it. Similarly, many other stresses went mentioned and mapped, but unresolved.

Take, for example, the coffeehouse workers I witnessed my first day of observation. Their duties were punctuated with an incessant dialogue of problems, wishes and judgments, spoken at a volumewhich, according to my fieldnotes, "suggested their nonchalance towards being overheard." This is but oneway coffeehouse behavior implies the presence of an audience which may or may not be

present, and the necessity of an "intermediate" openness. Thus the "bean masters," as they are called, may voice their individual feelings and frustrations throughout their shift, but these must be available to all. Thus the feelings they voice, if we believe they are savvy Sewanee citizens, are probably not really their own, after all. Who would make those secrets available to a bunch of strangers? Indeed, these dialogues are only "short, abbreviated performances" (Moffat, 43) thereof. The format of the dialogue underlines this unreality; first the male would discuss his sexual frustrations, then the female her worries for the future. Neither would really respond to the other, only nod in a friendly sense, to facilitate the perpetuation of the other's monologue. What better metaphor exists of the friendly self? Does it not serve its practitioner by social interaction so as to protect and enable individual autonomy? In this sense, bean masters at Stirling's, and the surprisingly audible talks they engage in, echo classical protagonists, exemplifying the virtue of friendliness.

An ensemble of students, familiar and otherwise, confront the bean masters and coffee-drinking public with a variety of drink demands and social concessions. Almost all eye the tables of the front room before making an order, many exuding a smile at nobody in particular while scanning the populace for a friend. One group of three girls entered side by side, giggling and chatting. They were in no hurry to order, and their leader broke the typical ordering etiquette (Adrian — she also works at Stirling's) with a bawdy "how ya doin'?" upon encountering the bean masters. Her friends thought this extroversion was symptomatic of her status as a "morning person." In fact, Adrian might not have uttered such a pedestrian greeting had she not been very familiar with the coffeehouse. Her familiarity to Stirling's may have afforded her and her friends some latitude with the bounds of friendliness. Adrian continued to announce to her comrades that yesterday she had "finally bought deodorant" an admission which might puzzle and embarrass many among the

Sewanee population, if not alienate them from traditional hygienic norms. With Adrian and her friends, however, it was no problem. And those of us around the conversation could do little about it, as such actions would be an even further infringement on friendliness. Thus, even when close friends appear in Stirlings conversing intimately, this appearance changes meaning as it does so on stage in a friendly playhouse. Adrian and her chums reflect not just interpersonal intimacy, but a character (or characteristic) of association open to public viewing.

On three separate occasions, objects within the space were perceived in a theatrical manner, as well. Twice, girls knocked over things in the room, and both times they apologized profusely. One of the girls actually made a point to apologize to me, I being the closest person in the room to her fallen books. This association of order and grace within a friendly realm extends even to things, as I unknowingly exemplified one morning. Pouring cream in my coffee, I unknowingly kicked over a sign leaning against the counter. Immediately, a young girl studying looked at me and smiled. "Did you just knock something over," she asked. "It's the story of my life," I said, going on to explain my chronic clumsiness, particularly within the realms of physical space. Looking back, I realize I was using that moment of embarrassment to cast myself within the friendly drama! Was the story of my life reducible to a series of clumsy bangs and crashes? Hopefully not. But within the friendly confines of the coffeehouse, to a vaguely-known audience, might I not best abbreviate myself as such a goof? It was a lot less painful than explaining the mechanics of how the sign got knocked over, or my autobiography.

Once a freshmen male entered with his head down. He raised it to meet the male bean master before him, and asked for a recommendation. He followed the recommendation, took his coffee and left. Upon doing so, the bean master stepped from behind the counter, stopped, and said, "that kid is the biggest faggot." What he meant or why he said it, I

don't know, but the better question is, to whom did he say it? While I have gone to great lengths portraying students as actors of a social script, the question remains, who watches this play? Who are the strangers smiling at, as they enter the coffeehouse, and who are bean masters talking to so loudly, when they seem only to be talking to themselves?

To an outside observer, coffeehouse theatrics might seem incoherent, irrational and off-putting. So does much art, sometimes, if it chronicles not the order and continuity of a fixed aesthetic, but the trauma and restlessness conjured up in imagining a new one. In the intermediate space of Stirling's, students talk in friendly manners and terms of the modes of relationships not afforded to them within that space. They conspire loudly, as is encouraged, so others might follow their lead. Art has always served as a medium for imagining alternate orders, and coffeehouse theater does not differ; there, students talk of themselves (knowingly or not) to peers they may never meet. In so doing, personal wills and dilemmas are diffused without necessitating personal interaction, and those new to the student society may witness their future social interactions before their very eyes.

*Social Selves: Music, Friendliness, Democracy*

Earlier, I collaborated with two colleagues (Shell et. al., 2000) on an inquiry into a possible relationship between musical tastes and social groupings at Sewanee. On the heels of previous research (Shell, 2000) conducted in Sewanee which suggested some correlation, we sought information at residential, nutritional, academic and consumer locations. We inquired as to students' musical tastes, their extracurricular involvement at the college, and significantly, their preferred locations for "hanging out," as well as those social domains they avoided. These questions were administered in varying orders, as we sought varying angles on the relationship between musical taste and social inclination (and/or disinclination). Believing a response about one

preference might severely influence a response to the other, but not knowing which of the two possessed such an authority, we sought to allow both primacy in the order of questioning.

What we found, as I explained in my conclusion, "Individuals and Everything," related closely to Moffat's (1989) perspective on musical taste at Rutgers:

"Many students of both races said that they liked 'all kinds of music,' but against this claim was the disturbing percept that average musical tastes correlated closely with racial identity. For what one heard booming out of the rooms was not endlessly diverse.  
(151)

Like Moffat, we heard much of tolerance in our study, manifest in automatic claims of liking "all kinds of music," or "everything," in the face of claiming a genre-specific allegiance. The preponderance of this alleged tolerance indexes the tensions surrounding musical allegiance, as does the informants' increasing uneasiness in the face of a set of questions linking taste to specific social headquarters.

