



Beng child care, Côte d'Ivoire

Alma Gottlieb

As usual we want to follow the AAA in encouraging people to submit poster sessions, whether for SHA or elsewhere. These are often much more useful than the 15-minute sound-bites of presented papers, with far more time for the discussion of ideas. But regular sessions are needed, too!

### If Dr Spock Were Born in Bali

At the November meeting in San Francisco, the SHA sponsored two invited panels, one of which was "If Dr Spock Were Born in Bali . . . : Testing the Boundaries of Ethnographic Writing," organized by Alma Gottlieb (U Illinois). The papers in the session reflected on the experimental writing techniques that characterize the recent book, *A World of Babies: Imagined Childcare Guides for Seven Societies*, edited by Judy DeLoache and Alma Gottlieb (2000).

In the book, seven interdisciplinary authors propose imagined childcare guides for seven societies, to explore child-rearing practices that are quite removed from the contemporary US. They also critique the culturally constructed nature of the childcare manual, exemplified by the well-known book by Dr Spock, with its implicit (if unintended) naturalist/universalist model of childhood—the notion of an Everybaby.

In inventing a playful yet dead-serious ethnographic genre, the book's authors broach many intellectual and/or scholarly boundaries. In the AAA session, four of the volume's authors reflected on their involvement in the project. Joining in the lively and ongoing conversation about opening up the writing of ethnography to experimental forms, they addressed questions such as:

What are the appeals in general to experimental writing in the social sciences? What are the risks—intellectually, politically, pragmatically?

In writing playfully for an imagined audience who is not intended as the actual reader, what are the intellectual/political/ethical risks . . . and benefits?

What challenges are posed to a scholar aiming to write for a non-scholarly audience?

Are there some truths that can be more effectively expressed through narrative and other fictional techniques than through traditional social science writing? Can social scientists use irony to make serious scholarly points?

Are there advantages to writing about a population on the basis of other researchers' fieldwork rather than one's own?

Do students and professors face the same risks in writing experimentally?

In addressing these and related questions, the session engaged a variety of contemporary debates in the practice of writing ethnography. Participants in the session were Carol Delaney (on Muslim villagers of Turkey), Marissa Diener (on Bali), Michelle Johnson (on semi-sedentary Fulani of West Africa) and Alma Gottlieb (on Beng farmers of Côte d'Ivoire).

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## Society of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists

ELIZABETH STASSINOS, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

### The Queer Superbowl

As we recover from the queer superbowl, aka The Academy Awards, SOLGANS have a few of our own talents to celebrate. This year there were two Benedict awards for single authored books: Esther Newton with the tickle-me-Ruth title of the year, *Margaret Mead Made Me Gay*, and Stephen Murray for *Homosexualities*. The edited book prize went to Barb Voss and Rob Schmidt, the editors of *Archaeologies of Sexuality*. Also, for undergrad and grad Solgans, those Solgans who are teaching, or those who know of students who might want to apply, please send student articles or term papers in for the Payne Prize next year (contact Sandy Faiman-Silva [sfaimansilva@bridgew.edu](mailto:sfaimansilva@bridgew.edu)). I encourage all of you to submit to Barb West, our new editrix... you know what I mean! You may do this via email or via our Solga webpage at: [www.usc.edu/isd/archives/oneigla/solga/](http://www.usc.edu/isd/archives/oneigla/solga/). You can find this site through the [aaanet.org](http://aaanet.org) resource site for the AAA. I will now put more time into my solo Northampton speedfolk guitar act, Lesbian Handyman Detective (LHD. Is that the good cholesterol?). Ever, Stass.

Please send articles, debates and news to Barbara West (U of the Pacific) at [bwest@uop.edu](mailto:bwest@uop.edu). Our co-chairs are Sandy Faiman-Silva ([sfaimansilva@bridgew.edu](mailto:sfaimansilva@bridgew.edu)) and Lawrence Cohen ([cohen@uclink.berkeley.edu](mailto:cohen@uclink.berkeley.edu)).

## Society for Linguistic Anthropology

RICHARD SENGHAS AND JAMES STANLAW,  
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

This month we are pleased to present an interview with George Lakoff, a scholar well-known to most SLA readers. More of this interview can be found in the Knowledge Exchange section of this issue (and the complete text is given at the Mind

Project Cognitive Science Website at Illinois State U at [www.mind.ilstu.edu](http://www.mind.ilstu.edu); for username, type MINDPRO and for password, type ROBOTS). Lakoff will also be a keynote speaker at the Ninth Annual Symposium About Language and Society (SALSA) Conference, to be held at the U of Texas, Austin, April 20-22 ([www.utexas.edu/students/salsa](http://www.utexas.edu/students/salsa)).

