

Monday, March 19, 2012, en route to San Antonio

Usually when I embark on an academic trip I have a very clear set of expectations: giving talks to students and academics in Universities, or visiting real utopia sites, or meeting with community and activist groups to share my ideas. Often, of course, unexpected things happen, and these add much to the value for me of such trips, but mostly I have a pretty clear sense in advance of what to expect and what the “rules of the game” will be. Well, maybe that is a bit too pat – in recent years it hasn’t been that unusual for me to be unsure about the rules of the game at the outset of trips. My three week lecture trip to China was like that, as was my trip to Bolivia to give talks in popular forums on participatory democracy. Still, on this trip I don’t know what is *really* going to happen. I will be visiting four academic institutions that serve Hispanics or Native Americans – three in Texas and one in Arizona. I will be meeting with faculty and students, and in some cases, administrators. I will give some talks and have informal discussions. Jean Shin, the director of Minority Affairs at the ASA, will be traveling with me and will lead professional workshops about the ASA and its various programs for students and departments. What I don’t have a good sense of is how this will actually play out. I’m not anxious about it – I think it will be exciting. But I don’t know exactly what to expect. I’ll just play it by ear.

One issue I have been thinking about is how to pitch my talks on Real Utopias. I have given talks on this theme so many times in so many different venues that I don’t ever need notes generally am comfortable improvising the exposition of the ideas in a variety of configurations. In thinking about the range of talks I have given, it seems that there are basically six different “modules” that get mixed & matched as the situation warrants:

1. An introduction around the core, foundational empirical observation: “Much human suffering and many deficits in human flourishing are the result of existing social institutions and social structures”. This provides the basis for talking about alternatives and a sociology of the possible connected to a sociology of the actual.
2. A discussion of the moral foundations for the diagnosis and critique of existing institutions. This can be an extensive discussion of equality, democracy and sustainability, or a brief taste of the issues connected those values.
3. The critique of capitalism in terms of those moral standards.
4. The inventory of examples – this is always fun and can be captivating. I really like talking about these.
5. The elaborate theoretical model I have developed as a way of integrating all of the examples into a broader vision of alternative. This is what I sometimes call “taking the social in socialism seriously”. This is the most original (and I think intellectually challenging) set of ideas, but the most difficult to lay out in a compact way.
6. Logics of transformation: how to get from here to there.

In different talks to different audiences, I emphasize one or another of these, and sometimes drop some altogether. For highly politicized audiences, especially of activists connected to leftwing political traditions, I spend a lot of time on the theoretical model of socialism as a hybrid and the logics of transformation. When I present this to community groups that are not embedded in the socialist problem, then I often drop the theoretical model altogether. Sometimes the talk is mainly about examples. My current plan for these talks is basically to focus on the moral foundations and on the examples. But we'll see how the spirit moves me in the talks.

Later, in San Antonio

I arrived in the midst of a tornado alert. The decent was one of those thrilling rollercoaster plane rides with lightning flashes, but we still arrived on time. While I am hoping for exciting experiences on this trip, I can do without tornados.

Day 2, March 20, 2012

Taco Palenque restaurant, off Interstate 10, in Laredo

After an intense and interesting day we drove from San Antonio to Laredo, getting here around 9 pm. I slept most of the way. I hadn't thought I was this tired, but a day of constant talking and a two hour lecture and discussion can be draining. We're all pretty hungry, so we decided to stop for dinner before going to the motel. David Rangel – a grad student from UW Madison, originally from San Antonio, who is accompanying us – suggested Taco Palenque, a local Laredo chain. So far on the trip I have not been successful in simultaneously satisfying my low-fat dietary regimen and having a something I was glad I ordered after eating it. Jean suggested maybe we should go to something other than a local place, but I still prefer to try again.

Later, in the hotel

The chicken fajitas plate was delicious.

The morning was spent in the college of public policy in the downtown campus of the University of Texas San Antonio, first meeting with the Dean, Rogelio Saenz, a sociologist who taught for many years at Texas A & M, and then a group of phd students in the applied demography program. It was quite pleasant, but not really an engagement with the HSI part of the University.

The highlight today, for me, was the talk at the suburban campus of UTSA. It was very far from the downtown. Mostly it remains a commuter campus, so, because of its distance, nearly everyone drives a car to get there.

When we arrived at the auditorium we saw that there was a long line of students outside, signing in as they entered. Outside the auditorium there were tables with the names of professors on sheets of papers. Students found their professor's name, and signed their name. Later I found out that students in sociology classes were given extra credit for coming to the lecture. The result was that the auditorium was packed – it held 350



people, and there were people in the aisles as well. Of course, it is always nice to have a big audience who come just because they were interested, but I think this is a pretty good idea, and certainly a good way to get undergraduates to have what I hope was an interesting experience. I commented in this at the beginning of the talk: "This is pretty amazing. I think this is the second largest audience at an invited university lecture I have ever had. The biggest was a



few years ago in Santiago, Chile, where for some unknown reason about 600 came. But this is great. Who would have thought that at UTSA I would have my second biggest audience ever?"

I gave the version of my "stump speech" on Real Utopias that emphasized the moral foundations, its implications for the critique of capitalism, and then a range of specific examples of real utopia institutions. I think in the end I probably went into too much fine-grained detail on the underlying moral foundations issue. I like talking

about these normative issues, partially because I think so many people have muddled ideas about things like social justice, but also I really like exploring the nuances. Still, I lingered a bit too long, talking at length about the difference between the principle that people have equal *access* to the conditions to live a flourishing life and the idea of equal *opportunity*, and the idea that both individual freedom and collective democracy are rooted in the same fundamental value – that people should have access to the means to participate meaningfully in decisions which affect their lives. The result of this was that I was a bit squeezed for time for the exploration of examples. I discussed several – participatory budgeting, Wikipedia, community-based land trusts for urban agriculture, and Mondragon – but I think it would be better to allow a bit more time than that.

The discussion was lively and interesting. Here are a few of the issues explored:

- I was asked how I would change education in order for it to satisfy my conception of social justice. I raised the issue of the legitimacy of private K-12 education which enabled rich parents to effectively buy privileged for their children. I explained this is an instance of their being a deep tension between two values – the value in parents being able to support their children in the best way possible, to do right for their children; and the value that all children should have equal access to the conditions to live a flourishing

life. Expensive private K-12 education violates the equal access rules, especially given how lousy a lot of education is for the poor. But preventing private schooling contradicts other values. Where to draw the line is difficult.

- “How does size hinder the US? Does this make it harder to create a real utopia? Is Scandinavia the ideal?” Size, I argued, makes certain things harder and others easier. If you believe that the only way to create a real utopia is to have a complete rupture with the existing system, then this is probably harder in a very big country. But if you believe that the way forward is through interstitial transformations, then size might even be an advantage because it might allow for more experimentation, more spaces and places where new things can be tried.
- “Is there a country in history that best fits the real utopian ideal?” I don’t think this is the best way to think about the idea of real utopia. I use the term mainly to talk about specific institutions rather than whole societies. Brazil is not a real utopia, but the participatory budget institution is a good example of democratic innovation that has a real utopian character. Wikipedia is a real utopia created in the United States.
- I was asked to discuss a little about the ideas I had about transformation. I explained the triplet rupture/interstitial/symbiotic transformation. I explained that ruptural transformation suggested the slogan “smash first, build second”. I then talked a little about some conservative ideas about transformation, in particular the Ron Paul type anti-government view. This, I said, was not really a project of institution-building, but just of destruction. Smash now, don’t build anything: just get rid of government involvement in the economy altogether and don’t replace it with new institutions, just let the market solve everything.
- “What do you think about the Michigan takeover of Flint in order to solve its budget problems? What did that mean for democracy?” This was a profound violation of democratic principles. The budget crisis in Flint and other cities is entirely a political crisis imposed on cities by the nature of our tax system and the way taxation is being treated politically. We are the least taxed country among the developed capitalist countries. There is no reason at all for there to be any budget crisis. What we have is a low tax crisis. Taxes are essential for democracy, and low taxes undermine democracy because they make it impossible to provide a wide range of public goods. Think of the problem this way: Taxes are the way we divide up the total social product into public or collective purposes and private purposes. By allocating too much to private purposes we make it impossible to democratically choose to do certain kinds of things.
- At one point I asked people in the audience to give me some examples of real utopias from San Antonio. I said that you could call this Erik Wright’s Law: there are interesting examples of real utopia everywhere. No one said anything. I pressed for some examples. Finally one person cited an example of how private entrepreneurship has been used in some “downtrodden” parts of the city to promote local development. I responded by saying that while such private entrepreneurship might be a good thing and might help people in such situations, I didn’t think it was probably a “real utopia”. I

would need to know more about this, but mostly what is called corporate social responsibility is PR and not really designed to make advances on equality, democracy and sustainability. I then explained the difference between policies which might improve things in the lives of people but were not real utopias, and policies which were part of a real utopia alternative: the latter move us closer to some ideal rather than just away from a bad situation.



The discussion went on for 40 minutes or so. After it was done, Jean and David met with students to discuss sociology careers and graduate programs and I met with faculty for a relaxed discussion of various matters connected to sociology, graduate schools, and real utopias. I was very impressed with the thoughtfulness and seriousness of the faculty. They seem very engaged with their students and eager to help those that are interested find a way into sociology as a career, but it can be very difficult.

One person asked me how I incorporated real utopia into my teaching, not as a topic but as a way of teaching. That was a nice question – I haven't actually thought explicitly about my own way of teaching as a real utopia, but I do try to bring my values to bear on my teaching, and I mentioned a number of things:

- Co-mentoring between graduate and undergraduate students in one of my courses that is pretty evenly balanced between the two.
- The Wikipedia writing assignment in a seminar.
- The end of semester weekend retreat for seminars in which grad students present their term projects in the form of an academic panel.
- The three minute breathing meditation at the beginning of classes to create a stillness and separation of the class from the outside world.

