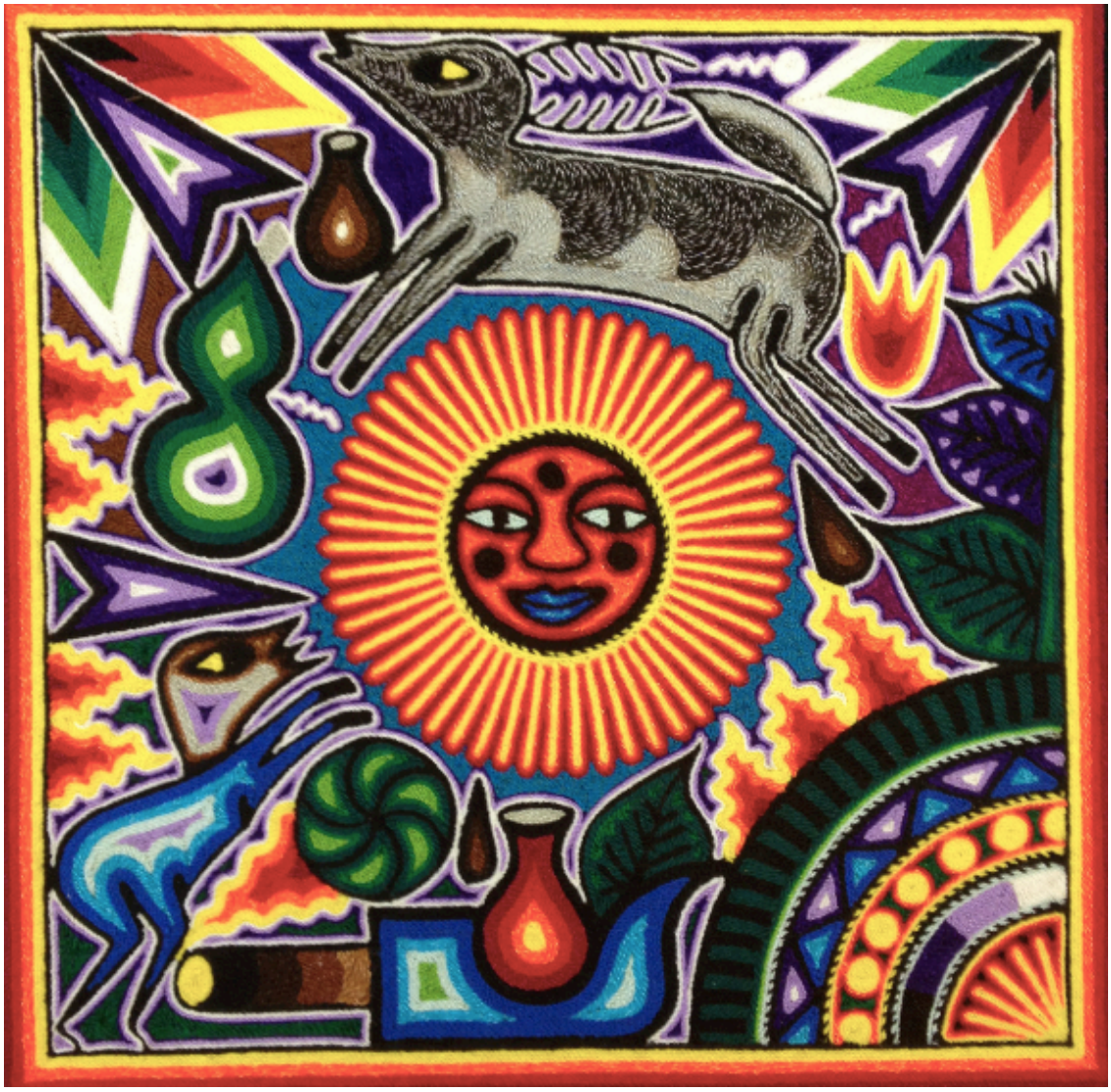
Volume

9



Winter 2013

VOLUME 9: WINTER 2013

California State University Dominguez Hills Electronic Student Journal of Anthropology

1000 E Victoria Street, Carson CA 90747

Email: CSUDHESJOA@gmail.com

Table of Contents

THEORY CORNER

STUDENT RESEARCH

Bourdieu, Boas and White on the Kablye House

By: Heather Davis

In the field of anthropology there are two theoretical approaches, idealists and materialists. Idealists, like Franz Boas, argue that culture is developed through thought. In idealism, the ideas that a group shares create the culture and are reflected in their material goods (e.g. tools, pottery, shelter, etc). Boas argues for a more detailed ethnography, that explains the historical process of the culture. Conversely, materialists, such as Leslie White, argue that to understand a society, one has to analyze the material conditions (e.g. climate, geography, food supply and other physical aspects of their surroundings) of that society. Materialism argues that the physical environment of a society shapes the culture's ideas, beliefs, and values. White explains that people produce energy, which is utilized in creating their culture. There are a few anthropologists, like Pierre Bourdieu, that view both theories (idealist and materialist) as equally important and believes that they work together to shape the culture. Each approach to studying anthropology gives a different view on a culture. In the case of the Kabyle house, an Algerian farm house, both approaches shed a different light. In this essay I intend to show how these theories would be applied in the case of the Kabyle house.

Pierre Bourdieu, a French social scientist, approaches anthropology differently than White and Boas. He describes culture as being constructed by “social actors” who enforce social rules based on historical events. Society’s rules, individual actions, and historical traditions must work together in order to produce a culture. In his essay *The Berber House of the World Reversed*, Bourdieu discusses physical structure and, placement of objects, and explains the meaning behind the object placement and physical structure in Algerian houses. The rectangular shaped house is divided by a partial wall that separates the light and dark parts of the house. The house is built around dichotomies (e.g. light:dark and men:women) and oppositions (e.g. males/ female and day/night). The part of the house that has light is associated with life and lined with a loom, storage jars, and a hearth. The dark part of the house represents nature (i.e. death, birth, and sexual intercourse) and serves as the stable. The women and children sleep in the hayloft above the stable. The house goes from north to south and the door is on the east side. The house also represents the gender roles and expectations of the Algerian farmers.

The house is considered to be the woman’s realm, while the man’s realm is outside the home in the public eye. If a man is in the house doing what they consider to be “woman’s work”, he would be considered “the man of the home” who “broods at home like a hen in the henhouse.” Inside the home, women spend their time in the light part of the house. The inside of the house is a reversed image of man. The house is defined from the outside, which is the man’s territory; therefore, it’s created from the view of the man. Bourdieu states “the house is an empire within an empire, but one which is always subordinate because, even though it presents all the properties and all

the relations which define the archetypal world, it remains a reverse world, an inverted reflection." Separating or trying to reduce the "social actors" and historical developments to rules distorts the culture, because they all influence and depend on one another. Bourdieu argues that there is no specific reason why women are associated with the home or why men are associated with the public, but the social actors and historical processes created those ideas and beliefs.

Franz Boas has an idealist approach to anthropology and argues that culture does not go through a unilineal evolution process and develops at its own rate and in its own way. The Algerian house is influenced by its own historical process and not influenced by the cultures that surround it. Boas claims that there is no general rule or law on behavior that societies follow; instead cultures have their own rules and laws that derive from historical developments. Boas argues that cultures that may seem similar truly develop differently and have different causes. To fully understand a culture a person must do an extensive ethnography. Their history shapes their ideas and beliefs. Boas would describe the Kabyle house's oppositions as being caused by historical processes and not a common process that happens globally. The specifics of light and dark in the house are deeply rooted in the Algeria farmer society and are known only by that society. Boas would explain that to fully understand the meaning and the roots of the importance in light and dark, anthropologists would have to do an extensive and detailed ethnography, otherwise, there wouldn't be a sufficient amount of evidence to support their claims or theories about why the house is surrounded by oppositions and homologies.

The cultural traits must be taken into context and not viewed as a stage in cultural evolution. The history of the group must be taken into account when studying specific traits and patterns of a group. When analyzing the Kablye house, Boas would be concerned with the historical developments. He would look for detailed events that created the separation of light and dark. He would also look at the connection between the individual and the culture and how they influence each other. Boas would argue that the organization of the objects inside the house reflect a specific historical process and culture development. The events that led to the women's place being inside the house and the men's place being outside the house reflect culture events that divided gender roles and created rules that are gender specific.

Leslie White has a materialist approach when studying a culture and describes culture as a behavior. Culture exists to serve the needs of humankind. In Whites essay, *Energy and the Evolution of Culture*, he argues that people produce energy and culture is developed by how efficiently the energy is used when creating their material environment. White uses the formula E X T=P (E= energy, T= technology, and P= is the "magnitude of the product per unit of time") to clarify the relationship between the amount of energy used for work, technology that uses energy, and the end product. He argues that this formula helps confirm the idea of cultural evolution; changes in technology lead to social changes which then lead to ideological change. To understand a culture one must understand their technology. When it comes to houses, White would argue that the technology and materials used to build the houses show more about their culture than the house itself. The technology that a woman would use inside the house would give more of an insight of the woman's role. The technology the

man uses in the farm and the energy he produces and utilizes, would give more of an understanding about the environment.

The house is built by a specific culture for specific reasons. For example, in the study of the Kabyle house, White would focus on the technology they used to build the house, the tools and the man power. The way they used their own physical energy to build the house gives us insight on their culture evolution. People will create and innovate tools that will use their energy more efficiently. White develops two laws that describe this cultural development. The first law states that, culture develops when the amount of energy is harnessed and put to work. Culture is used to satisfy the needs. A specific need for humans is shelter. The people in a society will use their energy to build shelter that will protect them from weather in their specific area. The second law explains that cultural development changes depending on the efficiency of technological means of putting this energy to work. As the technology becomes more advanced so do the homes, which reflects the cultural evolution.

