

While I find the formulation useful, I suggest instead a more expansive definition which recognizes the fact that costume is but one of a set of signs adopted by masculine drag artists. A drag king, male or female, expressly performs maleness by hyperbolizing the signs of masculinity, conversely, a drag queen expressly performs femaleness by hyperbolizing the signs of femininity. Biological maleness carries with it the social demand for an emphatic use of masculine signs; drag takes this one step further by intentionally hyperbolizing and theatricalizing those signs, regardless of gender. Such gender theatrically may sometimes attempt to render itself as genuine and seek to pass, but its origins always lay in a conscious performance of gendered stereotypes which are themselves hyperbolic. Passing women, by contrast, live their lives as men, preferring, as they do, understatement to hyperbole. Like biological men, they utilize the signs of masculinity emphatically; emphasis and hyperbole are quite different things.

Gender theatricality, as defined above, is independent of sexual orientation; anyone can do it. Still, the fact remains that the great majority of drag artists are either gay, lesbian or transgendered, and that all of the women with whom I worked built primary emotional and sexual relationships with other women. But when I asked them if there was any relationship between their sexual orientation and their work as drag artists, most responded negatively, attributing the choice instead to a profusion of feminist goals; only one suggested that it helped to have a sexual knowledge of women when entertaining as a drag king. Why then, were the drag kings all queer? In my introduction I suggested that since drag is by nature gender-disruptive, it has always come naturally/culturally to queers. But many scholars have linked drag to camp and seen both specifically as products of gay male culture; lesbians who did drag were simply borrowing the strategy (see Bergman; Meyer).

I see this line of thinking as but another example of the pervasive tendency to view women as naught but a pale imitation of men. Drag, some claim, has a history among gay men that it simply does not among lesbians; therefore it must belong exclusively to gay male culture. I suggest rather that drag has something of a history among all gender transgressors, and that drag is attractive to all those who feel limited by their assigned gender roles. Women, however, had simply lost the space they had to perform it; the drag king concept, while "always available," never had the chance to develop "into a continuously generating tradition the way drag queen has" (Esther Newton, as quoted in Halberstam, 1998, p 301). While the first half of the 20th century saw a tradition of cross-dressing actresses, blues women and lounge singers flourish (see Halberstam; Faderman; Ferris), the feminist movement of the 1970s fostered the spread of an anti-male attitude among women, especially lesbians, who until rather recently had little desire to engage masculinity in any form. Masculine women were ridiculed within feminist ranks for

imitating men, while lesbian couples with a butch-femme aesthetic were chastised for aping heterosexuality and perpetuating the patriarchy (see Nestle; Faderman; Rubin). There was simply no friendly space for a drag king.

Several of the women I spoke to expressed surprise that they were, in fact, accepted among the more "PC" lesbians, who "traditionally have hated men" (No less than three of the nine women I interviewed spoke these words to me). They did not expect their acts to go over as well as they did. It is true, I believe, that 15 or 20 years ago, their acts would not have been well received. But audiences have changed. Drag Kings have emerged in the 1990s, I suggest, because the political environment has changed yet again, and men are no longer cast as villains. Post-feminists are less willing to see themselves as victims of a male enemy and more likely to consider themselves liberated and independent actors. Young women today refuse to acknowledge any sort of gender imbalance they cannot overcome, and many respect the "new man" as a vital contributor to society. The age of AIDS, too, has drawn lesbians and gay men together, where they have found certain shared aspects of culture and sexuality; a lesbian can accept her attraction to masculinity and still remain true to her politics. Women, feeling more secure in their gains and achievements, see themselves on a more equal footing with men. As men and masculinity grow in the esteem of women and lesbians, masculine women reap some of the benefits; because men are no longer perceived as threatening, it is safe once again for women to be masculine. It makes sense, then, that the post-feminist 1990s have finally opened up a space for Drag Kings to exist; it also accounts for the fact that nearly all of my informants went for the feminist explanation of why they do drag.

Mo B Dick

Here is one example of a Drag King performance by Mo B Dick (Maureen Fischer), seems "Moby" is the richest metaphor in art and performance art and music these days!

He made his entrance into the crowd, shouting "Hallelujah! Amen!" and sprinkling holy water on us as he passed. Taking the stage, he proclaimed loudly "The Drag Kingdom is come!" and, reading from "The Book of More-Men," proceeded to address the crowd with Pentecostal fervor:

"Brothers and Sisters, I want to read from the righteous book of the gender free. Right here in the Chapter 13 it says, and I quote: and on the eighth day the gods realized that there must be a third sex. And then the gods created the royal family of the drag queens and the drag kings. Hallelujah!"