Following the faculty gathering there was a reception with both students and faculty, and then around 6:30 we left for Laredo.

Day 3, Wednesday, March 21

driving south on Highway 83 between Laredo and McAllen

We're driving south on mostly a two lane highway parallel to the Rio Grande River: To our right, hills in Mexico on the distant horizon; scruffy trees and cactus on both sides of the road; passed through a town named Zapata; Warm sun, clear blue sky, forlorn water-pump windmills like in old Westerns. The landscape is mostly flat, but because of the bushy, short trees you mostly don't see the horizon and so don't quite get the Big Sky feeling that I associate with the plains. There are occasional stretches of four lane highway on this route for no apparent reason – there is hardly any traffic, not even many trucks. David says Texas likes its highways. We just passed a Whataburger Restaurant. David proclaims: "They have the best ketchup." I think that may be the first time in my life anyone has complemented a restaurant on the basis of its ketchup. Big, bold, Political signs for local elections everywhere: Judge Imelda "Pinky" Cruz; Ricardo "Rick" Rodriguez for Sheriff; Elect "Freddie" Alvarez. David points to the sky on our left:

look, I think those are border control drones. There is a weird kind of slow flying aircraft that might well be a drone. David explains that he has heard that the border patrol is now using these to find undocumented migrants crossing the Rio Grande. We pass a couple of guys with a truck and bird cages selling parrots. Parrots for sale, on the side of the road? Did you see the parrots, I asked. Let's turn around and take a look. We pass periodically "Historical Marker 1 Mile" signs, and finally stop at one in Rio Grande City, and learn about a Kentuckian who arrived in the 1840s, married into the Garza family, settled down, helped found Rio Grande City. Further South now, in Sullivan City. Just passed seven border patrol cars with lights flashing. One man is on his knees. A young woman has her hands behind her back, handcuffed. Now in La Joya, another small town. Near the highway is a gigantic high school football stadium with a jumbotron scree at one end. Texas likes its football. On the left: The Lord and I funeral home. We just passed a building with



a huge cut out of a cowboy with his arms outstretched looming above the façade as if engulfing the building and a big sign saying "Adult Day Care." All along the highway, as we pass towards the great Brownsville area, we see buildings identified this way. I'm sure I have ever seen such signs along a highway, and even in cities, such care facilities do not announce themselves this way. I wonder, what is the story behind this? And now we are pulling off the road in McAllen. We've arrived.



Jean Shin & me at the historical marker

Earlier

In the morning en route to Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) I had an interesting conversation with David Rangel about HSIs. Before he entered graduate school David worked for an NGO involved in higher education for Hispanics and knew a lot about these institutions and their history. Most HSIs, including the University of Texas San Antonio, were not built to serve Hispanics in the sense that HBCUs, tribal, and Gallaudet were built to serve a specific constituency. The HSI designation is a formal Federal designation for administrative and political purposes. University administrators use the designation for purposes of getting grants and other kinds of special services. UTSA especially is ambiguous in terms of the designation. It was originally built on the outskirts of the city, really in the countryside away from the concentrations of Hispanics and closest to relatively wealthy white areas. Today, many students would not even know that it was officially an HSI. At the institution we visited today – Texas A&M International University – over 90% of the students are Hispanic and it is clearly part of the de facto mission of the institution to serve their needs, even if formally the university was established simply as a regional campus of the Texas A&M system. Certainly the faculty we met saw this as central to their roles.

We arrived at the University around 9:30 and were met by John Kilburn, associate dean for research and a professor of sociology. As we walked to the venue for a careers discussion with student we had a brief discussion of the issue of very talented undergrads who, he told me, “you would die for”, but who don’t want to leave the area. “We serve everyone – we have students who are in the 99th percentile and the 3rd percentile, students who are persistent and get Cs and Ds and eventually cross the threshold and graduate, and students as good as students anywhere. We have students who could get PhDs at Wisconsin or Harvard, but won’t leave their family.” I wonder if this a distinctively Hispanic issue, or a more general pattern among first generation college students from an extended family networks where no one goes to college and everyone stays in the community, where family/kin connections are part of the fabric of life and geographic mobility not? David Rangel made the very interesting point that Hispanic kids from the region have no problem leaving home for the military, even for military careers, not just short term enlistment, so it seems that this is not simply cultural or familial aversion to leaving. It is hard to disentangle this.

The morning was spent in a discussion with students about the kinds of careers that can grow out of a sociology major and how they should think about the skills they have been learning as students. At the beginning I asked them to introduce themselves and say where they were from. As they said their names I repeated their name and those that had come before in reverse order. I managed to keep track to the end – 20 or so students. Nearly all of them were from Laredo and had lived there all of their lives. The exception was two African-American girls – one from Dallas and one from Houston. John Kilburn had told me that the University had been making an effort to recruit non-Hispanics to the campus, but mostly this has come from recruiting athletes for teams (the school is a Division II school). These young women looked like basketball players.

Jean began the session by giving everyone a set of materials from ASA – a booklet about sociology careers, another about the relevance of sociology for other careers, some research on the satisfaction of sociology majors later in the careers, and some other things. He then began an interesting, and very useful discussion, about skills that students had learned as sociologists and why these were of very general importance and should be on their resumés – things like the ability to write a review of the literature, to summarize statistical research in a report, to do data analysis, and so on. He engaged the issue by asking students what they thought were valuable skills. At one point he was clearly trying to get someone to say that writing itself was a skill. To help the students answer the question, I mimed typing and then, unconsciously, mimed hitting a carriage return on a typewriter. When I realized what I had just done I made a comment to the students that went something like this: “What just happened is really interesting. That motion I did [I mimed it again and said “ding” with the carriage return] is what you do when you use a mechanical typewriter. I haven’t used a typewriter for over 30 years – and actually, since in 1982 I was using an electric typewriter, it has probably been almost 40 years since I used a mechanical typewriter. What happened just now was that I was miming typing and then without thinking added that motion. Let me make this a sociological teaching moment – what happened reflects an idea that Bourdieu talks about when he talks about a habitus. A habitus refers to all of the ways in which you deeply embody an understanding of how to do things, of the rules of the game, what he sometimes called a “feel for the game”. This is like speaking a language in which you don’t have to think consciously about grammar and forms of expression – you just do it because it is deeply internalized. Well, I guess that archaic typing motion is deeply inscribed in my brain; it is part of my embodied knowledge of this task. So when I mimed it, I mimed the mechanical typing with the carriage return without giving it a conscious thought, even though it has been 40 years since I actually did that.”

After Jean had finished talking David spoke a little about graduate school and preparing an application. David gave a very interesting account of his personal trajectory. “I did not have a good undergrad record. My priority in school was having a good time and I really succeeded at that! I went to college to get a degree so that afterwards I could get a better job and earn what people with degrees earned. After college I worked for a nonprofit organization that was involved issues around higher education for Hispanics and after a while I decided to go back to school to get an MA. I went to UTSA and did well there, and then decided to go on for a PhD. I know that got where I am not just because I worked hard but because of the hard work of others – my grandparents who came to the United States and worked hard so their kids could get an education and then my mother who did the same for me. She only got her BA degree when she was 52.” I added that it is really important to know that a solid, exciting piece of work in an MA can basically erase a problematic undergraduate record for application to a PhD program. PhD application committees don’t pay much attention to an undergraduate transcript for someone with an MA and an MA thesis. The MA program at TAMU seemed excellent in this respect because students get a huge amount of individual attention and feedback on writing. Two of the students there this year had just been admitted to good PhD programs – at Texas A&M and at Vanderbilt – and preparing students for this seems like a really valuable role for MA programs at this kind of institution.

I then gave a general pitch about an academic career, about the kind of life this is. I hadn't really prepared any remarks in advance, so this was pretty much off the cuff:

“If you love being a student, if you like to talk about ideas, to write, to read, to think hard about interesting problems, then you'll love being a professor. Being a professor is like being a student forever. Let me tell you a story. I had an undergraduate student from a working class family who was the first person to go to college. She never thought about the possibility of being an academic – it just wasn't on her radar screen. But she was incredibly talented and an excellent writer, so I suggested that this might be a worthwhile career for her. She was astounded, but eventually decided to see if she could get in. She got full funding to two excellent PhD programs and is now en route to being a professor. So if you like these kinds of things and you're good at them, then think about this as a possibility.

Some of you might think that the barriers are too high. After all there are lots of undergraduates who go to Harvard and Princeton and Michigan and Berkeley who apply for graduate school. How can you compete with them? Doesn't this put you at a big disadvantage? I am one of those people. I grew up in an academic family. Both of my parents were professors. Both of my siblings are or were academics and both of their spouses are academics. I knew by age ten that I wanted to be a professor. So, for me it was easy – almost a script. But what does this mean for someone without such advantages? Here what I think: going to an elite school does give people advantages in applying to graduate school. But you also bring things to the application that are really important and distinctive. You grew up in the border within a Hispanic cultural context in Texas. That give you also sorts of perspectives on things that a white student from New England does not have. Sociology values diversity not simply because it is a matter of justice, but because it enriches sociology as an intellectual pursuit. One's life experiences constitute crucial raw materials for sociological knowledge and sharing that knowledge with others is a crucial part of a sociological education. These sorts of things are very strong positives in any application you might submit. Also remember: the people reading applications are sociologists and they understand how context imposes different kinds of challenges on students. They understand – or at least usually understand – that test scores are highly vulnerable to a person's background and often have little to do with real talent and potential to contribute to sociological knowledge. You have to have affluent parents to take a Kaplan course for SAT and GRE preparation. These courses add 100 points or so to the average student's scores. It would be a good thing if Kaplan was required to inform colleges if someone had taken their prep course and then to deduct 100 points from each students test. That would help create an “even playing field.” So, sociologists are pretty good at taking into consideration background, experience, obstacles and how these affect certain kinds of performance. What we want are students with fantastic potential and students who add to the excitement and richness of a graduate program. So again, if you love reading and writing and talking and thinking, then think about a PhD program in sociology and an academic career.

