

props to Kent Flannery) the good, the bad and the ugly in statistical analysis, and was often struck by the ubiquity of attempts to quantify things that shouldn't or couldn't properly be studied this way.

The beauty of this title is that the article doesn't really need to be written—it is more or less self-evident from the title: "On Quantifying Cool." The cultural category of "cool" is virtually indefinable, yet has been central to a great variety of movements in Western society. If next to impossible to define, it absolutely cannot be quantified; yes, one could posit markers and subject them to analysis, but to do so would be to ignore and defy the very nature of cool. Maybe someday he'll change his mind, have some spare time and turn something out, but until then we'll have to just get by with the title.

Contact either of us at Dept of Anthropology, McGraw Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853; 607/255-6773; fax 607/255-3747. Email Fred at fwg1@cornell.edu (that's the number 1 after fwg, not the letter l) or Vilma at vs23@cornell.edu.

Society for Latin American Anthropology

HORTENSIA CABALLERO-ARIAS, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Nash-Roseberry Graduate Student Award In Latin American and Anthropology

The SLAA created, in December 2005, the Nash-Roseberry Graduate Student Award to honor two of the most outstanding anthropologists in the field of Latin American studies, and to recognize the excellence of students who are coming into the field creatively applying anthropological theory to their field data. The award is a check for 500 USD.

The winner will receive the award during the 2006 meeting of the Society for Latin American Anthropology at the 105th AAA Annual Meeting in San José, California. The award will be handed to the winner at the Annual SLAA/ALLA Cash Bar Reception. If the student is unable to come to the meetings, the check will be mailed to her or him.

The papers must be of 8,000 words maximum including all references, and must have not been submitted for publication. Accepted languages include English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

The papers should be mailed electronically to Gabriela Vargas-Cetina, at gvcetina@tunku.uady.mx and gabyvargasc@prodigy.net.mx. The deadline is September 30, 2006. The winner of the award will be announced the last week of October 2006. The winning paper will be automatically submitted for possible publication to the *Journal of Latin American Anthropology*. All decisions by the award's committee will be final.

Please send any comments, suggestions, ideas, including photos for future columns, to Hortensia Caballero-Arias at hcaballe@ivic.ve or at Centro de Antropología, IVIC, Carretera Panamericana Km 11, Caracas 1020-A, Apartado Postal 21827, Venezuela.

Society of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists

DAVID L R HOUSTON, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Rethinking the SOLGAN

By William L Leap (American U)

The time has come to talk about the future of SOLGA's newsletter, the SOLGAN.

In the days before electronic communication, before queerness became so mainstreamed in academe, and before SOLGA enjoyed "official status" within the AAA, the SOLGAN provided readers with academic news, research reports, job listings, announcements and the all-important book reviews—information its readers could not find in other venues. Today, such information is readily available within the AAA and through other channels. Should the SOLGAN address certain tasks, given that other sources are now meeting its traditional functions, or should we let it die?

At SOLGA's annual business meeting in 2005, I agreed to initiate conversations over the next year that will lead to some concrete proposals regarding future directions for the newsletter. This column is a first step. My hope is that this will prompt some discussion on the SOLGA listserv or through private channels during the summer months. By September 2006, I will circulate the assembled ideas to SOLGA members. From the responses to these ideas and a roundtable discussion at the 2006 annual meeting in San José, I hope to have a set of vetted proposals to present to the SOLGA membership at the 2006 business meeting.

What's Your Vision for the SOLGAN?

With so many sources of information on LGBTQ studies out there, and so many conflicting personal interests, it seems unwise to propose that the SOLGAN become the "flagship journal" for work in LGBTQ anthropology. (Similar arguments led to the creation of the flagship journals for several other AAA societies; the argument as such is reasonable.) I see a strong intellectual future for the SOLGAN if oriented around two tasks: "reviews" (books or articles in journals) and "critical essays" (statements using anthropological method and theory as a basis for entering into ongoing debates in LGBTQ studies, sexuality studies, policy issues or related themes). The intention is twofold: to see the SOLGAN open a space for public reflection on LGBTQ issues and what anthropological perspectives have to say about them, and to make clear that LGBTQ anthropology has not lost its energy, creativity and commitment to calling systems of oppression into question. Those goals lured many of us into anthropology—and into SOLGA—in the first place.

That's my vision for the SOLGAN—what's yours?