One potential explanation begins with treating informants' professions as Moffat did his students sexual biographies; we may succeed, that is to say, in treating answers a little more like texts and a little less like courtroom testimonies. In Moffat's words, we treat the responses as "unavoidably honest at the level of values, attitudes, and ideation," but only "relatively honest at the level of behavior" (193). This approach furthermore acknowledges the formality of our methods, which rarely succeeds in yielding strict, "behavioral" autobiography by its very impersonal nature. Moffat links music with sexuality, early in his work, as a necessity for peer interaction. And frank talk of sexual behavior, he asserts, happens only amongst the best of friends. Thus what we find in our responses are records of

students "ideation" and "values" as manifest on a particular level of social interaction Moffat calls an "intermediate zone" (36). As Moffat suggests, this partially familiar, partially strange realm of interaction requires a working set of behaviors; it requires peer-strangers to act "friendly" to one another, "to give regular abbreviated performances of the standard behaviors of real friendship" (43).

The behavioral form of friendliness, its imposition of usually intimate words and acts on a somewhat exotic encounter, mediates the tension of self encountering other. In much the same way, an all-tolerating attitude towards musical interests escapes the patterns of musical difference we noticed, which surround social groups on campus and somehow denote social conflict. The attitude reflects broader popular notions of acceptance of and mutual respect for difference among members of a community that are long-embedded in the ideology of American democracy, to the point where they resound with untold authority and infallibility. In other words, students know they may evoke these abstract values in order to avoid conflict, as others, when met with these norms tenets, will most always cease questioning them.

In fact, many avoided the pitfalls of declaring allegiance by taking the opposite course of action, and naming one particular group as their "kind of music." Doing so, they evoked the underside of the above democratic ideology, that of individualism and privacy. In limiting their preference to an individual source of music removed from association with others, didn't they attempt to ensure that their choices were devoid of connection to other groups? Ultimately, democratic values strive to maintain this very belief, that some agency of their own protects individuals' preferences from the subordinating will of larger, potentially more powerful social organizations. Perhaps that is another reason the language of friendliness masks said organizations' struggle for primacy: not only do said pressures force peers to choose for and against one another, but they also

force individual agents to surrender their autonomy.

### Conclusion

"Perhaps the individual is so viable a god because he can actually understand the significance of the way he is treated, and quite on his own can respond dramatically to what is proffered him. In contacts between such deities there is no need for middlemen: each of these gods is able to serve as his own priest." (Goffman, 1956, 30)

Indeed, Sewanee students keep their attention trained on their constructions of self, and experience those around them through the exchanging of such constructions, tailored to meet the norms of whatever particular marketplace they might currently be inhabiting. In preserving an array of selves with which to greet those around them, they learn to somehow represent an effective autonomy as well as an integrated place in the world, simultaneously.

However, the "rhetoric of alienation" from the institution mentioned earlier reflects the third side of Perin's "psychic tripod," that of the anger which laments the conflicting American values of autonomy and intimacy. In this sense, the self stands for the asymmetry of these values' exchange. As Perin asserts, her anthropology of America must be interested in "internal" comparisons, "between ideals and practice, between the said and the unsaid" (227). What goes without saying for Sewanee students is their own delicate model of archetypal American ideals, an almost-magical presence they conjure and derive from their social environment. Upon constructing the model, the student calls it by his own name.

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## SPECIAL SECTION ON ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO ANOREXIA

*This paper and the next one by Richard O'Connor provide 'food for anthropological thought' on this subject, and will, I hope, prompt further thought and exploration by anthropologists—Editor*

### **Anthropology and Anorexia: A Proposal for Future Research**

**Jennie Smith**

Sewanee

**A**norexia nervosa (AN) has reached alarming levels in much of North America and Europe. In the United States alone, approximately seven million women and adolescent girls, and perhaps as many as one million men and adolescent boys, suffer from this debilitating and sometimes fatal condition. Moreover, a growing body of evidence suggests that non-Western areas once considered to be immune to AN have not, in fact, been spared. Although the prominence of this illness has many sociocultural implications, anthropologists have been strikingly slow to engage in discussions on the issue. Except for a few very notable exceptions (e.g., Becker 1995), we have left that to the psychologists and medical experts.

The purpose of this paper is not to ask why so few anthropologists have dealt with the fact that millions of women and men across the globe are starving themselves—sometimes to death. My aim, rather, is to present an argument for increased anthropological attention to AN. I begin with a brief description of prominent scholarly understandings of AN, then detail a number of ways in which anthropologists are particularly well equipped to confront and correct some of the gaps and biases that plague those understandings.

Until the 1970s, analyses of AN tended to locate the roots of the condition in the personal and

family histories of its victims. As AN was believed to affect almost exclusively white females from the middle and upper classes of the West, most studies focused on individuals and families of that stratum. Styles of parenting—mothering, in particular—were often the focal point of critical investigation. Eventually, an expanding body of feminist research on the

*My aim...is to present an argument for increased anthropological attention to Anorexia Nervosa.*

media, women's health, body image and dieting led to analyses that linked AN to larger sociocultural phenomena—namely, Western body-shape preferences (particularly preferences for women's bodies) and the development and perpetuation of those preferences by the mass media and the health and beauty industry.

The understanding of AN as an unfortunate by-product of what is generally referred to as "Western culture" quickly gained the status of a truism in much of the literature on eating disorders; it was generally not argued but assumed. Even studies

that found AN in “non-Western” areas generally attributed its occurrence to its victims’ exposure to Western media images and/or Western health and beauty industries. (Recent examples include Paiewonsky’s [2000] work in the Dominican Republic and Becker’s work in Fiji [1995]). In fact, as Weiss notes, the idea that AN stems from Western preferences for thinness became incorporated into very definition of AN (1995: 538). While this “culture-bound” model of AN continues to serve as the implicit foundation of many studies on the topic, since the late 1980s and early 1990s, scholars have increasingly called it into question.

