

Meeting 19 • 11 March 2014

Week 10: Languages, races, peoples; going/coming home

Version:
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pictures of the week

thought-bite of the week:

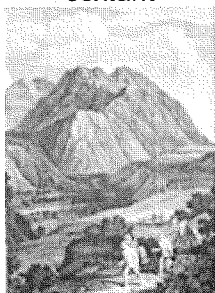
pictures of the week

"Gold dug out from the ground has, in the people's eyes, a special lure unrelated to the diligent farmer harvesting a fertile land under a gentle climate."



Humboldt showing
Indians how to use a
sextant

(Humboldt, "Personal Narrative", from *Jaguars and Electric Eels*, ed. & trans. Wilson, p. 24)



Cargueros (native
porters)

mini-text of the week (start):

"...What an odd experience it was to find ourselves in these vast solitudes with a man who believed he was European, with all the vain pretensions, hereditary prejudices and mistakes of civilization, but whose only roof was a tree."

Humboldt, "Personal Narrative", from *Jaguars and Electric Eels*, ed. & trans. Wilson, pp. 70-71 ([read more](#))

Topics for today (key to symbols)

* (05') Mini-text of the week: how "exotic" have you experienced the world (places, peoples)? what does "civilization" mean to you? what did it mean to Humboldt? Did he "go native"? More about H and his Prussian aristocratic society.

* (05') Followup on last meeting's discussion of who "our people" are: An email received right after class, and a misunderstood overheard phone call.

1) The "carguero" incident (pretty good way to gauge your performance in the course): What did H do and think? Describe equivalent encounters with yourself in the place of H: what would you do?
2) Are human beings (individuals / groups) "hardwired" to be hostile or friendly to new groups they encounter?

* (10') Today's installment of Humboldtian reading for me: *A World of Rivers: Environmental Change on Ten of the World's Great Rivers*, by Ellen Wohl (2011). The Nile and the Danube. Nile: sole source of water in a dry climate, with ancient culture, modern population / development pressure, and prospect of increasing tension within/among volatile societies. Danube: river developed heavily over long time, stable population, multinational region, serious demand for water but even more serious threat from industrial pollution.

* (10') Culture contact, "clash of civilizations", individual reactions (even clashes within one person). The "Bennett Scale" or DMIS (Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity): In whatever intercultural experience you have had (try to use specific examples, not just general reference to

people and places, where are you on this range? 1) Denial of Difference; 2) Defense against Difference; 3) Minimization of Difference; 4) Acceptance of Difference; 5) Adaptation to Difference; 6) Integration of Difference.

What if the "natives" / "local yokels" don't want to benefit from our wisdom, goodness, and wealth? what if they do? When can indigenous languages (not) be saved? (Ostler, Nicholas. *Empires of the Word: A Language History of the World*). Indigenous peoples?

* (10') 99% vs. 1% (of a different kind than "us" vs. "the super-rich") Quick point about the Chimborazo graphic: Humboldt's pioneering work in plant (and animal) geography: the 99% perspiration and data are combined with 1% inspiration and insight to produce the monumental, iconic "Chimborazo" graphic. That was the best they had "back then" about sustainable environmentalism: the data, the thought, the presentation in words and pictures. There was NO "Big Science": no government-sponsored science (until late in 19thC in US - Powell's fights), no corporate-financed R&D. Well, there was a little, especially for military purposes (mapping, weapons). But most science was "amateur" (gentleman and a few others), because science then was not regarded as important. Producing that engraving involved huge effort and expense, even after the data was collected.

--Some other "iconic" images related to science (whether as concepts or as means to deliver data effectively).

--Special points: natural history collections; rarity of travel; topographic mapping (Wikipedia; Geosciences, Idaho State U)

* (10') Small group discussion of the books you're now reviewed. Suggested organization by topics: exploration and adventure; bio-sciences; math/ physics; history, economics, politics (philosophy?); biographies; off-beat topics (foodie books, Descartes' brain, dark side of 19th-C painting)

* (10') Grants, jobs, résumé lines (cont'd.): 1) PSU Sustainability Institute – link "get involved: students") - current opportunities • off-campus opportunities; events; education • May 7, 2014: PSU Student Research Symposium (and online proposal form) May 29, 4-6 pm, 7th Annual Sustainability Celebration; PSU sustainability travel awards for students (check with them to see whether money is available at present).

