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Reply

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EUGENE Ruyle and Keith Dixon, long-time advocates of Puvungna-related issues and members of the Anthropology Department at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB), are active stakeholders in the current debate. Since Ruyle and Dixon also offer the most critical reviews of our article, we turn our attention to their comments first. Although Ruyle and Dixon emphasize somewhat dif-

ferent issues, they reflect quite similar lines of commentary. The reader will notice, for instance, that Ruyle and Dixon essentially ignore the major points made by our article. Instead, both commentators adopt a strategy favored by trial lawyers: If you cannot refute your opponent's arguments directly, distract the jury with confusing side issues and character assassination. These diversionary tactics are designed to destroy the credibility of our article on three grounds: it leaves out vital information; we are guilty of sloppy scholarship; and we are "hired guns," somehow enticed by the administration of CSULB to propagate ideas inimical to Native Americans and historic preservation. Let us look at these charges more closely.

SINS OF OMISSION?

Ruyle and Dixon say we omitted important issues and information from our article. Ruyle, for example, criticizes us for not reporting in detail the perspectives of contemporary Indians, and for not adequately discussing the "Puvunga struggle." Both Ruyle and Dixon maintain that we failed to provide an accurate history of archaeological investigations on the CSULB campus, including what they say are misinterpretations of a Native American burial discovered a number of years ago. Curiously, Dixon focuses most of his comments on legal documents, personal correspondence, and an unpublished manuscript. This tactic complicates assessing our article published here, since the documents to which Dixon refers are not before the readers of this volume. On the other hand, this approach affords plenty of opportunity for creating confusion and introducing *ad hominem* judgments.

Each of the points outlined by Ruyle and Dixon is interesting in its own right. There is no question that Indians hold important perspectives on Puvungna, views to which they and others are deeply committed. The CSULB campus has an extensive and interesting history of archaeological investigation. We see nothing to keep Ruyle and/or Dixon from airing their perspectives on these topics in print. But our article in this volume is not primarily

about the campus archaeological record or contemporary Native American perspectives on Puvunga, as important as these topics are. Our goal is to show how conceptions of Puvunga evolved over the long term, particularly how this evolution was shaped in critical ways by anthropological scholarship. Does this perspective work a hardship on parties interested in the kinds of issues mentioned by Ruyle and Dixon? It is difficult to see how.

With regard to the human burial mentioned by Ruyle and Dixon, we fairly and accurately pointed out that this discovery reinforced a conclusion held by some that a Native American "village" once occupied the CSULB campus. We have no problem with the qualifications of this discovery offered by Ruyle and Dixon, but these in no way change the significance of the burial as we reported it. What about the other issues that Ruyle and Dixon would like readers to know about? Ruyle's views are available from the web site that he promotes in his commentary. One can readily find a number of other internet sites that discuss topics related to Puvunga, including references to news stories. A large body of anthropological and archaeological data on the campus is available to scholars and interested parties. A study commissioned by CSULB, for example, documented the views of contemporary Gabrielino Indians concerning Puvunga (Altschul 1994).

Numerous reports have detailed the results of campus archaeological investigations over the last two decades, including extensive test excavations of campus sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as Puvunga (see Raab and Boxt [1995] for a listing). A number of public meetings has been held to disseminate information about all of these topics. Yet our research showed that there is something conspicuously missing in this swarming array of advocacy statements, web sites, public hearings, archaeological reports, news stories, and legal documents: discussions that place scholarly investigation of Puvunga in a long-term, comparative perspective. Our article provides one such overview.

BAD SCHOLARSHIP?

Ruyle and Dixon claim that we are guilty of poor scholarship because we did not include certain sources in our discussion nor did we fully explain the context of the sources that we did use. For instance, Ruyle (p. 78) claims that "there has never been any mystery about the location of Puvunga," owing to the opinions of Harnett, an early historian of the Long Beach area (Case 1927:26-27). Readers of our article can readily see that Harnett's interpretation is essentially identical to the better known conclusions of Harrington (1933). Apparently, the Harnett citation is supposed to eliminate any question about the location and identity of Puvunga. Nonsense. As we documented in our article, the Harrington interpretation is popular among current scholars, but is hardly an unimpeachable source.

