From Labrador to Samoa:

The Theory and Practice of Eleanor Burke Leacock

Constance R. Sutton, Editor

Published by the Association for Feminist Anthropology/
American Anthropological Association
In collaboration with the
International Women's Anthropology Conference

PO 86944 LN
Museum GN 21 L364 F76 1993

Copyright © 1993
Association for Feminist Anthropology / American Anthropological Association
All Rights Reserved.
Typesetting by Caribe Computer Services, New York City, NY
Printed in the United States of America
ISBN 0-913167-55-X

To Happy,
In loving memory.
Connie

UNIVERSITY

Eleanor Leacock, Labrador, and the Politics of Gatherer-Hunters[1]

Richard B. Lee
University of Toronto

Richard H. Daly
Gitksan-Wetsueten Educational Society

In her long career Eleanor Leacock tirelessly challenged views which she considered to be theoretically unsound and politically harmful. She was particularly critical of theoretical perspectives which universalized capitalist relations of production, and claimed to "discover" them in even the most "primitive" societies. This was a key component of the work which marked her professional debut, on the Montagnais-Naskapi of the eastern Canadian subarctic.

In carrying out the substantive research that flowed from these ethical and political principles, her work underwent an interesting evolution. In her writings on hunter-gatherers and Native American ethnohistory, she pioneered the view that Indian culture and society could only be understood against a backdrop of the transformative and destructive forces of colonialism. But when a later generation of scholars invoked "world system articulation" as the **prime mover** in the creation and reproduction of Native cultures, it was Leacock who redirected our attention to the sources of native cultural resistance and autonomy.

Both perspectives are in evidence in her 1954 monograph, *The Montagnais Hunting Territory and the Fur Trade.* In a work of only 59 pages, Leacock used ethnographic and ethnohistorical data to challenge the so-called "Family Hunting Territory" hypothesis of Frank Speck; in so doing she effectively critiqued one of the

most durable chestnuts of twentieth century American anthropology: the idea that aboriginal North Americans had a kind of private tenure in land. With her Montagnais work she joined an often heated scholarly debate which remains central to ethnographic work in the Canadian sub-arctic and to the theory of gatherer-hunter societies.

In a body of work extending over twenty-seven years Frank Speck had described in detail what he called the Family Hunting Territory (FHT) of the Algonkian Indians. Speck had considered the existence of the FHT as ethnographic evidence that private property and individual immediate family ownership had existed throughout history, even among the most allegedly primitive foragers of Canada. In a long series of papers (Speck 1915, 1923, 1926; Speck and Eiseley 1939, 1942), Speck had elaborated his view that individual hunters and their families, not larger collectivities, controlled exclusive access to the game of a hunting territory, and he maintained that such practices antedated the fur trade. Although Speck's motives were complex, [2] among them was the goal of countering Morgan's and others (particularly the spectre of Marx and Engels) view that "free land-holding has generally been thought typical of primitive man" (Speck 1926:323). Speck's views were widely endorsed by prominent anthropologists of the day including Robert Lowie (1936), Irving Hallowell (1943), and Loren Eiseley (Speck and Eiseley 1942).

In situating herself within the debate, Leacock described the context of her Montagnais-Naskapi work in these words:

> It so happens that [the Montagnais] figured importantly in the argument, generally accepted when I was a student, that the "communism in living" referred to by Lewis Henry Morgan and Frederick Engels had in fact never existed. It was asserted that although the Montagnais-Naskapi lived by hunting, fishing, and gathering nuts, roots, and berries, as once had all humanity, they nonetheless owned and inherited their lands as individuals. Frank Speck, a major proponent of this argument, wrote with Loren Eiseley (1942:240) that such private ownership must be `troubling to those who, like Morgan, and many present-day Russians, would see the culture of the lower hunters as representing a stage prior to the development of the institution of individualized property.'
>
> Historical research, however, confirmed the position taken by two professors of mine, William Duncan Strong and Julian Steward, and the Canadian anthropologist Diamond Jenness, that prior to the influence of the European fur-trade, the Labrador Indians had owned their lands collectively. Furthermore, fieldwork, plus a reexamination of reports by Speck and others, made clear that even after the Montagnais-Naskapi became dependent upon fur-trading, it was not an individual's right to land as such that was recognized, but only the right to **trap** on certain lands. People could hunt, fish, and gather food, birch bark, and other necessary goods where they chose (Leacock 1981:31).

As a graduate student at Columbia Leacock conducted field work in Labrador and Quebec in 1949-50, followed by archival research on 17th to 19th century sources on the region. Leacock's 1954 monograph sought to establish three points concerning the Fur Trade and the hunter-gatherers of Labrador:

(1) The North American fur trade was not a recent arrival; it had been altering Native life for over four hundred years. Even before the advent of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670, the annual harvest of beaver pelts from eastern North America had already reached 80,000 pelts.

(2) The "family hunting territory," where it existed, was associated with the setting of traplines for fur-bearing animals and was rarely, if ever, applied to other forms of game. Moose, caribou, and bear, for example, continued to be freely hunted across boundaries, even in areas where the family hunting territories for the harvest of other species were observed.

(3) In areas such as southeastern Labrador communal hunting, even of furbearers, persisted up to the 1940s, and family hunting territories were reluctantly adopted as a direct result of government and trader pressures. Ethnohistorical records for centers of early trade elsewhere indicated similar processes to those found among the Natashquan of southeastern Labrador.

In making her case Leacock brought to bear both ethnographic and ethnohistoric data to solve theoretical and substantive issues, an innovative synthesis of methodologies for the time, though commonplace today. Another innovative component of Leacock's problematic was her attempt to understand the broader social and political background to the Family Hunting Territory debate. She argued that assumptions such as those of Speck and his colleagues tended to see all of human nature through the lens of twentieth century civil society. In Leacock's eyes, the point of view of Speck and Eiseley smacked of the male, middle-class

state society's outlook, portraying the rest of the world's cultures in the image of its own historically specific hegemonic culture.

Leacock's 1954 monograph was widely cited in the literature, and for a period of over twenty years few scholars resurrected Speck's model of private land-holding among subarctic peoples. In hindsight the acceptance that Leacock's work enjoyed was surprising on several counts. Here was a scholar arguing for the vindication of Morgan (and Engels) at a period in American history when McCarthyism was in full swing. The year 1954 was a time of intellectual timidity and conformity with the Cold War ideological formation firmly in place. And a young, not regularly employed and radical woman was daring to challenge the dominant banalities of the day.

At the same time it would be an error to overestimate the power of Leacock's opposition and to discount some powerful allies and arguments on her side. As she herself often noted the linking of the Family Hunting Territory to the colonial fur trade did not originate with her. Steward (1936, 1938, 1941), Jenness (1935), Bailey (1937), Lips (1937, 1947) and others had argued this point forcefully in the two previous decades.

Two factors can be invoked in explaining the magnitude of the influence of Leacock's work. First was the high quality of the ethnographic data and the marshalling of the ethnohistoric evidence. It was hard to argue with her data and few did. It seems clear in hindsight that by the 1950s anthropology was ready to move in a much more historically informed and politically conscious direction.[3] Leacock's approach epitomized a post-war anthropology struggling to come to grips with the real lives and predicaments of Native peoples, not as museum specimens, but as actors in turbulent times, as peoples actively pursuing their goals and living their lives under conditions of colonialism and imperialism. In this sense, the ravages of the McCarthy era may have heightened, rather than lessened a sense of dissatisfaction with the prevailing ideology within the discipline.

While Leacock's Montagnais-Naskapi work was inspired to a degree by the ideological challenge of Speck and Eiseley it was informed both by close analysis of, and serious reflection upon her fieldwork evidence. Eleanor Leacock was the last person to deny that the pursuit of knowledge was informed by the debates

between different philosophical and ideological outlooks, but neither was she one to enter a serious debate without substantive data to back up her position.