The idealist and materialist views both give explanation to cultures. Boas explains that multiple studies done over a period of time would give the best look into a culture as it evolves. White argues that to understand a culture a person must look in to the physical environment and how they use it. Putting these ideas together will give the most insight into a culture. Understanding the implications and applications of the environment is just as important as understanding historic background. To fully understand a culture a person cannot make superficial assumptions that societies go through the same stages and developments. Each culture evolves different and at different rates. Culture is complex and can only be understood when all aspects of it

(environment and historical processes) are linked. Studying these different aspects may give a better understanding on why a women's place is inside the home or why the house is divided by light and dark.

References

Boas, Franz.
2009. Methods of Ethnology. *In* Visions of Culture: An Annotated Reader. Jerry D. Moore, eds. pp. 25-35. Lanham: AltaMira Press

Bourdieu, Pierre.
2009. The Kayble House or the World Reversed. *In* Visions of Culture: An Annotated Reader.Jerry D. Moore, eds. pp. 405-417. Lanham: AltaMira Press.

White, Leslie.
2009. Energy and the Evolution of Culture. *In* Visions of Culture: An Annotated Reader. Jerry D. Moore, eds. pp. 187-207. Lanham: AltaMira Press.

The Rise of a Burner: A Ritual Transformation of the Self during the Burning Man Festival

By: Marko “Polo” Germono

This paper discusses the development of a new culture, coined the Burner Culture, which has emerged out of an annual music and arts festival that takes place in Black Rock Desert, Nevada during Labor Day weekend. The Burner Culture has developed from capitalistic American consumerism, and will be analyzed through the theories of American anthropologists, Leslie A. White, Edward Sapir, and Eleanor Burke Leacock.

The Burner culture is a temporary, cooperative community that has rejected a capitalistic trade system and has reformatted a western hierarchical administrative system in the distribution of goods and services. The origin of the Burner culture emerged from the Cacophony society based in San Francisco, California. The Cacophony society is a small anarchist group of pranksters who create street art and events that mock capitalistic American society. One particular event celebrated the summer solstice by burning an effigy of a man took place on Baker Beach, San Francisco in 1986. This event lead to the start of the Burning Man festival in 1990. This festival celebrated the breaking away from a capitalistic society and the reinvention of identity for one week every year. The development of a temporary reinvention of the individual in a cooperative community that created the Burner culture will be discussed through the theoretical lenses of a materialist (Leslie A. White), idealist (Edward Sapir), and materialist/idealist (Eleanor Burke Leacock).

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis states that language is a learned behavior that shapes how the individual conceives and perceives the world around them. Language is an arbitrary sound symbol encapsulating concepts of the social and physical environment. It is through the interpretations of the physical environment (i.e. geological features of the land, climate, and types of resources available to the people living in the region) that cultures are shaped. The social environment shapes and influences the individual through various social institutions (e.g. religion, government, and art). The complete vocabulary of a language acts as an inventory of every idea, interest, and livelihood of the social group, making it somewhat possible to infer the characteristics of their physical environment and their culture. The Burner culture is shaped by how people interpret Black Rock City, which they call home.

Sapir would argue that Black Rock Desert, rich in alkaline, is the social environment that has influenced the Burner culture. This fine grain alkaline dust can dry the human skin to the point where it starts to crack and bleed. Dust storms can reach speeds up to 40 miles per hour, destroying campsites if not properly constructed. With high speed winds, the alkaline dust can create a dust storm so thick that people standing three feet away from each other could not see one another. Burners have given many names to the alkaline dust; one particular name the desert dust has been called is the playa. Sapir would argue that the desert environment has shaped the Burners view of the world because the word playa also refers to the idea of home for many Burners. The idea of home does not only refer to a temporary communal experience in the desert but also a place where one can truly express their self without prejudice from others. What unites Burners as they live on the playa is how they

recognize the dry desert conditions that demand cooperative strategies to survive for a week. It takes months of preparation and teamwork before the Burning Man festival begins to create a sustainable city that more than 50,000 people call home. The word playa suggests the idea of everyone experiencing the same reality and emphasizes social equality. It is how people chose to interpret a harsh environment that created the Burner culture. Sapir would state that the Black Rock Desert environment has shaped the Burner culture and influenced their social behavior. After all, with current outdoor technology available to people, it is easy not to heavily rely on others to survive a harsh desert for a week, but people choose to do otherwise. Sapir would conclude that it is how people chose to interpret Black Rock Desert as the playa, a place to commune with others, that created a new culture.

In conducting ethnographic work, Eleanor Burke Leacock emphasizes that anthropologists need to be aware of the changes within culture in their own historical context. In Women's Status in Egalitarian Society: Implications for Social Evolution, she studied the foraging Montagnais-Naskapi and how contact with European capitalism change their egalitarian society into a stratified trading community. The foraging Montagnais-Naskapi were transformed by capitalistic ideas toward management of resources, and thus, their cooperative subsistence strategies were lost. It is though influential foreign practice of trade that makes part of Leacock's theory an idealist approach to cultural development. However, the capitalistic fur trade that played a part in how the Montagnais-Naskapi changed their way of life also makes Leacock's theory a materialist approach to cultural development. The rise of the Burner culture can be explained through this mixed approach of idealism and materialism by drawing our

attention to the people's reinterpretation of capitalistic consumerism, and the creation of a gift-giving economy during the Burning Man festival.

As mentioned in the beginning of this paper, the Burner culture was an attempt to escape capitalistic consumerism for one week out of the year. I believe that America's consumerism practices emphasize individualistic behaviors that lack communal experiences. Leacock would argue that the consumer lifestyle in America influenced people like the Cacophony society of San Francisco to desire a new way of life outside an oppressive capitalistic society. This escape from consumerism was made possible in Black Rock Desert located in the middle of nowhere. Leacock would interpret the Cacophony society's temporary relocation to the desert as a response to consumerism. The desert, it seemed, was far away from the reaches of influential capitalistic ideals. Black Rock Desert was the perfect place to reinvent ones identity for a short time during the year without any consequences. Through the reinterpretation of consumerism, people traded material goods not by a monetary system but through the act of gifting with no expectations of repayment. Gifting enabled the Burner society to function. Leacock would interpret gifting as a reinterpretation of material culture, creating a new way of life. Leacock would conclude that the creation of a new ideal way of living and the uses of a gift-giving economy gave rise to the Burner culture.

There are two different rituals that take place on the last two days of the Burning Man festival that are crucial to the cultural development of Burners that only Leacock's theory can explain. The burning of an effigy of a man symbolizes the letting go of one's past actions during the previous year in order to make room for new actions in the New Year. The burning of a temple, which takes place the day after the first ritual, symbolizes the

reflection of one's past in order to change one's self. The use of fire in these rituals destroys both structures of the man and the temple, which symbolizes how the individual sees themselves transform into a new person. Without fire, this symbolic ritual would not be effective. White would not be able to explain these two very symbolic rituals that are so imbedded in the Burner culture. Sapir could explain the rich language that is used to interpret these rituals and how they lay in the core of the Burner culture. However, the organized Burner culture came from the chaotic Cacophony society, a progression that Sapir could not address. Only through Leacock's understanding of how culture constantly changes through time, can we appreciate the Burner's historical context and how they came to be. Leacock can also give us an explanation of how the use of fire has influenced the Burner's worldview. The actual use of fire to burn the Man effigy (a break away from capitalism) and the temple is what makes the Burning Man festival meaningful and why the playa is known as home. Without the use of fire to burn these two different structures, the language used to create the ideals of Burners would not exist. In that sense, Sapir fails to explain the importance of fire's influence on the Burner culture.

Eleanor Burke Leacock's balanced materialist/idealist theory in analyzing the development of the Burner culture can explain the formation and organization of the Burner's community and their ritual burning. It is both the desire to reinterpret one's self and their original society's ideals, and the invention of a gift-giving economy that created a new culture; consciousness and trade had to change in order to create a temporary communal city in the desert that gave birth to Burners. Therefore, the burning of the Man and the temple is a ritual that is essential to the definition of a Burner. Although

White and Sapir could explain some aspects of how Burners came to be, they would fall short in explaining the importance of fire within their culture.

References

Leacock, Eleanor Burke.
2009. Women's Status in Egalitarian Society: Implications for Social Evolution. Jerry D. Moore, eds. pp. 246-269. Lanham: AltaMira Press

Sapir, Edward
2009. Language: An Introduction To The Study Of Speech. *In* Visions of Culture: An Annotated Reader.Jerry D. Moore, eds. pp. 89-96. Lanham: AltaMira Press.

White, Leslie.
2009. Energy and the Evolution of Culture. *In* Visions of Culture: An Annotated Reader. Jerry D. Moore, eds. pp. 187-207. Lanham: AltaMira Press.

Sherry B. Ortner, “On Key Symbols”

Abstract by: Brenna Smith

The universally accepted definition of culture is that it consists of symbols, and in *On Key Symbols*, Sherry Ortner expands and further defines the concept of “symbol.” She begins by stating that most ideas and objects are symbols, with varying levels of cultural importance. The most important symbols, however, are key symbols. Her method for identifying key symbols is as follows: if an informant says it’s important, if they are aroused by it (positively or negatively), if it appears across multiple facets of the culture, and if there are specific directions regarding treatment of it, it is a key symbol. The Christian cross and the American Flag are examples of key symbols. Key symbols are further expanded, labeled as either summarizing or elaborating. Summarizing symbols summarize different values and ideas, and can stand for multiple things. Elaborating symbols are further dichotomized as powered by action or concepts. Action powered elaborating symbols are simply the driving force behind social change, and can be further defined as “key scenarios,” or a roadmap to a culture’s definition of “success.” Conceptual elaborating symbols, however, categorize how the world works, are “analytic” and “provide vehicles for sorting out complex and undifferentiated feelings and ideas.” Elaborating symbols with conceptual power have also been termed “root metaphors,” a concepted experience that members of the culture identify with. Essentially, Sherry Ortner defines symbols and their use, subdividing symbols into key and non-key, key symbols into summarizing and elaborating, elaborating into action power or conceptual power, and finally into root metaphors and key scenarios.

