
**THE ISLAND OF MENSTRUATING MAN:
QUEERING LEACOCK'S INTRODUCTION TO ENGEL'S "ORIGIN OF THE
FAMILY, THE PRIVATE PROPERTY AND THE STATE"**

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Blood is drawn from the penis (or some other part of the body among other groups) and men go through the ritual cycle of menstruation, retreating from the ordinary round of daily affairs, observing various taboos, then reentering, cleansed and renewed.

Eleanor Leacock, Introduction to "Origin of the Family, the Private Property and the State"

ABSTRACT

This article looks to archaeologically assess Friedrich Engel's hypothesis of the complicit role of monogamous marriages in patriarchal dominance as outlined by him in his (1884) canonical oeuvre, "The Origin of the Family, the Private Property and the State," as well as, Eleanor Leacock's (1972) introduction to his work. Engel's had mentioned, but not fully elaborated, on the labor impact in the switch from communal production to that of individual accumulation within the nuclear family; one that allowed the household to accumulate wealth in an hierarchical manner. I use the archaeological iconographic material from the Ecuadorian coast to address this hypothesis, as well as, the recent insights of a Queer Archaeological theoretical approach.

KEYWORDS: Patriarchy, Queer Archaeology, Friedrich Engels, Sexuality, and Gender.

RESUMO

Este artigo procura avaliar arqueologicamente a hipótese de Friedrich Engel sobre o papel cúmplice dos casamentos monogâmicos no domínio patriarcal, conforme delineado por ele em sua obra canônica A Origem da Família, a Propriedade Privada e o Estado, bem como introduzida por Eleanor Leacock (1972) a esse mesmo trabalho. Engel havia mencionado, mas não totalmente elaborado, o impacto do trabalho na mudança da produção comunitária para a acumulação individual dentro da família nuclear; o que permitia ao agregado familiar acumular riqueza de forma hierárquica. Eu uso o material iconográfico arqueológico da costa equatoriana para abordar esta hipótese, bem como, os recentes *insights* de uma abordagem teórica Arqueológica Queer.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Patriarcado, arqueologia queer, Friedrich Engels, sexualidade e gênero.

RESUMEN

Este artículo busca evaluar arqueológicamente la hipótesis de Friedrich Engel sobre la complicidad de los matrimonios monogámicos en el origen del patriarcado, como él lo describe en su obra (1884), "El origen de la familia, la propiedad privada y el estado", así como, en la introducción de Eleanor Leacock (1972) a ese mismo trabajo. Engel había mencionado, pero no completamente elaborado, sobre el impacto laboral en el cambio de la producción comunal a la de la acumulación individual dentro de la familia nuclear; uno que le permitiría a la familia acumular riqueza de una manera jerárquica. De este modo utilizo el material iconográfico arqueológico de la costa ecuatoriana para abordar esta hipótesis, así como las recientes contribuciones de un enfoque teórico arqueológico queer.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Patriarcado, arqueología queer, Friedrich Engels, sexualidad y género.

INTRODUCTION: THE ISLAND OF MENSTRUATING MEN

In 1972, the anthropologist Eleanor Leacock wrote a now famous introduction to Engel's (1972[1884]) canonical oeuvre, *Origin of the Family, the Private Property and the State*. In it she emphasized one of the lesser-developed point of Engel's work, which was the complicit role of monogamous marriages in patriarchal dominance. Engel's had mentioned, but not fully elaborated, on the labor impact in the switch from communal production to that of individual accumulation within the nuclear family; one that allowed the household to accumulate wealth in an hierarchical and in a less restrictive manner.

As Leacock (1972) expresses, Engel's premise was very much a theoretical insight that although logical had yet to be assessed in the archaeological and/or anthropological record. In this regard she outlined two key interrelated point: Firstly, that Engel's (and Marx's) original assessment of the evolution of capital in early societies was distinctfully based on Henry Morgan's [1877 (1985)] work and his own oeuvre, *Ancient Societies*; and Secondly, that Engel had developed a theoretical insight that Morgan himself was very careful, or perhaps, fearful of carrying out, since he "was, and remained essentially the pragmatic scholar, insightful, but not committed to theory" (LEACOCK, 1972, p. 4).