Example of a successful conference presentation proposal: "The 'Humboldt Project:' Outreach to K-12 At-Risk Students through Experiential Learning about Sciences, Social Sciences, Humanities, Environmentalism and Sustainability" (U of Hawaii, January 2009)

Example of a successful travel funding request narrative (HICAH 2012)

Example of a successful small grant proposal: developing STEM materials for language learners

Example of conferences suitable for presentations based on this course, by students from the course: Hawaii International Conference on Arts & Humanities (mid-January); American Association for Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE); Smart and Sustainable Campuses Conference (March, 2014, Maryland); European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction (EARLI), 16th Biennial conference, Limassol, Cyprus, 25-29 August 2015 (also has a JURE - JUnior REsearchers conference on 4 July, 2014, in Nicosia, Cyprus)

Study (scholarship) opportunities: DAAD; for later in careers: Alexander von Humboldt Foundation;

Something more adventurous: the tall ship Alexander von Humboldt II; today (11 March) she is right near Tenerife

* (10') Recalling, sorting, expressing our knowledge of Humboldt and the origins of sustainable environmentalism. Suggest small group discussions of these topics: life, travels, world-view; research (events, methods, concepts, data); people(s) – maybe split into bioscience and math/physics etc.; cultures, economics, politics, ethics; the relation of those topics to sustainable environmentalism (then AND now) - (re)interpreting the past AND the present

Bennett scale

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **Bennett scale**, also called the **DMIS** (for **Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity**), was developed by Dr. **Milton Bennett**. The framework describes the different ways in which people can react to cultural differences.

Organized into six “stages” of increasing sensitivity to difference, the DMIS identifies the underlying cognitive orientations individuals use to understand cultural difference. Each position along the continuum represents increasingly complex perceptual organizations of cultural difference, which in turn allow increasingly sophisticated experiences of other cultures. By identifying the underlying experience of cultural difference, predictions about behavior and attitudes can be made and education can be tailored to facilitate development along the continuum. The first three stages are ethnocentric as one sees his own culture as central to reality. Moving up the scale the individual develops a more and more ethnorelative point of view, meaning that you experience your own culture as in the context to other cultures. At the next stage these ethnocentric views are replaced by ethnorelative views.

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Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

1. Denial of Difference

- Individuals experience their own culture as the only “real” one. Other cultures are either not noticed at all or are understood in an undifferentiated, simplistic manner. People at this position are generally uninterested in cultural difference, but when confronted with difference their seemingly benign acceptance may change to aggressive attempts to avoid or eliminate it. Most of the time, this is a result of physical or social isolation, where the person's views are never challenged and are at the center of their reality.

2. Defense against Difference

- One’s own culture is experienced as the most “evolved” or best way to live. This position is characterized by dualistic us/them thinking and frequently accompanied by overt negative stereotyping. They will openly belittle the differences among their culture and another, denigrating race, gender or any other indicator of difference. People at this position are more openly threatened by cultural difference and more likely to be acting aggressively against it. A variation at this position is seen in reversal where one’s own culture is devalued and another culture is romanticized as superior.^[1]

3. Minimization of Difference

- The experience of similarity outweighs the experience of difference. People recognize superficial cultural differences in food, customs, etc., but they emphasize human similarity in physical structure, psychological needs, and/or assumed adherence to universal values. People at this position are likely to assume that they are no longer ethnocentric, and they tend to overestimate their tolerance while underestimating the effect (e.g. “privilege”) of their own culture. In other words, as explained by the Canadian Center for Intercultural Learning, “people who adopt this point of view generally approach intercultural situations with the assurance that a simple awareness of the fundamental patterns of human interaction will be sufficient to assure the success of the communication. Such a viewpoint is ethnocentric because it presupposes that the fundamental categories of behavior are absolute and that these categories are in fact our own.”

4. **Acceptance of Difference**

- One’s own culture is experienced as one of a number of equally complex worldviews. People at this position accept the existence of culturally different ways of organizing human existence, although they do not necessarily like or agree with every way. They can identify how culture affects a wide range of human experience and they have a framework for organizing observations of cultural difference. We recognize people from this stage through their eager questioning of others. This reflects a real desire to be informed, and not to confirm prejudices. The key words of this stage are “getting to know” or “learning.”

5. **Adaptation to Difference**

- Individuals are able to expand their own worldviews to accurately understand other cultures and behave in a variety of culturally appropriate ways. Effective use of empathy, or frame of reference shifting, to understand and be understood across cultural boundaries. It is the ability to act properly outside of one’s own culture. At this stage, one is able to “walk the talk.”

6. **Integration of Difference**

- One’s experience of self is expanded to include the movement in and out of different cultural worldviews. People at this position have a definition of self that is “marginal” (not central) to any particular culture, allowing this individual to shift rather smoothly from one cultural worldview to another.

Evolutionary Strategies

In his theory, Bennett describes what changes occur when evolving through each step of the scale. Summarized, they are the following:

1. **From Denial to Defense:** the person acquires an awareness of difference between cultures
2. **From Defense to Minimization:** negative judgments are depolarized, and the person is introduced to similarities between cultures.
3. **From Minimization to Acceptance:** the subject grasps the importance of intercultural difference.
4. **From Acceptance to Adaptation:** exploration and research into the other culture begins
5. **From Adaptation to Integration:** subject develops empathy towards the other culture.

Notes

1. ^ While this level may initially be interpreted as a higher level of sensitivity, it is actually consistent with the dualistic thinking characterized by this stage where one culture is seen as good and another culture as bad. In this case, however, it is one’s own culture that is seen as bad and another’s culture that is seen as good; neither culture is valued in its own