Eleanor Burke Leacock, "Women's Status in Egalitarian Society: Implications for Social Evolution"

Abstract by: Alexx Salazar

In her article, *Women's Status in Egalitarian Society: Implications for Social Evolution*, Eleanor Burke Leacock argues that women's status in egalitarian societies must be re-analyzed utilizing historical data, while considering the entire social-economic system and not projecting ethnocentric social constructions onto that society. She rejects the notion that women in egalitarian societies are subservient to men, claiming that this conclusion is based on distorted assumptions and inadequate data.

Leacock asserts that previous ethnographies have failed to account for changes in egalitarian societies, such as their economic systems being influenced by capitalism, which lead to the oppression of women. Another problem with the analysis of women's status found in ethnographies lies in inadequate interpretations and generalizations. According to Leacock, a theoretical issue with the analysis of women's status is the confusion of "autonomy" ("decision-making power") with "equality" (a term that implies "rights" or "similarity" in class societies). A further issue is found in the tendency of researchers to place concepts from their own culture (e.g. hierarchical structures) onto the egalitarian society, or to assume that the egalitarian society is merely an incipient form of the researcher's society.

Leacock reveals that leadership and decision-making in egalitarian societies are dissimilar from that in our own society, but that they should not be viewed as "weak," "informal," nor "unstable." The resilience of the egalitarian band society can be ascribed

to the success of individual autonomy (of both women and men), since decisions about activities are made principally by those who are accountable for those activities. Leacock affirms that imposing dichotomous concepts such as “public-private or jural-familial” onto the analysis of egalitarian band societies will continue to distort conclusions.

Leacock maintains that evidence does not exist within egalitarian societies’ structure to support the claim that women are of lower status than men, and that ethnographies on this topic are overrun with contradictions. For example, two descriptions of women can be found in the same piece of work (The Ojibwa Woman), written by the same person (Ruth Landes): one where women are portrayed as autonomous, self-reliant, and more resourceful than men, and another where women are described as subordinate and unskilled.

Leacock concludes by stating that ahistorical approaches fail to establish accurate descriptions of women’s status in egalitarian societies, and that anthropologists must realize that these societies are not untouched or unchanging, but the opposite.

Marvin Harris, "Anthropology and The Theoretical and Paradigmatic Significance of the Collapse of Soviet and Eastern European Communism"

Abstract by: Shirene McKinney

In the article *Anthropology and the Theoretical and Paradigmatic Significance of the Collapse of Soviet and East European Communism*, Marvin Harris discusses the (then) recent economic collapse of the Soviet Union. His explanation sets forth a cultural materialist view based on a society's infrastructure (means of production and reproduction), structure (means of production and consumption) and superstructure (behavioral adaptations to infrastructure and structure) which Harris identifies as essential to human social life.

As a cultural materialist, Harris believes that material conditions shape the consciousness of a society. On the level of infrastructure, environmental and technological innovations are more likely to be used if they are proven to be effective and efficient. The developments that occur on the structural and superstructural levels are more likely to be maintained if they are compatible with the foundations set by the infrastructure. It is "the primacy of infrastructure" that is key to a functioning society. Harris shows the "cracks" in the foundation of the Soviet Unions infrastructure as he details its inefficiencies : the decline of energy, distribution inefficiencies, environmental degradation, and lack of innovation that resulted in the collapse on the infrastructural level. This coupled with incompatibilities on a structural level (fake output, inhibited flow of information) led to the eventual fall of the Soviet Union.

Harris stresses that anthropology ought to move toward more scientific inquiry and holds that his model would be true across other cultures and economies whether they are capitalist or communist. The fundamental aspect of infrastructure does not diminish human agency.

Clifford Geertz, "Ritual and Social Change: A Javanese Example"

Abstract by: Marko Germono

Clifford Geertz's ethnography on a Javanese funeral illustrates how conflict arises when cultural dimension (logico-meaningful) and the social structural (causal-functional) are not harmonized in a religious slametan social event. Radcliffe-Brown argues that religion reinforces social values through symbolic ritual practices and strengthens a group's social structure. Malinowski states on a psychological level, religion helps one to cope with life experiences and derive meaning from it. However, these two functional approaches, according to Geertz, fail to consider how social change can compromise religious practices and create an unsatisfactory experience. The slametan is a funeral ceremony that helps the survivors retain iklas, to keep one's composure and to suppress uncontrollable negative reactions and accomplish rukun, a kind of social order or "communal harmony." Logico-meaningful is the integration of cultural characteristics of ideas and concepts becoming logically harmonized to link "meaning and value" from the human experience. Our social structure is a system of how people interact with one another, and it is through the effects of our actions (causal-

functional) that integrates us in this system and “keeps the system going”. When these two different integrating factors of logico-meaningful and causal-functional do not coincide in a harmonious way, conflict arises within a group of people. Because of two opposing political values between the masjumi (Islamic) and permai (Hinduist/animist) were infused in a traditional slamentan funeral religious practice, the slamentan did not serve its purpose to help individuals retain iklas and bring rukun to the community. Friction created between the masjumi and permai caused conflict to arise and the slamentan to fail.

The Hopi: Cosmology, Religion, and Ritual

By: Patricia Alonzo

The Hopi are a group of Native Americans located in the Southwest region of the United States. The Hopi call themselves *Hopitu-shinumn*, meaning "People of Peace" (James 1956). For many generations they have maintained their traditions, they are a proud and reserved people who "stand as living representatives of an ancient way of life" (O'Kane 1953). Hopi worldview is very complex and is embedded in every aspect of everyday life; this paper looks at Hopi cosmology, religion and ritual by examining the Hopi creation myth, understanding Hopi clans, the kiva, and one of their most important traditions, the *Katsina* Ceremony.

In order to understand Hopi religion it is important as always to start at the beginning and that means to understand the "Hopi Creation Myth." The difficulty in examining closely this Creation Myth is that there are many different versions of the myth, all of which likely lack complete details (Geertz 1984). All versions however, can and do provide a basic understanding of the Hopi view of creation, which further allows for a basic understanding of Hopi religion and beliefs.

According to the Hopi, within the earth lay four worlds "all situated one upon the other" as a series of caves with the current world at the surface (Geertz 1984). *Taawa* who is identified as the "Sun-father, impregnated the earth and gave birth to all living things, including people" (Sutton 2012) thus life was born. According to myth, humanity

became corrupt and the first world was destroyed; only a few survived emerging into the second world. Yet as the second world over populated, the process repeated and people were led to the third world. Although each world began as a paradise, each was disrupted by humankind's wrongdoings and therefore destroyed by some sort of natural catastrophe (Geertz 1984). Eventually mankind was led up the fourth world, ruled by Maasaw the "protector of the Hopi, the God of Fire and of the Dead, as well as the Purifier who will return on the last day of this Fourth World existence" (Geertz 1984).

The Hopi are divided into clans and when they arrived to the fourth world each clan migrated in every direction of the continent. Migration enabled each clan to explore the land as well as test each clan's particular power (Geertz 1984). The clans were given direction by *Maasaw* to return to the Hopi land, which is believed to be *Orayvi* the first Hopi settlement, so that they may demonstrate their abilities and receive their allotted plots of land (Geertz 1984). Little by little, after wandering the earth, each clan began to arrive back in Hopi land. According to the Hopi all people emerged this way through the cave and out to the fourth world (Sutton 2012).

The Hopi clan system is very complex and serves a variety of purposes within the community and for the individual; each clan represents a particular linage. These economic units allow for the division of labor. Work is divided among the men, women, and children (James 1956). The clan system functions in a democratic way, and each individual Hopi has his place within the community (James 1956). Each clan represents its own specific totem which is often in the form of an animal or plant (e.g., Bear, Water, Young Corn), a type of emblem that serves as a moral guide. The Hopi have a firm belief in the spirit world which coexists with the physical world (O'Kane 1954). "Each

clan has its own set of rituals and ceremonies with each their origin, efficacy, area of responsibility and method of performance" (Geertz 1984).

Every aspect of Hopi life is surrounded by the notion that one must live a good life of "humbleness, hard work, and prayer" (Sekaqaptewa and Washburn 2004). In essence every action by a Hopi member is built on faith. Faith resides in the belief that all of mankind emerged from the womb of the Mother Earth. The Kiva is symbolic of this belief; the Kiva is normally square in shape and built partly underground. Inside the Kiva is a small hole in the ground which resembles the hole in which mankind entered from the third world making way into the fourth. The main purpose of the Kiva is ceremonial rituals as well as other such gatherings. It is uncertain as to what entirely goes on in the Kiva. Here outsiders are not allowed to join in kiva ceremonies, so it is known that the kiva where the heart of ritual manifests.

A very important ritual among the Hopi is that of the Katsina ceremony which takes place in the Kiva. This initiation ceremony is a religious tradition that occurs soon after a child reaches six years of age (James 1956). The Katisinas are rain spirits each with a unique cloud and rain making abilities, when the Hopi dress in their ceremonial regalia they become the Katsina. In essence the Katisna do not bring the rain, they become the rain. "Hopi Katsina performances are complexes of song, dance, costume, ritual regalia, all of which are essential components that support, reinforce, and enhance the inspirational message;" (Sekaqaptewa and Washburn 2004) the message to live a good and honest life. The Katsina live in a watery underworld and during ceremony they are attracted by all the beauty that encompasses the ceremony. The katsinas come from every direction of the underworld to bring rain to the pueblo to help with the harvest

of crops. During the ceremony a Kachina doll is presented to the child, a small wooden doll used as a sort of educational tool. The Hopi Katsina song that go along with ceremony focuses on everyday life activities such as farming, the gift of rainfall, and the growing of corn by hand all of which lead to the fulfillment of life (Sekaqaptewa and Washburn 2004).