In order to push these theoretical insights further, Leacock's introduction elucidated some of the questions still left begging in Morgan's and Engel's work. Her work allowed us to more systematically ask: How did monogamous arrangements, especially if they were so socially divisive, get to be instituted as the normative sexual arrangements in society? Why

were males, not females, the gender role that would be privy to the most benefit from this household capital accumulation? And perhaps, even more broadly, what happens to Engel's theoretical contribution when confronted with the biological reality that more than two sexes have always existed, even mores in pre-Western societies, and that like today, multiple and varied forms of gender identifications peopled the societal landscape?

It is perhaps the latter question that is most central to the postcolonial and/or queer concerns of many Latin American archaeologists, and also the main focus of this article: What happens, or, how do we assess the pre-Hispanic past's gendered and sexual landscape when we go beyond the sexual binary, heterosexism, and incorporate the role of queer and trans desire into it?

As Leacock states (see epigraph above) there are many cultures in the world where men emulate women and therefore perform an-other gender, and an-other cultural sexual reality. These island of menstruating men (HOGBIN, 1970) present male who cut their penises (and other bodily parts) to enact a menstrual-like ritual, that far from an exception is central to the power dynamic of these societies. It is precisely these menstruating men and other similar queer examples of trans-desire that can no longer be seen as exception to the cultural norms but rather, more than ever, must be researched as central features of their societies, and ours.

BACK TO THE FUTURE: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL DÉJÀ VU

My initial reading, almost three decades ago (as a graduate student), of Leacock's introduction was quite profound. It was the first time I read a succinct outline of how gender inequality might have developed and was equally offered a viable hypothesis of what might have also led to patriarchy. This is particularly significant since, most probably, for the majority of our species' history, that is, for almost two hundred thousand years, a greater form of gender (and social) equality had existed. It was Engel's work through Leacock's introduction that enabled me to appreciate how when capital accumulation appeared, particularly under state formation, women faired worse than men and seem to have become second class citizens.

However, the questions still remained: How did this shift occur? What were the mechanism that made normalized one gender over another, and made this a lasting legacy until our days? And what were the roles of child-birth, and perhaps warring itself, in this process, since both activity seemed to be the most gender-specific ones in the literature? Meanwhile, no actual hypothesis was proposed in Leacock's introduction of how same-sex desire might have entered the picture. Although it was clear from the analysis that monogamous heterosexual arrangements were complicit with capital accumulation, as well as, with gender hierarchy, patriarchy and sexual discrimination.

I still remember the afternoon in my ex-partner's father's apartment when I first read the text, and the lasting impact it provoked in me. I believe it was then that I both decided, I would never join such a sexist and hierarchical arrangement as that of monogamous marriage, and, found myself closer than ever to come out as a gay men. Not unlike how the anthropologist Esther Newton (2000) argues Margaret Mead made her gay, it was Eleanor Leacock that powerfully contributed to my developing the idea that the binary, hierarchical, and unequal world I inhabited was anything but normative or normal.

However, it would be after 25 years, that is, a quarter of century later, that I would slowly find my way back to Leacock's work (through this article) and once more use her contributions to assess the varied manner in which sexual and gender arrangements might have existed and been operationalized in the past. The initial attempt at using Leacock's insights to carry out an archaeological dissertation of the Formative period (see below for chronology) in Ecuador, was met with disbelief, and almost ridicule by my then academic advisors.

My archaeological doctoral committee found it improbable, if not outright impossible, for me to find in the archaeological Formative record of the Ecuadorian coast, clues to gender inequality and hierarchy. And even less likely that I would be able to assess the shift from female preponderance in the Formative Period (3000BC-500BC), or at least more gender equality, to that of male domination, as seems more readily present, expressed in the Regional Development (500BC-500AD), and in the later Integration (500-1500AD), Colonial (1500-1830AD) and Republican (1830-) periods of Ecuador.

However, although gender inequality in the Colonial and Republican periods can be blamed on the European intrusion, the gender shifts from the Formative to the Regional

Development Period could provide an opportunity to see on the ground how this inequality evolved. My frustrated initial doctoral research was an attempt to give some flesh to Engel's bones (in Leacock's term), of assessing how patriarchy might have flourished, and why women as the reproducers of workers found themselves to be the object of domination instead of the other way around.

But this initial doctoral question would have to wait for almost three decades. And it was only in the last couple of years and as part of another collaborative research project that this gendered/sexual concern has made its way back to the future.

