

ance (Ed, 1996) and *Women's Struggles and Strategies*, (Blackwood) *Webs of Power: Women, Kin and Community in a Sumatran Village* (1999) and *The Many Faces of Homosexuality: Anthropological Approaches to Homosexual Behavior* (Ed, 1986). Below is the statement from the prize committee about the significance of the text for anthropological studies of homosexual desires/practices across cultures followed by our interview as regards Blackwood's hopes for the text and the discipline's future work.

#### Award statement of the Prize Committee

Among a worthy field of outstanding work, *Female Desires* was the unanimous choice of the Prize Committee for a series of reasons. As Blackwood and Wieringa themselves emphasize in their introduction, the volume addresses the invisibility of female same-sex relations outside the US and Europe in the anthropological literature. It does this through a series of 11 essays, all ethnographically, historically and theoretically brilliant, that explore a wide variety of female same-sex relations around the world. Throughout the authors critically interrogate and situate the categories "woman" and "lesbian" rather than taking them as given, relating them to debates over national authenticity and the imperialist moves of some "Western" queer scholars. The editors' introductory essays situate the collection in the anthropological, queer and feminist literatures.

Both these introductory essays, and each ethnographic essay in the volume, also raise crucial comparative and theoretical points of value to any anthropologist interested in sexuality. These include: how do such ostensibly gender-neutral categories as nationalism and globalization themselves rely on gendered notions of, for instance, movement, the local and the state? How does the female-identified ethnographer situate herself and her knowledge production in the context of those whom she studies? How do colonial histories and postcolonial rhetorics of the state inflect but not determine the subjectivities of women who desire women? How are these subjectivities legitimate and authentic cultural logics rather than simply wholesale importations by women duped by the global? (Tom Boellstorff, Stanford U, on behalf of the 1999 Ruth Benedict Prize Committee)

#### Writing *Female Desires*

This book was the culmination of eight years of work between Blackwood and Wieringa. According to Blackwood, Wieringa contacted her out of the blue which led to their organizing an ICAES (International Congress on Anthropology and Ethnological Sciences, Mexico City) session. This session in turn led to the idea for an edited volume on the topic of female desires. This was around 1993. But because of the time and logistical constraints of their own research and teaching positions, the book stayed in development stage for several more years. As Blackwood says, "without email the book would never have made it," as she continued to nurture the project while doing



Evelyn Blackwood

fieldwork and teaching in Honolulu, West Lafayette, IN (Purdue), Indonesia and San Francisco. Wieringa herself was in motion between the Netherlands, Surinam and Japan. In 1996, the project began coming together when Deb Amory (SUNY Purchase) provided space for working on introductory chapters at her house.

During this phase, contributing authors to the book sent their pieces in, sometimes still in the stage of being translated into English. Because Blackwood and Wieringa felt the project was crucial to the discipline moving forward with these issues, Blackwood even put it ahead of her own monograph on West Sumatra for a year despite tenure pressures. According to Blackwood, all of the authors made considerable sacrifices like hers to get the work done. Some were working on their dissertations, adjuncting while other projects and the job hunt loomed, or being funded for other work and therefore short of research time. That none of them were funded to put time into their part of the project is a statement itself on the major obstacle to creating a place in anthropology for LGBT studies, and particularly lesbian work. Blackwood says that a logical sequel to this book would be another edition, as there is so little research covering major ethnographic areas. This makes me think again that a journal would also answer some of the problems of the poverty of research, such as an LGBT version of *Cultural Anthropology*. Concluding the interview, Blackwood said that she encourages more anthropologists to work on women's same sex relationships, "it's not that they are not there . . ." she said. She also said that more graduate students need to do this work and that the funding must be demanded and created.

We can talk today about Other cultural and international women's communities and what they do. We can even agree that they are finding a voice. Nevertheless, unless we see more books like *Female Desires*, they will continue to be ignored and undervalued in the ethnographic record. Sometimes it seems as if in anthropological discourse, as in popular culture, LGBT persons and their plots are only used to stimulate straight gender insights and funding. Perhaps this is why fieldwork on women's same-sex relations is more invisible than men's. One of the reasons we considered was that working on men's communities might be ethnographically easier. For example, as a fieldworker, I feel that I might be more inclined in Massachusetts to do fieldwork in places that are public gay meccas like Provincetown, than in those "not-so-hidden valleys of the lesbians" areas like Northampton, MA, because of the way that the "natives" make their lives available to national and international tourism and ethnographic scrutiny. On the other hand, the excitement of doing the first work on these issues, as Blackwood and Wieringa and their contributors have done, is that one gets to begin the dialogue, set the agenda and claim one's Margaret Meadian space within the discipline. And this itself should send graduate students into the field.