I know that for many of you there are really big challenges in thinking about this. Many of you have lived your whole life here and are very close to your families and your communities. You are very comfortable in this cultural context, and this is important. I would not want you to think that I think the value of living close to your family within your community is less valuable than pursuing an academic career, even if you love academic life. These can be hard choices for people who live in a part of the country without a high density of academic institutions. So, this is a challenge. But you should not shy away from thinking about an academic career if you love academic work and are good at it because you think it is unattainable.

At lunch I continued the discussion with a number of students. One somewhat older student, late 30s I suppose, had just presented some research at a national conference in New York and was clearly incredibly excited by the experience. She loved doing the research – on attitudes among Hispanics about the death penalty – and loved the experience of presenting it at the conference. We talked a bit about the substance of the issues. I mentioned the contrast between two kinds of reasons people might say that they support the death penalty – the first, because they genuinely and deeply feel in the moral rightness of execution, and the second, because they believe that this is what most people believe and they simply adopt conventional beliefs as their own. If we are interested in changing people’s beliefs it can matter a lot what the ratio is between these, at least for some sorts of beliefs. I used the example of discussions in the 1960s about the problem of changing racist beliefs. I also mentioned James Fishkin’s research on deliberative polling as quite interesting with respect to the problem of changing beliefs – how beliefs can change through dialogue when people are in a situation where they can genuinely listen to each other and get good quality information relevant to their beliefs. This was a nice, interesting, sociological conversation. (I noticed that when I started explaining these things, much of the rest of the conversation at the table – there were perhaps 15 or so people around the table – stopped and people turned to listen. I find this a bit disconcerting, but I guess it is to be expected when I am invited somewhere in my role as President of the ASA.)

After talking a while about these substantive sociological issues, the student who had done the research asked what she might do about her self-confidence. I love this work, she said, but I really don’t feel confident about it. I told her that there is a secret most people don’t know: very few people are really self-confident about their ideas and intellectual capacities. Grad students in seminars are constantly trying to avoid looking naïve or ignorant. People differ much more in their ability to seem self-confident than in the real, internal sense of confidence in their ability. I told her that on the basis of our conversation and her description of her work she should definitely feel confident that she can do sociology in a serious way.



Afternoon, Day 3

My formal lecture on Real Utopias was after lunch. In spite of my intention to allow more time for the exploration of examples and less on the moral foundations of the argument, I ended up, once again, focusing on the normative issues. Because I didn't have much time for the examples, I briefly talked about participatory budgets and Wikipedia, and then asked which other example I should explore. Someone yelled out unconditional basic income, so I explained how it worked and why I thought it was such a powerful idea for broader transformation.

Some of the questions raised in the discussion:

- *On wikipedia:* Isn't there a problem of third world access to Wikipedia? Wikipedia seems to be mainly produced in the developed countries and then disseminated; doesn't this create a kind of monopoly of knowledge for richer countries? *My response:* I think, if anything, Wikipedia reduces by quite a bit the monopoly of knowledge, both in terms of production and distribution of knowledge. Anyone in the world can edit entries. It is disseminated freely. The Wikimedia Foundation is also devoting a lot of time and energy to the problem of strengthening the Wikipedias in non-dominant languages and getting Wikipedia to poor countries, in Africa and elsewhere. They are developing a system in which Wikipedia is downloaded on a flash drive and distributed to rural education centers, schools and the like, in Africa. In terms of its uneven quality, this is to be sure a problem, but you should not look at this statically. The question is really the extent to which it is getting better. What is the dynamic of development? This is one of the reasons I launched the ASA Wikipedia Initiative, to get academics more involved in working on Wikipedia, especially by making Wikipedia writing assignments in the classes.
- *Selfishness and Altruism:* Do you talk about "mindfulness" as an important issue? How individuals might come to understand that their decisions really affect other people and be mindful about this. People often don't think about how doing things affect others. We don't think about how we affect the world (eg. pollution). Mindfulness might have other implications as well. *My Response:* I thought initially you were asking a question about mindfulness meditation. I have a meditation practice and I have used this in classes, beginning classes with a three minute breathing meditation. But you are asking about altruism and selfishness – how can we get people to think more seriously about the needs and welfare of others, not just themselves. That is a real problem. I don't think that I have a lot to say about this. Mainly I would make two points: first, we live in a society that encourages people to act in self-interested ways. That is what is reinforced by markets and competition. So, reducing competition and constraining markets is part of the way of reducing the weight of self-interest in social activities. Second, I think that participatory, deliberative processes tend to help stretch people's preferences both in terms of time-horizons and in terms of other-regardingness. This is not inherent, but it is, I think, a tendency. Dialogue and deliberation help people to think

more about the future, and it makes other people's needs and interests have a more substantial reality.

- *Inequality*: Isn't social stratification necessary for society to function? *My response*: It may be the case that *some* degree of inequality is necessary for human societies to function smoothly, but this does not imply that anything like the level of inequality in the US today is necessary, nor does it tell us what forms of inequality are necessary and which are not. Those are the critical questions. The degrees of inequality in the US today are massively greater than needed for a well functioning society.
- *Culture*: Do you think there is a real utopia where capitalism can exist and where people can have an appreciation for culture? *My response*: The problem in capitalism is that the arts – music, theater, art, dance, etc. – do not thrive well in profit-maximizing markets. Fortunately, many people are passionate about the arts as an intrinsic value and are prepared to live at very modest standards of living in order to devote their lives to artistic expression. This enables arts to thrive surprisingly well on the fringes of capitalism. One of the reasons I enthusiastically support unconditional basic income is that it would open up a tremendous space for the arts, given much more equal access to the conditions to live a flourishing life for people who want to flourish through the arts. It also contributes to sustainability, since the arts have such a lighter environmental footprint.

After the lecture, there was a very unusual event: the induction of students into Alpha Kappa Delta, the international sociology honor society. I have never had anything to do with this organization and barely knew of its existence, but it is clear to me that it can play an important role in some settings. It clearly was important to the students at TAMU. Students had friends in the audience for the ceremony, and one woman had her two young sons there, who clapped very enthusiastically when their Mom was handed her certificate.

I was asked to give an induction speech. I told the students that I had not prepared anything in advance since I wanted to see how the spirit moved me. I sometime find it is much better to not be prepared, to approach a situation like this with great focus on the emotions of the moment and to think in an almost meditative way about what to say. So I spoke about sociology as a community: "Welcome to sociology as a community," I said. When I began as a sociologist 40 years ago, I told them, I didn't think of sociology as a community. Indeed, I didn't have any kind of real commitment to sociology at all. I was attracted to sociology because of all the social science disciplines, sociology seemed the least disciplinary. It didn't discipline its borders nearly as much as other social sciences. It was a base of operations where I would be left alone. Now, after four years in sociology, I really do feel it is a community and a community that I very much value. It is a community that values its diversity. It is tolerant and pluralistic. It values diversity of methods and approaches, diversity of theoretical perspectives, diversity of topics. It values the cultural diversity that different people bring to the community of sociology, because it recognizes that such diversity helps deepen sociological knowledge.

After my comments there was the actual induction. All of the students read, in unison, the following:

I, (your name), do hereby promise to uphold the goals and ideas of the Alpha Kappa Delta International Sociology Honor Society and in particular, “to study humankind for the purpose of service. To focus on improving people’s adjustments to their physical, biological, and cultural environments. To promote human welfare through the association of a fellowship group interested in developing scientific knowledge that may be applied to the solution of social problems. We hope to attain responsible leadership in our chosen fields and discharge our duties with modesty and intelligence, with dignity and efficiency, with democratic respect for the rights and privileges of others. We hope to have the gift of working, playing, learning and loving with joy and enthusiasm as long as we shall live.”

There was only one idea in this that I found problematic – the reference to “improving people’s *adjustments* to their....cultural environment.” I think it is often more important to adjust the cultural environment to the needs for human flourishing than it is to adjust people to culture. But that aside, this is a wonderful set of values and perspectives. I especially like the last sentence.



The honor society induction ceremony



After the induction it was time to leave for the drive from Laredo to McAllen.

Later, the night of March 22

Late last night, after working on these notes for a few hours in my hotel room in McAllen, my computer suddenly went crazy. All sorts of direct warnings of critical errors popped up. I was instructed to click on something to fix them. I did so and was informed that nine problems were fixed and eight were not. I rebooted. When windows returned error messages flashed again and nothing I could do could remedy the situation. With a sinking heart I closed things down and went to bed thinking that everything I had done had been lost.

Today I took it with me to the University of Texas Pan American thinking I would have to have the computer sent by FedEx to Madison to be fixed and facing the problem of getting one sent to Texas for the rest of the trip. The Provost suggested that his IT people look at it, and to my great relief they managed to restore everything and get rid of the viruses that had somehow or other attacked the machine. The strange thing was that this happened immediately after I had

checked out the ASA blog. I had looked at the blog last night around midnight and then went back to writing up my notes, and almost immediately the system collapsed. When I mentioned this at the morning gathering two other faculty members said that the same thing had happened to them. It just didn't seem possible that this was a coincidence, so Jean Shin called the ASA office and had them check everything out on the blogspot. Apparently they found nothing problematic, even checking the site out with a variety of high-powered programs. Perhaps there was some sleeper Trojan on my drive and just needed some kind of trigger, and that this same virus was lurking on the other two faculty computers. Could be, I suppose. But now it works OK, even though a number of programs seem disabled. Hopefully It will function well enough for the rest of the trip.