We are not alone in this assessment. As Lightfoot (p. 76) points out in his review of our article, Harrington's hypothesis about Puvunga's location is far from certain on ethnohistoric grounds. Unfortunately, like much of the anthropological field work conducted early in this century, Harrington's research is based on the "memory culture" of a small number of closely related informants. Harrington's report of what was essentially a single identification of Puvunga was not verified by independent accounts or tested against the possibility of differing accounts. Critical as well, the Harnett and Harrington interpretations never connected Puvunga with the area that now makes up the CSULB campus. That linkage arose for the first time with the nomination by Dixon of campus archaeological sites to the NRHP in 1974. Puvunga's inherent complexities and ambiguities will not go away simply because Ruyle pronounces these problems solved.

Dixon is unhappy about our citation of an account by Kurtis Lobo, a Juaneño Indian. Dixon offers a confusing exegesis of an endnote from another, unpublished manuscript, in which we briefly discussed the Lobo citation. In both the article

published here and the paper cited by Dixon, we simply pointed out that it is possible for Native Americans to hold different ideas about the location of Puvunga. We made it quite clear that Lobo (1977) was relying on Boscana's account to fix the location of Puvunga. This point is significant because it shows that at least some recent Indian communities have accepted the validity of Boscana's "uncorrected" statements about Puvunga. Harrington's placement of Puvunga at Rancho Los Alamitos may not be the only account that Native Americans rely upon to inform their traditions. We cited Lake Elsinore as a heuristic point, merely to give the reader an approximate idea of the location of Puvunga, according to the Boscana account. It seems to us that what Ruyle and Dixon describe as bad scholarship on our part is simply a failure to agree with their views.

Some of the comments offered by our critics are astonishingly self-indulgent excursions into name calling. Dixon (p. 72) says of his comments: "This account has to be personal because I can only document my own experience, but it is my understanding that Boxt and Raab also avoided other university faculty and Native Americans who were out of favor with the administrators." Translation: Since we showed substandard deference to people and ideas favored by Dixon, we must have been in the thrall of campus administrators, therefore making it legitimate for critics to go after us, as well as our article.

Ad hominem judgements masquerade as analysis. For instance, Dixon (p. 67) claims that "Boxt and Raab are alone among scholars of reputation, as far as I know, in refusing to acknowledge Boscana's simple and widely recognized error in writing northeast instead of northwest in locating Puvunga." Does this imply that perhaps we do not belong among "scholars of reputation" because we disagree with Dixon? It gets worse. Dixon (pp. 72-73) concludes his discussion with this statement:

I hope the *Journal* will invite publication of an adequate follow-up to Boxt and Raab's article in the future in order that knowledgeable people can ana-

lyze the kinds of issues that they brought up about local archaeology and ethnohistory in order to prepare the level of response that is not possible in a brief comment. However, Boxt and Raab could use their rebuttal now to make that unnecessary.

I hope their response will be to disaffirm this and their previous paper . . . as incomplete for reasons beyond their control, and then perhaps express their intention to consider preparing an independent study of the Puvunga issues by taking advantage of all the information that is available to them.

This ultimatum has a vaguely medieval ring to it. We are exhorted, effectively, to confess that we were overpowered by Evil, and to return to the Truth. In past centuries, inquisitors used a ploy much like this against accused witches: "Are you still consorting with the devil?" Any response, of course, leads straight to the stake. Let us stick to discussing ideas and issues instead of exorcisms.

The available space does not permit comment on each of the criticisms offered by Dixon and Ruyle. Even so, and despite claims regarding errors and omissions on our part, we think the body of evidence we presented in our article supports a robust conclusion: Over time, various commentators, including Native Americans and anthropologists, have offered differing accounts of Puvunga, and they have relied on differing interpretations of the anthropological literature to support their conclusions.

CONSPIRACY, ANYONE?