One of the ways scholars have done this is by presenting evidence of AN among non-Westerners with only very limited exposure to Western media and consumer products. Gandhi, Appaya and Machado, for example, note that while “much of the discussion on AN in Asians has focused in the role of exposure to Western ideas and culture which emphasise slimness and diet control” (1991: 592), three of their own patients “came from very traditional Indian households” (592). They conclude that, “although AN may be less common in India than in the West, it is not as rare as [most] reports suggest. Indeed, a likely explanation for the absence of reports in literature is the [un]familiarity of the diagnosis rather than its rarity” (591).

In a Hong Kong-based study, Lee, Ho and Hsu found numerous cases of AN among what they consider to be fairly “traditional” Chinese families. They report, moreover, that of the 70 Chinese anorexics with whom they worked, 41 (58.6%) exhibited no “fear of fatness”—the symptom generally used to link AN to Western body-shape preferences. Lee et al use this finding to argue that, “Anthropologically speaking, the uncompromising imposition of the criterion of fear of fatness on fasting patients from a different culture or era which is not obsessed with slimness, without proper regard for its contextual validity, constitutes a ‘categorical fallacy’” (1993: 1006).

Added to these studies based in non-Western societies are a number of historical texts suggesting that AN has existed in Europe since at least the sixteenth century—well before “modern Western culture” (see Bell and Davis 1987, Bynum 1988, and Mennell 1987). While there is some disagreement as to whether the “miraculously fasting girls” of the Middle Ages were “anorectic” or not, those girls seem to have shared a striking number of traits with contemporary anorexics.

Another way scholars of AN have called into question the culture-bound model is by revealing that it is often inconsistent with both Western and non-Western anorexics’ own understandings of themselves, their bodies, and their illness. According to Katzman and Lee (1997), the real Achilles heel of the culture-bound model is that it has involved replacing local meanings of food refusal with an “overinclusive concept of Westernization.” It is thus, they say, that the model leaves unaccounted for “the meaning of self starvation for individuals in Eastern and Western countries who report no fat phobia” (388). Not only do Katzman and Lee draw from their own and other research on AN in Asia, but also from late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century research in the West, and from studies of non-fat-phobic AN within the contemporary West. Based on this evidence, they assert that “by construing AN as a body image disorder or a Western culture-bound syndrome, extant models miss the broader contexts and varied meanings of food refusal” (Katzman and Lee 1997: 385). Steiger affirms Katzman and Lee’s critique, claiming that, “*Anyone* who works with large numbers of AN sufferers knows that this disorder is not uniformly about a desire to be thin” (quoted in Weiss 1995: 542; *italics mine*).

Studies supporting these assertions contain many other reasons that someone might starve herself besides a desire for thinness. Weiss (1995) draws upon psychodynamic research to reveal that AN is often more about “avoid[ing] sexual maturity and a womanly figure” than developing a slimmer figure.

Banks' study of AN in Minnesota revealed that some anorectics "express their desire to restrict intake of food through religious understandings"—that is, through the conceptions about food, the body, and sexuality that are provided by their religious traditions (1992: 867). In another U.S.-based study, Dulce, Hunter and Lozzi (1999) suggest that although "Cuban Hispanic culture" in the United States does seem to shield Cuban Americans from eating disorders, this is not so much due to differences between Cuban and mainstream-U.S. conceptions of body image, as it is due to differences in how the eating process is conceptualized and enacted. They concentrate in particular on disparate mealtime rituals and disparate attitudes toward those rituals. (See Farrales and Chapman 1999 for an equally revealing study conducted among Filipino Canadians). Among the other factors scholars cite as likely causes of AN among their subjects are parent-child conflicts, parental separation, sexual conflicts, and traumatic events (Mumford et al 1991).

All these studies make clear that while the culture-bound model has offered rich insights into factors that *can, in certain situations*, produce and perpetuate eating disorders, it is a model filled with gaps and shortcomings. One must wonder, in fact, if its sweeping popularity has had as much to do with Western-centricisms as with rigorous causal evidence. As Lee, Ho and Hsu (1993) conclude from their discussion of non-fat phobic AN in Hong Kong, if we are to develop theories of AN that are more reflective of the *full* variety of anorectic experiences, we must consider self-starvation on both a universal level and on many particular levels. We must develop a perspective, in other words, that is both rigorously etic and thoroughly emic. (*This sounds like a job for an anthropologist!*)

I would argue that anthropologists are uniquely well suited to take up the task of revising and reformulating current understandings AN.

Among the reasons for this are the following four:

- 1) As social scientists trained in ethnographic methodologies, we are particularly well poised to rectify the overuse of the "overinclusive concept of Westernization" that now plagues the literature on AN. Among the ways our ethnographic training has prepared us for this job is making us especially sensitive to gross generalizations about human preferences, tendencies, and dispositions—particularly when those generalizations are assumed to apply across cultural divides. Accompanying this cultivated skill in detecting generalizations is a great deal of experience in confronting and correcting them. What better way to go about replacing the overuse of the Western-culture concept with more "local meanings of food refusal" than conducting in-depth, on-the-ground participant-observation (a rarity thus far in AN studies)?
- 2) Locally based projects of this sort, however, must be placed in a larger context. To that end, comparative studies must be carried out both within and well beyond the geographical parameters in which most AN studies have taken place—in "Third World" as well as "First World" societies, in rural as well as urban areas, among those enmeshed in the consumer and media networks of the West and those farther removed from those networks. Anthropologists are familiar with all of these

field sites—in particular, with those into which other social scientists may hesitate to venture. We are also especially experienced in listening to people whose voices are rarely considered by those who generally analyze them and make decisions about their fates, and have often served as liaisons between those two sectors. As Katzman and Lee's work suggest, linking up such distance—and often disparate—sectors will be a crucial part of making theories of AN more accurate and applicable.

