

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

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### 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.