In the period after 1954, Leacock's work developed in a number of directions not directly related to foragers (see other papers, this volume) but she continued to publish her Montagnais-Naskapi material and to maintain an interest in hunter-gatherer studies. Her 1955 paper on "Matrilocality in a Hunting Society" made important observations about gender relations among foragers. Contrary to the widespread view that hunting societies were male-dominated as well as patrilineal and patrilocal, Leacock presented evidence that women in these societies had considerable influence over post-marital residence choices, and among the Naskapi uxorilocality was normative, a finding that was confirmed by a number of other studies in the region and elsewhere (eg. Bishop 1976; Dunning 1959; Marshall 1959). Thus Leacock anticipated by some two decades the focus on women's power in foraging societies that was to characterize feminist anthropology in the seventies (eg. Slocum 1975).

The quality of gender relations in Montagnais society was beautifully evoked in an insightful ethnohistoric essay "Montagnais Marriage and the Jesuits in the Seventeenth Century..." (Leacock and Goodman 1976; reprinted in Leacock 1981). Here the Montagnais are revealed through the cultural lens of the *Jesuit Relations*, the voluminous ethnographic reports sent home by the Jesuit fathers between 1610 and 1790 (Thwaites 1896-1901). In a brilliant exposition we see the patriarchal and authoritarian assumptions of seventeenth century Frenchmen sorely tested by the egalitarian and gender-blind behaviors of the Montagnais. The paper describes the Jesuits' attempts to comprehend these strange customs. When one Jesuit chastised a Montagnais man for the indigenous custom of men overlooking their wives' affairs with other men, the Montagnais was unconcerned. But if you allow this to go on, the Jesuit persisted, how will you know if the children you father are really yours? In what must rank as one of the best comebacks in the long history of the European dialogue with the "Other," the Montagnais replied, "Thou hast no sense. You French people love only your own children, but we all love all the children of our tribe" (Leacock and Goodman 1976:82).

Though not present at the *Man the Hunter* conference in 1966, Leacock was a prominent participant in the conference on band societies at the National Museum of Canada in 1965 (Leacock 1969), and in subsequent meetings on foraging peoples in Paris in 1978 and Quebec in 1980. The Paris conference led in turn to the publication of *Politics and History in Band Societies* (Leacock and Lee 1982).

She also broadened her perspective of reinterpretive ethnohistory to encompass the whole of Native North America. In 1971, together with Nancy Lurie, she published the acclaimed collection of papers entitled *North American Indians in Historical Perspective*, with contributions by, among others, June Helm, William Sturtevant, Darcy NcNickle, and Gene Weltfish. This volume had a dramatic effect on the historicizing of studies of North American Native peoples, precisely at a time when the native peoples themselves were rediscovering their history, and the recovery of forgotten and repressed histories was becoming a major task of indigenous peoples world-wide (see for example Cabral's "The Weapon of Theory" 1979).

The Family Hunting Territory Debate Today

Leacock believed that to comprehend fully those societies which are not differentiated by classes, it was necessary to understand not only their internal dynamics and the histories of their relations to class and state societies, but also the production of our knowledge about them. She argued convincingly that only the method of historical materialism had the breadth and analytical depth that could encompass the understanding of these complex processes and provide a framework for action.

Beginning in the 1970s a number of Canadian scholars in the area, some professing these same scholarly and ethical commitments, were reporting findings that seemed to fall somewhere in between Leacock's view of pre-fur trade communal land tenure and Speck's familial property. Observers such as Feit (1969, 1973), Tanner (1979) and Sieciehowicz (1986) reported that individual family heads, while certainly not "owning" land in the western sense, were nevertheless responsible for "managing" and "stewarding" the resources on a given tract of land to ensure against overhunting and inefficient exploitation. Although it was acknowledged that these "managers" were also controlling commercial traplines on Family Hunting Territories they nevertheless appeared to function in the capacity of "Keepers of the Game" — Calvin Martin's term (1978) — for non-commodified, subsistence resources as well. Additionally Bishop (1986), Morantz (1986) and others adduced evidence which claimed to show that these stewards had existed in past times as well, as far back as the 17th century, though no-one could say for sure what the situation would have been for the pre-colonial period.

While it appears that some of this work challenges Leacock's position, the differences are more apparent than real. Part of the difference springs from two quite different senses of problem. Much of the subsequent work by subarctic scholars has tacitly avoided the theoretical, processual and evolutionary component of Leacock's writings; rather, contemporary observers have focussed on the land and resource management procedures of the present — without particular concern for qualitative differences in social relations at different points in history.

A second area of difference is that while recent writings emphasize the vesting of jural rights in land in family units, all are clear that powerful and enduring mechanisms exist throughout the region for reciprocal access and the sharing of rights to (non-commercial) game resources within a wider collectivity. But these broader rights are often mentioned in passing as if their presence were not strictly relevant to the matter.

Third, as Hugh Grant (1981) has noted, some have criticized Leacock because her formulation of the Family Hunting Territory for the Labrador Innu does not precisely fit the situation in their particular areas. But surely what Leacock was offering was a plausible and testable hypothesis about the emergence of the FHT in one area and not a global explanation intended to account for the specifics of all cases in all areas. As Grant notes "This general thesis about historical change is not proferred as a replacement for history itself" (1981:24).

A fourth area of divergence relates to the context of fieldwork in the 1970s and '80s as an era of Native Land Claims in Canada — something that Leacock herself was both aware of and involved in. The prevalence of several comprehensive and specific land claim court actions led researchers to the very practical question of what indigenous practices could stand up in a court of law; and consequently an emphasis on those aspects of indigenous

land tenure which most closely resembled the privatized individual jural land holding of Euro-Canadian law.

If studies of land **management** have predominated in recent decades, because land claims were being fought in the courts according to arguments about the nature of "land use and occupancy" (see, for example, Elias 1988), it is only recently that the focus has shifted back to reconsidering the question of aboriginal **collective** ownership and jurisdictional rights to land and resources.[4] With this contemporary focus has come a renewed challenge to researchers to clarify the terminological imprecisions which still surround the social organization of ownership, as correctly pointed out by the late Edward Rogers (Bishop and Morantz 1986:22-23) and by Adrian Tanner (1979:210-211).

What is most illuminating to us is that a number of recent papers contain as a leit-motif the continuing presence of indigenous communal practices, interlinked and articulated with the Family Hunting Territory. These latter give the land tenure a distinctive cultural character, fundamentally different from Euro-Canadian notions of private tenure in land. Arguments for the synthesis of the enduring demands of communal hunting with individual stewardship of resources are found in work by Colin Scott (1986), Jose Maihlot (1986), Krys Sieciechowicz (1986), Fikret Berkes (1986), and Adrian Tanner (1991).

It seems to us then, that even in seeking to refute Leacock's theory and data, modern scholars further undercut Speck's position that private property is a universal and ahistorical phenomenon. Furthermore, their work has given material substance to the nature of hunter-gatherer social organization in the region, showing at once the flexibility of the system and its own, *sui generis* responses to the new challenges created by the fur trade, resource depletion and eventual sedentarization of the population on government-administrated reserves.

Conclusion: Ethnography, History, and World Systems

By presenting a framework that would encompass the symbolic, the psyche, the emotions, social organization and ecology, Leacock hoped to counter the pervasive mechanical materialism and biological reductionism that were such prominent currents in anthropology in the later years of her life. Eleanor Leacock's vision was not a simple one: to do justice to foraging peoples one had to be able to factor out three historical

dynamics affecting their lives: first, relations of production and reproduction that were rooted in the communal mode of production; second, dynamics arising from the complex historical relations between foragers and their agricultural neighbors; and third, one had to deal with the struggles for survival — political, economic and cultural — of foragers and other communal societies enmeshed in the capitalist nation-state (Leacock and Lee 1982:1-20).