- 3) Many anthropologists have lived in areas where body ideals tend toward the large and fatty, not the thin and "cut"; where BIG reflects power and control, not a lack thereof. In fact, as Cassidy (1991/1992) notes, this is the case in most areas of the world. Anthropologists' experiences with these "non-Western" body ideals might not appear at first to be very relevant to the study of anorexia nervosa. I would argue, however, that few things could be more relevant. In these contexts, too, we find women, girls and boys who employ or submit to extreme measures to modify their body shapes. Like anorectics and bulimics, many suffer long-term health consequences, and some die. Are there not some profound connections here? And what about AN in this context? Does it ever occur? If so, when? So far, we simply do not know.
- 4) While the "culture-bound" model must indeed be replaced by more effective ways of conceptualizing AN, theoretical exploration into the ways in which AN involves the enactment and embodiment

of sociocultural norms must be strengthened, not downplayed. This is another area in which anthropologists have a good deal of experience. During the past three decades, in particular, a host of studies on praxis and embodiment have appeared in anthropological annals.

Anthropologists are no strangers to hunger. Many of us have lived in communities where our neighbors experience hunger on a daily basis.<sup>1</sup> In fact, my own interest in AN grows in part out of my constant confrontations with hunger while conducting research in Haiti, which is now said to be the third hungriest country in the world. Anthropologists should no longer distance ourselves from the hungers experienced by the millions of women, girls, men and boys now suffering from AN—not a small number of whom are located within the walls of the very schools where many of us teach. We have too much to offer—and too much to learn—to continue neglecting this heartbreaking disease.

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<sup>1</sup> Extensive discussions of hunger and its meanings are more rare in anthropological literature than one might expect. I am currently conducting research on what anthropologists *have* written about hunger, and hope to use it both to generate more accurate conceptualizations of anorexia, and to more effectively critique the ways in which anthropologists and other scholars have grappled with the condition.

# ANOREXIA AND THE PERSON/SOCIETY/COSMOS HOMOLOGY<sup>1</sup>

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**O**ur bodies speak two languages. We've learned to hear and honor one, conscious reason, and ignore the other as myth or intuition. That's the Enlightenment's legacy. It splits spirit from matter, religion from science and morality from practicality, dominating our thought in a 'mind vs. body' discourse that isolates the individual from society.

The other voice, now more felt than heard, puts the individual in society and society in the individual. Each echoes the other. It's metaphoric thought where the person, body, society and cosmos are all alike as bounded systems that reveal or even influence each other. So the person can be the cosmos writ small or society can be the person writ large.

Sound irrational? Not to Renaissance thinkers. Is it foggy headed? That's what Enlightenment science said. All that mystical thinking died long ago—or so we're taught. Yet I suspect this language is the lifeblood of groups. Today it hides in our intuitions, haunts our moral sensibilities, and bids the person embody society. That's how anorexia begins, creating sentiments that then get caught in our dominant mind-body discourse. The disease comes from crossing 'languages,' from feeling one tongue's humanizing sensibilities that join the person to society and yet following the other's cold logic that separates the self from the body as it does the person from society.

In the next three sections I first discuss these two 'languages' or idioms separately and then compare them. In the last two sections I apply these idioms first to a normal case, American health and fitness movements, and then to anorexia. I conclude that we have misunderstood the anorexics motives

and meaning.

**Mind/Body Dualism:** We live within a mind/body [M/B] dualism. That's conscious modern life. It's our contemporary twist on a soul/body dualism that's ancient to our tradition and rather common globally. What distinguishes the Western version is how easily mind and body can become enemies and how deeply their struggle structures our civilization. Sahlins (1996) sees it as one of the West's "native structures of the long term," the cosmology that constructs economics and the economy.

Of course that's not how we experience this spirit/matter split. We know it as the distinction between love and sex, between a moral sentiment and a biological drive. It appears in the conflict between home and work, between helping a friend and helping ourselves. We embody its struggle whenever we willfully deny our body food, sleep or rest to realize some goal—and take pride in the sacrifice, in how far we've pushed ourselves. That's what traps the anorexic. Her life-or-death battle is an inner struggle that we're all taught to live.

What's the war about? For the anorexic and indeed all of us it's about being a better person. What we take to be better—a slimmer body, a higher grade, more money, a kinder world—is often only incidental. To be sure, each has its fetishized measure—pounds or points, dollars or good deeds—that moves us along the path to improvement, but these endless efforts make no sense unless we imagine a more perfect world and feel a duty to bring it about. That's what World Religions gave us once the 'really real' is in another or higher life. Unlike the earlier local religions that sought balance, now the goal is betterment. So Christians live in a fallen world and yet as each has a divine inner spark, a soul, they can

hardly live too comfortably. That's the archetypal spirit/matter split behind our daily secular struggles. It not only structures our everyday lives and enjoins endless improvement, it can animate even secular pursuits with religious needs that can never be met. That's how we can work so hard, even shortening our lives by making more money than we need or losing more weight than is healthy.

Of course that's not what the natives say. We're quick to see self-interest, as if that were some final answer. A clue that it's not comes once we ask about this petty god, this self, whose interests are always magically served. At first glance simply meeting one's needs is what every animal does, but on closer inspection these needs are not so simple. Indeed, this being's coherence and ambition suggest a suspiciously Christian soul struggling to fulfill its higher purpose in an uncaring materialist world. Ironically, then, invoking self-interest raises spiritual notions, not just materialist explanation.

Yet the native's faith in self-interest is not misplaced. It's cause and consequence of the shift that made modernity, breaking up social wholes to create ever more autonomous activities and individuals. That's how the Protestant Ethic got detached from its religious meaning, making work an end in itself (Weber 1958). It's also how the self-discipline a democracy requires got detached from its civic purpose, becoming an end in itself. That's half the reason the 'good person' is always working out and slimming up. It's the latest in a long series of ostensibly secular movements with largely religious goals.

Critical to this shift is the calculability that begins once spirit is divided from matter, mind from body. What once was whole—a society, a friendship, a meal, eating—bifurcates into a spirit that we can't measure and matter that we can. All of this makes individual self-interest calculable and that practice ultimately isolates us one from another.