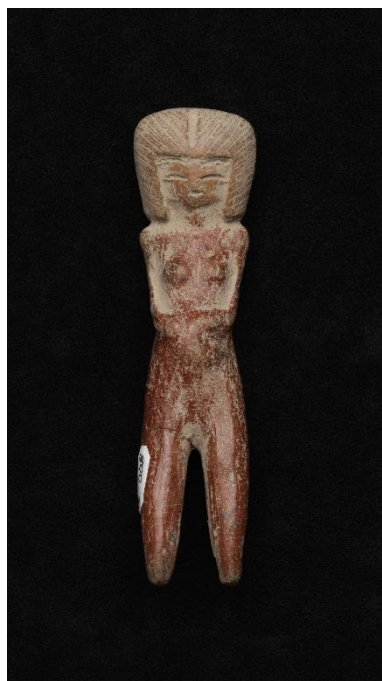
THE ECUADORIAN LANDSCAPE OF TALKING FIGURINES

In 2015, the archaeologist, and now colleague and friend, Dr. Maria Fernanda Ugalde, proposed for us to carry out a joint research project that would focus on the gender/sexual variation of Ecuador's pre-Hispanic past. Most particularly we would focus on the Regional Development cultures of the coast, e.g. Tolita, Jama-Coaque, Bahia, Guangala, etc., with the objective of recording and assessing anthropomorphic figurines in order to differentiate gendered and sexual categories for each cultural group. The basic idea is to record each of the figurine's physical variable (i.e., necklace, earrings, headdress, sexual organs, dress, etc.) and then cross tabulate for any statistically significant correlations.

The last three years of the project has already produced a wealth, not only of data, but also of other significant research and artistic endeavors (see Ugalde 2019 in this volume), including a 2019 exhibition on The Sexual/Gendered Variation of Ecuador's Pre-Hispanic Past at the National Museum (MUNA) in Quito, the first of its kind. At the same time (despite just being at the analysis and correlation period of the project) we have also been able to see interesting elements that reconfirm our premise of a more varied sexual/gendered past than the one inherited from the colonial period of our continent (UGALDE; BENAVIDES, 2018; UGALDE, 2017; BENAVIDES, 2017).

Perhaps, equally important, we have begun to sense a much larger pattern that we are now better poised to comment on; that is, the significant transition of the gendered

variation of pre-Hispanic figurines over the five thousand years history from Valdivia (see figures 1 and 2) to Manteño-Huancavilca (see figure 3) figurines. The over-whelming majority, approximately 80-85% of Valdivia (3000-1500 BC) figurines are females and/or present mostly feminine attributes such as large hips, vaginas, and breasts, which is completely the reverse by the time of the Manteño polity (500-1500AD) where it will be men and/or the mostly male attributes of broad shoulders, penises and flat chests that will predominate even more, around 95%, of the figurine landscape.



Figures 1 and 2 - Valdivia figurines, 2300-2000 BC, courtesy of the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University (Photo by author); two examples of the almost complete female figurine representations of the Formative Period (see attached list below for full credit requirements).



Figure 3 – Manteño figurine, 600-1500AD, courtesy of the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University (photo by author); Masculine representation of the Integration Period in probable masturbatory act (see attached list below for full credit requirements).

The shift in the gendered/sexual figurine landscape also goes hand in hand with significant political, social and demographic changes from the Formative to the Regional Development and the Integration Period. During this transition we see a tendency of greater political complexity, urban development, craft specialization, increase in trade networks, ideological development, as well as, surplus accumulations. The assumed premise is that all of these markers of greater forms of social complexity correlate with a transition to less egalitarian forms of social relations in all areas, including those in the gender and sexual realms.

As Engels (and Leacock) had prefigured decades ago, greater social complexity seemed to result from capital accumulation and surplus extraction, which in turn seemed to have given way to a patriarchal form of governance. This pattern is what seems to be represented in the changes reflected in the anthropomorphic figurines over time, first to a major, and then almost a complete monopoly of males and masculine traits over the Regional Development, and ultimately leading almost to the complete erasure of the female or feminine traits in the Integration period.

Of course, the harder question is what does this gender/sexual shift mean, express or ultimately belie? How did it come into place? By what mechanisms was male reproduction or representation favored in the world of figurine production? Who was in charge of ceramic production in these cultures, and how did they ultimately reflect these changing patterns in society? And finally, how do these shifts (i.e., political, ideological, ceramic, settlement pattern, etc.) ultimately reflect and represent the reproduction of power in these societies?