Now Here is a Drag King, I thought, who's read Gilbert Herdt. Fully aware of the theory behind the performance, the Reverend condensed it for the audience:

"Brothers and Sisters, many people ask me, they say, what is a drag king? What is it? What is it? What is this movement that's sweeping the nation? What is

it? I'm here to tell you; I'm a special messenger. I am a Reverend. A drag king is a person who wants gender euphoria! A drag king is a person who has accepted their female masculinity! And a drag king is a person who likes fast cars and cheap women, Amen! Amen! Ooh, Lordy, I'm feelin' it."



Vermont

Power to the queer brothers and sisters in Vermont for succeeding in winning a crucial legal battle for alternatively gendered folk raising families and desiring legal marriage. What a fantastic way to enter the millennium regardless of how many of us choose these institutions. The message, based on the Vermont and not the US constitution, is that queer families are a positive contributing force for American society.

Please send any info, calls for papers, comments and especially any works in progress (abstracts, fieldwork plans, current publications you want blurred) to Stass at estassinos@annamaria.edu. SOLGA's new she-chair is Sandy Fairman-Silva.

Society for Linguistic Anthropology

CYNDI DUNN AND RICHARD SENGHAS, CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

I am pleased to announce that Richard Senghas (Sonoma State U) will be the new co-editor for this column; look for his first column next month. I would also like to thank out-going editor Jim Wilce for two years of interesting and informative columns.

Note that Mar 1 is the deadline to submit sessions to be considered for SLA-invited status at the Annual Meeting. Due to an increase in membership, we now have three "invited" slots on the program, and this can be a way to raise the profile of your session. Contact Laura Miller (address below) for more details.

Also note the Mar 1 deadline for AAA awards recognizing distinguished teaching (Mayfield Award), service to the profession (Boas Award), communication of anthropology to the public through the media (AIME), and the anticipatory use of anthropology to address issues of public concern (Textor Award). Complete descriptions and nomination requirements can be found in the Awards Alert column of the Dec 1999 AN. Please nominate colleagues whom you feel are deserving of recognition.

Conference Announcements

The 8th annual Lavender Languages Conference (Sep 22-24, 2000, American U, Washington DC) invites 1000 word proposals for presentations exploring any facet of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered or queer conversation, narrative, literature, semiotics or other language/linguistic themes. Papers for a special session on "The Language of Will & Grace" are welcomed. Visit www.american.edu/LavenderLanguage or contact Bill Leap, Conference Director, wlm@american.edu for details. Abstract deadline: Apr 30.

Emory U, Georgia Institute of Technology and International Society for the Study of Narrative Literature will sponsor an International Conference on Narrative Apr 6-9, 2000. See the Meeting Calendar for further details.

Sociolinguistics and Anthropology in New Zealand

By Yukako Sunaoshi (U of Auckland, New Zealand)

As an American-trained sociolinguist, I wasn't sure what to expect when I first arrived in New Zealand. What I found was people doing very interesting work in sociolinguistics, but very little along the lines of linguistic anthropology as I had studied it in the States. This essay is an overview of current sociolinguistic research in New Zealand and some of the possible reasons for the lack of a linguistic anthropology focus. It is a necessarily partial truth based on my personal observations and discussions with a few individuals.

I recently earned my PhD from the U of Texas at Austin. My official affiliation was the department of linguistics, but at UT, sociolinguists (in Linguistics) and linguistic anthropologists (in Anthropology) form a shared community of practice dedicated to pursuing the study of connections between language, society and culture. While finishing my dissertation, I spent 1997-98 as a visiting researcher at Victoria U of Wellington, New Zealand. Since last Jun, I have been teaching courses on Language and Society in Japan at the U of Auckland, New Zealand.

It is interesting that we often find or become aware of our identity when we are out of our place of origin. In my case, visiting Victoria U made me realize how their definition of sociolinguistics and mine differed. At UT, I did not have to dichotomize sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology. They were on a continuum, overlapping with each other. In New Zealand, there seems to be no linguistic anthropology program, and very few scholars seem to approach language with an anthropological concern. Janet Holmes (Victoria U-Wellington) and Allan Bell (U Auckland) are two of New Zealand's most prominent figures in sociolinguistics. Although both conduct intriguing sociolinguistic research, there is very little about their work that could be described as anthropological. My impression is that in both cases, ethnography is not really part of their methodologies. And to me, this is the indication that they are sociolinguists, but not linguistic anthropologists.