The Katsina ceremony is only one of many ceremonies in which the Hopi enact. Hopi cosmology and existence is deeply intertwined with nature; everything in the natural world is interconnected. A complete look at Hopi life would help to fully understand Hopi religion because every aspect of Hopi life is connected to their religious and cosmological views. According to the Hopi deep interconnectedness between humans and the natural world is rooted in their world view. Living a “good life” to the Hopi means everything exists in a state of harmony and balance which is enacted through ritual, song, their material culture, and everyday activities.

References

Bernardini, Wesley.
2008. Identity as History: Hopi Clans and the Curation of Oral Tradition. Journal of Anthropological Research. 64(4): 483-509.

Geertz, Armin W.
1984. A Reed Pierced the Sky: Hopi Indian Cosmography on Third Mesa, Arizona. BRILL 31(2): 216-41.

James, Harry C.
1956 The Hopi Indians. Caldwell: Caxton Printers.

O'Kane, Walter Collins
1953 The Hopis: Portrait of a Desert People. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Sekaquaptewa, Emory, and Dorothy Washburn
2004. They Go along Singing: Reconstructing the Hopi past from Ritual Metaphors in Song and Image. American Antiquity. 69(3): 457-86.

Sutton, Mark Q.
2012 An Introduction to Native North America. Boston: Pearson.

The Power of Symbolism: Religious Efficacy in the Political Agenda

By: Kassie Sugimoto

In most western societies, religion is thought to be segregated from the political realm. Contrary to this belief, a “moral” dialog has assimilated into American politics, leading Americans to debate over issues like the inception of life and appropriate birth control methods. Although most Americans perceive religion and politics to be separate, the two realms share an important commonality; both religion and politics use symbolism to express ideas. This paper will address how politics and religion overlap, how symbolism and rituals manifest themselves in politics, the means in which power is legitimized and revoked, and the way religion and politics influence each other. The power of symbolism will be illustrated in current, historic, and prehistoric events.

Symbolism in religion and politics permits abstract ideas, such as God or Freedom, to be comprehended by a group of people. David Kertzer divides symbols into three components: condensation of meaning, multivocality, and ambiguity (Kertzer 1996). Condensation of meaning is the physical manifestation of one symbol with multiple symbolic meanings, such as the cross within Christianity (Kertzer 1996). Multivocality refers to the numerous meanings that are associated with one symbol. Multivocality is an important aspect of symbols because it allows individuals to

personalize their own interpretation of a symbol while maintaining social unity (Kertzer 1996). For example, the American flag is symbolic for multiple abstract values: freedom, the pursuit of happiness, free speech, individual rights, liberty, equality, etc. Since symbols are ambiguous, individuals are able to determine what the American flag means to them, while maintaining unity with everyone who relates to the American flag. Symbols and rituals also produce strong emotions and feelings among a group, which is beneficial to politicians who have the ability to manipulate symbols to create and legitimize power (Kertzer 1996).

Religion and politics overlap because they are both expressed through symbolism (Kertzer 1996). Symbols are ideas, values, images, objects or language that represent and convey the meaning of another abstract idea (Stein and Stein 2011). Rituals, repetitive symbolic behavior that have been socially standardized, are important to politics because they are conducive in eliciting emotion, thoughts and opinions, and the solidarity of social groups (Kertzer 1996). Symbolism and rituals manifest themselves in politics by allowing abstract ideas, thoughts, and values to be comprehended by a social group; organizing and creating social solidarity among a group; eliciting strong emotions and feelings among a group; conveying non-verbal communication; and by making and legitimizing power (Stein and Stein 2011).

Political leaders are able to create, gain, and/or legitimize power and authority by identifying or associating with a particular symbol (Kertzer 1996). The most central symbolic icons in the prehispanic Andes were the Sun and the Moon. The Inca utilized these symbols to expand their empire across the Andes, achieving great success within a quick one hundred year timespan (Silverblatt 1998). The success of Incan imperialism can be attributed to their claims that they were direct decedents from the Sun and the

Moon, and in doing so legitimized their claim to power (Silverblatt 1998). Additionally, the Inca were able to create tribute-bearing enclaves through the development of a political hierarchy, which was legitimized by associating political participants as relatives of the Sun and the Moon (Silverblatt 1998). Through the manipulation and identification of significant Andean icons, the Inca were able to legitimize their political agenda. Conversely, symbols can also be used to overthrow authorities and political institutions.

Religion, rituals, and symbols are used to overthrow authorities and political institution during revitalization movements. Revitalization movements are deliberate and well organized social efforts aimed at implementing a more satisfying culture (Wallace 1956). In the event of social or political stress, revitalization movements can occur. Revitalization movements are typically structured in five chronological steps: the pre-revitalization time period during which the majority of the population is satisfied; the increase of social conflict as individual distress increases in a population, ultimately leading to dissatisfaction; as distress is protracted, stress and anxiety increase within society; finally, revitalization movements aim to correct social distress by attempting to alter the dissatisfactory customs (Wallace 1956). Revitalization movements correct political unhappiness, are often influenced by religion, and are frequently instigated by a vision from the supernatural (Wallace 1956). I will use the Taki Onqoy, a revitalization movement from AD1560, to exemplify how religion, rituals, and symbols are used to combat authoritative power.

As colonialism destroyed indigenous life through the extirpation of religion and customs, the indigenous people aimed to resist and repair the effects of Spanish colonialism through a revitalization movement called Taki Onqoy (Mumford 1986). The Taki Onqoy sparked political and religious havoc in the Andes. The movement to resist

Spanish colonialism was legitimized by Andean gods; supporters of the movement preached that huacas were returning to defeat Christianity through the possession of Inca decedents (Mumford 1986). The Taki Onqoy dictated that participants reject Spanish names, clothing, and food allowing members of the group to identify together in solidarity by using clothes and lifestyle choices to signify a divergent social identity (Mumford 1986). Although individual members may have had very different reasons for joining the Taki Onqoy movement, social solidarity was created through the manipulation of mutually revered symbols, such as the huacas.

Western societies, such as the Unites States of America, often view a separation of church and state. However, the controversy surrounding the election of John F. Kennedy as the first catholic president exemplifies just one of several ways religion and politics influence each other in American society. In recent elections, funding from religious interest groups, such as the Christian Coalition within George W. Bush's presidential campaign, has influenced political policies (Wald and Calhoun-Brown 2011). Issues over abortion and gay marriage have dominated the political agenda in recent political campaigns. Religion and politics influence each other because they are both expressed through symbolism. Symbolism allows people to convey an array of information, such as political beliefs, moral values, and identity. Recently, Americans boycotted Chick-fil-A, a fast-food chain restaurant, after the company publically announced their disapproval of gay and lesbian marriages. The strike of Chick-fil-A symbolically represented supporters of gay marriage and unified individuals who rejected the stringent definition of marriage as only existing between a man and a woman.

In more recent events, debates regarding the funding of Planned Parenthood, a non-profit organization designed at providing free and low cost women's healthcare and family planning options, have ensued from previous political agendas. During the McCain-Palin presidential campaign, several individuals donated money to the Planned Parenthood Organization under the name of republican vice-president candidate, Sarah Palin. The donations made were not to help support the organization, but instead were used as a symbolic platform to argue against Sarah Palin's political agenda. The "Sarah Palin Donators" were effective in conveying their disapproval of Palins political agenda on a national level because they understood that although proclamations conveyed through speech may be argued or debated, symbolic action is an effective way to express a message without rebuttal.

Symbolism is an important tool used in both religion and politics because it permits the expression of ideologies and social identities. Powerful and authoritative participants are able to influence social ideologies and values by eliciting emotions and thoughts through the manipulation of symbols. Symbolism is a vital element in religion and politics because it holds the ability to legitimize and refute authority. The overlapping of religion and politics contributes to creating solidarity among social groups. Since solidarity movements rarely reflect one set of ideologies or motives, symbolism becomes a very powerful tool in the construction of social identities and the perceptions of individual participants.

References

Kertzer, David.
1996. Ritual, Politics, and Power. *In* Readings in Ritual Studies. Ronald L. Grimes eds. Pp. 335-352. Upper Saddle River: Pearson.

Mumford, Jeremy.
1986. The Taki Onqoy and Andean Nation: Sources and Interpretations. Latin American Research Review. 33(1): 150-165.'

Silverblatt, Irene.
1998. Imperial Dilemmas, the Politics of Kinship, and Inca Reconstructions of History. Comparitive Studies in Society and History. 30(1): 83-102.

Stein, Rebecca, and Philip Stein.
2011. The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft. Upper Saddle River: Pearson.

Wald, Kenneth D., and Allison Calhoun-Brown.
2011. Religion and Politics in the United States. Plymouth: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers.

Wallace, Anthony.
1956. Revitalization Movemnets. American Anthropologist. 58(2): 19-46.

Experiencing senior gardening in the Long Beach Cambodian community through ethnography

By: Maggie Slater

The purpose of this paper is to share my experience with the Cambodian senior gardening group and the enriched feeling and sense of hope that I went home with after the Cambodian Arts & Culture Exhibition in Long Beach, CA. I will use the information from interviews I conducted with the gardening program's director, Arun Va, and my observation and interaction with seniors and the community at the festival to illustrate my positive experience. I admit that I began this project with preconceived notions. I had visions of getting my hands dirty with the seniors. I thought I would learn special

techniques that have been used for thousands of years and brought here from the war torn homelands of Cambodia. They would share with me the ancient mystical layout of their garden and introduce me to the gods that protect and insure a successful harvest. But this fantastic movie I created in my head never came to fruition. There were seniors. There was gardening. And I did discover new uses for familiar plants. But what I discovered, and what the seniors get from this group, was so much more than I anticipated.