It was a matter of concern to Eleanor Leacock that a large number of Marxist anthropologists had been so impressed with the power of expanding capital that they have tended to recognize only the third of these dynamics, and to discount the others. According to this view, which shares some of its rationales with "postmodern" anthropology, forces generated by the "world system" — the fur trade, the rubber trade, petty commodity production, labour migration and proletarianization — are the very forces that have created the cultural identities of non-state societies integrated into the world economy. In our view it is mistaken to draw such conclusions without a multi-layered understanding of both the internal and external social conditions — and the social forces that shape scholarly discourses along lines set by the hegemonic agenda. Reflecting the disillusion with the possibility of progressive change in the age of Reagan, Bush and Yeltsin, World Systems perspectives have tended to regard the power of capital as unlimited and have projected this omnipotence into periods of history and regions of the world where its actual presence was limited or highly contested. This is often accompanied by a labelling as hopeless romantics those who would see value in the persistence of features of communal modes of production in today's "colonized, baptized and culturally traumatized" societies (Sahlins 1968:1).

An important part of the legacy of Eleanor Leacock was her insistence that, indeed, something else, something equally as real exists and persists "out there," beyond the baleful light shed by multi-national capital and neo-colonialism. She argued that this "something else" was essential to a scholarly and politically relevant understanding of the identity of any non-state society studied in our century. She maintained that those who failed to analyze, from an evolutionary perspective, these other aspects of contemporary non-state societies, had the effect of negating their existence and obscuring their history and heritage.

Reviewing Eleanor Leacock's work of more than three decades on band societies, we discern the emergence of an interesting pattern. In 1954 Leacock pointed to the impact of colonialism and capitalism on Native North America at a time when most anthropologists were either blind to the phenomenon, or viewed it through the rosy glasses of acculturation theory. But then, three decades later, the discipline's center of gravity had shifted, and most anthropologists had come to recognize the awesome power of Capitalist modernity and its ability to transform cultures and destroy lives. In the current conjuncture it was Leacock who fought against the tendency to eliminate from anthropological analysis consideration of the persistence and vitality of communal production relations and egalitarian values and decision-making among these same Native peoples.

Given the enormous load of ideology in most branches of scholarship, Leacock championed the importance of empirical evidence; without the researcher's commitment to gather, weigh and analyze historical and ethnographic evidence, a large part of what passes for discourse today will remain little more than ideological name-calling.

To recover a link to the real world beyond the mind of the researcher, to seek out as far as possible the empirical realities, and to root this in an understanding of the political implications of our work are important tasks for anthropologists today and in the future. These, in our view, are two of the most enduring legacies of Eleanor Burke Leacock.

Notes

1. Earlier versions of this paper were presented at symposia commemorating the life and work of Eleanor Leacock at the Annual Meetings of the American Anthropological Association, Chicago, November, 1987, and the XII International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, Zagreb, July, 1988. The authors wish to thank Hugh Grant, Tom McFeat, Krys Sieciechowicz, and Adrian Tanner for useful suggestions on this paper, though responsibility for its errors and interpretations remain with us.

2. For a discussion of Speck's influences and motives see Knight 1974, and particularly Feit 1991.

3. Leacock's work was rapidly picked up and incorporated into what became one of the most influential articles published during the 1950s, *Tappers and Trappers* by Murphy and Steward (1956).

4. The first case in which the issue of aboriginal rights of ownership and jurisdiction is central to the pleadings is *Delgam Uukw et al v. The Queen in the Right of the Province of British Columbia*, the Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en case, before the Supreme Court of British Columbia from May 1987 to June 1990. Although judgement, rendered in April 1991 did not support native claims, an appeal to the Appellate Court of British Columbia is currently underway.

References

Bailey, Alfred G.
1937 *The Conflict of European and Eastern Algonkian Cultures, 1504-1700.* Publications of the New Brunswick Museum, Monographic Series, No.2.

Berkes, Fikret
1986 Common Property Resources and Hunting Territories. In Bishop and Morantz *op. cit.* Pp. 145-62.

Bishop, Charles
1976 The Emergence of the Northern Ojibwa: Social and Economic Considerations. *American Ethnologist* 3(1):39-54.

Bishop, Charles
1986 Territoriality Among Northeastern Algonquins. In Bishop and Morantz *op. cit.* Pp. 37-63.

Bishop, Charles A. and Toby Morantz
1986 Who Owns the Beaver? Northern Algonquian Land Tenure Reconsidered. *Anthropologica* (Special Issue), N.S. 28(1-2).

Cabral, Amilcar
1979 *Unity in Struggle: Speeches and Writings of Amilcar Cabral.* New York: Monthly Review Press.

Damas, David, ed.
1969 *Contributions to Anthropology: Band Societies.* National Museum of Canada Bulletin No. 228. Ottawa: National Museums of Canada.

Dunning, William
1959 *Social and Economic Change Among the Northern Ojibwa.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Elias, Doug
1988 *Rights and Research: The Role of the Social Sciences in the Legal and Political Resolution of Land Claims and Questions of Aboriginal Rights.* Unpublished MS.

Feit, Harvey A.
1969 *Mistassini Hunters of the Boreal Forest: Ecosystem Dynamics and Multiple Subsistence Patterns.* Montreal: McGill University Master's Thesis in Anthropology.
1973 The Ethno-Ecology of the Waswanipi Cree: Or How Hunters Can Manage Their Resources. In *Cultural Ecology: Readings on the Canadian Indians and Eskimos.* B. Cox, ed. Pp. 115-125. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.

1991 The Construction of Algonquian Hunting Territories: Private Property as Moral Lesson, Policy Advocacy and Ethnographic Error. In *Colonial Situations: Essays on the Contextualization of Ethnographic Knowledge*. George W. Stocking, ed. Pp. 109-34. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Grant, Hugh

1981 *The Montagnais-Naskapi Family Hunting Territory: A Review of the Literature*. Unpublished MS, University of Toronto.

Hallowell, Irving

1943 The Nature and Function of Property as a Social Institution. *Journal of Legal and Political Sociology* 1(3-4):115-38.

Jenness, Diamond

1935 The Ojibwa Indians of Parry Island, Their Social and Religious Life. *National Museum of Canada Bulletin* No.78, Anthropological Series No. 17.

Knight, Rolf

1968 Ecological Factors in the Changing Economy of the Rupert House Cree. *National Museums of Canada, Anthropology Papers* No. 15. Ottawa.

1974 Grey Owl's Return: Cultural Ecology and Canadian Indigenous Peoples. *Reviews in Anthropology* 1:349-359.

Leacock, Eleanor B.

1954 The Montagnais "Hunting Territory" and the Fur Trade. *American Anthropologist* American Anthropological Association Memoir 78. Washington DC: AAA.

1955 Matrilocality in a Simple Hunting Economy. *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 11(1):31-47.

1969 The Montagnais-Naskapi Band. *Proceedings of the Conference on Band Organization*, Ottawa, Ontario, 1965. David Damas, ed. Pp. 1-20. National Museum of Canada Bulletin, No. 228.

1979 Ethnohistorical Investigation of Egalitarian Politics in Eastern North America. In *The Development of Political Organization in Native North America*. Elisabeth Tooker ed. Seattle: American Ethnological Society.

1981 *Myths of Male Dominance: Collected Articles on Women Cross-Culturally*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Leacock, Eleanor B. and Jacqueline Goodman

1976 Montagnais Marriage and the Jesuits in the Seventeenth Century: Incidents from the Relations of Paul LeJeune. *Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology* 6(3):77-91.

Leacock, Eleanor B. and Richard B. Lee, eds.

1982 *Politics and History in Band Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leacock, Eleanor B. and Nancy O. Lurie, eds.

1971 *North American Indians in Historical Perspective*. New York: Random House.