Please send any information you have on ongoing fieldwork, research, or LGBT conferences to Elizabeth Stassinis (Anna Maria C) at [estassinis@annamaria.edu](mailto:estassinis@annamaria.edu). SOLGA Co-Chair is Sandy Fainman-Silva (Bridgewater C).

## Society for Linguistic Anthropology

RICHARD J SENGHAS AND CYNDI DUNN,  
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Well, we've made it again! This is the final column until Sep. As you conduct research and fieldwork over the next few months (or travel for vacations, for those so lucky), please consider submitting short reports for this column. We also welcome conference reports, and notice of any events of special interest to linguistic anthropologists.

#### SLA Student Paper Competition

Students and their teachers should see the announcement of the SLA student paper competition in the Awards Alert column in the Career Development section of this issue. The winner will be announced at the San Francisco meeting, will receive a \$200 prize, a year's subscription to the *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, and will be listed in the AN. The winning paper will also be automatically submitted to the *JLA* for possible publication.

#### Language Revitalization

Leanne Hinton (UC Berkeley) was featured on public radio in the Bay Area this spring. Broadcast on KQED, the interview addressed language revi-

talization, reporting that linguistic archives of endangered and moribund languages are being used in local efforts to preserve the languages and cultural heritage of linguistic minorities. Some early wax recordings were included, some as old as 100 years. Last year, *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* produced a theme issue on this topic (Vol 30, No 1, Mar 1999), which included an article co-authored by Hinton and Jocelyn Ahlers. I found this particular issue very effective for teaching undergraduate courses in both language change and schooling in cultural context. Students comment that the articles are very accessible, and the situations documented are very useful in discussions connecting theory, research and practice.

### Language and Metaphor

By John McCreery (*The Word Works, Ltd*)

[Editor's note: This piece was originally a response to a thread on Anthro-L. We include it here in hopes of hearing what linguistic anthropologists currently have to say about the issues it raises.]

Tim Mason cites Lewis Carroll; Jesse Cook sturdily defends the need for some shared meaning as a prerequisite of communication. Both, I suggest, point to the poles of one of those binary oppositions that confuse as much as they clarify. I write from a conviction, fostered by the way I make my living, but derived intellectually from the likes of Wittgenstein, Austin and Max Black, also Erving Goffman, Victor Turner, James Fernandez, and (in a lately discovered quite wonderful book) Howard Becker; conventional meaning and metaphor are both intrinsic to the ways in which we human beings use words. What is more interesting to consider sociologically are the situations that move us more in one direction than in the other.

Mathematics provides us with the image of pure conventionality—an extreme at which, do note, meaning disappears altogether or, alternatively, becomes completely arbitrary. Poetry provides us with the image of metaphor fecund with meaning, of words so perfectly chosen for precisely what they point to that when they are juxtaposed a virtual explosion of meaning occurs. Advertising copy (like politicians' speeches) mimics poetry, but remains constrained by the need to speak to mass audiences and to convey primarily the concepts that the advertiser hopes to communicate. Thus it can never stray too far from convention and is thus, do note, often accused by critics of being fundamentally meaningless.

Scholarly discourse tends to be esoteric-conventional but limited to smaller audiences trained by scholarly disciplines to see the potential meanings of terms in severely limited ways. Scholarly insight, however, is never a matter of mere convention. Insights are applauded when embodied in what Max Black calls strong metaphors. To further our discussion, I quote a bit from Black's "More About Metaphor," which

appeared in Andrew Ortony's *Metaphor and Thought* (1979, p 26-7).

Black has just distinguished between "extinct," "dormant" and "active" metaphors. The first are discovered by philologists examining the etymologies of what are now purely conventional words; the second are clichés, not quite dead expressions that may yet be revived by using them in unusual ways; active metaphors are those which strike us forcefully and transform our perceptions of the situations in which they occur.

"Given an active metaphorical statement, it would be useful to discriminate two aspects, which I shall call emphasis and resonance. A metaphorical utterance is emphatic, in my intended sense, to the degree that its producer will allow no variation upon or substitution for the words used [poetry in the image described above]—and especially not for what in Metaphor I called the 'focus', the salient word or expression, whose occurrence in the literal frame invests the utterance with metaphorical force. Plausible opposites to 'emphatic' might include: 'expendable', 'optional', 'decorative', and 'ornamental'. . . . Emphatic metaphors are intended to be dwelt upon for the sake of their unstated implications: Their producers need the receiver's cooperation in perceiving what lies behind the words used.