**Micro/Macrocosm Unity:** Quite unlike mind-body struggles, a great deal of everyday life

unfolds in micro/macrocosmic [M/M] metaphors that harmonize the body, self or person with house, polity, society or cosmos, that see one mirrored in the other. Each is a whole, a bounded system, that is not just similar but equivalent to the others. All are thus homologues, differing in scale but not kind. From little to large, one echoes the other as all abide by the same cosmic principles. So a person is neither split by mind-body strife nor torn between good and evil, but rather joined as a single whole—mind with body, good with evil—that prospers by harmonizing with cosmic laws that govern all of nature. Sound exotic? In fact, person-centered metaphors are probably universal, perhaps basic to how children learn to think, and the micro/macrocosmic set we've just sketched is common in many cultures (O'Neill 1985) and pervades Indo-European thought (Lincoln 1986).

We're largely unconscious of M/M patterns because Enlightenment science drove metaphoric thought out of the field of reason. Yet it was widely accepted in the Renaissance and still flourishes in poetry and intuition just as it echoes through the Bible and anchors social life. Historically, no sooner had science thrown it out than politics brought it back. The most powerful political current of our age, nationalism, rests on a person/nation homology. In this imagined community (Anderson 1991) the metaphor works both ways. Going from large to little, each person embodies his or her nation literally from birth. Saying "I am an American" doesn't distinguish mind from body. It's a single identity that is so 'natural' that latecomers must be 'naturalized.' Going from little to large, the nation embodies its people in a whole of its own kind. Here a nation is a collective individual, not just a collection of individuals (Dumont 1970). That was quickly evident in the first new nation's literature where "celebration of the representative self as America, and of the American self as the embodiment of a prophetic universal design" became an enduring genre (Bercovitch 1975:136). It is this person/nation equivalence that, leaping from little to large, skips over all lesser

intervening loyalties—family, kin, locality, religion—to make today's radical individualism not just possible but plausible.

Social science is entangled in M/M thinking even as it studies such thought. Caught up in our era's nation/person equivalence, the fact that every nation is actually quite diverse is easily forgotten. Indeed, the idea that as Americans we're all somehow similar is so intuitively convincing that it sent a generation of social scientists in search of an American character or personality. Nor was that fruitless quest the end of it. At home and abroad many still look for the 'representative' community, the place that captures a country or culture microcosmically. Of course that's laughable to postmodernists, but their alternatives—the endless ethnic, local and life-style identities that seem to be replacing national and cultural wholes—are just person/group homologues of smaller scale. And aren't consumerism's imaginative leaps of that kind too?

Yet how can M/M thought make leaps while modern reason sticks to the facts? Somehow ideas once taught by medieval mystics have a powerful and pervasive presence in an age of skepticism and practicality. Of course that's no puzzle if we consider that a metaphor is a mental tool judged by how well it works, not if it is true or false. On these grounds micro/macrocosmic metaphors are fruitful and effective. They open rich possibilities for coherent thought, feeling and action. We might then explain M/M survival by its effectiveness, either in itself or in relation to the alternatives, a task we take up now.

**Comparing Idioms:** While people may mix and match their symbols eclectically, the M/B and M/M idioms begin with different principles and end up imagining markedly different worlds. Where the former divides the world radically, separating divine life from mere matter, in the latter "the unity of humanity and cosmos, of matter and spirit [are] resoundingly affirmed" (Lincoln 1986:501). One sets the stage for struggle, the other for harmony. One enjoins betterment, the other balance. One world

divides the person and calls the better half, the soul, to inner and outer struggle. The other world unites the person and calls that whole to align itself to other such wholes.

While either the M/B or M/M idiom might make a viable world on its own, today the two are entangled in a modern division of labor. Where the M/B idiom is the voice of disengaged reason that isolates the individual from society, M/M symbolism channels the feelings of connectedness that join individual and society in sympathy. The former is as literal, analytic and rigorous as the latter is metaphorical, synthetic and imaginative. To put this historically, M/B idiom is the Enlightenment's child, the voice of progress and modernity, while the M/M idiom inflects pre-modern as well as postmodern thought. Today's division of labor would seem to incorporate the Romantic Era's reaction against the Age of Reason. Thus the M/M idiom flourishes in the arts, even though that domain is subordinated to society's political and economic order; and it survives within the M/B split as the unvoiced language of its lesser half, the body.

To function properly—indeed to survive—out society requires both idioms. To be sure the division into M/B and M/M idioms is not necessary, but once that arbitrary step is taken each idiom serves a vital function. Our dependence on the M/B idiom as the discourse of science, medicine and progress hardly needs elaboration. Indeed, its dominance is so complete that it dismisses any M/M expressions as art we don't need or mysticism that's misguided. Yet the society that the M/B discourse imagines—a secular contract between naturally self-interested individuals—is a sociological impossibility that could not and does not replicate itself. Unless the contract is held above the interests of the parties, ruling them as a god governs the faithful, society would collapse. That's Durkheim's point. It wouldn't surprise Adam Smith. He wrote not just The Wealth of Nations but also the long-forgotten Theory of Moral Sentiments, the other half of his social vision. From him as well

as Durkheim and Turner we learn that society requires feelings of trust and sympathy or it fragments into groupings that do. Small-scale societies evoke those sentiments (collective effervescence, *communitas*) in ritual while large-scale societies add love of God or country. What about our society? We've spent several centuries destroying ritual forms while casting doubt on God, and now, as nationalism seems to have passed its peak, we appear to be, on the one hand, collapsing back into localizing religious and life-style groups that sustain trust and sympathy, and on the other hand, extending sympathies globally through the media, charity and tourism. Yet how or even if we're changing is another matter. My point here is that even our self-consciously cynical society needs and has the implicit trust and good will that social life requires. It's built into a division of labor where the dominant M/B discourse of manipulation hides the subordinate M/M path of sympathy.

Have you noticed how neatly the contrast between these two idioms fits our gender stereotypes? The M/B idiom seems as male and dominating as the M/M one is female and dominated. Is this biology? No, not in any simple sense. Each idiom has a clear history that is closely connected with its contemporary use. Over the centuries men have used both idioms—and so have women. It's the same today. Men and women have access to both and typically use them eclectically. Are women more likely than men to think, feel and act in the M/M idiom? That's what our culture expects, and so it wouldn't be surprising if that influenced what people did. Is the M/B dominance over M/M a vehicle for men's domination of women? Absolutely, although this is modernity, not biology. What we have then is a shifting gendered difference, not a settled gender distinction.