Niko Besnier (Victoria U—Wellington) told me that there are perhaps only one or two more scholars besides himself in New Zealand whom he would describe as linguistic anthropologists. He is not hired as a linguistic anthropologist but as a sociocultural anthropologist. One reason he pointed out for this situation is the strong influence the British tradition of anthropology has had in the field of anthropology in NZ. Donn Bayard (U of Otago), who has been teaching an undergraduate course titled "Linguistic Anthropology," commented that linguistic interest with-

in anthropology is marginal and he considers his main interests as sociolinguistics.

At the U of Auckland, until very recently, linguists belonged to two departments: English and Anthropology. Now, all linguists belong to a Linguistics Dept. I still have limited knowledge of these linguists, but my understanding is that those who were under the English department are mostly formal (Chomskian) people, whereas those who were under the Anthropology department are mostly descriptive people. It should be noted, however, that many of these linguists are interested in the sociocultural aspects of language use and that the division between formal and other types of linguistics is generally not as strong in NZ as in the US. The predominant languages being studied here are NZ English, Maori and languages of the Pacific Islands. Therefore, it is not difficult to find someone who is working on an indigenous/endangered language or society, but their approaches are likely to differ from those of US-trained linguistic anthropologists.

Te Reo Maori (the Maori language), and Maori people's cultural issues also tend to be studied under the discipline of Maori Studies. One interesting difference between NZ and the US is that NZ government has become more proactive in terms of maintenance of Maori language and culture (eg Maori Language Commission at the government, pre-schools operated in Maori). Therefore, Maori people seem much more visible here than Native Americans in the US. A number of issues related to Maori language, culture and identity seem to be studied in various disciplines, but not as part of linguistic anthropology. Because of the politico-historical situation, the major focus of ethnic studies in NZ has been on Maori-Pakeha (European-originated New Zealanders) issues and relatively little attention has been given to more recent immigrant groups from non-European countries, including Asians such as myself.

There have been extensive studies on various aspects of NZ English. For example, the Wellington Corpus, done at Victoria, is a longitudinal, large-scale study, and various members (eg phonologists, applied linguists, sociolinguists) have used the data for a variety of interesting studies. Another area of interest I noticed is the issues of Kiwi identity/ies. For example, Allan Bell's recent work is concerned with how Kiwi identity is constructed in Air NZ's TV commercials.

I suspect that linguistic anthropology as a field may well be unique to the US. It is important to note that NZ may be too small as a country to establish all possible academic fields. As Janet Holmes pointed out, linguists in NZ cannot afford to be just one kind of linguist if they want to keep their rigorous linguistic inquiries with a limited number of colleagues. This situation suggests at least two things. First, there are people here whose concerns and interests partially overlap with ours. And second, there are a number of situations which are worth receiving academic attention but have not been studied yet. Because of these reasons, I see a good potential for this country's scholars to benefit from linguistic

anthropological approaches. Likewise, I have learned greatly from their dedication to studies of NZ English, Maori and languages of the Pacific.

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Society for Medical Anthropology

ANN MILES AND HOLLY PETERS-GOLDEN,
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

SMA and SfAA Together In San Francisco

By Peter Guarnaccia (Rutgers)

The Society for Medical Anthropology's spring meeting will be held jointly with the Society for Applied Anthropology, Mar 21-26, 2000 at the Cathedral Hill Hotel, San Francisco, CA. The Program for the SMA spring meeting has developed into a varied and exciting set of sessions. The Program will begin with the SMA Plenary entitled "The Contributions of Medical Anthropology to Anthropology and Beyond" to be held on Wed, Mar 22, 2000 from 2:00-5:00 PM. The participants in the plenary are: Art Rubel, Arthur Kleinman, Charles Leslie, Margaret Lock, Rayna Rapp and William Dressler. Some of the questions the panelists have been asked to address include: 1) What have been the major accomplishments of medical anthropology from which to build a medical anthropology for the 21st Century? 2) How has medical anthropology contributed to the theoretical, substantive and applied development of anthropology as a field? 3) What are the promising and urgent directions, both theoretical and applied, for medical anthropology for the next century? Following the Plenary, there will be a reception hosted by SMA and sponsored by SfAA.

We also have a number of rich and exciting sessions organized by Board Members for the Meetings. These include: Evolutionary Perspectives on Health: Relevance to Health Policy (Andrea Wiley) examines the concept of adaptation from a biocultural perspective and the role of evolutionary medicine in informing health policy issues to improve well-being.