Before an understanding can be reached of where the seniors are today, it is important to see where they came from. In order to do that, I need to share a little bit of history on the Khmer Rouge. The Khmer Rouge ruled Cambodia from 1975 to 1979. Led by Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge was the communist party of Kampuchea and is responsible for the deaths of millions of people. Officials of the former regime, intellectuals, teachers, artists, and anyone else deemed as “enemy” were executed. People were forced into agricultural labor camps. Their lack of food, long and laborious work schedules, and lack of medical treatment led to starvation and disease. In addition, entire families were brutally murdered by the Khmer Rouge. Cambodians learned to keep their opinions, feelings, and discontent hidden for fear of retribution.

The Khmer Rouge was ousted by the Vietnamese in 1979. The ousted regime fled to the Thai border where they continued to control the territory, and their followers, into the 1990s. The Khmer Rouge was finally forced into non-existence by 1997 by the government that replaced them. Many Cambodians came to the United States where a

large portion of them settled in Long Beach, which is now home to the largest Cambodian community outside of Cambodia.

The senior gardening project, like most community projects, has humble origins. It began with a small plot of land and a few seniors. It has blossomed into 70 seniors and two gardens; one at Peace Garden in Martin Luther King, Jr. Park and the other on 20th street. The program was started in 2002 by Mr. Saysuong and was initially called United Cambodian Community (UCC). The idea was to get the seniors, new to this country, out of their homes to assimilate them into the community. They went door to door inviting the seniors to join them by getting them involved, not only with gardening, but also with the English as Second Language (ESL) program. Today the senior's project has many other activities such as Tai Chi and computer classes geared toward seniors. Arun Va has been the Director of the Senior Garden Project since 2003.

Our first interview with Arun was on a Friday morning at the garden on 20th St. My partner, Ellyse, and I sat at a patio table under a canopy of crawling vines with our recorder and pencils ready to document the ins and outs of the project.

There were a few seniors bustling about. In hind sight, I wish I had talked to the seniors at that time. Our interview began with Arun's personal history. He was born in 1957 in Battambang and entered the United States by way of Hawaii in 1982. His wife was born

in Phnom Penh. She lost her entire family to the Khmer Rouge. They have two daughters and live in Riverside. When asked what the program was about, Arun replied:

> Health and happiness. Happy and full of heart, not just for [themselves] but for others [as well]. We teach them to be [independent]. For now they talk about what they need and we support them but, [in] time, they will learn how to support themselves.

I realized that this is more than a gardening group. This is acclimation, training, and a social network disguised as something they are comfortable and familiar with: gardening. It is a special form of group therapy for these people who were traumatized by the atrocities of war. They are emotionally and physically damaged. They have come to a country where they are safe from terror, but the scars remain. Can we help them? There are cultural differences and past experiences to consider. We, as Americans, have no experience with genocide, how can we possibly understand?

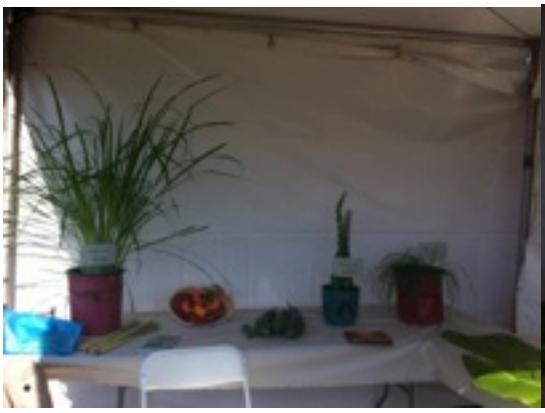
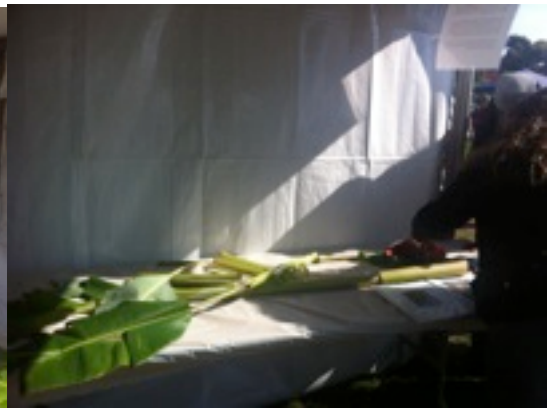
The Cambodian community has answered the call, beginning with this program. Arun explains,

> sometimes they cry when we talk about things that [are] [hidden] inside them. [All] the killing, threatening [and] things that happened. [They were] manipulated not to talk, so they keep [things] inside and they hurt so much. They start trusting us [and] they talk and share and learn together how to [have] an open mind.

At this point I became more interested in this group than I was before. But still, I didn't talk to the seniors. I was not confident in the effectiveness of translating our ideas to one another. Although they were very polite, I did not feel they would open up to me.

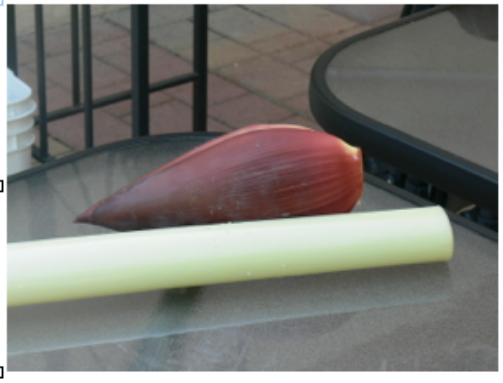
We conducted another interview with Arun in which we obtained more background on the group's origins. A film crew was present at that time and Arun was understandably distracted. Our interview was cut short. I noticed how familiar and personable the seniors interacted with each other and the film crew and I felt a bit envious, but still, I didn't try to reach out.

We had scheduled an appointment to meet with Arun a week before the festival to go over the general layout of our booth, but the appointment was canceled. I called Arun the day before the festival to make sure everything was ready to go and to discuss the transportation of the plants we planned to showcase. Arun told me that he would not be able to make it to the festival and that I should "come to the garden now" to go over things now. I was the first to arrive at the garden and the plants that we agreed would go to the festival were sitting on the patio table under the canopy of crawling vines. I had a few minutes to myself to reflect and panic. Then Arun arrived and apologized, again, that he could not be at the festival, but he had arranged for some of the seniors and his assistant to take his place. He explained to me that the seniors wanted to make sure that our booth would give the right impression; that it represented the group in a positive way. When the seniors arrived I explained our plans for the booth, showed them the labels I had made for the plants and the paper I bought to cover the pots of the plants. Since they do not speak English very well, the translation was rough and they did not appear to be enthused. I feared our project was doomed. With the plants loaded into my car I headed home to prepare, I was determined to make this work.

My partner Ellyse and I decided to feature the plants from the garden against the back of the booth with the banana tree on the East side of the tent so that the tables formed an upside down “L.” We were assigned a corner booth so the West and south sides of our booth were open. Our exposure was great.





In the booth, we placed the banana tree flower, that we had purchased at a local market, on the table next to a banana stalk. We stripped the banana stalk down to the core, approximately two inches in diameter, which is cut up and used for cooking, as is the banana flower. Rosanna showed us how to make a popgun and a whistle with the stalk. It was a popular toy with children in Cambodian when she was a child.


Looking around at the elaborate displays of the other booths, ours felt a little naked. I had such grand visions for this project. This would be the first year that the senior garden project would be showcased at the Cambodian Arts & Culture Exhibition and I wanted us to make a good showing. Without Arun there to discuss the project it would be up to Ellyse and me to talk about the program and the banana tree. I was nervous, but could not afford to panic.

The seniors arrived at 10:00am, without the interpreter. They appeared to feel as lost as we felt. After all, this was their first experience with the festival too. People started to arrive at our booth and Ellyse and I handled it well. We were talking about the senior project and the banana tree like we knew what we were talking about. It amazes me how much we can pull from our subconscious, things we didn't know we knew.

The booth was doing well but still, the seniors were not getting involved. That all changed when Serey Hong, the interpreter, arrived an hour later. The seniors came out of their shells. I introduced myself to Serey and he told me that the seniors had not really understood what the festival was. Had they known what to expect, they would

have “done things differently.” I agreed. I explained to the seniors, through Serey, that this was a first for both of us. Next year it will be better. The ice had been broken, a door opened! They felt more comfortable with us. They talked with us and they started talking directly to the visitors.

The banana tree toys that Rosanna had showed us were a big hit at the booth. They brought back fond memories to some and were new discoveries to others. A woman came into the booth and recognized the whistle. A huge smile stretched across her face as she showed a crowd of enthusiastic children how to make them. A man was telling his two young sons how he used to play with the popgun as a child. He told us that they would make a horse from the banana stalk and, with the pop gun, would play “cowboys and Indians.” Cowboys and Indians? It seemed odd to me because it is such a clear piece of Americana. I handed him a banana stalk and knife and asked him if he could make a horse. He did and it really looked like a horse. His sons loved it. Everything was going so much better than I had expected.

At one point, I sat in a chair and was looking through a book filled with pictures of Cambodia. One of the seniors, who I will refer to as Bob, sat next to me and started to identify some of the places that he had been to at one time or another. When he showed me a picture of the Mekong Delta, he told me that when he was a boy he would swim in it, but you can’t today because it is filled with “caca” and “pee pee”.

His English was poor and my Khmer is non-existent. I didn’t understand most of what he was saying and found that I didn’t need to. I watched his face light up with every turn of the page and felt his excitement and longing for a time gone by and a home he may never see again. It saddened me and yet, strangely, gave me joy at the

same time. It was like watching a child's face when she sees the Disney castle in person for the first time.