Lips, Julius

1937 Public Opinion and Mutual Assistance Among the Montagnais-Naskapi. *American Anthropologist* 39:222-228.

1947 *Naskapi Law*. Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, 37, Pt.4.

Lowie, Robert H.

1936 Lewis Henry Morgan in Historical Perspective. In *Essays in Anthropology Presented to Alfred L. Kroeber*. R. H. Lowie ed. Pp. 169-81. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Mailhot, Jose

1986 Territorial Mobility Among the Montagnais-Naskapi of Labrador. In Bishop and Morantz *op. cit.* Pp. 92-107.

Marshall, Lorna

1959 Marriage Among the !Kung Bushmen. *Africa* 29:335-365.

Martin, Calvin

1978 *The Keepers of the Game*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Morantz, Toby

1986 Historical Perspectives on Family Hunting Territories in Eastern James Bay. In Bishop and Morantz *op. cit.* Pp. 62-91.

Murphy, Robert F. and Julian Steward

1956 Tappers and Trappers: Parallel Processes in Acculturation. *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 4:335-355.

Sahlins, Marshall D.

1968 *Tribesmen*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Sieciechowicz, Krystina

1986 Northern Ojibwa Land Tenure. In Bishop and Morantz *op. cit.* Pp. 187-202.

Scott, Colin

1986 Hunting Territories, Hunting Bosses and Communal Production Among Coastal James Bay Cree. In Bishop and Morantz *op. cit.* Pp. 163-74.

Slocum, Sally

1975 Woman the Gatherer: Male Bias in Anthropology. In *Toward an Anthropology of Women*. Rayna Reiter ed. Pp. 36-50. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Speck, Frank

1915 The Family Hunting Band as the Basis of Algonkian Social Organization. *American Anthropologist* 17(2): 289-305.

1923 Mistassini Hunting Territories in the Labrador Peninsula. *American Anthropologist* 25:452-471.

1926 Land Ownership Among Hunting Peoples in Primitive America and the World's Marginal Areas. *International Congress of Americanists* 22nd Session, Rome 2:323-32.

Speck, Frank and Loren Eisley
1939 Significance of Hunting Territory Systems of the Algonkian in Social Theory. *American Anthropologist* 41:269-280.
1942 Montagnais-Naskapi Bands and Family Hunting Districts of the Central and Southeastern Labrador Peninsula. *American Philosophical Society* 85:215-242.

Steward, Julian H.
1936 The Economic and Social Basis of Primitive Bands. In *Essays in Anthropology Presented to Alfred L. Kroeber*. R. H. Lowie ed. Pp. 331-50. Berkeley: University of California Press.
1938 Basin-Plateau Aboriginal Sociopolitical Groups. *Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin* 120.
1941 Determinism in Primitive Society? *Scientific Monthly* 53:491-501.

Tanner, Adrian
1979 *Bringing Home Animals*. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press.
1991 Canadian Aboriginal Resistance to Fur Trade Mercantilism. Paper presented at the Symposium on "Narratives of Resistance," *Annual Meetings of the Canadian Anthropology Society*. London, Ont. May 1991.

Thwaites, Reuben G.
1896-1901 *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*. Cleveland: Burrows Brothers, 73 vols.

Contributions to Native North American Studies

Robert S. Grumet
New Hope, Pennsylvania

Eleanor Burke Leacock worked among Native American people for more than forty years. During that time, she conducted pioneering research in many Indian communities as she helped develop innovative models shedding new insights into Indian lifeways. Often challenging prevailing wisdom, Happy's theoretical and methodological contributions continue to exert an enduring influence upon the study of Native American culture and history to the present day.

Happy's first field experiences occurred as a participant in the Columbia University summer field trip of 1945. Working as a graduate student in an interdisciplinary team under the direction of Marian W. Smith, Happy conducted fieldwork with Harrison Indian people living along the Fraser River in the southern region of the Canadian province of British Columbia.

Two of Happy's lifelong interests, her concern for children and her awareness of the importance of history in anthropological analyses, were first expressed in print in the two articles she prepared for the volume publishing the field trip's findings (Smith 1949). The first of these, entitled "The Seabird Community," showed how historical effects of dislocation and enduring attachments to traditional interpersonal bonds prevented different Coast and Interior Salish people forced to live together within the Seabird Island Reserve from developing a strong sense of community (Leacock 1949).

The second article in the Smith volume, a report co-authored with Joanne Schriver entitled "Harrison Indian Childhood," was the first published study of childhood in a Northwest Coast Indian culture (Schriver and Leacock 1949). By focusing

Egalitarian and Class Societies: Transitions and Transformations

Christine Ward Gailey
Northeastern University

Eleanor Leacock was one of two American anthropologists in the early 1950s to document the transformation of communal social relations — kinship and gender — that occurred with indirect forms of colonialism and accompanying changes in use-rights. Both she and Stanley Diamond (1951), in their respective dissertations, used ethnohistorical research to trace the shifts in kin-associated obligations and claims with increasing social stratification.[1] In her study, later published by the American Anthropological Association (Leacock 1954), Leacock challenged Frank Speck's widely accepted assertion that private property was universal. She analyzed the impact of introducing commodity production — the fur trade — on kinship and gender relations, including how the Innu (then called the Montagnais-Naskapi) of Labrador mobilized around the continuing threat of economic differentiation and privatization of resources.

Through comparative and historical research, Leacock would continue to address the questions posed by colonialism and local cultural dynamics of gender and kinship. In all of her work, Leacock discerned the processes and dynamics, the social dialectics undergirding exploitation, rather than relying on an explicit or implicit assumption about a (gendered) human nature. By way of explanation for existing stratification, Leacock sought historical transformations, first and foremost, rather than teleological historical reasoning she explicitly rejected (Leacock 1963:IIxvii), the convenience of purported universal cognitive structures (Leacock and Nash 1977; Leacock 1977c), or neoHobbesian and sociobiological notions of innate hierarchy (Leacock 1981a).

Leacock led the post-McCarthy reevaluation of social evolution, and pressed beyond the prevailing sentiments in the academy to question in her 1963 introduction to *Ancient Society* whether patriarchy was a primordial condition. Moreover, she challenged the assumption that patrilineality was coincident with patriarchy, a point well taken and often missed by researchers even today. Indeed, she took up Morgan's (and, so, Engels') point in this regard and posited a connection between the development of patriarchy and processes of class and state formation (1963: IIxvi).[2]

From the 1960s on, Leacock would focus on the transformation of societies through colonially catalyzed class and state formation, including as part of this ongoing process, the imposition or encouragement of capitalist development in the postcolonial period. Entwined always, and increasingly through time, was the question of what happens to women's authority and autonomy (Leacock 1972, 1977a, 1977b, 1981b; Etienne and Leacock 1980). This line of inquiry, rooted always in empirical studies, culminated in her formidable comparative analysis of the conceptual and methodological problems encountered in assessing the shifting contours of gender oppression (Leacock 1983).

In the early 1970s Leacock reached an audience far beyond anthropology and North America when she resurrected and critically evaluated the Engels thesis, based on more recent ethnohistorical research (Leacock 1972). In so doing, she invited a generation of younger scholars to pursue research on women's status. She was without question the first of the modern feminist anthropologists to call for reexamining the relationship of state formation and women's loss of autonomy and authority. This pathbreaking reconsideration inspired and deeply influenced a whole generation of feminist scholars throughout the world, particularly those who would consider themselves to be Marxist or socialist feminists.[3] Leacock placed women again squarely on the social science (not just anthropological) agenda, as well as on the socialist one, to the consternation of a number of prominent male Marxist scholars.