JS: *So perhaps you could explain to anthropologists about why this revolution in philosophy about embodiment would be an important and critical issue for them to know about.*

GL: OK. Well, one of the things, say, that Pierre Bourdieu brought to the study of society—from both sociology and anthropology—is the awareness of how much the body plays a role in everyday life. But we're finding other, deeper, kinds of bodily issues. Things like the fact—which is something very remarkable—that the mind is embodied. This is because people had thought that when we studied cognition we were studying something disembodied, something separate, something abstract and so on.

And what we found was that it wasn't. That there weren't just concepts out there: that they had to do with the way your mind and your body interact—and your brain and your body interact—with the world. Now, the way in which this happens in detail is interesting because, if you think of it from the point of view of more classical anthropology—that is, if you ask the question, "How are people alike, and how are they different?"—one kind of answer that cognitive anthropologists tried to get was how are they conceptually alike.

What we found is that conceptually there are lots and lots of commonalities around world. There are lots of basic, what we call, "image schemas," which are the primitives for spatial relations concepts. These seem to be the same around the world even though the spatial relations concepts are different.

The same thing, remarkably, happens in the metaphor system. There is a set of what we call primary metaphors that are very similar in languages and cultures around the world, and these are very simple ones, though there are quite a number of them. Then, to get complex metaphors, they are put together in complex ways that can be quite different from culture to culture—though even some of the complex metaphors turn out to be similar. But we haven't studied them enough to really know just what the similarities and differences are.

The exciting thing about this is, we have opened up the study of conceptual systems—embodied conceptual systems—in a new way that hasn't been done before. We are just beginning to look at them in other languages, and we would love to have the cooperation of people who do anthropological linguistics in looking to see what the conceptual systems are—which one are similar and different across languages—but this is not an easy thing to do.

That is one important thing to say, but one of the remarkable things is if you ask why should it be that are such similarities across cultures, the

answer is, is that people pretty much have the same bodies with respect to the relevant issues. So, you know, we all have two eyes, we all have brain structures that are pretty much the same. . . . And we all live in worlds with a gravitation field, have night and day, and have plants and animals and so on. In spite of all the many differences among peoples around the world and among individuals, there are very very important striking similarities that lead to similarities of conceptual systems. So, if you wanted to ask the old question, "How are people alike and how are people different?" this is a new way of answering that question.

[For example,] anthropologists talk a lot about kinship, of course, but there has been less talk about systems for time, or systems of causation, or the structure of events. Or the concept of the self; there has been some discussion of this but now we find there is a very rich concept of the self that, in part, is the same in English—America and most Western countries—and Japan, even though there are differences. It is not that there are no differences, but it is also a rich and identical system that people didn't know about. Before that, anthropologists were writing about how different the concept of the self was, instead of saying it is different in these ways but similar in other ways. Again, once you have opened up conceptual systems for serious study, then, you can ask questions that were just never asked before.

Please send your comments, contributions, news and announcements to Richard Senghas ([richard.senghas@sonoma.edu](mailto:richard.senghas@sonoma.edu)) or Jim Stanlaw ([stanlaw@ilstu.edu](mailto:stanlaw@ilstu.edu)).

## Society for Medical Anthropology

ANN MILES AND FRED BLOOM, CO-CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

### SMA Business Meeting

On November 17, 2000 the SMA Business Meeting took place in San Francisco. As promised earlier by SMA President Bill Dressler, the Meeting had a new look. To engage the membership more fully in the SMA's business, reports by Board members and committees were streamlined, giving more opportunity for new business to emerge from the floor.

Bill's opening remarks evoked Woody Allen, who said that "90% of success in life involves just showing up." That being so, the editors noted the room packed with successful people. Bill continued, however, by discussing the serious work of the SMA last year to increase the presence of medical anthropology in venues such as the NIH.

The first business was the presentation of awards. Since there were too few submissions, no student prizes (Rivers and Hughes) were awarded for 2000. James Trostle urged the membership to encourage more student submissions (see [www.cudenver.edu/public/sma](http://www.cudenver.edu/public/sma) for Prize details). The Polgar Prize went to Carla Makhlof Obermeyer for the best paper ("Female Genital Surgeries: The

Known, the Unknown, and the Unknowable") published in the *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 13:1, March 1999. The Basker Memorial Prize, presented by James Carey, went to Gelya Frank for her book *Venus on Wheels: Two Decades of Dialogue on Disability, Biography and Being Female in America*, U California Press 2000. The Virchow Prize, from the Critical Anthropology of Health Caucus, went to Carolyn Smith.