Day 4, Wednesday, March 22, 2012

I left out one interesting issue from yesterday. While leaving the induction ceremony to Alpha Kappa Delta, a couple of the faculty members from Sociology spoke to me about efforts by the Texas higher education authority (that's probably not the official name) to close down the MA program at TAMU. The official criterion for closing an MA program is that they have fewer than 15 completed MA degrees over a five year period. There were two years in a row – four and five years ago – in which there were no completions. Then new people were hired and the program revamped. Since then there have been 13 completions in three years, with seven this year and two students going on to very good PhD programs. Still, there was a provisional decision to close the program because it technically failed the criteria. From what I saw while here, this MA program serves a terrific purpose. It enables talented undergraduates in sociology who want to go on for a PhD to get intensive training to improve their record, tighten up their skills, and gain greater confidence. The MA in its own right is valuable, of course, but this fills a real function within the “pipeline” for minority students to enter the profession. I was very impressed with the faculty and how much they nurtured their students. It would be extremely short-sighted for the program to be terminated.

McAllen, Texas, visit to University of Texas Pan American (UTPA)

Havidán Rodríguez, the Provost and a Wisconsin Sociology PhD from 1991, picked us up at 7:15 to go for breakfast with various policy people and faculty who were interested in meeting us. That was pretty early for me given that I had been up late the night before working on the blog notes, with the added complication of the computer crash which meant I stayed up later just trying to sort things out. So, a little less energetically than on previous days, we set out.

The morning gathering was congenial. The people we met with were very welcoming and eager to learn about what I was doing as ASA president and how I thought of my visit to their university. I probably talked too much, going into too much detail about my various ASA activities – the design of the summer conference, the Wikipedia initiative, and the trip to universities serving historically marginalized groups – but everyone is so deferential that there

were no signals to wrap up. Afterwards there were group photos by the University press office and a brief press interview.

After breakfast we gathered in a large auditorium for the student forum on careers. The script was much as the day before, but the setting was less congenial. Instead of thirty students in a small room there were 100 or so in a huge auditorium. This made for much willingness of people to ask questions. Jean again went through his agenda of the skills sociologists acquire and why they are relevant for careers and I talked about why people should take seriously the idea of academic careers.

Next came my lecture on Real Utopias – the same basic structure and themes of the previous two. There were a couple of new little twists. I talked about the difference between a diagnosis and critique which identifies the precise mechanisms responsible for the “foundational empirical claim” (the claim that much human suffering and deficits in human flourishing are the result of existing institutions and social structures) and the problem of solutions to those harms. I explained that it does not logically follow that transforming those institutions is needed to remove the harms. Just as an aspirin can eliminate a headache without knowing what the cause is or even affecting the cause, it could be possible to remedy the harms of capitalism without really transforming capitalism, and certainly without eliminating it. Thus, the arguments about alternatives require independent development. I also spent a bit of time explaining the contrast between policy analysis and real utopia analysis even though both imply improvements in the conditions humans face. The difference is that real utopia analysis points towards a destination – that is the utopia part – and asks if an institutional design moves us in the right direction, whereas policy analysis just asks if we improve things. Vouchers for private schools, I explained, could improve things and make it harder to move towards the goal of a democratic, egalitarian, inclusive educational system.

We didn't have much time for discussion, but I continued for an extra fifteen minutes so some issues were raised after the talk. I had a handheld mic, and to make it easy for people to be heard, I scampered up the aisles to hand it to people raising questions:

- Hierarchies are a fact of nature, thus we have institutions that exist that reflect this nature. How do we dismantle those hierarchies? *Response:* Yes, we are social animals of a kind that have instinctual drives to form hierarchies, to make status distinctions and generate inequalities. But we are also instinctually carnivores and this does not block us from being vegetarians. Instincts and nature simply create dispositions and tendencies, but this does not determine the actual degrees of inequality and the forms of inequality we create. That is the result of social practices and the exercise of power.
- You said that a highly controlled society in which all decisions are public would be disastrous? Can you elaborate? *Response:* [from the lecture: The issue here is the boundary we draw between decisions that should be entirely left to the individual, which we call “private” decisions, and decisions which should be made by some community or collectivity, which we call “public decisions.” My point is that the guiding principle is that people should be involved in decisions that affect their lives. This helps specify both private decisions (that affect the life of oneself alone) and public decisions

(which also affect other people). The problem is that almost all decisions have some effects, if only trivial ones, on other people. If we said that all decisions with any effect on other people should be made collectively, then virtually nothing would be left to individuals to choose for themselves.] The reason it would be a very bad thing to draw the line between public and private realms in this way is that it would rob individuals of autonomy and responsibility, and this, I believe, would undermine human flourishing. Flourishing depends in part on having substantial control over one's own life and being able to set one's life plans into motion. There is thus some tension between realizing this basis for flourishing and democratic values, since strictly speaking giving people this kind of autonomy means that they make choices that affect others. The point then is that on balance it is desirable to sacrifice a little democracy for this kind of autonomy.

- In a country that promotes and encourages rugged and rigid individualism how can you accomplish real communal interests? *Response:* It is important not to exaggerate the extent to which Americans truly embrace rugged individualism. I know this is Texas. But even here people are also generous, other regarding, interested in reciprocity and cooperation. Even if the typical person avows greater enthusiasm for individualism than in many other places, even the average person holds other values as well. So, the extent of individualism may be a problem, but it is not the only value in play even in America.
- In a cross cultural sense, individualism in America is much stronger than individualism in Japan. The Japanese might be more altruistic and Americans more individualist. *Response:* It is important to remember that even if the *modal* person in the US is much more individualistic than in Japan, there is a very wide dispersion of beliefs in individualism and altruism around this modal type in both countries, and lots of overlap. I think that fundamentally the main issue here is the nature of the *contexts* in which we find ourselves which draw on our individualistic or more altruistic dispositions. If you live in a super-competitive society where solidarity is constantly challenged and individualism is easy, then people act much more individualistically and adjust their beliefs to match their behaviors. It may still be that individualism is a stronger cultural norm in the U.S., but it is very heavily reinforced and translated into action because of the contexts and pressures people encounter. I added to this the parallel point of gender differences between men and women – there is a wide distribution of gender-linked traits like aggressiveness and nurturance among men and among women, with lots of overlap, but contexts and norms force bigger differences in behavior.
- Any comments on Warren Buffett's proposal to ask millionaires to pay more of income to tax, Warren Buffett believes he should pay more tax, why don't others think like that? *Response:* well, in a way I disagree with Buffett – I think millionaires and billionaires should pay MUCH more taxes, not just a little more. Actually I think almost everyone should pay more taxes because I think the biggest problem with respect to taxes in American society is how low they are. That is a more important problem than the unfairness of the distribution of taxes. It matters more for poor and disadvantaged people how much is gathered in taxes and what is done with those taxes than how fair the tax system is. Sweden is a much more egalitarian and fair society not mainly because

its tax system is fairer, but because it gathers a lot more taxes and uses it to benefit less affluent people. Think of taxation this way: We all cooperate to generate the total amount of products in a society, the total amount of income. We then allocate this income to two main kinds of purposes – private consumption to meet individual needs and collective consumption to pay for public goods and social needs. In a capitalist market society the way we make this allocation is through taxation: this is how we decide how much to put into the collective pot and how much to leave to individuals to decide to use as they wish. Our major problem is that we put way too little in the collective consumption pot, less than in any other developed country.

After the talk quite a few students gathered around to briefly chat and to ask me for autographs. A number wanted me to sign the ASA bumper stickers. There was also a local TV reporter who wanted to film a short interview. I'll be curious if anything appears. (Here is a Screen shot from the website. The clip is available at: [http://www.kveo.com/news/president-american-sociological-association-speaks-utpa.](http://www.kveo.com/news/president-american-sociological-association-speaks-utpa))

As I was being ushered off to lunch, one student came up to me to talk about graduate school and various issues around self-confidence, challenges, and the like. I spent quite a bit of time talking to her. As in my conversations yesterday, I was struck by the seriousness of purpose and passion, enthusiasm, but also by the difficulty of moving from this setting.

Lunch was spent with the sociology department faculty talking about the serious difficulties their programs faced. They are under a lot of pressure to increase efficiency, to raise standards but also increase class size. The faculty recognize that writing is a critical skill, but it becomes impossible to give serious writing feedback with classes of 90 and 100. It is all very frustrating, clearly. In the discussion I suggested that perhaps they needed to think of new ways for students to engage in more peer-to-peer mentoring and feedback. In some sense one of the

President of American Sociological Association Speaks at UTPA

Monday, March 26, 2012 - 09:13



EDINBURG — The President of the American Sociological Association is traveling the country, touring minority serving colleges, and one of the stops was at the University of Texas Pan American.

ASA President Erik Wright visited the campus and gave a presentation to the students and took a tour with the faculty. He wants to make sure Sociology is a program thriving among minority institutions and inform students that it is realistic for them to pursue higher education with Sociology. Mr. Wright stated, "One of the things we are doing is talking to students about careers in sociology and how coming from an institution like this should not be viewed as an obstacle, that the education that students here get is excellent and that they can aspire to go to the very best graduate schools."