QUEERING ENGELS: THE DISCIPLINARY CONTRIBUTIONS OF A QUEER ARCHAEOLOGY

Since Engels original contribution, and Leacock's introduction, there have been several important additions to the assessment of the development of gender/sexual inequality over time. Perhaps the most insightful and unique earlier works have been those by Christine Gailey (1987) and Sherry Ortner (1978). Gailey's (1987) ethnohistorical study, *Kinship to Kingship: Gender Hierarchy and State Formation in the Tongan Islands*, reflects a coherent case study of how the changing social relations of production, from kin to more status or class-based one, gave way for men to develop a greater economic and political control of the island.

This gender shift is also well documented in Ortner's (1978) article "The Virgin and the State," which originally appeared in *Feminist Studies*. In it she presents the most cohesive and a cross-cultural argument of why female virginity became an identifiable and tangible element in these class based social formations, while it not being the case in previous non-state polities. It is telling that female and not male virginity starts to be policed by the state, and that ultimately this policing provides a form of social and ideological control over those defined as female or possessing feminine traits.

For Gailey (1987), it is important that women, and not men, are actually at the core of the sexual reproduction of society. Therefore, women, she argues, are more central to the state's social reproduction, and somewhat contradictorily it would seem, instead of gaining more power from this capacity, it becomes the rationale for their lack of agency and political demise.

This same argument has been most sophisticated utilized by Silverblatt (1987) and Muller (1977, 1985), to describe the evolution of capital accumulation in the Andes and Europe, respectively. Both authors describe how kin relations of production were superseded by social ones that looked to imitate the previous ones. In this way for the Incas, specifically, fictive social groups called *panaças* and land controlling *ayllus* were deemed the most important (and sacred) elements in the social reproduction of society. Also it is in this context that male heirs were deemed inheritors of the throne, and that warring and conquest practices also became pivotal in Andean surplus extraction of the dominated polities and the ideological reproduction of a powerful Inca state (SILVERBLATT, 1987; PATTERSON, 1997).

However, equally important, Silverblatt (1987) argues, is that far from being invisible or absent of the political domain, women and women-centered forms of control were also indispensable for the Inca's state apparatus and reproduction. There was a religious order, equally, at the hand of the leader/Inca's sister-wife, *Mama Ocllo*, as well as, genealogical rights that continued to follow the matrilineal line. On top of this the *panaças'* loyalty was reinforced not only by *ayllu* land rights and redistribution, but also by the gift giving and redistribution of the most prized possession of the Inca lords, that of royal robes and clothes.

In the grand majority these royal clothes were the product of the *acllaconas*, young girls chosen from conquered communities who were then sworn virginal laborers of the Inca state (PATTERSON, 1997). It is in this fashion that women were not only responsible for the sexual reproduction of the state through child-birth but also in the sexual sublimation of their labor in royal clothes which were then used to secure greater loyalty of conquered lords and expand the territorial domain of the empire (SILVERBLATT, 1987).

Silverblatt's (1987) work is quite illuminating not only in terms of the transition from female households of power to that of male dominated state infrastructure but, perhaps more importantly of the central role that women played in the social reproduction of the Andean state under the Incas. However, much more work is still needed to understand how come what should have been an asset for women's control rather, turned out to be controlled by others, and ultimately set the base for patriarchal forms of female exploitation that would only be heightened at the moment of conquest and European colonial rule.

Perhaps the understudied group of the cumbi camayocs (elite male weavers) might help us continue to elucidate Silverblatt's (1987) case study even further. Very little is known of these male weavers, which were the ones responsible for weaving the most precious textiles of the Inca state. It is said that sometimes more than a year was needed for these expert weavers to produce a single robe of exquisite value and made from the most precious alpaca wool and of rare feathers and made to be worn only by the Inca himself, and his royal family (MURRA, 1956, 1962).

The cumbi camayocs were entrusted to produce the finest textiles for the state, even beyond that of the rarified acllaconas. However, unlike the acllaconas which were traditionally chosen for their beauty (and in that manner also helped to remove the most eligible women from the conquered polities reproductive pool), the cumbi camayoc were men with some form of physical disability that precluded them from participating both in the forced labor needed to construct the famed Inca roads (e.g., chaquiñan and capiñan), or be invested in sexual reproduction (MURRA, 1956, 1962).

