

politics in Cauca over the past three decades. Other participants were Adonías Perdomo of the community of Pitayó, Cauca; Susana Pinacué of the Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca; David Gow of George Washington U; and Myriam Amparo Espinosa and Tulio Rojas Curieux of the Universidad del Cauca.

Academic anthropologists must shift priorities when we come into contact with indigenous intellectuals. We must, for example, transform our understanding of the boundedness—or lack thereof—of cultures and of what it means to theorize culture from non-Western subject positions, if we are to enter into conversation with native scholars who harness intuition and sentiment to empirical research, in an effort to produce studies that can be used by popular educators, community organizers and ethnic leaders. Our critique of essentialism must be abandoned in favor of a new look at how these native researchers use cultural forms to frame a utopian project for the future of their communities; that is, we can no longer apologize for the “strategic essentialism” of indigenous activists but must, instead, reconsider what their cultural project really does. Finally, we must consider what it means to enter into relationships that imply taking risks, both intellectual and affective, that transform our articulation within academic and activist networks, something that native intellectuals have always been forced to do.

Please send short articles and photos that could be of interest to our readers, care of Gabriela Vargas-Cetina, facultad de antropología, universidad autónoma de Yucatán, Calle 76 #455-LL, Merida, Yucatan, México; tel and fax [52]999/925-4523; gvargas@webtelmex.net.mx or gabriela_vargas_cetina@hotmail.com.

Society of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists

BARB WEST, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

The fieldwork essay this month comes from somebody's very first foray into the field.

Doing Fieldwork

By Dominic Imperiale, Independent Scholar

Since I started my college career I have been in love with anthropology. I was already doing “fieldwork” as a junior, when I took a psychological anthropology course that required a research paper. Unfortunately, a course in methods was lacking in my department and students who were interested in doing research were just given a reading list, instead of some one-on-one guidance on research methodology. I attribute this attitude to Roger Sanjek's notion that fieldnote taking is not taught in the classroom because some see fieldnote writing as a rite of passage into the discipline. The lack of a methods course made my first fieldwork experience all the richer because I had to use my own logic and sense in designing my research.

My first real fieldwork experience occurred my senior year. I wanted to prepare a research paper for presentation at my university's undergraduate research symposium. I struggled in the beginning on what to do, how to do it, and why was it even important. The last question was easy enough to answer, it was my project and if no one else found it important, I did and that was all that mattered. (Until my fateful trip into graduate school, when I was taught a hard lesson that if your adviser doesn't like a topic, then it doesn't matter how important it is to you.) The two former questions were much harder for me to answer.

I had a great theory to test, but how to do it? Should I amble through the confusing maze of statistics or follow in the footsteps of my predecessors who used descriptive ethnography? My population was special; I was dealing with closeted gay men. What should I do? Then it hit me. Describe the sample with statistics and use interviews to back-up my theory.

I then knew how I wanted to answer my question, but I was still in the dark on how to get my information. I never imagined how hard it would be to find a method to make sense out of my madness. How do I get a group of homosexuals to open up and talk to me about their social and sexual lives? I knew I needed questions to prod information out of them and get the ball rolling, but how to approach it?

I sat with a group of classmates and we brainstormed. By the time the third beer settled into my system, I had my answer. Use a combination of questionnaires and interviews. I'd use questionnaires with carefully worded questions to get the data and then give the informants the opportunity to volunteer for interviews. Luckily, I didn't know they would all agree to the interview and the nightmare it would be to code those interviews!

I then had my what, how, and why, and then needed the informants. By this time I discovered H Russell Bernard's book on methods. I read about the various types of informants but when it came down to it, I was on my own. I quickly learned that closeted gay men were very hard to come by, which makes perfect sense. Therefore, I used the snowball method: I found one and he soon pointed me to the others. But I still had the problem of asking my questions.

That was where the real lessons were learned. Many of my informants were quite demure when it came to discussions of sexuality. So I needed questions that could allow them to talk about their sexual lives in ways that would not compromise the cowboy code of modesty. My key informant suggested leading questions that would bring my cowboys to water. I took his advice and soon realized I was maturing into some likeness of an anthropologist.

I received an award for the paper and presentation. I was later approached by four of my informants, who thanked me for telling their story. The lesson I took from my first fieldwork was that it takes more than a methods class to make a good anthropologist; it takes a storyteller

who can speak for those who cannot speak for themselves.