The purpose of the senior project that Arun tried to convey in words to us from the beginning was expressed in the faces of the seniors and the pride they showed in their booth at the festival. As the day wound down, the music filled the air and visitors joined in the Khmer dancing in front of the stage. I took a moment, stood back and scanned the festival. From booth to booth and face to face I saw the blending of old tradition and new tradition, the sharing of old memories and the creation of new experiences. I thought about Kurin's (1998) article, *Why Do We Do the Festival* which questions the authenticity of cultural festivals and saw the answer to that question all around me. Here was a group of Cambodians sharing who they are and where they come from so that future generations will not forget. In the globalized world of today, with new ideas and influences affecting our world-views, it must be expected that culture evolve. The Cambodian-American culture will live on in their home away from home. I have never been out of the United States, but that day I spent seven hours in Cambodia. Kurin's question was answered; this is why we do festivals and, yes, it's authentic.

References

Kurin, Richard
1998. Smithsonian Folklife Festival: Culture Of, By, and For the People. Washington, DC: Center For Folklife and Culture.

The New Internationalist. “A Shattered Nation” Last modified April 5, 1993, http://newint.org/features/1993/04/05/facts/

Sharp, Bruce.
2008. “The Unique Revolution” Last modified July 16, 2008, http://www.mekong.net/cambodia/uniq_rev.htm

Vagabonding “Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge, and Genocide in Cambodia” Last modified January 13, 2003, http://www.vagabonding.com/travelogue/000060.html

Moni Mekhala & Ream Eyso: Honoring the Spirits and Transmitting Culture through Ritual and Performance

By: Alexx Salazar

Introduction

This paper explores a Cambodian ritual known as sampeah kru, the Khmer (Cambodian) classical dance accompanying the ritual, and the purpose of both as contextualized in the Cambodian community of Long Beach, California. As seen throughout the event to be discussed in this paper, both the ritual and the performance function as vehicles for venerating spirits and transmitting Cambodian culture. The research presented in this paper is based on data collected from voice recordings of Prumsodun Ok and Sophiline Cheam Shapiro and participant-observation at the 10th Anniversary of Khmer Arts Academy (KAA), a non-profit dance studio founded in Long Beach. As a supplement to my initial data collection, I conducted a field interview with a

local Cambodian ritual specialist, Sakphan Keam. The anniversary celebration took place on Saturday, October 13, 2012 and included an altar for the sampeah kru and the performance of the Ream Eyso and Moni Mekhala dance. After introducing the general background of the sampeah kru and this dance in Cambodian culture, I will describe them as they were performed in Long Beach on the day of the event. Finally, I will comparatively discuss the existential (ideal) postulates versus the normative (real) postulates (Hosteler and Huntington 1996) in play throughout this ritual and dance performance.

The Ritual: Sampeah Kru

The sampeah kru is a Cambodian ritual ceremony in which offerings are given to the spirits and teachers of the dance in hopes of receiving their blessings, knowledge, and power to perform the dance (Cravath 1986; Orenstein 2002; Shapiro-Phim 2008). Historically, the sampeah kru was performed over two consecutive days, once every year, and was overseen by a ritual specialist familiar with the dance and the ritual (Cravath 1986). In the past, the ceremony began by placing offerings of food on nine altars (one for each of the eight cardinal directions and one main altar) (Cravath 1986). This would occur on the first day. On the following day, more offerings were given and the critical ritual involving the placing of the masks/headdresses on the heads of the student dancers by their teacher(s) was performed (Cravath 1986). The sampeah kru was complete when the students performed a dance while wearing their masks and offering their performance up to the spirits and teachers (Cravath 1986; S. Keam, interview, Oct. 27, 2012).

In addition to honoring the spirits and teachers (both the departed and living), the sampeah kru also serves as a means for enculturating young generations of dancers by passing down the knowledge of dance from spirit to teacher to student (Cravath 1986; Shapiro-Phim 2008). In this system of enculturation, there exists an "artistic and spiritual hierarch[y]" of which the students are mindful (Shapiro-Phim 2008). Visual evidence of this is illustrated in the shape of the masks/headdresses that are placed at the highest level of the altar. The layered and pointed design of these masks— especially the masks of the hermit and Hanuman, both of which have one or two miniature heads layered above the full-face mask (See Figure 4 in the Appendix)— symbolizes the necessity of the dancer to connect with her or his own mind and spirit while also connecting to the "energy" of the teacher spirits that came before her or him (S. Keam, interview, Oct. 27, 2012). These masks were used by past dancers, thus by wearing the masks in the present and focusing on the spirits of the dance, the students create a physical and spiritual connection to the knowledge and energy of the spirits (S. Keam, interview, Oct. 27, 2012; Cravath 1986). According to Jacques Brunet, "the masks are in fact regarded as living spirits as soon as they are worn by the dancers" (Cravath 1986). This "living spirit" or "energy" is made accessible when the mask is worn by the student, allowing "that energy [to] pass from one to another. [But the student must] receive [the energy] in good faith, and use [it] in good faith" (S. Keam, interview, Oct. 27, 2012).

The Dance: Ream Eyso and Moni Mekhala

The tale of Ream Eyso and Moni Mekhala is depicted in the Cambodian dance drama performed in the style of Khmer classical dance, and is often affiliated with sampeah kru ceremonies (Cravath 1986; Shapiro-Phim 2008). It is a tale of how

knowledge is passed from teacher to student, of the balance between good and evil, and of the creation of lightning, thunder, and rain (P. Ok, n., Oct. 13, 2012). The story of Ream Eyso and Moni Mekhala begins with a teacher, the hermit Lokta, and his three students: Moni Mekhala, “the goddess of the seas,” Prince Vorachhun, the “princely manifestation of the earth,” and Ream Eyso, “the storm demon” (P. Ok, n., Oct. 13, 2012). As the students approached the completion of their training, the hermit told them that he would award one of them with a magnificent gift. To obtain this gift, the three students had to compete in a contest devised by Lokta. He said to them, “whoever brings me back a glassful of morning dew first, will be the master of this gift” (P. Ok, n., Oct. 13, 2012). The two males, Vorachhun and Ream Eyso, attempted to win the contest by using the same strategy. In the darkness of the night they both ran out into the forrest and scrambled to retrieve every drop of dew from the forrest plants before the sun arose (P. Ok, n., Oct. 13, 2012). However, Moni Mekhala simply placed her scarf out in the open at night and when morning came she wrung the dew from her scarf into a glass, filling it with ease (P. Ok, n., Oct. 13, 2012). As a result of her clever strategy, Moni Mekhala was able to deliver her glass to Lokta before the others. To reward them each for their efforts, Lokta transformed each of their glasses of morning dew into gifts, although Moni Mekhala’s was the most precious and powerful gift (P. Ok, n., Oct. 13, 2012). Prince Vorachhun’s gift was a magic dagger (See Figure 7 in the Appendix). Ream Eyso’s gift was an ax made of diamonds (See Figure 6 in the Appendix). And Moni Mekhala’s gift was a crystal ball (See Figure 5 in the Appendix) that “radiate[d] a brilliant and powerful, piercing light” (P. Ok, n., Oct. 13, 2012). Envious of the inherent power of the crystal ball, Ream Eyso devised a plan to steal it from Moni

Mekhala, but first he had to face Vorachhun who was a noble prince and would not simply let him take the crystal from her. Up in the skies a fight ensued between the two masculine figures, but eventually Ream Eyso won (See Figure 8 in the Appendix). After defeating Prince Vorachhun, Ream Eyso ripped through each set of clouds to find and attack Moni Mekhala (See Figure 10 in the Appendix). When the two of them met, Ream Eyso said to her, "'Moni Mekhala, give me your crystal.' [And she replied], 'You want this crystal? You come and get it.' [Finally he said,] 'I will kill you if you don't give me that crystal.'" Without fear she responded once again, "'Come and get it.'" (P. Ok, n., Oct. 13, 2012). Filled with rage and frustration, Ream Eyso threw his diamond ax at her and "the sound of it cutting through the clouds create[d] the sound of thunder" (P. Ok, n., Oct. 13, 2012). But before his ax fell to the ground, Moni Mekhala threw her crystal ball into the air, which released great lightning that struck Ream Eyso and blinded him (See Figure 9 in the Appendix). As he was grounded below her, Moni Mekhala was faced with the decision to either defeat him once and for all, or let him keep his life. She realized that they were both taught by the same teacher, and thus decided to have mercy on him (P. Ok, n., Oct. 13, 2012). However, Ream Eyso soon recovered from his blindness and immediately attacked Moni Mekhala, once again cutting through the clouds to get to her. The forces of "lightning and thunder, male and female, good and evil, calm and rage" that developed as a result of their continued battle led to the creation of rain (P. Ok, n., Oct. 13, 2012). This rain fell upon the earth and nourished it, while simultaneously reviving Prince Vorachhun (P. Ok, n., Oct. 13, 2012). Their story and the dance performance end with the formation of a naga (mythical serpent) as all of the characters join together to dance amongst the gods (See Figures 12-13 in the Appendix). As

evident in this tale, this dance is a story of finding balance between the naturally dichotomous elements in life.