The cumbi camayoc's disabilities shifted their gender (and perhaps even sexuality) to something that was neither male nor female, and in a traditional Andean sense made them, like the acllaconas, essential in the social reproduction of the Inca state. The queering element of the cumbi camayocs, I believe, provides a window into how Andean gendered/sexual categories failed to fall within the binary that the Western would impose in the area at the moment of conquest.

The cumbi camayocs, like the enchaquirados (homosexual harem of chosen young men at the service of the communities political and religious leaders) on the Ecuadorian coast (BENAVIDES, 2002), provide a more nuanced way of understanding how gender/sexual difference was constituted in the pre-Hispanic past, and perhaps provides insightful manner of understanding this varied legacy of sexual variation present in contemporary times (UGALDE; BENAVIDES, 2018).

In this manner, more than anything a queer archaeology can provide us not only with new ways of seeing the past, but also, equally importantly, of connecting that past to our ever evanescent present (SPIVAK, 1999). A queer archaeology rightfully challenges us to look at a past that refuses to stay buried or repressed, and rather connect us to greater questions not only, about disciplinary methodology, but also about human rights and political

representation (WEISMANTEL, 2013). In many ways, a queer archaeology contributes to the decolonial concern of reclaiming our buried histories [FOUCAULT, 1998 (1971)] and providing our contemporary transgender communities a historical continuity that they have been denied for way too long (BENAVIDES, 2017).

(IN)CONCLUSION: FISTING FOUCAULT AND THE LONG RIDE HOME

Women are spoken as “isolated” in “menstrual huts” so that the men will not be contaminated. Where men’s houses exist, however, they are written about respectfully; here the exclusion of women betokens men’s high status.

Eleanor Leacock, Introduction to “Origin of the Family, the Private Property and the State”.

I believe the new challenges posed by a Queer Archaeology also go hand in hand with new ways of thinking about power. As outlined by so many of the contemporary theorists on gender and sexuality (BUTLER, 2006; PRECIADO, 1990; HALBERSTAM 2011; to mention a few), identities are a performative element pervasively intertwined with our enculturation. As such, identities are always a product of power, and more than anything are points of political vulnerability, which will always be defended ruthlessly and with a vengeance (HALL, 1997a; 1997b).

To this degree, the idea of external others repressing us in terms of who we are makes less sense than we ourselves being the agents of our own demise and repression; or that is, of producing our own culture. This Foucauldian insight, that power works more pervasively from within (as a fisting device sort of speak), and not simply as an external, oppressive force, but rather, as a constitutive one in myriad capillary forms, might prove as insightful for assessing past gendered/sexual norms and more, as it is for contemporary forms of identifications (FOUCAULT, 1998; 1971).

So rather than looking for evil dominant forces that instituted patriarchal forms of oppression, it would be more useful to look for those cultural elements that proved

productive in creating a hierarchical social structure. Perhaps a queerying of Engel and Leacock allow us to identify long lost cultural patterns that developed, and finally saw their full realization, in the recent pre-colonial past: What were the mechanisms that slowly gave way to normative gender inequalities and hierarchies? How did the multiple and varied gendered/sexual past subjects (in their plurality) participate and contribute to their own inequality and hierarchy? And ultimately how did gender/sexual realities (as lived-in experiences) relate, negotiate and constitute the differing forms of power present in the pre-Hispanic world?

It is my hope that this queerying of Engel's work will allow us, at least in Latin America, to make it back home; to assess in an even more authentic ways the past from which we evolved and are still indebted to. Also understanding, as Anzaldúa (1987) does, that home is actually the scariest place to return to because it is the place of that initial foundational trauma. And yet return we must return in order to transgress our most oppressive forms of existence (HOOKS 1994; FOUCAULT, 1971). Because as Anzaldúa (1987) argues, the word "homophobia" may literally mean "fear of going home." What if in the disciplinary sense, it reflects the fear of returning to the queer past of our ancestors and accepting the more transgressive existence of their varied gender/sexual identity; one that the last five centuries of Western existence has looked to erase.

As Baldwin (1993/1963, p. 4) states, "Home! The very word begins to have a despairing and diabolical ring." But at the same time there is no place like home, and that ancestral home is also where we must go to start the historical voyage all over again, or at least to see where it originated from.

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