"How far such interpretative response can reach will depend upon the complexity and power of the metaphor-theme in question: Some metaphors, even famous ones, barely lend themselves to implicative elaboration, while others, perhaps less interesting, prove relatively rich in background implications. For want of a better label, I shall call metaphorical utterances that support a high degree of implicative elaboration resonant.

"Resonance and emphasis are matters of degree. They are not independent: Highly emphatic metaphors tend to be highly resonant (though there are exceptions), while the unemphatic occurrence of a markedly resonant metaphor is apt to produce a dissonance, sustained by irony, or some similarly distancing operation.

"Finally, I propose to call a metaphor that is both markedly emphatic and resonant a strong metaphor. My purpose in the remainder of this paper is to analyze the *raison d'être* and the mode of operation of strong metaphors, treating those that are relatively 'weak' on account of relatively low emphasis or resonance as etiolated specimens."

A final note: One of Black's great purposes was to remind us (as Gordon Fisher has reminded the Anthro-L list) of the role of strong metaphor in the history of science and mathematics: To insist, in other words, that those who see science as a matter of conventional manipulations of just-the-facts-ma'am data are demonstrating their ignorance of what scientists do. His thinking may, I suggest, point beyond the conventional oppositions in which our discussion to date has been embedded.

(John McCreery invites responses at [mccreery@aol.com](mailto:mccreery@aol.com).)

### Useful Addresses:

Susan Gal, SLA President; Dept of Anth, U Chicago, 1126 E 59th St, Chicago, IL 60637-1539; [s-gal@uchicago](mailto:s-gal@uchicago).

Alessandro Duranti, Journal of Linguistic Anthropology editor; Dept of Anthropology, UCLA, CA 90095-1553; [aduranti@ucla.edu](mailto:aduranti@ucla.edu).

Laura Miller, SLA Program Organizer; Dept of Sociology & Anthropology, Loyola U, 6525 N Sheridan Rd, Chicago, IL 60626; tel 773/508-3469, fax 508-7099, [lmille2@luc.edu](mailto:lmille2@luc.edu).

Cyndi Dunn, SLA column co-editor; 716 Ticonderoga Dr, Denton TX 76205; 940/891-3746, [cdunn@gte.net](mailto:cdunn@gte.net).

Richard J Senghas, SLA column co-editor & LINGANTH list administrator; Dept of Anthropology/Linguistics, Sonoma State U, 1801 E Cotati Ave, Rohnert Park, CA 94928-3609; tel 707/664-2312, fax 664-3920, [richard.senghas@sonoma.edu](mailto:richard.senghas@sonoma.edu), [ownerlinganth@ats.rochester.edu](mailto:ownerlinganth@ats.rochester.edu) (for all LINGANTH list business).

## Society for Medical Anthropology

HOLLY PETERS-GOLDEN AND ANN MILES,  
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

### SMA Website Has Moved

Craig Janes (Colorado-Denver) has taken over the SMA website. You may now find it at [www.cudenver.edu/public/sma](http://www.cudenver.edu/public/sma).

### Basker and Virchow Prizes

The deadline for nominations for the Rudolf Virchow Award, given annually by the Critical Anthropology of Health Caucus, is May 25, 2000. Submissions for the Eileen Basker Memorial Prize, established by the SMA to promote excellence in research on gender and health, are due by Jul 1, 2000. See the Awards Alert column for complete information.

### Call for Manuscripts

Andrew Strathern and Pamela J Stewart (both U Pittsburgh) have been appointed co-editors for a new series of medical anthropology publications from Carolina Academic Press. The Series focus is on ethnographic studies from any part of the world, to be used for both teaching and research, written by both new and established researchers. Those interested should contact the editors at Dept of Anthropology, U of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260; tel 412/648-7519, fax 412/648-7535, [pamjan+@pitt.edu](mailto:pamjan+@pitt.edu). Glenn Perkins, Acquisitions Editor, Carolina Academic Press can also be contacted—see the press's web page at [www.cap-press.com/archaeology/med\\_anthro.html](http://www.cap-press.com/archaeology/med_anthro.html).

### New Book Review Editor at MAQ

Beth Conklin (Vanderbilt U) has been selected as the next Book Review Editor for MAQ to serve a 3-year term beginning Jul 1, 2000. She and Barbara Rylko-Bauer, the present editor, will work together to effect a smooth transfer of this office.