Applying this gendered division of labor to the person we find that in the West the M/B domain psychologizes where the M/M channel somatizes. I've borrowed these two odd verbs from Kleinman

(1986) who uses them to analyze disease patterns. Yet if we go beyond biomedicine's diseased/healthy dichotomy to consider degrees of well being, then psychologizing and somatizing would seem to describe the normal dynamics that bind the Western individual to society. In this scheme psychologizing extends the M/B discourse of rational calculation beyond conscious thought into the person's inner recesses, either reflexively by that person or analytically by outsiders. Here what Kleinman (1986:56) calls "the result of the Western mode of modernization" is a "process wherein explicit, abstract, intellectually calculable rules and procedures are increasingly substituted for sentiment, tradition and rule of thumb in all spheres of human activity" (Wrong quoted in Kleinman [1986:56]). In contrast, somatization expresses societal processes (values, worries, social movements) in bodily states and sentiments. I take some such channel to be part of our biological heritage as social primates; although the M/M messages that concern us are Western and entangled in a larger division of labor.

To sum up, we've described two idioms and their interrelations. I've called them languages to stress that each has an inner coherence, is largely inherited and serves as a vehicle for communication. My larger argument is that crossing these languages creates anorexia, but before we turn to that pathological mixture let me illustrate their normal everyday mixing in the health and fitness movement that is the context out of which anorexia comes.

**Health and the Individual/Society Relationship:** Why work out? A visitor from another era might mistake our work at the office for leisure and our leisure at the gym for work. Vast sums of time, money and energy that might develop our minds or society go into staying fit, a bottomless pit. So why do we work out? The off-the-cuff answers—"for my health," "it feels good"—exalt the body although that's often justified as the means to being a better worker. Legitimizing his lengthy works, friend said "the time comes back to me," meaning the time spent

working out makes him a more efficient worker. All of these answers are mind/body discourse, explaining what we do by individual self-interested choice.

But fitness is a social movement. It has swept millions along, first giving them the urge for bodily improvement and then rewarding the faithful. That's new. In the early 60s when I was running to get in shape for cross-country, people stopped to ask me if I needed a lift. By the late 1970s a victim fleeing an attacker would have been ignored as just another runner. What happened? Had science demonstrated the virtues of exercise? No, medical research followed the fad, coming after millions were exercising religiously (Becker 1986:19; Gillick 1984:375). People turned to their bodies when they could no longer face society. In the early 1960s Americans had faith in their country and the perfectability of society, but the Vietnam War, civil unrest and the inadequacies of democratic institutions left many disillusioned. With the "failure of the radical movement... end of the anti-war movement, and the decline of religion" Gillick (1984:381) argues that well intentioned successful people had "few channels . . . left through which . . . they could personally contribute to the betterment of society." Coupling personal with social redemption, the "pursuit of physical fitness was seen by some as a means by which individuals could improve America . . ." Were they remembering what President Kennedy had said?—"an increasingly large number of young Americans . . . are neglecting their bodies . . . are getting soft. And such softness on the part of individual citizens can help to strip and destroy the vitality of a nation" (quoted in Gillick [1984:381-82]). We might object that a nation's strength rests on its institutions, not individuals, but then nationalism had equated society with the polity and the polity with the person long before. So the response to the social upheavals of the 60s, to experiencing society as out shape, was to get one's own body in shape. Were students, women, blacks and even the 'refer-ees'—the police, courts and elected officials—all out

of control? Somatize that worry and getting control of your own body becomes a national response.<sup>2</sup>

Was this 70s fitness movement a fluke, a M/M outburst in a national M/B story of progress? Hardly. We've had over 200 years of such movements. The causes change but the response is constant. Thus Green (1988:x-xi) finds the 19<sup>th</sup> century's fitness movements divide into three eras, each with different causes that somehow still find the same solution. What explains this extraordinary continuity? Were the mainstream dominated by M/B discourse, a truth rather hard to contest, then reform might well be driven to M/M representations. Consider four affinities between our health and fitness tradition and the M/M idiom.

First, it's the same world view. Underlying these movements Green (1988:x) finds "the idea of individual responsibility for one's social position" is "a corollary to the widely held idea that nature . . . is essentially good and human maladies or complaints are a result of people's inability to live within that system without being victimized by their own passions." So it's in your hands. That thinking first imagines the person as one autonomous whole and nature as another and then insists the former harmonize with the latter. Here harmony ensures health but it can just as easily bring success for the person prudent enough to harmonize his or her life with the economy's demands. The alternative, to insist that regardless of what the market wants your gift is as an artist or your place is in this town, is M/B discourse, upholding spirit in its struggle against material conditions.

Second, society is the person writ large. That's how these movements get their conviction that individual personal change will bring social redemption. True, their M/B ideology might be only that they'll convert individuals one by one until society changes, but this betrays the M/M assumption that the person and society are essentially the same. Will football become a gentle sport if all the players are gentle people? No, just as the game isn't the same as

its players, society is not the person writ large. Ignoring this truth, fitness movements tap and create M/M sentiments.

Third, the person/society relationship as one whole to another is ultimately religious. That's not just Durkheimian theory. Historians note the close connection between secular health movements and an earlier and still competing evangelical tradition, but then we might have guessed the connection from the health and fitness rhetoric. As Stein (1982:169) says, "[s]ubstitute penitence for disease, and salvation for health (or 'wellness'), and one lays bare the old morality play . . ." Starker (1989:170) observes, people "who cannot accept inspirational messages in a religious context" devour them as scientific or humanistic dicta of self-improvement. True, the impetus for self-improvement may well have M/B sources, but where this entails the whole person harmonizing with society or nature, we have the M/M secular equivalent of being one with God.