*Medical Anthropology Quarterly* Editor Mac Marshall reported that the board approved a permanent page increase. The past year saw 63 submissions and 15 papers accepted, with a selective 24% acceptance rate. Papers are now reviewed in approximately two months. Innovations for MAQ were discussed, including theme issues and the posting of back issues on "Jstore.org."

Some Executive Committee Reports were delivered by Bill, who noted the following highlights. Barbara Koenig reported the financial health of SMA is good, with a fund balance of \$104,000 and a deficit of \$3,000 projected for 2000. A dues increase is likely by 2005. New officers and board members are Mark Nichter, President-elect; Mark Luborsky, Secretary/Treasurer; Cheryl Mattingly, Catherine Panter-Brick, Paul Farmer, Executive Board; Sabrina Chase, Student Board Member. James Trostle agreed to serve an extra one-year term. Abby Kohn, the student representative, reported that the guide to graduate programs is "on-line" on the SMA web site and that they sponsored two successful events at the meetings.

Ruthbeth Finerman (AAA Program Committee, with Andrea Wiley), reported on their work. Ruthbeth noted that because of space considerations at the hotel, the 2000 Meetings were extremely competitive. There were 10 proposals for invited sessions with space for only four.

Peter Guarnaccia reported on the *Amicus Curiae* (Friend of the Court) brief submitted by the SMA to the US Supreme Court concerning drug testing of pregnant women. This set a precedent for the SMA and resulted in new AAA policy. He also reviewed the SfAA/SMA meeting last March. The Board would like feedback about future joint meetings with SfAA or others.

Bill then provided details of his activities to increase the profile of medical anthropologists in various agencies. He highlighted work at NIH and the National Center of Complementary and Alternative Medicine. He discussed the AAA section assembly, pointing out that the SMA should be more involved in nominations.

In new business, Charles Briggs, from the AAA Public Policy Committee, described the Committee's work, adding that "the path-breaking policy work of Medical Anthropologists is well understood." The Committee's purpose is to increase anthropology's participation in the public arena. He urged members to submit "expert" data sheets to the SMA web site and asked how the Association can assist members. Robert Hahn proposed that the SMA Board create a membership registry indicating areas of policy expertise. Bill agreed the Board would take on this task. Next, Rob Lemelson described the Foundation for Psycho-

Cultural Research for anthropologists working at the boundary of the social and neurosciences.

To close, Bill informed the membership that the search for a new MAQ Editor will soon be initiated. Suggestions from the membership to the search committee are welcome.

Explore the SMA website for an expanded version of this column at [www.cudenver.edu/public/sma](http://www.cudenver.edu/public/sma). To submit, contact Ann Miles, Anthropology, WMU, Kalamazoo, MI 49008; 616/387-3983, fax 616/387-3999, [Miles@wmich.edu](mailto:Miles@wmich.edu).

## Society for Psychological Anthropology

KEVIN BIRTH, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

### Student Essay Competition

As was announced in the awards column of the January 2001 AN (p 34), every year there is a SPA student essay competition. The deadline is May 1, so if you are a student, now is the time to start planning your submission. If you have students who have written strong papers, now is the time to encourage them to revise their work and enter it. The winning essay is published in *Ethos* and the winner gets a year's membership in the SPA, which includes a subscription to *Ethos* and travel expenses (covering airfare, hotel and registration expenses) to attend the 2001 biennial meeting of the SPA to be held in Decatur, Georgia.

Papers submitted for consideration should follow these guidelines: 1) No evidence of the author's identity may be provided in any way through the text or by reference in the paper; 2) the author's name and address, student affiliation and the title of the paper must be provided on a separate cover sheet accompanying the manuscript, which should be identified by the title; 3) authors must be students at the time of writing the paper; entries should be accompanied by a photocopy of the student identification card; 4) papers must not exceed 35 double-spaced pages and must follow the style of *Ethos*; and 5) the original and three copies of the paper must be submitted and received by May 1, 2001, accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped manila envelope if return of the original is desired. Submissions that do not meet the above requirements will be considered ineligible and returned without consideration; those that qualify will be forwarded to the awards committee after May 15. Entries should be addressed to Theresa O'Neill, SPA Secretary/Treasurer, Dept of Anth, 1218 U of Oregon, Eugene, OR, 97403; 541/346-5100, fax 541/346-0668, [tonell@oregon.uoregon.edu](mailto:tonell@oregon.uoregon.edu).

### Northeast Psychological Anthropology Meeting

The date for this meeting has been changed to April 30, 2001. If you are planning to attend and want the schedule, directions or parking information, please contact Kevin Birth at [kevin\\_birth@qc.edu](mailto:kevin_birth@qc.edu) or 718/997-5518.