As noted above, the views expressed in our article are characterized not merely as mistaken, but as a reflection of something more sinister. For instance, Ruyle (p. 81) suggests that public law was broken in the reporting of human remains (a child's deciduous tooth) found during archaeological excavation of the campus. It is hard to know what constructive purpose this innuendo can serve. This thinly veiled allegation is completely baseless, as documented by public records. But this charge is not the end of the allegations.

Ruyle (p. 80) seems to argue that campus officials are conspiring to destroy Puvunga, and im-

plies that we were employed to assist this plot in some fashion: "Thus, it was only after campus officials decided to build a strip mall on CA-LAN-235 and were frustrated in their attempt to conceal its National Register status that they hired Boxt and Raab for a 'cultural review.'" The basis of this conspiracy is apparently the assumption that efforts are afoot to discredit the listing of archaeological sites CA-LAN-234, CA-LAN-235 (both of these sites are on campus) and CA-LAN-306 (at Rancho Los Alamitos) on the NRHP. Proponents of this scenario seem to believe that if enough doubt can be created about the identity of these sites as Puvunga, the university will have a clear path to do as it pleases. This scenario—likely to appeal to conspiracy fans no matter what we or anyone else has to say—is based on a serious misunderstanding of the facts.

We prefer not to belabor the issue of the NRHP, but since we are essentially accused of being parties to a conspiracy designed to remove Puvunga from the NRHP, we should probably try to bring some clarity to this issue. A major part of the current controversy stems from confusion about what the NRHP is and what it can do:

Is it legal to destroy a historic property? Absolutely, as far as federal law is concerned. It's not legal to destroy it without considering the matter—that's what Section 106 [of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966] requires, and of course the way you consider it is by following the process set forth in 36 CFR 800. But once you've done that, you can destroy the property, subject to whatever agreement is reached under Section 106—and subject to any other legal authorities that apply [King 1998:131].

It is not up to us to decide whether the process described by King should be set in motion. We simply wish to point out that if such a process is invoked, discussions like the one in our article are likely to have little or no impact on the results for reasons that we describe next.

For our part, we do not believe that the NRHP status of the CSULB sites could be or should be questioned on the basis of divergent opinions about whether they are *really* Puvunga. This question is

simply irrelevant to how these sites must be managed under existing laws and regulations. We can illustrate what we mean by posing a question: Do Native Americans have to prove that their spiritual beliefs are objectively true in order to gain recognition of their beliefs by governmental authorities? The answer clearly is no. This would be an impossible burden for anyone. All that the NRHP requires is documentation that a body of such beliefs exists, and that these beliefs hold importance for a cultural community. The question of whether such beliefs are objectively valid does not enter into the equation.

Archaeological sites CA-LAN-234, -235 and -306 were listed for the purpose of commemorating a Native American people and their religious tradition. The documentation in favor of this recognition, consisting of two pages of narrative (Dixon 1974), essentially advanced two anthropological hypotheses concerning Puvunga's nature and location (Harrington's conclusions, augmented by Dixon's ideas about village dynamics). As such, the Puvunga sites have fulfilled their commemorative function for more than two decades. But this is a different purpose than certifying that these sites, *and only these sites*, are Puvunga.

Although many Native Americans, members of the public, and some anthropologists believe that the NRHP absolutely "authenticates" historical or archaeological properties, the reality of the situation is not quite what many expect. Did the NRHP staff in Washington, D.C., or authorities elsewhere, rigorously and independently determine that CA-LAN-234, -235 and -306 are the only sites that could possibly be Puvunga? The record does not reflect this kind of determination and the practices of the NRHP would in no way lead us to believe so. If the NRHP is such a rigorous tool for certifying the validity of anthropological scholarship, it ought to be a marvelous research tool, right? Not according to King (1998:94), one of the country's leading authorities on the NRHP:

This is one of the Register staff's ultimate fall-back positions; they honestly seem to think that the Reg-

ister can be a great research tool. This strikes me as utter balderdash. Considering that the Register now represents—and always will represent—a non-random selection of properties that have happened to be nominated and accepted based on quite uncontrolled and uncontrollable variables, what kind of legitimate research does the Register think anyone's going to use it for?