Fourth, the person is unitary, not divided. Glassner (1990:222-23) argues that today's fitness fad is postmodern in its denial of dualities and its insistence that "[t]hrough fitness, selves are truly embodied." That sounds right but the thought is pre-modern and clearly survived through the health movements to reform modernity. In his history of American health reform, Crusaders for Fitness, Whorton (1982:348) finds their hygienic ideologies all appeal to "our primitive intuition that the body and soul are intimately wed." One late-19<sup>th</sup>-century spin off was the rise of sports, an activity that fused spirit with body in the will to win. Mrozek (1983:228), a sports historian writes: "In one sense, turn-of-the-century Americans betrayed the primacy of the material world in their own minds. Yet, at the same time, they reached toward a reintegration of mind with body and of spirit with matter. The sense of unity that had been part of the Puritan gift had been jeopardized . . . by the Enlightenment." So sports were getting us back to M/M unity in the very era when industrialism and robber baron capitalism

split spirit and matter radically.

Going back to our original question, "why work out?," we see this reasoned individual choice can hardly be separated from a tradition that shapes how we reason and what we want. Are you working out to save society? That's not what you think but it may be what you feel. Or perhaps you're just conforming to that tradition's latest crystallization, "'health' as the New Morality by which character and moral worth are judged" (Becker 1986:19). That script goes back at least to the 18<sup>th</sup> century: "Individual responsibility for health through clean and upright living . . . is part of a venerable American tradition. The fundamental tenet of this . . . physical hygienism, dating at least to John Wesley . . . is that health results from living in accord with 'the laws of nature'" (Gillick 1984:369). But isn't this true? Becker (1986:21) reminds us that "[T]he domain of personal health over which the individual has direct control is *very* small when compared to heredity, culture, environment, and chance." That, anyway, is what rational calculation says. It's just not how M/M sentiments and social movements make us feel.

**Anorexia:** How does the health and fitness movement relate to anorexia? Stein (1982:173) observes it is "no mere analogy to suggest that many symbols, fantasies, and rituals of the wellness movement seem remarkably like those of patients with anorexia: in both, mouth and body are instruments and battlegrounds of magical control." Where the anorexic differs is in her consistency. While health enthusiasts move freely between M/B and M/M idioms, the anorexic locks into the mind's dominance over the body and yet won't give up the M/M sentiments that bind her body to society's worries. Obviously that's not the only cause, and mixing by itself need not be pathological, but the disease requires a combination of logical practices and moral sensibilities that neither idiom carries alone. While this deadly mix creates a single self-perpetuating system, we'll consider each idiom separately.

The M/B Vector: Anorexia's M/B discourse

appears as the will's triumph over the body's needs. Bordo (1997) shows the antiquity and centrality of this typically Western struggle that can harden into a hate for the body. Of course the larger aim is not to hate the body but to love the inner spirit, the soul that's mired in our fallen world. Bodily control thus becomes a vehicle for transcendence. Indeed, from fasts to monasticism, every major religious tradition has ascetic practices that translate abstract belief into bodily experience.

Caught in the will's triumph over the body, the anorexic may well experience an addictive physical and moral high of bodily transcendence. That's likely enough that monastic traditions specifically guard against it. To be sure, as her conscious motives are hardly religious, she is closer to today's dedicated athlete than yesterday's devout monk. Nonetheless all three—anorexic, elite athlete and monk—seek an ideal that separates them from everyday life. Moreover, just as the medieval monk had a religious path set before him, today's anorexic and athlete embody a well established societal order that equates the good person with bodily control. That's a distant but compelling spin-off of the mind/body split.

This split also provides anorexia's means, not just its motive. Counting calories and calculating weight is possible only after matter's measurable world is split off from spirit's metaphysics. That's how Enlightenment science got going. Today the modern impetus to measure our time, motion and money, even our thoughts and feelings, is integral to the self-management expected of all adults. Take how it changes a meal. Where eating once embedded a person in group custom and camaraderie, now we can't stop the calculation that reduces it to the calories and cholesterol that will help or harm our individual body project. Why be so picky? Healthy living is our duty to ourselves as well as a mark of the New Morality's good person. Instead of the medieval monk's sin and salvation, today's child hears that story as junk food or healthy eating, as

getting fat or staying in shape. Where that monk might 'cheat,' getting indulgence or deceive himself about a sin, today's hard numbers are as unforgiving and unambiguous as the reality we think they measure.

The M/M Vector: Critical as the M/B discourse is to the development and persistence of anorexia, it cannot explain why the anorexic embodies society so literally, insistently and powerfully. Were it rational calculation, the bid to make one's body more marketable socially, then by that same principle the dieting would stop once the goal was reached. Were the anorexic a weak-willed conformist, losing her true self to win the approval of others, then by that same principle she should yield to therapy and society's revulsion when she goes too far. True, the psyche has its own logic and what begins with rational calculation or unwitting conformity may touch off a vicious cycle of yet another kind, but were that so then any intervention that broke the cycle should bring back the reason and conformity that keep most of us normal. In fact such interventions—hospitalization for weight gain, drug therapy—rarely succeed. Of course nothing works particularly well—anorexia is notoriously hard to treat—but then perhaps biomedicine has chosen to fight only on its own ground. So it wins M/B battles in a war over M/M sensibilities.

While conscious thought is M/B discourse, anorexia entails M/M feeling and action. The action is obvious: she shapes her body as society is shaping itself. The feeling that act requires is sympathy if not empathy. Were it put into words, we would get 'as society is, so am I.' Or we can reverse that to the anthropomorphic 'as I am, so is society.' If the former is conforming, then the latter is controlling. Which is it? Both. To insist it is one or the other converts an M/M sentiment of affinity into the M/B discourse of advantage.<sup>3</sup> Anorexia's impetus is meaning and morality, not power or practicality.

Yet why does the anorexic feel M/M sentiments so strongly? Why not just capitulate to

M/B dominance? Here gender and age enter. Women may experience—and are certainly still urged to take—the intuitive, emotional and socially responsible half of the social whole. Or should we say that the aggressive pursuit of self-interest dominates M/B thinking so completely that nurturant values have to be in another idiom? Either way we might expect women to experience M/M sentiments that they can neither easily ignore nor, in the absence of Victorian roles, comfortably express.