To join the SOLGA listserv please send an email with Subscribe SOLGA in the body to listserv@American.edu. If you have a fieldwork story of your own to tell contact me at bwest@uop.edu.

Society for Linguistic Anthropology

MARK ALLEN PETERSON AND JAMES STANLAW,
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

This month we present excerpts from an interview with Ray Jackendoff. More of this interview can be found in the Knowledge Exchange section of this issue, or under “Anthropology News” at <http://lilt.ilstu.edu.soa>.

Language Components

Ray Jackendoff: I think what's the innovation here is to say that the system of language is really a number of parallel components—each of which is created—and then there are components that serve as interfaces between them, so that you are matching up the phonological structure with the syntactic structure. Now the other major innovation in my approach is that instead of thinking of words as units that are inserted into syntactic structures, I'm thinking of words as ways of connecting across the multiple structures. So a word like “cat” is a piece of phonology that is perhaps [kæt], and is a piece of syntax that says it's a singular noun, and it's a piece of meaning that says it means whatever “cat” means. So using the word is establishing a connection across the different structures. So the purpose of words is to give you the minimal-sized memorized encodings that relate the three linguistic structures. And then there are further rules that tell you how to relate phrases.

The other thing that it does very nicely is connect models of language processing. In the syntactic models of Chomsky you sort of say, “Well, in the formal model you start with syntax and then it branches outward to phonology and meaning.” Well, in processing, if you are *listening* to language you want to start with sound and map the meaning; and if you're *producing* you want to start with meaning and map the sound. And neither of those is possible directly within the standard generative grammar. So in my model it's really a question of mapping across these interfaces, which don't have any direction to them; you're just saying these are ways you can make structures correspond. So you can map the rules of grammar rather directly into a processing model. And a lot of the psycholinguistics work fits very nicely into my model in saying that you are sorting on the basis of phonological input—you're trying to figure out what words you have—and then those are telling you how to start building structures in the other components.

The other thing it does is that it now sets you free to work on a generative theory of meaning that doesn't wipe out syntax. It acknowledges the insight that meaning is something separate, and you can talk about it as interacting with the rest of the mind—with perception and action in rather the same way it interacts with language.

Jim Stanlaw: Do you think with this phonology-syntax-semantics model we could then extend this into more formal ways of talking about sociolinguistic rules and conversational analysis?

RJ: Well, I imagine that the question would be, what are the principles that knit sentences together in a conversational discourse, and are those a subset of the things you can do within sentences or are they an entirely different set? My impression is that they are not completely wild; that is, that it is pretty constrained. But you can see what the puzzle is: what do we expect the overall form of the narrative to be, or what do we expect the overall form of a conversation to be. We have to ask where did those expectations come from, and how did we learn them? And I guess you can look at the issues of speech register and code switching similarly: certain words are marked for register and the whole thing has to match up, and so on. And register can include all kinds of things, so there can be words that are used, say, in certain rituals and as soon as you hear that, it carries the whole thing into a ritual domain. Or that there are marks of some kind of ethnic identification. And those are actually pretty simple, normally. The more interesting ones are conversational connectedness.

Please send your comments, contributions, news and announcements to SLA Contributing Editors Jim Stanlaw (stanlaw@ilstu.edu) or Mark Peterson (peterson@aucegypt.edu).

Society for Medical Anthropology

NANCY VUCKOVIC AND JANELLE TAYLOR,
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Take a Stand!

One of the special features of SMA's recently revamped website, www.medanthro.net, is a forum devoted to "SMA Takes a Stand," which is an initiative designed to facilitate a greater level of involvement by our organization with issues having national and international health importance. Mark Nichter, president, describes the process thus:

What I would like to introduce is a participatory process enabling SMA members to spend a year considering an issue in depth. Here is the process I envision. The SMA Board will select one issue each year for deliberation. During this year, a task force will be formed to facilitate this process of consciousness raising. Background readings will be made available to all SMA members on the website, and a bulletin board will be established allowing members to express opinions and exchange ideas. At the end of the year,

an invited session will then be organized at the AAA (or SMA meetings) and a policy paper will be written by members of the task force explaining the role(s) that anthropologists can play in addressing the focal issue.