Leacock's concern with the historical transformation of women's status preceded the first feminist anthropology anthologies by at least two years — a decade if you count the introduction to Morgan, and about two decades if you consider

the dissertation. Her work on state formation and the subordination of women, her demonstration of the authority and active engagement of women in the politics of communal societies (e.g., Leacock 1977a), her tireless combat with biological reductionists of various sorts (Leacock 1978, 1981), combined with her generous encouragement of younger scholars and feminists and courageous defense of students, made Leacock pivotal in the emergence and legitimation of feminist anthropology.

Gender for Leacock was not a frozen entity, reducible to sex differences, but neither was it a random cognitive category floating free of sociocultural and political economic processes, or derived in some indecipherable way from an abstract concept of power or timeless sense of difference. While the question of the historical origins and trajectories of gender oppression has received a postmodern dismissal in the contemporary climate of the Euroamerican academy, Leacock's work continues to resonate with the experiences and concerns of women throughout most of the world, including the marginalized and nonacademic corners of Euroamerican societies.

Let us consider, then, some of the major contributions she made to the analysis of the impact on gender relations of colonialism, class and state formation.

Leacock and the Conceptualization of Egalitarian Societies

Leacock began examining the questions of the origin of oppressions (by class, gender, and race) in a social context that necessitated and generated terminological confusion. It was the McCarthy period, and to identify societies in terms of how they were organized socioeconomically was anathema to the academy.

The concept of primitive communism, while not used explicitly by Marx himself, but rather, Morgan, pinpoints distinctive social dynamics: shared or pooled resources, contextual authority in place of institutions of power, culture creation in the hands of participants, bedrock economic and social security. To call such societies "primitive communist" in the U.S. in the 1950s was next to impossible, if one wanted to have any audience at all. Leacock had a finely hewn sense of audience: she deployed different language for different audiences — and she reached a far more diverse set of audiences than most academics. She used language that her audience could hear, and therefore, she could stretch

their comprehension and conceptualization of the world more effectively. For this reason, it is vital that we appreciate how she used terms, not simply what terms she used.

The mainstream adopted, unwittingly, the economic reductionism and evolutionism of the Second International,[4] focusing as most did on subsistence techniques as a way of grouping and inherently ranking types of societies. The development of the term "egalitarian," thus, was an effort to steer away from the inaccuracy of an implicitly linear-evolutionist subsistence-strategy labeling, e.g. "hunting and gathering," "pastoralism," "horticulture," "agriculture."

Leacock and a handful of others stressed social relations of production and reproduction as defining features of different types of societies. Using the term "egalitarian" at least emphasized social relations, rather than forces of production. Recent critics of Leacock have dwelt on the inaccuracy of this term, without acknowledging the context in which she developed it, and the progressive role it played in that context. It must be remembered that at the time, the crudest economic determinist models were being used within mainstream U.S. anthropology, as befitted a nationalist political agenda that sought rapid economic development along capitalist lines throughout the postwar world.

It should also be noted that the way Leacock deployed the term "egalitarian" was not in the sense of some putative primeval condition of equality, with everyone having the same status or rank. Leacock was a leftist, not a liberal. She took pains to try to develop categories of analysis that suited the peoples studied, not fit other peoples' dynamics to a Procrustean bed of any stripe. In doing so she argued that social hierarchies could and did exist that were unoppressive; these were linked to life statuses that could be transcended, or were embedded in counterbalanced kin roles, or were due to achieved statuses available to a wide range of people. She held that no permanent, lifelong condition of oppression could exist in primitive communist societies. They were, and remain, egalitarian relative to class-based societies. This is because there is basic security for all, diffuse or consensual decision-making, direct engagement by all in socially necessary (re)productive work, and comparable control over such work by women and men, albeit sometimes at different phases of their life cycles.

Trajectories Toward Exploitation

For Leacock, the existence of structural ambiguities in kinship connections and the labor claims they convey in communal settings provide an arena where considerable inequities can emerge. But, she argued, consistent, systematic hierarchies can develop only if kinship-based ambiguities are reduced. This can occur rapidly in colonial conditions or in the dynamics of state formation, or as catalyzed through prevailing economic development policies. In so arguing, Leacock was among the first anthropologists to understand that communal societies have histories, and not only the ones framed by the colonial encounter. To analyze those histories, particularly with regard to gender relations, she was to state repeatedly,

> ...requires a complete break with the tendency to interpret all cultures in terms of categories derived from capitalist society (1983:263).

As she and Richard Lee would argue in their *Politics and History in Band Societies* (1982),[5] there is nothing automatic about social reproduction: it involves the conscious creation of culture; it is a process mediated by human action. Production, she would emphasize, in keeping with a Marxism that many Marxists would forget (see Leacock 1982), included a notion of social reproduction — the making, distribution and consumption of goods, the ceremonies and socialization that kept people in the community, and so on. What was not included in this sense of production, however, was the kind of managerial and intellectual work that served solely to reproduce class relations. In this there was a distinction, one born of and characteristic of all class societies, not present in communal ones. One of the core dynamics of state formation is precisely the emergence of this intervention of owning, managing, or intellectual classes in social reproduction.

The existence of some division of labor by gender in all societies was not problematic for Leacock. She could acknowledge that in most societies women did more child care — although she was at pains to point out that in most of the communal societies with which she was familiar, men did far more than in the United States, and the division of labor was far more flexible. The absence of problem was not because she was an essentialist — quite to the contrary — but because she was more concerned with control and authority over processes than

with the assignment of tasks, whatever their pattern. Unlike many contemporary feminist anthropologists, Leacock perceived the difference between a technical division of labor (task assignments) and a social division of labor (the attachment of differential value and decision-making to task assignments). The same division of labor would have dramatically different implications in communal versus class settings, and the everyday consequences did not escape her analysis (see, e.g., Leacock 1977b). She did not confuse form with content. Put another way, Leacock understood the radical implications of comparable worth, for her model of it was drawn from communal societies.

At the same time, Leacock did not freeze communal societies in a time warp. She argued that contradictions could develop within communal societies along the vectors of the technical division of labor by gender, age, rank in some cases, and achieved status. There could be tensions between communal ownership and kin-based allocation of use-rights, between ranks regarding labor claims and the character of reciprocal exchanges. These tensions were usually contained or reproduced as tensions, but in some instances (requiring empirical investigation) — such as bigmanships and chieftainships — these dynamics could eventuate in class and gender hierarchies (Gailey and Leacock 1992). But far more frequently, class and other hierarchies were catalyzed by colonialism (capitalist and precapitalist).

Based as always on painstaking comparative research, one major process she saw as fostering the development of exploitative inequalities in general, and gender hierarchies in particular, was commodity production. This she saw as emerging in the vast majority of cases through capitalist colonialism (see Etienne and Leacock 1980). But it also could accompany class and state formation, and even in a few situations where ranked kin societies engaged in trade and not simply kin-mediated exchanges (see Leacock 1983:275-277). In so arguing she challenged other anthropologists, Marxist and other, to clarify their understandings and characterizations of commodity production and exchange, of merchant capital, and the nature of exchanges in communal societies (Leacock 1982). She was insistent that the focus not remain on exchange per se, but on potentially shifting conditions of control over the production process and product — a focus that often reintroduces gender into the analysis, as well as colonialism:

> ...the fact that the French Marxists have not launched a thorough-going criticism of Levi-Strauss' assumption that exchange of women by men inaugurated human society has served to weaken their analyses of pre-capitalist production modes (1983:263).