RELATED

- [UTPA Students & Faculty React to Senate Vote](#)
- [UTPA and STC Sign New Articulation Agreement](#)
- [President of UTPA being Considered for U.S. Secretary of Education](#)
- [ForProfit Colleges Under Fire](#)
- [UTB President Juliet Garcia on NBC's Education Nation Summit Panel](#)

most important things to becoming a good writer is just to write an enormous amount, even without careful feedback from professors. So if students write essays and then read them out loud to each other and discuss what is clear and what is not with each other, then this could help improve writing without involving lots of teacher reading time.

It is after midnight. We drive back to San Antonio tomorrow, a five hour drive. I'll finish this up in the car.

Afternoon, Day 4

When we arrived in McAllen yesterday evening we were struck by the number of upscale restaurants and retail: Cadillac and BMW dealerships, Sushi restaurants, kitchen design stores, giant billboard for an upcoming appearance of Cirque de Soleil. Today we learned more about the economic situation here. The Rio Grande Valley is, apparently, one of the fastest growing areas in the whole US, and this rapid growth is concentrated especially in McAllen. As we looked around it wasn't at all obvious what was the basis of this apparent dynamism. It turns out, we were told, that this growth is fueled by wealthy Mexicans. They come to McAllen to shop. They have opened businesses and even moved businesses from Mexico to McAllen. The city has underwritten the creation of an extensive Arts district and entertainment district to attract more commercial activity. Wealthy Mexican nationals buy houses here and send their kids to local public schools. There is a suburban development called Sharyland, which has a recently built international bridge to Mexico (apparently built through lobbying by the developer) in which more than half of the students in the high school, we were told, were Mexican nationals. This is not a matter of undocumented migrants, but of rich Mexicans having homes in the development and sending their kids to the school. Part of this flow of Mexican wealth and activity is connected to security and violence issues, but not all of it. We were also told that the money involved in this retail- and construction-driven boom contains both clean and drug money in some unknown mix. All of this is part of the peculiar economic reality of "borders" – dynamics that depend upon special kinds of complementarities generated by the ways international borders intersect demographic and economic processes.

In the afternoon we spent a few hours on a tour of the area organized by Miguel Diaz-Barriga, the chair of the Sociology department at UTPA and previously, for twenty years, a professor at Swarthmore. His research focuses on border issues and, he said, he felt the need for a new challenge which is why he decided to change academic institutions and come here.

Our first stop on our tour was a *colonia* settlement outside of Edinbrugh. Colonias are unincorporated developments in rural areas. As explained to us, developers buy land and divide it up into quite small parcels. They then sell the land to people on a land-lease contract which transfers ownership over a twenty-year period. The kicker is that if you miss two payments you lose all the accumulated time and equity and have to start over, so many people end up never owning the property. The lease



holder, then, builds a home on the property. The developer typically provides no services – no sewer hook ups, no electricity, no water. There are, we were told, no real building codes in unincorporated areas (or, perhaps, what codes exist are simply not enforced), so people build their houses however they want. In the colonia we visited most of the houses were constructed around a dilapidated trailer of some sort, or even a broken-down camper-van.

There are dilemmas around these settlements in some ways not unlike the issues around informal housing in Latin America. If they were incorporated and brought under the jurisdictions of the adjoining cities, they would become much more expensive. The residents would have to pay property taxes. The land prices would rise because of the amenities. And building codes would make home construction way more expensive. So, some people defend the character of the settlement on the grounds that it provides better housing that these people would otherwise have access to. One sociologist with whom we discussed the issue added that the self-reliant, improvisational, do-it-yourself character of the communities created as a sense of pride of ownership and community solidarity that might be lacking in more conventional settlements. Many residents are undocumented workers, and the police we were told basically leave them alone when they live in the colonias, so in this way as well they are “better off” than if the colonias were properly regulated. I don’t want to dismiss these kinds of arguments, and I certainly have not studied this kind of setting. Of course people are adaptable and create positive experiences everywhere, but I am always a bit suspicious of arguments that celebrate the desirable qualities of deprivations.

After the colonia visit we drove to the Hidalgo Pump House. This is an old pumping station that pumped water from the Rio Grande for irrigation purposes and has been turned into a museum. It is also the site of a park called the World Birding Center. Those were pleasant, but the main reason for the visit was to get up close to the border wall which ran right through the park. Basically the Homeland Security Administration decided that the way to control illegal migration was to build a wall, but it could be built right at the border because of the frequent flooding of the Rio Grande. This meant that the border wall had to be built well in from the flood plain, often several miles from the river, cutting through ranch land, a gold course, and in this case a nature preserve. The Patriot



Act have power to Homeland Security to bypass all sorts of federal and state laws, so long as it was announced officially that the purpose in building the wall was fighting terrorism. Given the sanctity of private property in

David Rangle & me at the border fence

the Texan political culture, this has triggered quite a lot of discontent.

The evening was spent in pleasant conversation and excellent Mexican food – I had dish with olives, capers, onions and tomatoes, Veracruz style – with a group of sociologists. Then back to the hotel to catch up on the blog.

Day 5, Friday, March 23, 2012, driving North to San Antonio

We're about to get back to San Antonio where we'll have lunch. Sushi this time. Then we drop off David who will visit his mother. Jean will then drop me off in Seguin, 30 miles north of San Antonio, where I will visit my niece, who teaches math at Texas Lutheran University. On Saturday I fly to Dallas where I will visit my brother Woody and his wife Beth, and then on Sunday Jean and I will rendez-vous in the Dallas airport to continue our trip by flying to Albuquerque and then driving to Chinle, Arizona, in the Navaho Nation.

Day 6 & 7, Saturday-Sunday, March 25, 2012

Saturday was an entire day off from ASA related activities. In the morning I visited my niece in San Marcos, and then flew to Dallas to stay overnight with my brother, Woody. Late Saturday I checked my email and saw a typical "You can now check in" email from American Airlines. Since I didn't have a printer I wasn't going to bother with this, but I opened it anyway and noticed that flight number had changed and that the time of departure was 70 minutes earlier than on the original reservation. I called Jean about this. He said that he had received no alerts about schedule changes from Orbitz, even though he had given an email contact for such alerts. He checked things out and confirmed the earlier departure. I generally arrive at airports 60 minutes before the scheduled flight, so if I hadn't checked, we would have missed the plane.

In the Albuquerque airport we connected with Kimberly Huyser, a Navaho and a new Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of New Mexico. Kimberly grew up in Window Rock in the Navaho Nation and got her PhD from the University of Texas-Austin a couple of years ago. She is just finishing a RWJ postdoctoral fellowship at the University of New Mexico before officially beginning her tenure as an assistant professor in the fall. She is accompanying us for the same reason David Rangel came with us to the HSI universities in Texas: we felt that she could share her personal experiences as someone who grew up in the Navaho Nation, went off to college and then to graduate school in sociology. I think this is really a wonderful way for us to visit these institutions. Jean Shin represents the minority outreach and support activities of the ASA, a young academic from the same general community brings a personal life story to our interactions, and I talk about Sociology, the character of its commitments to diversity, and what it might mean to think about an academic career. I am not quite sure at this point how I will exactly frame all this in the context of Diné College (pronounced Dineh) since the students there only get an Associate of Arts degree and have to

transfer to a four-year institution to continue their studies, but I think the issues I have raised in the other places will still resonate here. We'll see tomorrow.

On the drive we had an interesting discussion about the use of the term "Native American" and "American Indian". I wanted to be sure that there were no sensitive issues around usage that I needed to know about. Kimberly said that both terms are used among Native Americans, but that there is some regional variation in which one of these is the main expressions for self-designation. In the Navaho she felt that "Native American" was preferred because it corresponded more closely to the self-designation in the Navaho language, which basically means the people of this place. Native is a rough approximation of that. In her own linguistic practice, she uses Native American whenever talking about official classifications, government programs, census data, and so on. She uses American Indian when the context is more political or cultural. Native American is a classification that amalgamates the category with other hyphenated Americans – Irish-American, Italian-American, Asian-American, African-American, etc. American Indian, on other hand, modifies the category "Indian" with the adjective American. It suggests the primary identity as an indigenous person of the continent, and then modifies it to indicate where. (I know that "Indian" has this peculiar historical derivation from Columbus' mistaken belief that he had reached the Indies, but I think Kimberly's point doesn't hinge on that). I thought this was pretty interesting – I hadn't seen the contrast in those terms. I knew that the radical civil rights movement among American Indians in the 1960s and 1970s was called the American Indian Movement (AIM), but I hadn't understood the specific implication of the expression. I mentioned that when I was in Winnipeg, Canada, last summer at a conference I was told that currently the preferred generic expression in Canada for the original inhabitants of Canada is "aboriginal Canadians" or just "aboriginals" rather than Canadian Indians or – as I had thought – First Nation Peoples. Since I had associated the word "aboriginals" so strongly with the indigenous people of Australia, it just didn't sound right (to me) to refer to the original inhabitants on Canada as aboriginals. What about the term "indigenous people", I asked. Kimberly said that no one seems to like that term. It is seen as demeaning, even though it is the term used by the United Nations as the generic term to refer to the problem of specific rights for the original inhabitants of the colonized parts of the world.

These linguistic issues tied to identities, social movements, cultural/political strategies and other things are always interesting. In my own lifetime I have seen the shift from Negroes to Blacks to African-Americans. We discussed this in the drive as well. Jean pointed out that there was a very big difference between using "Black" as noun or as an adjective, especially when "the" is put before the noun, as in: "The Blacks have voted strongly for Democrats." I noted that there is a certain way in which the shift to African-American loses something important represented by "Black" as the core identification. This is a bit like the point Kimberly made concerning Native American: African-American draws the parallel with other hyphenated Americans and thus treats the category as strictly an ethnicity-linked sub-type of American, whereas Black specifically draws attention to race as the classification logic. Jean added to this meandering conversation of classification terms that his mother always referred to Koreans as Orientals, a term that is almost universally rejected today.