We present here brief summaries of two discussions that have been initiated. Please visit the website, weigh in with your considered views, and help SMA "take a stand" on these important issues.

Clinical Drug Trials

An increasing proportion of clinical drug trials are conducted in developing countries where access to health care and government oversight of research are limited to nonexistent. Are vulnerable populations being exploited for benefits that accrue to people elsewhere? How do we protect against exploitation without unduly constraining much-needed health research that could, in fact, benefit vulnerable populations? What role should anthropologists play in the process of introducing and translating the purpose of clinical trials to local populations, insuring that they understand their rights, monitoring clinical trials in an environment subject to stakeholder and political economic interests, and serving as a watchdog?

Is the point of informed consent conveying information as facts or enhancing the understanding of a potential participant in a research project or clinical trial? Is enhancing understanding by analogical reasoning an acceptable form of cultural translation? Is the point of informed consent to provide information to a potential participant in a clinical trial (or any research project) or to educate them? What kinds of translational research are necessary? What is the role of translation research in better understanding how participants understand informed consent forms and learning? What kinds of communication approaches might improve their comprehension?

Are Fieldnotes Privileged Information?

Some ethnographers may not be aware that their fieldnotes, unlike the records kept by doctors for example, are not privileged information, and can be subpoenaed as legal evidence even when the anthropologist is not one of the defendants in the case, unless one has applied for (in advance) and been granted a "Certificate of Confidentiality" from DHHS. Should we as a scholarly community work to establish and defend the confidentiality of our research materials? Under what conditions would this be appropriate? How might we go about it?

What are the costs and the consequences of collective scholarly inaction on this issue, if individual ethnographers working in biomedical settings, such as Sheldon Zink (U of Pennsylvania) whose case is discussed on the website, must either turn over their fieldnotes or face jail time? Will this create an environment of distrust that would prevent ethnographers' access to biomedical research settings in the future? Does it send a message that raw anthropological data is part of the public domain in all issues of conflict? Will it

be impossible to ethically conduct fieldwork in locations where subjects could be vulnerable to any legal proceedings? Will anthropologists be required to anticipate the risk of legal proceeds as part of their work/consent process/research design?

What should we as medical anthropologists have to say or wish to do concerning these important issues? What do you think? Take a stand!

Please send your comments, contributions, news and announcements to SMA Contributing Editors Nancy Vuckovic (nancy.vuckovic@kpchr.org) or Janelle Taylor (jstaylor@u.washington.edu).

Society for Psychological Anthropology

REBECCA J LESTER, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

By Connie Cummings (Foundation for Psycho-cultural Research)

PTSD has complex sociocultural and biological determinants that defy any single approach to understanding its genesis or caring for its sufferers. The goal of the conference *Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: Biological, Clinical, and Cultural Approaches to Trauma's Effects*, co-sponsored by the Foundation for Psycho-cultural Research and UCLA, was to examine our cultural, clinical, and basic biological understanding of the disorder from a variety of perspectives—anthropology, neurobiology, history and psychiatry—in order to consider how these various levels of analysis interact and to encourage the formulation of new integrative models. By facilitating interdisciplinary sharing of knowledge and methods through presentations and roundtable discussions, the participants hoped to better understand the ways in which our biology and culture mutually influence both the experience and treatment of mental trauma.

The conference, held from Dec 12-15, 2002, brought together a diverse group of leading scholars, primarily drawn from the basic sciences, clinical and cultural domains, including the biologists Mark Barad, Mark Bouton, Larry Cahill, Christopher Coe, Michael Davis, Michael Fanselow, Emeran Mayer, Michael Meaney, Gregory Quirk, Stephen Suomi; the clinical psychiatrists James Boehnlein, J Doulgas, Bremner, Dennis Charney, David Kinzie, Laurence Kirmayer, Bessel van der Kolk, Robert Pynoos, Arieh Shalev, Rachel Yehuda; the anthropologists Leslie Dwyer, Byron Good, Alexander Hinton, Melvin Konner, Degung Santikarma, Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Allan Young; and the psychiatric historians Mark Micale and Robert Jay Lifton. Finally, former mayor Rudolph Giuliani, who delivered the keynote address, and Richard Sheirer and Rosemarie O'Keefe, other former NYC public officials who helped orchestrate the response to 9/11, as well as survivors from Cambodia, Rwanda, and Afghanistan, provided deep