Leacock tackled the thorny questions of why women are subordinated in state formation, why matriarchy could not eventuate as often as patriarchy, and why sources of autonomy and authority for women — especially producing women — in state formation is qualitatively different and less than in communal societies. As she argues in the *Dialectical Anthropology* article (1983:269-270), women receive the brunt of the subordination precisely because they come to represent both the making of goods and the reproduction of the labor force. This is not, as some critics have argued, an essentialist argument. Instead, as I have argued (Gailey 1988), the effort to control the continuity of local communities is what fosters ideologies of biology as destiny, emphasizing the "naturalness" of all forms of social hierarchy being ushered into existence: class, race/ethnicity, and gender. Women become particular targets for state attention because of the need to control labor and goods, and to prevent communities from remaining autonomous. To do so demands that the cultural constructs of kin based continuity be ripped asunder, with varying degrees of subtlety (oftentimes literally extracting women from their kin groups, as concubines, state virgins, symbolic wives of rulers, and so on). It is the community-state struggle over control of local continuity — what Diamond called kin-civil conflict — that heightens the attention paid to women as reproducers. Leacock concurred with my contention that gender hierarchy emerges first in the relations between emerging classes that only later — and unevenly, given forms of cultural resistance — can come to characterize whole societies (Leacock, personal communication; see also Gailey 1988). She saw women's subordination as an historically incomplete, checkered process:

> The social and economic subordination of women was established in some parts of the world millennia ago; it was unfolding in other parts of the world at the time of European exploration and conquest; and it has been developing in yet others in the context of Western colonialism and imperialism. ...in order to interpret this development correctly, it is essential, first: to have a clear concept of primitive communism, divested of stereotypical assumptions that female subordination is

a natural rather than historical phenomenon, and second: to place any society under study clearly in the context of its particular history, pre- and post-colonial (1983:270).

Evolution in the sense used by Leacock, then, was not a linear, relentless march of structural contradictions through time and stages. It certainly never conveyed any notion of progress, particularly where women's autonomy and authority were concerned. Modes of production were historical developments that then came to shape and be transformed by (gendered) human action. Institutions were created and destroyed, by people; the dynamics of everyday life as well as institutional structures mattered. She was not the kind of evolutionist of the Julian Steward or Marvin Harris materialist varieties.

What Eleanor Leacock provides future generations is pioneering work on the impact of commodity production on communal societies and the impact of class and state formation — especially as catalyzed through capitalist colonialism — on gender relations. She does this with a minimum of jargon, and textured comparative descriptions of everyday life. In all of her work, the underlying theme is clear, and clearly supported: human nature, flexible to a fault, is not inherently hierarchical. Women's oppression, thus, is not due to some universal will to power or innate quality of maleness, but due to concrete trajectories — locally variable, always reversible or open to transformation — of political, social, and economic change.

Notes

1. In a complementary study Diamond focused on state formation in Dahomey, and how class formation distorted gender and kinship relations (1951). Both, independently but out of a shared concern born of an abiding opposition to capitalism and class relations in general, documented the power of cultural forms of resistance, enacted in everyday life, in blocking or blunting the potential for social stratification to dissolve kin-based community relations. Diamond used the language of resistance explicitly, Leacock showed the dynamics as they played out during her field research.

2. At that time, only Diamond's little-known 1951 case study had developed a similar, empirically informed argument.

3. As an undergraduate pressured by professors to abandon an interest in "women's status" across cultures, I read first the Engels introduction and then the Morgan one with a growing sense of validation: it was not only possible to do research on women that would matter socially, but at least one anthropologist was doing so. Leacock's generosity of spirit was widely known, as was her ferocious defense of students. I never had the

chance to have Happy as a teacher, but she became a guide, a constructive critic, a friend, and a sustaining example of someone who never forsook her clarity of judgment about capitalism, maintained a vital research agenda in the academy without ever stooping to careerism, engaged in the emancipatory social movements of her time, and remained a gentle and loving spirit to those around her. She was an unsentimental and blazingly courageous woman.

4. The Second International was a series of debates and meetings (1889-1914) involving Marxist intellectuals and activists from a number of countries, aimed at developing a framework for analyzing and responding to the agrarian question and industrialization. While there were multiple strands to the debate, the Second International moved away from the previous concern with the class struggle and relations of production. Instead, great emphasis was placed on an assertion that once the forces of production were developed, socialism would emerge. Leacock's work, then, stands in stark contrast to this position, which became identified with Stalinism. Ironically, the "forces of production model" became fully mainstream in postwar development practices in the United States and elsewhere.

5. This volume preceded Eric Wolf's *Europe and the People Without History* (1982).

References

Diamond, Stanley

1951 *Dahomey: A Proto-State in West Africa*. Ph.D. dissertation in Anthropology, Columbia University. Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms.

Etienne, Mona and Eleanor Leacock, eds.

1980 *Women and Colonization*. New York: Praeger.

Gailey, Christine Ward

1988 Evolutionary Perspective on Gender Hierarchy. In *Analyzing Gender*. Beth Hess and Myra Ferree, eds. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Gailey, Christine Ward and Eleanor Leacock

1992 Transformations of Primitive Communism. In *Civilization in Crisis: Anthropological Perspectives [Volume One of Dialectical Anthropology: Essays in Honor of Stanley Diamond]*. C. W. Gailey, ed. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Leacock, Eleanor Burke

1954 The Montagnais "Hunting Territory" and the Fur Trade. *American Anthropologist Memoir 78*.

1958 Social Stratification and Evolutionary Theory. *Ethnohistory* 5(3).

1963 Introduction. *Ancient Society*, by Lewis Henry Morgan. Eleanor B. Leacock, ed. New York: Meridian Books.

1972 Introduction. *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, by Frederick Engels. New York: International Publishers.

1977a Women in Egalitarian Society. In *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.
1977b Women's Status in Egalitarian Society: Implications for Social Evolution. *Current Anthropology* 19(2).
1977c The Changing Family and Levi-Strauss. *Social Research* 44(2).
1978 Society and Gender. In *Genes and Gender* E. Tobach and B. Rossoff, eds. New York: Gordian Press.
1981a *Myths of Male Dominance*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
1981b History, Development, and the Division of Labor by Sex: Implications for Organization. *Signs* 7(2).
1982 Marxism and Anthropology. In *The Left Academy*. Bertell Ollman and Edward Vernal, eds. New York: McGraw-Hill.
1983 Interpreting the Origins of Gender Inequality: Conceptual and Historical Problems. *Dialectical Anthropology* 7:263-284.

Leacock, Eleanor and Richard Lee, eds.
1982 *Politics and History in Band Societies*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Leacock, Eleanor and June Nash
1977 Ideologies of Sex: Archetypes and Stereotypes. *New York Academy of Science Annals*, Volume 285.

Leacock, Eleanor and Helen Safa, eds.
1986 *Women's Work: Development and the Division of Labor by Gender*. New York: Bergin and Garvey Publishers.

Wolf, Eric
1982 *Europe and the People Without History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Eleanor Leacock and Urban Anthropology in the United States

Leith Mullings
Graduate School, City University of New York

I knew Eleanor Leacock as a scholar and activist, whose commitment was not merely academic, but political and personal. Long before critique of the canon became fashionable, Eleanor Leacock was one of the few established scholars to consistently cite and promote the work of women and people of color. She fought hard to democratize the academy and a whole generation of us will remember how she encouraged us to publish, invited us to conferences and wrote letters on our behalf. For me, the small, seemingly unimportant incidents recall most clearly the human dimension of her support. When I first became Happy's colleague at City College, I moved in a haze of exhaustion, caring for two young children while working more than full time. Knowing that I had no time for luxuries such as reading newspapers, Happy clipped articles she thought would be of interest to me. These miraculously appeared on my desk and shielded me from being too uninformed of *The New York Times* minutiae academics are fond of quoting to each other.

As an African American woman, my concern with structures of inequality drew me to Leacock's work. I found that her attention to the origins of inequality extended to her analysis of class societies. In this paper, I will discuss three aspects of her work on the United States: her concern with class, culture and inequality; her interest in applying the tools of anthropology to understanding institutions that affect our daily lives; and finally, her commitment to uniting analysis and advocacy.