The Event: 10th Anniversary of Khmer Arts Academy

On the day of the event, individuals and groups of people, Cambodian and non-Cambodian, young and old, lined up in front of the Long Beach Museum of Art as early as 9:00 a.m. to see the 11:00 a.m. performance of Ream Eyso and Moni Mekhala. Around 10:00 a.m. the event patrons began to be directed west into the courtyard— situated between two of the museum buildings— where they were able to find a place to lay their mats or blankets on the grass lawn designated as the audience seating area (See Figure 1 in the Appendix). Until the event officially commenced, people intermingled in the courtyard socializing (primarily audience members) or preparing for the event (dancers and KAA personnel). The commencement of the event was signaled by John Shapiro, co-founder of KAA and husband of Sophiline Cheam Shapiro, who addressed the audience from in front of the stage— located at the south end of the courtyard facing north. Mr. Shapiro welcomed the audience and thanked the event's sponsors before introducing Sophiline. Standing beside the altar on the north end of the courtyard facing the stage, Sophiline proceeded to discuss the altar and the sampeah kru. She specifically pointed out the offerings of meat, flowers, incense, and candles on the altar (See Figure 3 in the Appendix), and emphasized the mask at the center of the altar (the hermit) (See Figure 4 in the Appendix)—whom she stated is the creator and protector of Khmer classical dance, and is therefore a central figure (S. Cheam Shapiro, n., Oct. 13, 2012). She then began to light the candles on the altar, a substitute for the actual ritual, while the dancers (sitting at either side of the stage) watched attentively.

Then the audience's attention returned to the stage where the dancers performed the Buong Suong ritual dance (approximately six minutes in duration), which was a connection between the sampeah kru and the main dance performance. Directly after this dance, Prumsodun Ok, the Associate Artistic Director of KAA, came to the front of the stage to inform the audience of the reason why the Ream Eyso and Moni Mekhala dance is significant and why it is an accompaniment for the sampeah kru. In regards to the significance, he stated that this specific dance is an exceptional way to "empower [his primarily young female] students to…triumph in a masculine universe" (P. Ok, n., Oct. 13, 2012). He also stated that the dance revolves around "the passage of knowledge and leadership within lineages," which reinforces one of the main functions of the sampeah kru (P. Ok, n., Oct. 13, 2012). Then, as an introduction to the main performance, Prum recounted the entire tale of Ream Eyso and Moni Mekhala to the audience. At last, the dancers took the stage and performed the abridged version (approximately 45 minutes) of the dance.

Discussion: Existential Postulates vs. Normative Postulates

Throughout the day of the event, various procedural and ideological elements of the ritual and performance were tangled between the existential (ideal) postulates and the normative (real) postulates of the sampeah kru and the Ream Eyso and Moni Mekhala dance. According to Hostetler and Huntington (1996:5-6), existential postulates are the ideal "norms of belief" within a particular culture that affect the behavior of its people but can never fully produce the intended results of the ideal in everyday situations. On the other hand, normative postulates are the "norms of practice" that are more suitable for daily life. These two distinctive but related sets of beliefs have also

been referred to as “ideal versus real.” The two most obvious variations of existential and normative postulates at the event were the non-performance of the sampeah kru ritual and the abridged performance of the dance. The ideal sampeah kru is performed by including all of the procedures mentioned previously in the ritual background section of this paper. However, in reality, the sampeah kru was not performed at the event, instead the altar merely served as a symbolic representation of the ritual. The performance of Ream Eyso and Moni Mekhala was an abridged version of the dance, the ideal, full-length dance is much longer than the 45 minutes actually performed for the audience at the event. One likely explanation for both of these is timing limitations. In the context of Long Beach, the execution of both the ritual and the performance may have been hindered due, at least partially, to the time restraints of the venue— the KAA anniversary event had to finish by a specific time because another party had reserved the same courtyard for a wedding reception in the time slot immediately following the KAA event. To follow the existential postulates for the ritual and performance would require much more time than was available in the actual setting.

Another conflict between the existential and normative postulates was the recounting of the whole tale of Ream Eyso and Moni Mekhala. I cannot be certain on this point, however, I would venture to say that the ideal situation, for example in Cambodia, would not require this full retelling since the majority of Cambodians already know this story. It is one of the staple creation myths in Cambodian culture. However, the audience in Long Beach was not comprised of only Cambodians, nor can we be certain that the entire younger generation of Cambodian-Americans knows this tale.

There is yet another major disparity between existential and normative postulates that may not be as easily spotted; a shift in the role of the “ritual specialist” who presides over the ceremony. In the ideal model of the overall sampeah kru ceremony, a ritual specialist is required to preside over the ritual procedures since the mask/headdress ritual is emphasized and the dance is only a supplemental offering. Despite this existential postulate, the Long Beach event did not have a “ritual” specialist per-se since the ritual was not actually performed. Nevertheless, a specialist of a slightly different nature did oversee the event; a “dance” specialist. In the normative context, the dance became the emphasis in the absence of the sampeah kru ritual performance. The “ritual” aspect of the event shifted from the sampeah kru to the dance performance, thus calling for a similar shift in the role of the specialist.

In an interview for the Long Beach Post, Prumsodun Ok made a statement that I believe may serve as an explanation for this shift. Referring to the devastation of Khmer classical dance under the Khmer Rouge, Prum said, “Now, thirty or so years after this violent regime, Khmer classical dance artists— and Cambodia— [are] still rebuilding. As someone who is an inheritor of this legacy of loss, I have come to understand that I must transform it into a legacy of rebuilding that pushes for new heights” (Wolff 2012; emphasis added). The ritual and dance performances that occurred at the KAA 10th anniversary event were aligned with normative, not existential postulates, however this should not be seen as negative, but rather as a natural effect caused by the reality that all cultures are constantly adapting. Ultimately, both the sampeah kru (or at least the symbol of it represented by the altar) and the dance performance at the event functioned as mechanisms for honoring the spirits and transmitting Cambodian culture.

References

Cravath, Paul.
1986. The Ritual Origins of the Classical Dance Drama of Cambodia. Asian Theatre Journal 3(2):179-203.

Hostetler, John, and Gertrude Enders Huntington.
1996. The Hutterites in North America. 1967. Reprint, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 5-18.

KhmerArts.
N.d. REAM EYSO & MONI MEKHALA: Celebrating 10 Years of Khmer Arts - a set on Flickr. http://www.flickr.com/photos/88851422@N02/sets/72157631801156081/with/8100993300/ accessed December 13, 2012.

Orenstein, Claudia.
2002. Performance Review of The Continuum: Beyond the Killing Fields. Asian Theatre Journal 19(2):393-395.

Shapiro-Phim, Toni.
2008. Cambodia's Seasons of Migration. Dance Research Journal 40(2):56-73.

Wolff, Sander Roscoe.
2012. Healing and Inspiration: 10 Years of Khmer Arts. Long Beach Post, September 25. http://www.lbpost.com/life/2000001066-healing-and-inspiration-10-years-of-khmer-arts#.UKw2yo6DNlJ (accessed December 3, 2012).

Appendix

Photographs taken by author unless otherwise noted.