And so the miles between Albuquerque and Chinle melted away.

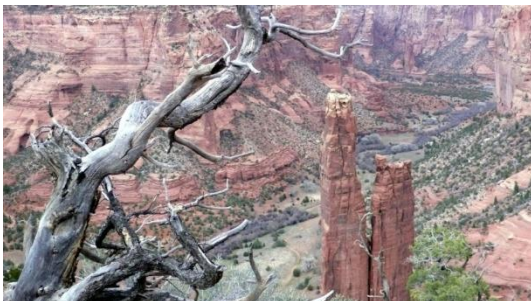
It turned out that the early flight was a great boon for us. It meant that we arrived in Albuquerque much earlier than planned and were thus able to arrive in Chinle, Arizona, after a four hour drive, early enough to drive along the South Rim of Canyon de Chelly. It was extraordinarily beautiful, magically beautiful. I had visited Canyon de Chelly 25 years ago with my family when my kids were little, but we had only visited the Canyon floor. This canyon is quite different from most other canyons I have seen in this part of the country: when you approach it from the west, you can enter the canyon from a valley floor. This is kind of like a box canyon, only canyon de Chelly is vastly bigger and more complex, with lots of side canyons and ravines. To visit the Canyon floor you need to go on an official tour, with a guide, because the Canyon is inhabited and they do not want people disturbing the residents, but you can drive along the north and south rims. Because we will be driving from Chinle to Tsaile where the college is located along the north rim tomorrow, we decided to drive to overlooks on the South Rim today.

As we approached the road we passed by the campground that my family had stayed at 25 years ago. I hadn't been back since then, but there was an instant rush of familiarity. I always find it remarkable when this sort of thing happens. I don't think I could have described the immediate area of the campground, but I knew I was there when we passed by. What I also remember intensely was that 25 years ago in August it was filled with mosquitos – there is a swampy area right nearby.

We began our climb on the road to the rim around 6:30. There was still enough daylight to see the spectacular formations in the canyon, although at each overlook the light declined. It was a



gray day, which meant that there was even less light left in the day. Kimberly suggested that we continue to the end of the road to the Spider Rock overlook, her favorite place in the Canyon. We got there around 7:30, just before sunset. The rim was about 200 yards from the parking lot. Just as we got to the rim, the sun broke through the clouds at the horizon. An unforgettable moment.





Day 8, Monday, March 26, Diné College, Tsaile, Navajo Nation

Today was a fine, sunny, crisp windy day. Actually: super windy. Blow your hat off windy. We left the Holiday Inn around 8 a.m. and had to wait briefly to pull into the highway because a cow was sauntering across the road holding up traffic. For someone from the well-fenced world of Wisconsin, free range cattle and horses are a bit startling. Once the cow had reached safety, we drove 35 miles along the North Rim of Canyon de Chelly to Diné College in Tsaile.

Diné College is the oldest college chartered by a Native American tribe. It was founded in 1968 and firmly established by the early 1970s. It is mainly a two year institution that gives AA



degrees, but there is a four year teacher education program as well. There are about 2300 students in the College as a whole, but only about 700 at the campus in Tsaile, 200 of which are residential, the rest commuting. There are a couple of other campuses in other parts of the Navaho nation, and also a number of smaller centers. The Tsaile campus is located on a high plateau just to the east of Canyon de Chelly, around 7000 feet

above sea level. The campus is lovely and architecturally striking: most of the buildings are round in the manner of the traditional Navajo Hogan, and the whole campus as well is



organized in a circular manner. This has some spiritual significance in Navajo tradition, we were told, but it also makes for a very appealing layout of the facilities.

We began the morning with a meeting with the president of the College, Maggie George, and a number of other people in leadership position in the college: Darrel Begay, the director of development for the College; Miranda Haskie, the head of the social science program and the ASA

member that has been our main contact here; Robert Yazzi, a former Chief Justice of the Navaho Nation; and a few other faculty. Maggie had taken the position at Diné this academic year after serving in the Obama administration as Executive Director for the White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities. She had gotten her PhD at the University of Kansas and had taught at the Haskell National Indian University in Lawrence, Kansas, for fifteen years. That was a nice personal connection since I grew up in Lawrence. When I was a kid Haskell University was called Haskell Institute. I knew it was there, and that American Indians from around the country came to Haskell for school, but I never visited it or really had any sense of the place. It was, as I recall, pretty marginalized from the life of the city.

At the morning meeting we learned about the history of the school and its current focus and agenda, and had a chance to discuss some of the challenges it faces. The core of Diné College is the General Education program rather than more vocational programs. In the Navajo Nation there is also the Navajo Technical College which offers various kinds of vocational certificates. [A terminological note: No one I met talked about ever used the expression “Navajo Reservation.” People would refer to living on the rez, but never use the word “reservation.” The expression “Navajo Nation” would sometimes be shortened to just “Navajo” in some contexts, for example, “There are very few grocery stores in Navajo.”]. There are some discussions about

how Diné and the Technical college can coordinate more and think a bit more about the higher education needs for the nation as a whole, but this is difficult. The difficulty is compounded by the complexity of funding. Diné has to deal with four governmental entities for its funding: The Federal Government which provides 61% of the funding, Arizona, New Mexico and the tribal government. In the requests to the Federal Government Diné asks for about \$6000 per year per student, but never gets quite that much. Maggie George said that the Tribal Government would like Diné to become a BA College and also have some MA programs, and even PhD programs, but this would be incredibly expensive and really financially unrealistic. Even the existing four-year teacher education program is expensive, and so far it is not an officially accredited program. This means that for students to get accredited they have to submit their record and other documentation to the State rather than have their credential automatically conferred upon getting a degree.

Maggie explained that a distinctive quality of the gen ed core program at Diné was the inclusion of curriculum on Navajo culture, language, and history. In the course of the day we also learned that this included efforts to bring traditional Navajo forms of knowledge and perspective to bear on subject matter outside of specific courses on Navajo themes. We didn't have a chance to delve deeply into this, so I am not completely sure precisely how this is played out. What I don't know is whether this is mainly a question of a juxtaposition of different world views or actually integrating them, exploring their tensions and thinking through syntheses.

Sociology at Diné is part of a social and behavioral sciences department that also includes psychology, history, anthropology and political science. Because the college really tries to prepare students to continue in four-year BA programs (about 40% do so), they are concerned about maintaining college level instruction, which is also needed to maintain their accreditation. There are real challenges, as in all higher education that takes seriously the task of educating students from disadvantaged backgrounds, because some students come with significant deficits, so the college has to do some remediation. Unlike some tribal colleges, Diné is not connected directly to any four-year institutions. Students here who go on to BA programs generally go to University of New Mexico, Arizona, Arizona State or Fort Lewis College. If they have an official certificate showing that they are Navajo, then they pay in-state tuition.

In the morning discussion we also learned about the broader context of tribal colleges in the U.S. In all there are 37 tribal colleges. There is a great deal of variety in their structure and goals. Some are closely connected to specific four year programs on the 2+2 models. Some are more like community colleges with lots of vocational programs. Some are chartered by single tribes, others are chartered by a consortium of tribes (seven in the case of South Dakota). Some of these colleges would like to have a distinct tribal college accreditation system, but because there is so much heterogeneity not much has really been done to accomplish this.

One especially interesting a complex issue that we learned about concerned the relationship between the development of the college and the nature of property rights in the Navaho Nation. Before Diné college could be built, the land for the college had to be removed from its traditional status. The main issue here is the quasi-property rights that people have in access to the land for grazing livestock. Much of the land is not exactly privately owned or publically owned, but governed by complex forms of use rights and access rights, and it is often very

difficult to remove land from such rules. This has proven to be a really big obstacle to expanding some of the branch campuses and centers of the college. In Chinle, apparently, the Diné College center is restricted to a small storefront and has been unable to expand physically because of this.

Darrell Begay added some interesting observations about the role of the two-year program of the sort that exists at Diné. If Diné had a four-year BA program, most students who wanted a BA would stay, but there is an intrinsic value of going off the rez for the BA and getting a larger world experience. The pitfall is that the Navajo Nation loses students who go elsewhere and decide not to come back. He said that the Navajo Policy Institute, an institute within the College, is doing a study of brain-drain and leaving and it is clear that the very fact that they are getting an education is a cause of the brain drain. The real issue, of course, is that there just is not the opportunity here for professionals. Jobs are the problem.

At the end of the morning discussion a student at Diné spoke to us to give her perspective on being a student here and talk about the issue of Navajo identity. Here is the gist of what she said:

I took Navajo language immersion in elementary school. When I was growing up I competed in language competition and did really well. But in 2005 I was ready to leave the reservation. I didn't really have any career objective, but it was time to leave. I wandered around aimlessly in Albuquerque for a while. In some ways it was a good experience, learned to socialize with non-Diné, with people who didn't know my family and clan. Eventually I went to school at UNM for teacher education, but returned here for family reasons with the plan of eventually going back to UNM. When I returned to Navajo I saw that things had deteriorated terribly. I experienced more violence here in a month than in six years in Albuquerque. Infrastructure had disintegrated, there were more gangs, the high school was totally torn up and vandalized by students. Why had it gotten so bad? I went to the Navajo Fair and saw the Navajo president talking up the importance of coal and how we needed to develop it. I was completely shocked. So, I decided to want to stay and help the community. I learned about the Diné program for teacher-ed, so came here for that. I'm taking courses in Diné culture and refreshing my language with beginning course again.