Consider the following points as an illustration of what King is talking about. Records show that dozens of archaeological sites dotted the landscape on and around the CSULB campus, some of which still exist. Yet Dixon (1964:1) remarked that, "In the past, rumor has identified it [CA-LAN-306, Rancho Los Alamitos] as the historic Gabrielino village of Kroeber's (1925) map, but judging from its location one would guess the site to be early; the nearby Los Altos site (LAN-270) may be a better candidate." So why is it that CA-LAN-270 and various other sites, including others on the campus, were not nominated to the NRHP? It does not really matter from the point of view of the NRHP, because the sites that were nominated serve their intended commemorative function. We apologize that the NRHP Inventory-Nomination Form for Puvunga (Dixon 1974) cannot be reproduced here, but permit us to refer briefly to this document. Referring to the campus and Rancho Los Alamitos archaeological sites recommended for listing, in Section 7 of the NRHP nomination form, Dixon (1974:2) said, "These two areas, which are currently visited by the public, are the only ones needed to represent Puvunga in the Register." In Section 8 of the nomination form, Dixon (1974:3) argued that, "It is appropriate that the Puvunga Village sites be included in the National Register as a means of perpetuating the memory of these native peoples and their religion, and as an aid to the program of public education."

Cases such as Puvunga are on the NRHP because they memorialize communities of belief, not because they represent claims to objective historical reality. By the same token, multiple ideas about the nature and location of Puvunga can exist, without invalidating any of these ideas for purposes of

cultural recognition. As we noted in our article, Kroeber (1925) believed that many local expressions of the Chinigchinich religion probably existed among Native Americans across southern California. If so, are the sites currently on the NRHP as Puvunga the *only* locations that could be recognized as such? Probably not. If Native Americans could assert other traditions and locations linked in their beliefs to Puvunga, perhaps other places could be placed on the NRHP to commemorate Puvunga as well.

Why have we pointed out these things? Because the commemoration of Puvunga as recognized by the NRHP never hinged on a showing of absolute fact. The charge that we could somehow "wreck Puvunga" by casting doubt on a nonexistent claim to reality makes no sense. Nobody can disprove that Puvunga commemorates cultural values and beliefs that are important to certain communities. As a result, nothing we have said in our article will impede the commemorative function of the NRHP sites on campus or abridge the university's land management responsibilities in relation to these sites. Nor does our analysis in any way infringe upon the rights of Native Americans or others to believe as they like about Puvunga. What is the fuss about? Perhaps that question should be addressed to those who forecast doom if we or others call for a pluralistic, open-minded look at the history of Puvunga.

We also want to address briefly the idea that our article is suspect because we worked as consultants to CSULB. The reality today is that many anthropologists, archaeologists, and Native Americans—including some of our critics—do consulting work for private corporations, governmental agencies, and tribal authorities. Is the whole lot corrupt? No. The integrity of the consulting process, while not perfect, tends to be enforced by processes that include peer review, the free flow of information, and open discussion and debate. This is where our unpublished manuscript, referred to by Dixon, comes into the picture. We freely circulated this discussion to interested parties; so much for the

idea that we tried to keep anyone in the dark about our research. These mechanisms make it difficult to get away with incompetent or unethical behavior. On this account, we remind readers that our article in this journal underwent the typically rigorous peer review process of the *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology*. Our work for CSULB gave us a relatively rare opportunity to examine a wide range of information but, for the record, we prepared our article on our own time, utilizing our own ideas. In our article, and in our comments here, we speak only for ourselves. Contrary to the suggestions of commentators, campus officials made no effort whatsoever to influence our conclusions or the content of our article.

Although we have said little about Lightfoot's review, its tenor stands in obvious contrast to the other commentaries. We thank Lightfoot for the calm, thoughtful analysis of some of the methodological issues involved in evaluating cases such as Puvunga. We like to think that this article reflects the broader tendencies of California anthropologists and archaeologists.