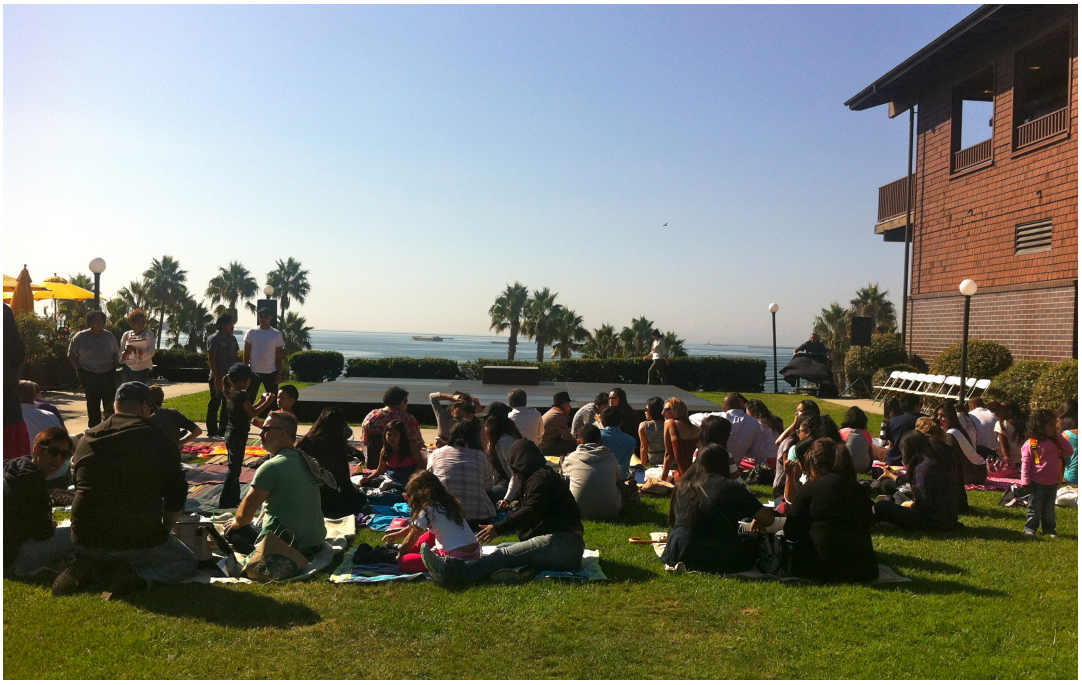


Figure 1

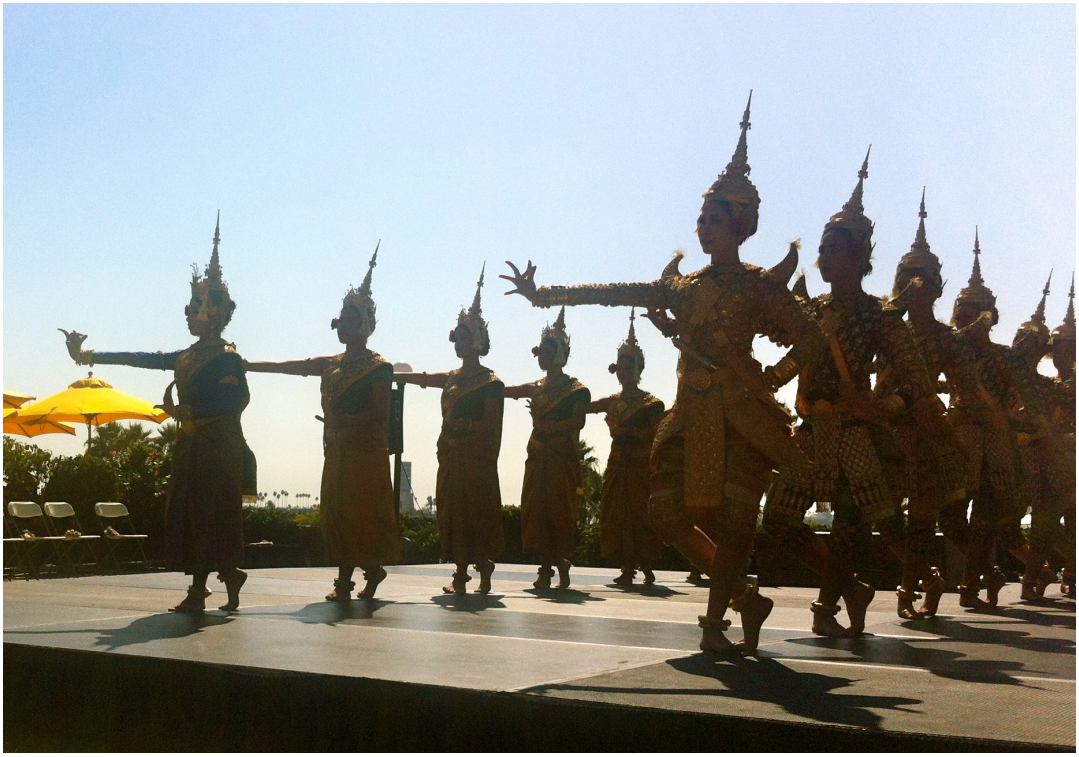


Figure 2

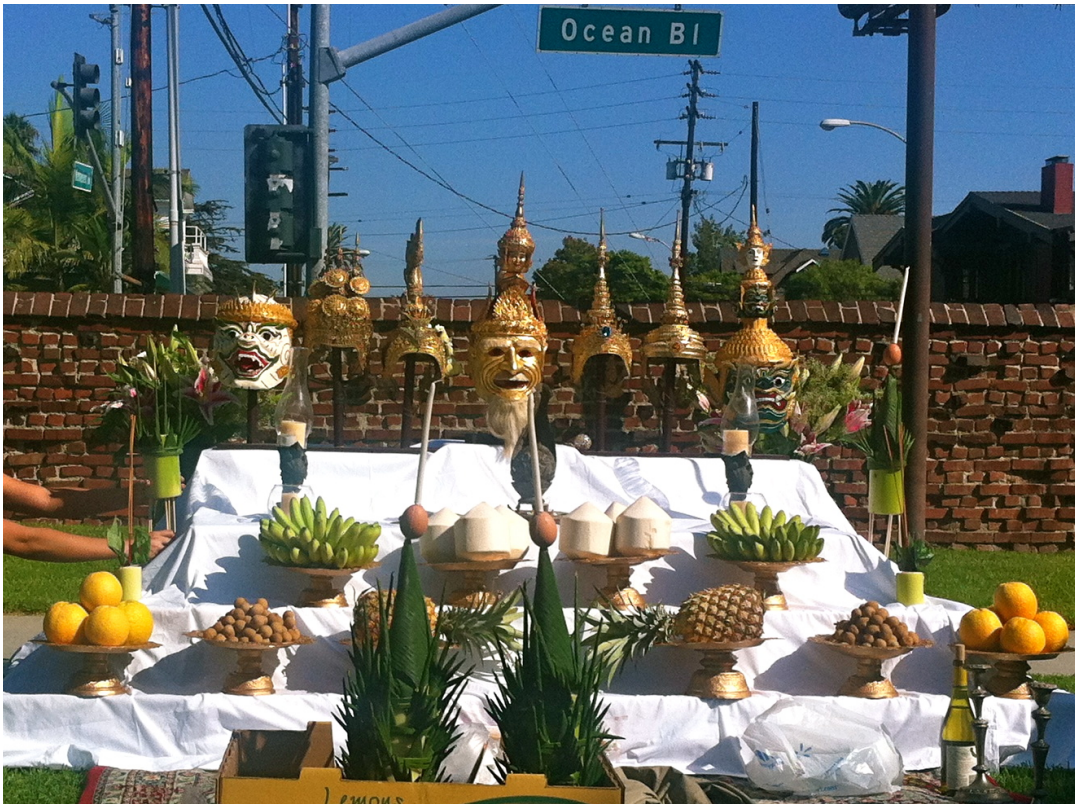


Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5: Moni Mekhala

Figure 6: Ream Eyso

Figure 7: Prince Vorachhun

Figure 8

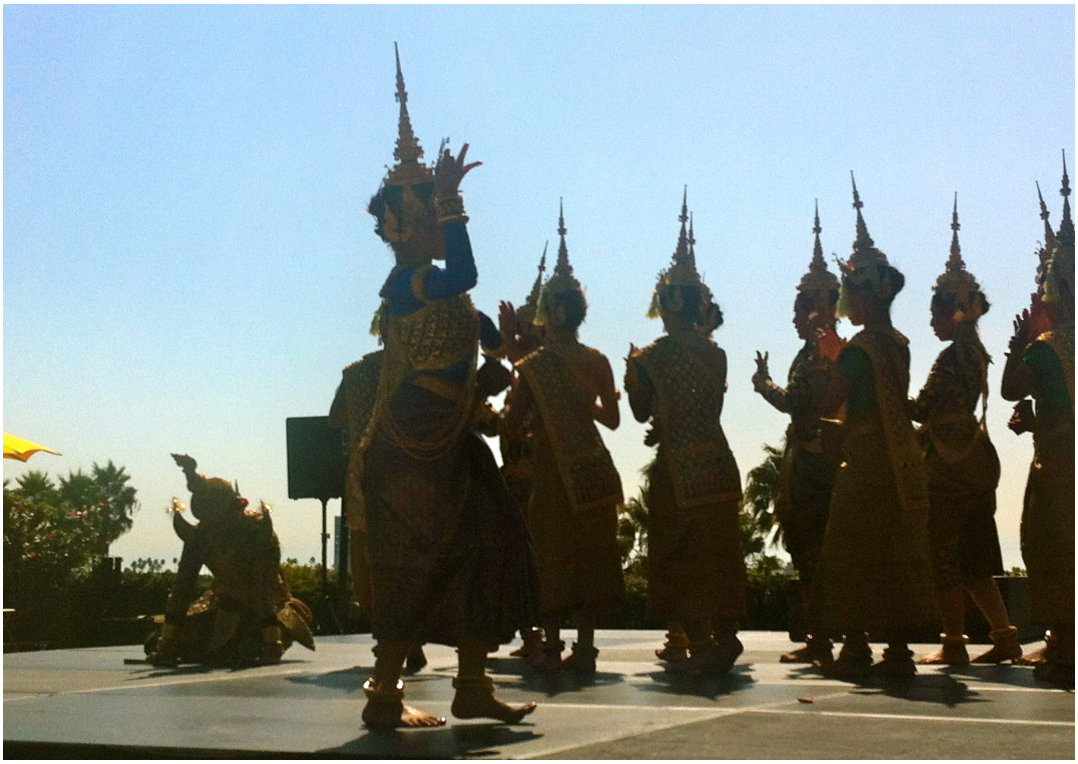


Figure 9

Figure 10

Figure 11

Figure 12

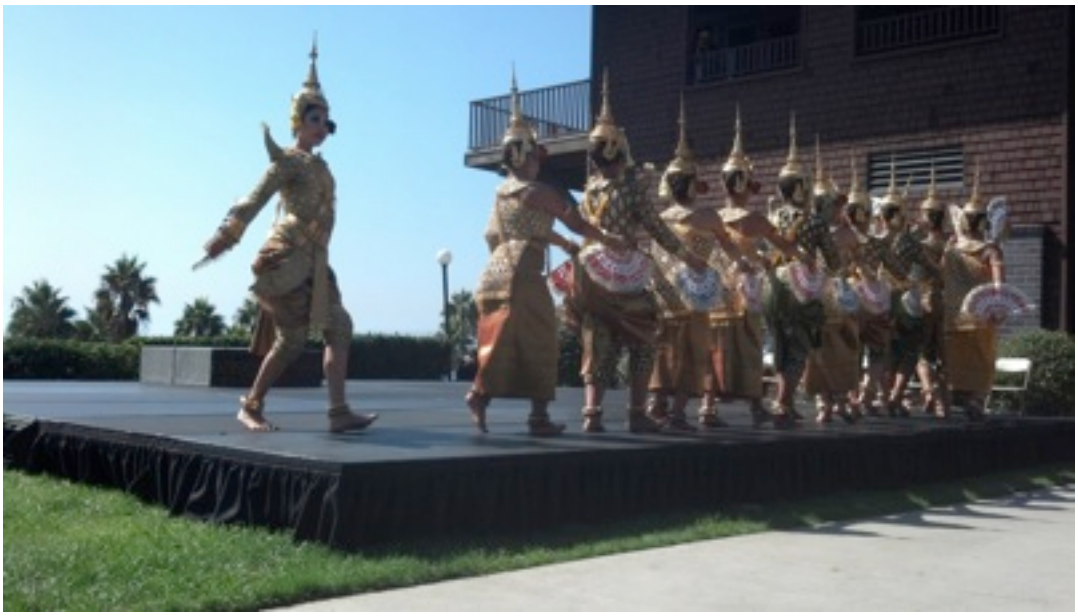


Figure 13

**Figures 12-13 courtesy of Alea Duran*