Class, Culture and Inequality

Leacock's work is central to the unfinished project of deconstructing analyses that obscure the way in which different

Ogbu, John
1987 Ethnoecology of Urban Schooling. In *Cities of the United States: Studies in Urban Anthropology*. Leith Mullings, ed. Pp. 122-147. New York: Columbia University Press.

Willis, Paul
1977 *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*. Surrey, Great Britain: Gower Publishing Company Limited.

Wilson, William Julius
1987 *The Truly Disadvantaged*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Eleanor Leacock's Contributions to the Anthropological Study of Gender

Rayna Rapp
New School for Social Research

Assessing the impact of Eleanor Burke Leacock's contributions to our understanding of gender relations is necessarily an open-ended process, for she was centrally positioned in an emergent conversation linking scholarship and activism. The lens through which we all read Leacock's work kept shifting, granting an ever-expanding perspective on the intellectual and practical claims the anthropological study of gender might support. Eleanor Leacock truly believed that if we could clear away the legacy of male-biased ideology which sustained conventional anthropological thinking about sex roles, we would be freer to form alliances that benefited women across our global diversity.

Leacock was a lightning rod in our field: power and clarity flowed from her work, she marked the boundaries of positions feminist anthropologists initially took. Whatever we wrote on gender, Leacock was reading over our shoulders, cautioning against a too-easy acceptance of current trendiness, insisting on the ethnohistorical roots of gender ideologies. She was quick to criticize over-generalizations concerning the breadth and depth of women's subordination, illuminating her arguments with layer upon layer of data drawn from non-capitalist social relations. We always wrote in relation to her, whether we acknowledged it or not. Perusing the series of feminist anthropological reviews which appeared during the 1970s and '80s attempting to survey the field, central problems continually refer back to her (Stack et al 1975; Lamphere 1977; Rapp 1979; Quinn 1977; Atkinson 1982; Mukhopadhyay and Higgins 1988).

If, as Marilyn Strathern (1987) suggests, feminist anthropology is defined by its debates, its discursive inclusions, exclusions, continuous discussions, and not simply by the positions we individually and collectively take, then our conversation with Leacock will continue to construct the possibilities for the field.

But how did Happy Leacock come to occupy such a central position in our thinking? The hard way! Christine Gailey has lovingly told this story in memorial appreciations, and in the excellent entry on Leacock she wrote for the biographical dictionary of women anthropologists:

> ...In her second anthropology course, (at Radcliffe) Alfred Tozzer told the women students that if they wanted to be anthropologists, they had better have independent means, because they would never get a job in anthropology. She recalled thinking, smugly rather than angrily, "I'll show you" (But it was to take her 11 years after she completed her doctorate at Columbia before she held a full-time teaching position in anthropology)...sensitized by her own struggles to be taken seriously as an anthropologist regardless of motherhood and limited employment, Leacock was extremely supportive of junior colleagues, especially those who were marginally employed. Her publication record is immense; there can be no doubt that her work is of lasting significance in anthropology and far beyond the discipline. After all, she made truth of her smug rejection of Alfred Tozzer's advice. Her own engagement in fostering younger scholars and her work with others to oppose race, sex and class stratification helped make such advice obsolete (Gailey 1989:216,219).

In the interplay of her personal experiences, political commitments and professional erudition, we begin to understand Leacock's contribution to gender analysis taking shape.

From her earliest research on the Montagnais-Naskapi (Innu), an appreciation of non-capitalist, non-Western gender relations is present. In article after article, the strength of indigenous women, their centrality to production and social reproduction, the respect accorded their mothering skills are made luminously clear: indeed, female heroines, full of humor, emerge on her pages (eg., Leacock 1975, 1977, 1978, 1981, 1983, 1986; Leacock and Goodman 1976; Leacock and Nash 1977). But these are odd heroines, fraught with danger as well as nurturance, power as well as self-confidence. Leacock is at her best when telling stories: Livingstone the explorer meets a female chief in a

Balonda village in 1857, only to learn, to his own chagrin, how to address her with proper respect. Without obeisance to the woman warrior, there will be no tribal co-operation with his project (1975:606-607). Innu women bring down the devil as shamans, torture Iroquois war prisoners, and generally offend the sensibilities of the famous missionary LeJeune, as she annotates the Jesuit Relations (Leacock and Goodman 1976). Poor LeJeune! He is always the butt of Montagnais joke and homily: When LeJeune upbraided an Indian for "allowing" his wife such sexual freedom that he could not be sure his son was his own, the Montagnais retorted, "thou hast no sense. You French people love only your own children, but we all love all the children of our tribe" (Leacock and Goodman 1976: 82, quoting LeJeune's diaries). The ideological blinders of patriarchal Christianity are here exposed to humorous retort.

Indeed, in the annals of Eleanor Leacock scholarship, a wonderful article might be written on how she used LeJeune as interlocutor of the Indians: at once the buffoon and the student, he represents the ethnocentrism and, finally, the possibilities for self-criticism, of the European encounter with tribal others. Leacock clearly found his careful observations heartening. Not only did they provide ethnohistorical grist for her theoretical mill, they supported her generous and insistent assumption that everyone (including even Catholic missionaries!) was educable.

Through Innu historical research, Leacock came to her conviction that gender must be treated holistically, integrated into an analysis of changing social relations. Hers was surely the most forceful scholarly voice arguing against a theory of universal female subordination. Rather, she insisted on the particular paths by which many tribal peoples relinquished their own versions of gender autonomy and egalitarianism in the face of mission, market, and colonial governor. Among the Innu, it was the development of individual trap lines as private property, the loss of dispersed decision-making in the face of colonial authority, the informal matrilocality-under-pressure that indirectly impacted upon gender relations, and not some direct or inevitable or biological contradiction between women and men. For Leacock, historical materialism provided more powerful explanatory tools than did any sociological or biological functionalism.

These lessons—to employ a holistic perspective, to delve into colonial history, to emphasize the indirect and the informal in the analysis of tribal peoples—were, of course, enriched by her scholarly and political commitments to making some of the classic texts of historical materialism accessible and usable in the field. In 1963, she authored the introduction to a new edition of Lewis Henry Morgan's *Ancient Society* (Leacock 1963); in 1972, the introduction to a new edition of Frederick Engels' *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State* appeared (Leacock 1972). In both, Leacock insisted on the importance of locating family forms in evolutionary and historical processes, and on the explicitly political nature of monogamy, patriarchy, private property, and class relations. Marx and Engels relied upon Morgan; collectively, their thought was foundational to an appreciation of how relations between the sexes had been transformed in the past, and were thus potentially transformable in the future. She helped to resurrect and make accessible these radical thinkers who had been too often marginalized in anthropology.

That doubled set of commitments — to classic critical theory in the field; to the methods of evolutionary thinking and ethnohistory — structured some of her most influential articles. In 1978, "Women's Status in Egalitarian Society" appeared. Lightning rod, indeed: three generations responded in the pages of *Current Anthropology* as she stood her ground, insisting on a careful definition and illustration of "egalitarianism," an incisive critique of male bias and Western bias and what Karen Sacks labelled state bias (1976). Leacock argued persuasively that such biases deeply influence what count as anthropological "facts." She challenged the accepted view that menstrual blood is seen as "polluting" in all societies when it might just as well be described in some as "powerful"; or that sex differences are inherently hierarchical; or that the public-private dichotomy represented a universal description or explanation for male dominance, especially when applied to pre-state societies. Other crucial pieces filled in the story she wanted to tell. In "The Changing Family and Levi-Strauss, or What Ever Happened to Fathers?" she challenged biased accounts of the division of labor by sex, asserted the autonomy of women to participate in marriage arrangements, and criticized reified exchange models (1977). "Ideologies of Sex: Archetypes & Stereotypes" (co-authored with her dear friend, June Nash) provided a dazzling

compendium of comparative sexual cosmologies: twinned, unified, transformative, sexual iconography was the very stuff of ethnohistory (Leacock and Nash 1977).