I was very impressed with how articulate and thoughtful she was, and how serious she was about working to strengthen some traditional aspects of Navajo culture. In her opinion, much of the problem in her former high school was rooted in a lack of respect of kids for the elders in the community, and this lack of respect led them to engage in such destructive practices. I'm not sure that this specific issue is at the core of the problem – it is likely to be more of a symptom than a root cause, but still her desire to re-engage her community and make a difference was moving.

After the meeting with the President we moved to a different venue to meet with students interested in asking me questions on any topic they liked. It began in a very striking way. A young woman, Valentina Maria Blackhorse, dressed in a traditional Navajo way, adorned with much beautiful silver and turquoise jewelry, and wearing a sash saying Miss Diné College 2011, officially greeted us. She began with a few minutes in Navajo (also called speaking Diné) and

then a greeting in English. The first part of the greeting was basically a formal account of her clan and family history. The student in the earlier discussion had also introduced herself in this way. When later in the session on careers Kimberly Huyser, the Navajo Assistant Professor from the University of New Mexico who is part of our traveling troika, introduced herself, she did the same. I later asked Kimberly to write down what she said:

Navajo (Diné) people greet each other with an account of their clan affiliations. The clan system allows for individuals to understand each other's background and also to discover clan relatives. It is common to give four clans, which stem from mother, father, maternal grandfather, and paternal grandfather. Here are my clans: Ya'at'eeh. Kimberly Huyser yinishye'. Ashi'hii' nishli', [I am of the Salt people] Bilagáana ba'shi'shchiin [born for the (Dutch) white people] Tsé Nahabíłnii dashicheii [my maternal grandfather's clan is the Sleep Rock People] Bilagáana dashinali' [my paternal grandfather's clan is the (Dutch) white people]. Ko'teego Diné asdzani' nishli'

Later in the day Kimberly discovered that she at Miranda had the same first clan, which meant that they were sisters. In the course of the day she discovered that someone she met was a clan son (Kimberly's first clan was his second clan) and another was her granddaughter (Kimberly's first was this person's fourth). I asked if this brought with it any sense of greater closeness or obligation. Kimberly said that it was a bit like discovering you grew up in the same city or went to the same high school as someone you had just met. It could slightly increase the chance of getting together in the future because of the sense of sharing something in common, but it didn't really trigger any sense of obligation.

The discussion was organized in a very nice way. Miranda had the students in her various sociology classes give her specific questions they want to ask. In the course of the hour and a half gathering we discussed four or five of them. Here are two of the questions we discussed:

1. Is capitalism the right approach to building an independent Navajo Nation?

Response: I have basically two answers to this question. First, given the historical realities of the present, given the nature of power relations and the kinds of options that are realistically available, the in a sense capitalism is the only approach to economic development. We're stuck with this for the time being. But Second, capitalism is also a very damaging way of developing a nation, it creates great harms for people and the environment. I will talk about this this afternoon. So, if we did not face the constraints of power, then an alternative, noncapitalist way of organizing our economic affairs would be much better. What this means in practice, I think, is that for the present we have to think of ways of combining capitalism with noncapitalist alternatives that point beyond capitalism. An example would be worker-owned cooperatives.

2. What are the best answers to getting away from federal assistance dependency?

Response: This turned out to be the big theme of whole discussion. There was much concern among the several of students who talked about the problem of dependency of the Navaho Nation on Federal aid and the ways in which such aid might generate passivity. In different ways several people wanted to know what I thought were the best strategies for resolving federal assistance dependency.

I began by saying that I really disliked the term “dependency” since it is such an ideologically-loaded expression. It brings with it the implication that in the ideal world everyone would be self-reliant, independent, on their own without having to rely on anyone else. But this is a complete myth. Inter-dependency is the heart of the human condition. In terms of the language of “dependency,” this was one of the main ideological weapons in the attack on welfare support in the 1990s. But think about it: if a stay-at-home Mom gets the income needed for her consumption from her husband’s wages, we don’t say “isn’t this terrible – she is dependent.” Most people think this is a perfectly legitimate division of labor and form of inter-dependency. But when a single Mom gets aid from the government to raise her children she suffers from dependency. I’m not saying that there are issues here, but they have much more to do with the design of welfare programs than with the sheer fact of getting aid.

In terms of Federal Aid to the Navajo Nation, I think it is absolutely wrong to think of this as charity or a form of dependency. It is a right. You have a right to these funds. Indeed, in the case of American Indians because of the injustices and oppressions of American treatment from the first contact, you really deserve massively more than you get. Indeed, some of the negative effects of Federal aid could be precisely because it isn’t enough. If it was more it could underwrite different kinds of development and create different kinds of opportunity than is presently possible.

But there is an even more basic point here. I think everyone should get a form of basic income from the government. As I will discuss this afternoon, I strongly support an unconditional basic income. All developed countries besides the US give everyone unconditional basic healthcare. It is unconditional because you don’t have to take care of your body to be entitled to it – smokers get free health care. We give children unconditional basic education. I think everyone should be given unconditional basic income sufficient to live above the poverty line, having all of their basic needs met without stigma. I don’t think this would create dependency. It would unleash creativity and individual initiative.

This led to some interesting back and forth discussion. One student quoted a Navajo saying that translates roughly “It has got to be you,” or in another version “If it is to be it’s up to me.” The student says that it is important for people to know that they cannot depend on others to take care of their families, whether that be handouts from the Feds or per capita income allocations from Indian Casinos. I replied that in addition to “It has got to be you” we also need “It has got to be us.” Of course it is important for people to take responsibility for their actions, to show initiative and persistence. These are virtues. And when government programs undermine these virtues that can be a serious problem. But still, the myth of self-reliance is also a serious problem.

Another student invoked the aphorism that if you give a person a fish and they eat for a day whereas if you teach them to fish they eat for a lifetime. I said that this is really an incomplete account of being able to eat fish for a lifetime. In many places you also need to stock the lake in order for there to be enough fish, and this requires lots of cooperation. You also need the equipment to fish, the means of production to catch fish. Some people may have sonar detectors to find the fish and others only have a twig with a line and hook. Some environments are much harder than others for fishing and therefore some people may still need nutritional

supplements even if they know how to fish. The critical issue, I argued, is that while the purely individual motivation part of the problem is certainly relevant, it not where the main action is.

Another student raised the issue of tribal sovereignty and how it connected to the problem of dependency: “Are we really sovereign if we have this dependency?” I was a bit less certain how to engage this issue than the issue of dependency as such. I argued that the issue of sovereignty is at the most fundamental level a question of self-governance and democracy, which is relevant to everyone, not just the Navajo. We need to restore a vibrant, meaningful, democracy with real participation and self-governance for everyone. Now, because of the historic ties to the particular land in this part of the world, combined with the historic oppression of American Indians, there are special issues involved in tribal sovereignty. The exact character of these issues varies across tribal communities. It is different for the Cherokee who were displaced from their traditional lands in the Southeast and for the Navajo and pueblo people who remain largely where they have always been. The critical issue is that all people should have the power control the conditions of their lives as individuals and members of relevant communities.

There was one especially unusual student at the discussion: a Chinese student from Shanghai who said that since childhood he had felt a sense of kindred spirit with American Indians ever since he saw the film about code talkers. He came to the United States to explore American Indian communities, and then discovered that the code talkers were Navajo, so he came to the Navajo Nation and is now a student at Diné College. In the discussion he referred to “our” nation when talking about the Navajo Nation, and seemed to identify very strongly with the culture and community. I’m sure there is an interesting backstory here. I overheard someone refer to him as the local Ernest Hemingway. Perhaps he is gathering material for a novel, but instead of Cuba has landed in Tsailé.

At lunch I had an interesting discussion with a couple of the students who had attended the morning event about what they wanted to do for their careers. One wanted to be a forensic scientist, the other an archaeologist. Both said that they were encountering significant resistance from their families because of the strong Navajo taboo against having any dealings with the dead. I had read something about this (I think in Tony Hillerman mysteries), but didn’t realize that this taboo was still sufficiently active that it would affect career choices. This led to an extended discussion about the idea of taboos and how they function in a culture. I said that many taboos originated in the context of differentiating one group from another – they help demarcate boundaries. Others reflect adaptations to various issues in the environment, which then over time can be extended or displaced from their original objects. In any event, it is a common issue how traditional taboos clash with modern life in one way or another. It can be a tough thing to figure out which to hold on to and which to drop.

After lunch was our session with students about careers. In the end we approached this pretty much the same we did in the other campuses. Even though this is a two year institution, most of the students with whom we were interacting were planning on getting a BA, and so in many ways the same issues were relevant. When it was my turn to talk I began by saying that one of the really interesting things I had learned while visiting Diné College was the way Navajo people introduced themselves by identifying their clan lineages and thus locating themselves in the cultural space of Navajo society. Well, I don’t exactly have clan membership, but I will try to

give you a Navajo-like introduction to my lineage. I then spoke of my material grandparents being Russian Jews who arrived in the U.S. in 1911; my mother who grew up in New York and then went to Iowa for graduate school where she met my father; and my father whose ancestors had been in North America since sometime in the 17th century, first in Canada and then in New York, but about whom I knew very little. I described how my parents had met in Iowa and then gone to California when my father was in the Navy in WWII, and that I was born there in 1947 while my Dad was in Medical school, and then moved to Kansas when I was four. I think people appreciated me telling my personal history this way and connecting it to the Navajo cultural form of greeting.

The next event on the day's packed agenda was a meeting with the Diné Policy Institute to learn about a couple of their research projects, one on the brain drain problem, and the other on the Navajo Food System. Two people lead the discussion: Robert Yazzi, director of the DPI, and Dana Eldridge, a staff member of the Institute. Dana grew up near Window Rock, but in high school got a scholarship to attend a Prep School in Connecticut. Later Kimberly told me that this was probably Choate, which has a longstanding connection to the Navajo Nation and has sponsored talented high school students for long time. Dana went on to Brown, but then wanted to return to Navajo. Maggie George had told us earlier that Dana was having a lot of trouble finding anything suitable and was on the verge of leaving when this staff position emerged.