Adolescence, the usual age of anorexia's onset, intensifies that dilemma. Not only must a girl become a woman, embracing the complexities we've just described, but she must also change from a child into an adult. That's a tricky change in middle class American culture. While child should not model on the larger world lest he or she become too cynical too soon, an adult is expected to master the cynicism self-interest requires. Is adolescence then the culturally constituted crisis of moving from a M/M to a M/B world? It could be for some, depending on the idiom that organized their childhood. And for everyone who wants to be a 'good person' and lead a meaningful life, the trick is to master self-interest without having it master you. Go too far and you're a pariah to most groups. If you don't go far enough then you're everyone's doormat, not a properly autonomous adult. Getting the right balance may be only a practical question for some, but adolescents who experience it as a moral crisis may embody their dilemma in disordered eating. Here food, a symbol of nurturance and a source of camaraderie, can neither be fully accepted nor finally rejected. Isn't that true for self-interest?

**Conclusion:** Anorexia is notoriously hard to treat. Could it be we misunderstand the anorexic's motives and meaning?

We've got the motives wrong. An anorexic wants to be a good person, not a supermodel. That's a moral sentiment. We can't see this because social and cultural explanation has settled on power as an all-purpose explanation. That's mind/body discourse.

It isolates the individual from society. Psychological explanation does the same. We're forgetting that humans are social primates whose groups arise through shared sensibilities and emotions, never just power and practicality.

We've also got the meaning wrong. A M/B discourse dominates our thought, but it is hardly half of how we act and feel. An anorexic's moral sentiments draw her into the meanings that make her group. That sets her on two paths. One, the M/B idiom, leads to the asceticism wherein the will denies the body. The other, the M/M idiom, leads her to the sociomorphism whereby she embodies society's hopes and fears.

I grant anorexia has other dimensions, but without moral sentiments and M/M symbols, we cannot explain how a once compliant and caring girl becomes an intransigent perfectionist who ignores the pleas of loved ones just as she does the needs of her body. Is she simply mad or does her asceticism and flawless diet give her the moral superiority to reject therapy's accommodations just as she does society's indulgences? Either we postulate some radical and unprecedented inversion of character or we recognize the essential continuity of the disease, the anorexic's earlier life and the meanings that make her group. Indeed, either we pathologize her feelings or we normalize the moral sentiments that we all feel.

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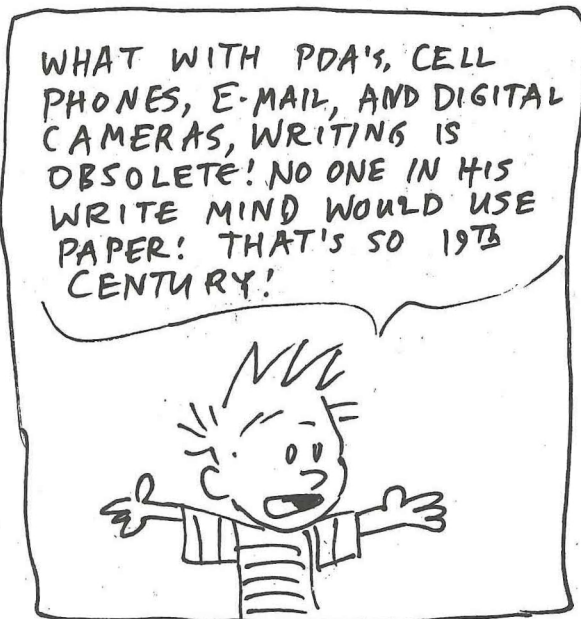
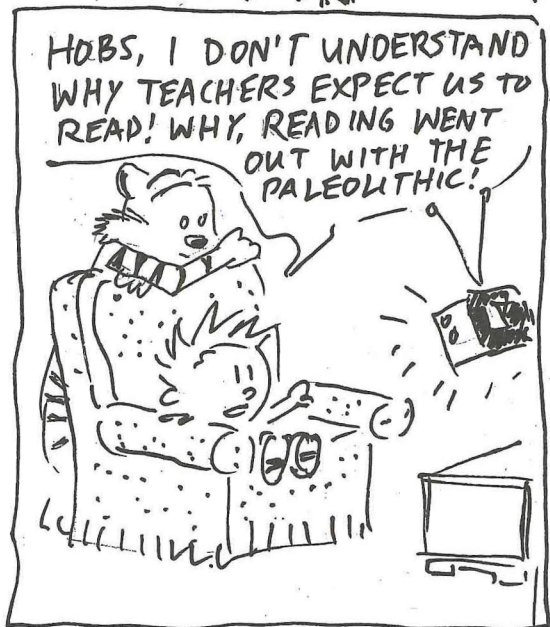
<sup>2</sup> Was society out of control or did people just feel that way? The person/society metaphor works both ways: the fact that a

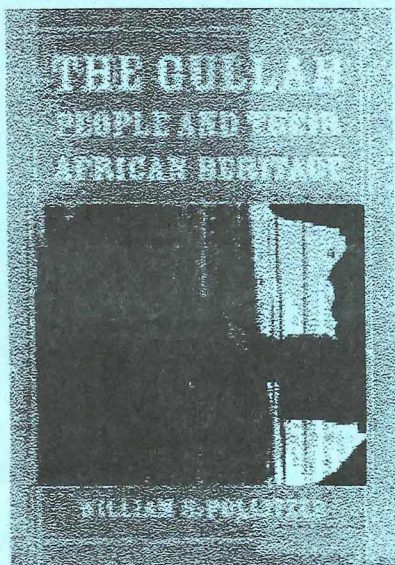
few marginal or highly political individuals seemed out of control—violating social conventions, indulging in drugs and sex—meant society was out of control. Was it? No. In fact planes flew, factories ran and schools taught as well if not better than they would decades later when the individual's exercise-disciplined body was in far better shape and well under control.

<sup>3</sup> Is this avoiding hard reason? Consider that M/B discourse first magically divides the individual from society and only then rationally calculates their relationship.

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