Finally, we want to address the idea that our article is harmful to Native Americans. Scholars and scientists work within well-defined rules and traditions. We constantly question established beliefs and interpretations, expecting that discussion and debate will lead to more adequate understandings of the things we study. In anthropology, this mode of operation can become problematic when the objects of study include the beliefs and traditions of Native Americans. Of course, anthropologists must approach these matters with sensitivity. But anthropologists also need to approach the study of Native Americans and their cultural legacies in a way that is careful and intellectually honest. One of the reasons we wrote our article is to show by example that anthropologists and archaeologists have not always been careful in making clear how the information they produce can affect others. Indeed, researchers sometimes seem unaware themselves of the potential problems that can arise from their opinions and research. Vine Deloria, Jr. (2000:

xiii), the renowned Indian activist and scholar, puts his finger on a major part of the problem:

We have too much information today. We are saturated by isolated facts for which we have great difficulty finding any familiar context. Indeed, "publication" no longer means acceptance by a prestigious journal. It can often mean simply posting an item on the Internet or talking with a reporter. We have come to believe that what is new is true, and so almost anyone can represent anything by merely appearing as a public figure in a discussion. How, then, can we make sense of what we think we know? One pseudo-fact can become the pivotal point in a controversy no one understands. Nowhere is this condition more endemic than the social sciences, but geology and archaeology contribute more than their share of confusion . . . The social sciences badly need to take a break, collect their thoughts, begin to produce reliable histories of their respective disciplines, and clearly articulate their fundamental doctrines so that we can see the various trees of knowledge that represent the forests in which we labor.

We agree with Deloria. We need long-term perspectives and we need honest and open discussions of how anthropologists work, and how we think we know things. We also need candor about what we do not know. Puvunga is a case in point. Our analysis shows that ideas about Puvunga have changed over time, and that while some interpretations have been more popular than others, no school of thought can lay claim to objective truth. Yet it seems to us that anthropologists have rarely acknowledged these facts explicitly. Why is that?

One answer, of course, is that scholars might selectively promote ideas for the purpose of advancing their own professional or personal agendas. There is nothing necessarily wrong with this, as long as everybody understands the norms of academic life. As scholars, anthropologists assume without question that all interpretations are models subject to revision on the basis of future research. We often deal in provisional truths, and as a result we tolerate multiple, sometimes competing, viewpoints. We certainly expect interpretations of data to change over time. In an arena of open debate, we assume that all points of view will have a hearing.

But anthropologists have not been careful in many cases to point out these facts to Native Americans. Puvunga again is a case in point. Letting the impression stand that there is only one way to look at the history of Puvunga sets the stage for trouble. The result can be a sense of anger and betrayal on the part of Indians who experience academic debate and discussion as an assault on ideas and concepts that they have come to identify—sometimes encouraged by anthropologists—with their cultural heritage. Among other things, the Point Conception and Puvunga cases point to the need for more frequent, open, and honest exchanges between anthropologists and Native Americans about the limits, uses, and diversity of ideas that exist among anthropological researchers.

This kind of candor will not always create agreement, but what are the alternatives? Retreat into mutually suspicious communities of anthropologists and Native Americans is not a productive solution. Some suggest censorship, either self-imposed by anthropologists or by other means if necessary. The basic notion favored by censors is that if discussion or debate about a particular topic is unwelcome to some Native Americans, it ought not be printed or discussed. As well intentioned as this strategy might be, it simply will not work in a society that protects free speech, and in which information is transmitted so easily and widely. Nor can we arbitrarily deny anthropologists the right to comment on the ideas and history of their own discipline. Nor is it necessary to do so. In our article, for example, nowhere did we suggest what Native Americans should believe on spiritual grounds. However, if Native Americans wish to consider the bearing of anthropological scholarship on their cultural identity, we believe that they deserve a kind of “full disclosure.” That is, scholars need to acknowledge honestly and clearly the debates and limits that are inherent in anthropological and archaeological research.

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