Robert began by telling us something over the overall philosophy of the institute. It's objective, he said, is to mesh the Western framework of research with traditional Navajo values and with what he called traditional/customary/common *laws*. I think this referred to something akin to "laws of nature" rather than legal rules. The approach was rooted in what he referred to as "Corn stalk Philosophy", which uses the cornstalk as a traditional symbol for seeking understanding and resilience. Having an institute like this is unique among tribal colleges.

This approach also involves establishing a strong connection to traditional Navajo Knowledge Holders in order to identify relevant concepts from the Navajo ways of knowing. Ultimately what the Institute wants to do is to use both forms of knowledge and research – Western and Navajo -- to illuminate the issues of the day.

Robert presented the initial research they are doing on the problem of brain drain. He explained that the Navajo brain drain is very much like the problem of educated people in the third world leaving for advantages. The literature on sustainable development argues that the key to sustainable development is increasing education and providing opportunities that retain the workforce. The Navajo Nation is an extreme case of underdevelopment, but research focuses too much on symptoms rather than causes. The Navajo Nation invests millions of dollars in education/scholarships, but the students go off-reservation and do not return. The research is focusing on understanding the decision making process that goes into deciding to return or to stay away. The decision to return clearly involves strong pulls of family and culture, and the decision to stay away is heavily shaped by outside opportunities being so much better outside.

Dana Eldridge presented the research on the food system. The discussion revolved around two main themes: the character of traditional food culture among the Navajo and the problem of the food desert today. She began with an extended discussion of the traditional Diné view of food and plants and their use as food, in ceremonies, and as medicine. She spoke of plants having spirit, soul, mind, and body. I was not sure of what all of this really meant. I can imagine, a bit, what it means to say that a plant has a spirit – perhaps that is a bit like an essence – but I don't know really what it means to say that a plant has a *mind*. When I asked Kimberly about this later, she said it a bit like saying that plants had a purpose. Her grandmother was fond of saying that a vegetable could be happy or sad.

The history of food among the Navajo has been the history of the denigration of traditional foods and the increasing incursion of Western food. It is even the case that one of the foods most Navajo's think of as traditional – fry bread – was imposed on them by the US Army. During the period of removal from the Navajo territories in 1864-68 when they were in confinement in Fort Sumner fry bread was given to them as part of their army rations. It is really a food of subjugation. Since then there are repeated instances of food being foisted on the Navajo in harmful ways. The Feds continually encourage dairy products even though 75% of American Indians are lactose intolerant. Milk was imposed on kids in boarding schools. The traditional diet was plant based -- mostly squash, native corn, and beans – with very little meat. Now the foremost food are things like sodas, processed meats.

The Navajo Nation is now a food desert – healthy affordable food is very hard to obtain. Dana showed us a map of the region where food desert areas were in pink. This corresponded almost exactly to the boundaries of Navajo. In 1937 the rate of diabetes among the Navajo was about 1 in 6000; now it is 1 in 3. There is a strong correlation of westernized diet and nutritional illness. She noted especially the ironies around corn: The GMO modification of corn has taken the sacred, nutritional corn that was a good protein source and transformed it in ways that reduce the protein and increase the starch and sugar content in order to more efficiently make to make high fructose corn syrup which the Navajo consume in sodas and results in diabetes.

After the presentation I spoke with Dana about the workshop being planned in Madison in the fall around new forms of urban food production, focusing especially on community based urban agriculture. This won't be a formal academic conference with papers, but an intensive brainstorming workshop being organized by a grad student in the department, Nate Ela. I invited Dana to come. She seemed genuinely enthusiastic.

My talk on Real Utopias came right after the DPI presentation. I more or less presented the material in the same way I had done in the HSI lectures last week. It was pretty clear to me that the students I was talking to, and of course the faculty, were able to understand the issues and themes as well as students elsewhere. The time allotted was shorter than in the other places, so there wasn't really any time for discussion, but after the talk there was a kind of town hall meeting to discuss anything anyone wanted to explore. There was food as well, although because of my lowfat diet I passed on the mutton-stew and fry bread.

Here are a few of the questions raised in the discussion:

Your family history is Russian, what defines a successful revolution? I thought that it was interesting that because I mentioned Russian Jewish immigrants that this became associated with the Russian revolution. I explored the distinction between revolutionary *goals* – wanting a radical, foundational transformation of core social institutions – and capital-R revolution, which is usually taken to refer to the means of transformation. The latter is what I would call a *ruptural* logic of transformation, an abrupt reconfiguration of basic institution with the slogan “smash first, build second.” Sometimes the forms of oppression and domination seem so monstrous that this seems like the only way. The problem is that in complex social structures, the historical experience of attempts at rupture are really dismal. Revolutions succeed in their objectives when the objectives are simple – breaking from Britain and getting rid of the King in the case of the American Revolution. That revolution left the social structure almost untouched. We even kept slavery under the banner of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It was definitely not a revolution that tried to break with the dominant forms of social power. If we want a democratic egalitarian future, then the evidence is that a ruptural transformation will not work. I suggested that the alternative we should think about is *interstitial* transformation. Instead of seeing society as an integrated system, it is better to think of it more like a loosely integrated ecology – like a pond – in which everything is interconnected and affects each other, but there are also niches and spaces where invasive species can enter. The task for transformation is filling those spaces with alternative institutions and then struggling politically to enlarge the spaces.

How do you encourage people to participate in democracy? In the Navajo Nation we often have trouble getting even the minimum number of people to attend a Chapter meeting [I think that was the term] which is like a town-hall meeting. People just don't seem to want to participate. I said that I didn't have any brilliant things to say about this. The distances in Navajo seem so large that I can understand why it can be hard to motivate people to come to meetings. It is especially hard to get people to meetings when it seems to be all talk and no action, where the meetings seem more like places where leaders play games than people really have a say. One thing I can say is that participation is more likely when real decisions backed by real resources get made. This is what happens in the participatory budget: when there is little budget to allocate, participation drops a lot. Sometimes participation can be increased when real incentives are provided for participation – like paying people. But that always seems a bit contradictory – motivating people by money rather than the meaningfulness of the activity. But sometimes that might be helpful. These are big challenges, and it is often very hard to solve.

How do we encourage parents to get involved and engage with their children's education? We often find it hard to get parents to even come to Parent/teacher conferences. They will fight to tickets to high school basketball games, but not bother to come to parent/teacher conferences. Do you think that children's disinterest in their education is a reflective of their parents' lack of engagement in the child's education? I would hope, I said, that the reason parents are not more involved in their children's education is not because they don't care, but because they are discouraged, or cynical about the system, or have had experiences which make them feel that there is nothing to be gained by involvement. The grad student who came with us on our tour of Hispanic institutions last week, David Rangel, is doing a research project on this kind of problem in elementary schools serving Hispanic populations by trying to increase what

sociologists call “social capital” in these communities. The idea is to strengthen the social networks that connect parents and schools and increase the levels of trust, and then see if this significantly effects parents’ involvement. You could do research here to find out why parents don’t take advantage of parent/teacher conferences. That could help you figure out possible ways to encourage them to come.

African American people do not receive “federal subsidies” and seem to do well. Do the subsidies actually hinder American Indian development? I didn’t know what to make of this question – African-Americans are hardly “doing well”. I made some general comments about the problem, commenting on the real despair in many inner city African American communities that comes from the lack of adequate income support, and I reiterated the point about the rights for American Indians to have transfers. This issue certainly seems to be a salient theme.

I see that you are a traditional Marxist. What phase of the Marx’s work does your work align with? This question was asked by a very interesting, intense young man that had participated in all of the events the entire day. I told him that I am not a “traditional Marxist” but rather that I work “in the Marxist tradition,” and then explained the difference between these two formulations. The fact that this tradition began with some wonderful works by Karl Marx a 150 or so years ago should not give those works any special authority. Indeed, if the best work on any topic in the Marxist tradition was written 150 years ago it would be a sad testimony to the failure of the tradition to make real scientific progress. I don’t really locate my work with respect to any specific texts of Marx, but rather see it as rooted in the problems and concepts of tradition as a whole: the class analysis and critique of capitalism, the concern with forms of oppression and emancipation, the problem of transformation and socialism.

By the time the town hall discussion had ended it was getting on to 7pm. We were all quite tired, but still decided to stop on the way back to Chinle to see the overlooks on the North Rim. The most fantastic was Mummy Cave, the name given to some ancient ruins (because some mummies were found in it) built into a cave high up on the side of the canyon opposite the overlook. The sun was setting again, but there was enough light to see the structure clearly. A breathtaking end to the day.



Day 9, flying en route back to Madison, Tuesday, March 27

I was too tired last night to make much headway in turning my notes into text, so most of the account of yesterday was written during the four hour drive from Chinle to Albuquerque, then in the Albuquerque airport, the flight to Denver, the Denver airport and now the flight to Madison. I will arrive in Madison around 6:45 this evening and then take a taxi to the Overture Center for the performing arts to see the Alvin Ailey dance company. Friday I fly to New York for the first conference of the National Participatory Budget Project. Then back to Madison on Sunday, April 1, only to leave again on Thursday for Penn State where I will give a talk at a



Jean & Kimberly

conference on social theory, meet with grad students in the sociology department to discuss their research, and do a workshop on real utopias. On Sunday, April 8, I fly off to Jackson, Mississippi, to begin my tour of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. This is a pretty intense schedule, but there isn't anything I wanted not to do and the schedule just ended up leaving almost down time.