The rich profusion of Leacock's publications is extensive, touching on themes as diverse as race and class in urban American schools, development in Africa and the Pacific, and adolescence in Samoa (Leacock 1969, 1986b; Leacock and Safa 1986). In this wide-ranging and varied work, many themes emerge. I want to stress two which relate to the anthropological study of gender.

First, these challenges to the *Myths of Male Dominance* (Leacock 1981) were part of a conscious strategy at once scholarly and political. In the afterword to *Women's Work* (co-edited with another close friend, Helen Safa, [1986]), Leacock urged feminist anthropologists to write for three concrete reasons: (1) to provide "material to counter widely held assumptions that male dominance and female subservience are inevitable as outcomes of a natural division of labor by gender...to effectively challenge ideologies of nature...;" (2) to further the analysis of women's work and family life during the period of modernization and industrialization of Europe; (3) to analyze the sexual division of labor and the effects of that division on women's position in Third World nations." That list represents her gift from anthropology to the field of women's studies.

Secondly, in re-reading her work, in trying to describe its place, there is more than the professional and the scholarly at stake: there is also the sense of the normative personal. A concept like "role model" wreaks of functionalist sociology, and I hesitate to use it in this context. But I have no more fluent description for what Leacock taught us all about gender. Her sympathetic accessibility, her supportive, but often firmly critical insistence on taking ourselves seriously, her nurturance of students and political activists helped us all to become more fully realized, richer human beings. She called us to account as members of a caring and political community, insisting that scholarship was an engaged (and engaging) responsibility. She truly believed that women had been, and would continue to be, responsible for nurturing the world, and cleaning up its problems, in their symbolic and material roles as mothers.

But the idea that women can be unproblematically described as mothers, and thus both empowered and subordinated mainly

as mothers, has been subjected to serious critique. Second wave feminist scholarship has examined the constraints and repressions inherent in such "maternalist" thinking. Not all aspects of female power or subordination fall directly within the role of mother, nor does mothering imply the same activities or values cross-culturally. And, of course, not all women actually are mothers, despite the powerful cultural tendency to describe us all as if we were. We have learned to worry that women from powerful communities may condescend when they speak about and ostensibly for women from less powerful ones, using the metaphors of maternity.

But Eleanor Leacock was an extreme maternalist. She would, I think, have been more comfortable with the maternalist ideologies of first-wave feminism, of Progressive Era female mobilization in the service of the Family of Womankind than she often was with some aspects of contemporary feminism. But no matter, for her maternalism belonged really to neither wave exclusively: it was deeply shaped by what she learned not only at home, but abroad. Fieldwork in British Columbia and Labrador, New York and New Jersey, Zambia and Samoa convinced her of the power of African mothers, Innu, Cheyenne and Tiwi mothers. Like them, she took the role of passing on communal resources, rituals, and responsibilities very seriously. Without her, would "we" have grown to woman's estate in all our present diversity? Without her intellectual and personal support, the lives and works of scores of politically engaged anthropologists, and hundreds of students, would have been far less rich. There are daughters of several generations, by now, and sons, too. Some of us knew her well, some slightly, some not at all. Some, like the generations of NYWAC and IWAC women benefited immensely from her presence and patience at endless meetings. Others were nurtured through her books and articles. All of us owe her a debt of appreciation and gratitude for the rich corpus — professional, political, personal — she left as a legacy. It remains to see what we can make of it, in the open conversation that continues to be the anthropology of gender.

References

Atkinson, Jane Monnig
1982 Review Essay: Anthropology. *Signs* 8(2):236-258.

Gailey, Christine
1989 Eleanor Burke Leacock (1922-1987). In *Women Anthropologists: Selected Biographies*. Ute Gacs, Aisha Khan, Jerrie McIntyre, and Ruth Weinberg, ed. Pp. 215-221. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Lamphere, Louise
1977 Review Essay: Anthropology. *Signs* 2(3):612-627.

Leacock, Eleanor Burke
1963 Introduction. In *Ancient Society*. by Lewis Henry Morgan. E.B. Leacock, ed. Pp. i-xx. New York: Meridian Books.
1969 *Teaching and Learnings in City Schools*. New York: Basic Books.
1972 Introduction. In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. by Frederick Engels. E.B. Leacock, ed. Pp. 7-64. New York: International Publishers.
1975 Class, Commodity, and the Status of Women. In *Women Cross-Culturally: Change and Challenge*. Ruby Rohrlich Leavitt, ed. Pp. 601-618. The Hague: Mouton.
1977 The Changing Family and Levi-Strauss, or What Ever Happened to Fathers? *Social Research* 44(2):235-259.
1978 Women's Status in Egalitarian Society: Implications for Social Evolution. *Current Anthropology* 19(2):247-275.
1981 *Myths of Male Dominance*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
1983 Interpreting the Origins of Gender Inequality: Conceptual and Historical Problems. *Dialectical Anthropology* 7:263-284.
1986 Women, Power and Authority. In *Visibility and Power: Essays on Women in Society and Development*. Leela Dube, Eleanor Leacock, and Shirley Ardener, ed. Pp. 107-135. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
1986 Postscript: The Problems of Youth in Contemporary Samoa. In *Quest for the REAL Samoa: The Mead/Freeman Controversy and Beyond*. Lowell D. Holmes, ed. Pp. 177-188. South Hadley, Massachusetts: Bergin and Garvey.

Leacock, Eleanor Burke and Goodman, Jacqueline
1976 Montagnais Marriage and the Jesuits in the Seventeenth Century: Incidents from the Relations of Paul LeJeune. *Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology* 6(3):77-92.

Leacock, Eleanor Burke and Nash, June
1977 Ideologies of Sex: Archetypes and Stereotypes. *Annals New York Academy of Sciences 285*.

Mukhopadhyay, Carol and Higgins, Patricia
1988 Anthropological Studies of Women's Status Revisited: 1977-87. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 17:461-495.

Quinn, Naiomi
1977 Anthropological Studies of Women's Status. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 6:181-222.

Rapp, Rayna
1979 Review Essay: Anthropology. *Signs* 3(3):497-513.
Sacks, Karen
1976 State Bias and Women's Status. *American Anthropologist* 78(3):565-569.
Stack, Carol B., Mina Davis, Estes, Valerie, Landes, Susan, Larson, Karen, Johnson, Pamela, Rake, Juliet, and Shirek, Judith
1975 Review Essay: Anthropology. *Signs* 1(1):147-160.
Strathern, Marilyn
1987 An Awkward Relationship: the Case of Feminism and Anthropology. *Signs* 12(2):276-292.

Eleanor Leacock and the International Women's Movement: Unity and Diversity

Helen I. Safa
University of Florida, Gainesville

At the close of her postscript to our co-edited volume on *Women's Work: Development and the Division of Labor by Gender*, Eleanor Leacock (1986a:264) wrote:

> There has never been a more pressing need for an international movement of women committed to pursuing the struggle for their liberation by uniting it with fights against oppression by class and by race. It is counterproductive, in working toward this goal, to separate the battle against patriarchal oppression from that against capitalist exploitation.

Although written nearly a decade ago, this plea to women to overcome their internal differences through building coalitions which unite gender, class and racial oppression continues to carry great validity today. Despite repeated attempts to articulate the relationship between patriarchy and capitalism as fundamental to understanding women's subordination, feminist scholars continue to disagree as to their relative importance. Radical feminists see patriarchy and reproductive relations embedded in the family as the central site of women's oppression, while Marxist feminists like Leacock place greater emphasis on relations of production in their analysis of women's oppression and link gender subordination to the hierarchical nature of the entire society.

Today, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, socialism and Marxist theory is being increasingly questioned and even discredited, not only in advanced industrial societies like the U.S., but in the Third World as well. Socialist Party leaders like President