Hidden Homophobia in *Brokeback Mountain*

By Jeffrey M Dickemann (Sonoma State U, Ret)

[Warning: plot exposition]

High on the list for Oscars, this film has been widely reviewed. As Richard Goldstein observes in *The Nation* (Jan 23, 2006): "it conforms to our assumptions about homosexuality," by supporting the "fashionable fundamentalist idea that disapproving dads make deviant sons. No wonder the Christian right has been so muted in its objections." But there is, I think, another reason for the lack of outcry from the right. Here are two men: one, Jack (Jake Gyllenhaal) is emotionally open and expressive, physically lithe, free. It is he who initiates sex, he who marries for money, constantly pleads with his partner for a life together, travels to Mexico for hustler sex, and is ultimately killed by gay bashers. He is dark haired. His opposite, Ennis (Heath Ledger), is heavy-set, uptight, restrained, mumbling and inarticulate; whatever his motive for marriage may be, it isn't money: his family is stereotypically working class. He refuses a lasting same-sex relationship. Although he ends up alone in a trailer, he survives. He is blonde.

Underneath the myth of two cowboys in love and the evasion of homosexuality in commercial advertising, reviews, promo pics, even by the director, all excellently detailed in a review by Daniel Mendelsohn (*New York Review*, Feb 23, 2006), is the homophobic subtext. Which man is the real gay? He seduces the other, is unscrupulous and sexually unrestrained: he deserves his end. The other, red-blooded mid-American, is corrupted by the unscrupulous gay, resulting in the destruction of his marriage, family and home. This could happen to you! Or so would the radical right read the film. (That this message is carried in part by the old dark-blond dichotomy may be the most surprising component of this contrast.)

Brokeback Mountain provides dual readings, a Hollywood gimmick at least as old as Bonnie and Clyde. Paul Valery said: One sees only what one thinks. *Caveat spectator!*

Join us. SOLGA wants you! Visit www.solga.org—news, mentors, listserv and more. Please send comments, suggestions and ideas for columns or just say "hi" to David Houston at dlrh-an@uvm.edu.

Society for Linguistic Anthropology

MARK ALLEN PETERSON AND JAMES STANLAW, CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Bylines as Indexes

Semiotics, claims Umberto Eco in his 1979 *Theory of Semiotics*, is the study of all systems of signification that can be used to lie. This is true even of motivated signs like icons and indexes, he insists, because they ultimately rest on arbitrary conventions that allow them to be recognizable.

This principle seems to be at the heart of a controversy in Utah, where the Spanish-language newspaper *Mundo Hispanico* has admitted that some of its bylines are fakes. The issue arose when the weekly newspaper, whose circulation is reported as 10,000, ran a front page story by "Elena Montalbo." Montalbo turned out to be a



pseudonym, according to a story in the March 17, 2006, issue of the *Salt Lake Tribune*.

Both the newspaper's publisher and editor, Gladys Gonzalez, and its managing editor, Patricia Quijano, said they don't see anything wrong with reporters using fake names because it is a common practice in Colombian and Argentinian journalism, where they learned their trades.

But Linda Petersen, the head of the Utah chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists said the use of fake bylines was "unethical" because bylines show that a reporter stands behind his or her story. To her, bylines indicate accountability, openness and responsibility.

News is an inherently indexical discourse. The very notion of "news" involves temporal and spatial deixis: new reports to us about recent events taking place in our absence. Bylines are important indexical markers that authenticate a news story's links to the time and space of an event by tying story and event to a person: a reporter who supposedly attended the event and wrote the story.

But bylines are cultural conventions, and can be used in many ways. Pseudonyms can serve a very useful purpose in shielding reporters from consequences. Certainly these consequences may be more severe politically, socially and legally in Colombia and Argentina than in the US. To use false bylines in US journalism is to defy media conventions, because it makes it impossible for readers who care to authenticate the story through the person of the reporter.

Yet such byline play has long been a part of how some small weekly newspapers operate. In her memoir, Pulitzer-prize winning journalist Edna Buchanan describes how in her first job for a small Florida paper, she wrote letters under false names because the readership was so small they couldn't fill the letters column.

Many newspapers with tiny staffs have similarly attempted to appear larger than they are by allowing reporters to file only a single story under their own names in an issue. Subsequent stories appeared under house names.

I once worked for a weekly paper in Washington DC that filled most of its back pages with rewritten press releases. The editors would rewrite the first three paragraphs in a more newsy, less publicity oriented style, then slap a house byline on it and run it as a news story.

The debate over the ethics of such practices reminds me of the debates over television representations in the early 1990s. When reporters spoke about recent legislative decisions in front of a projected background of the White House, or when executives invented and extended an image of a burning car to illustrate a report about an auto fire hazard, many viewers felt deceived. The verbal reports were "true" reports but the images were fakes. To many, they were lies.

As Paul Kay and Linda Coleman discovered in their classic 1981 study of lying, "Prototype Semantics: the English Verb of Lie," published in *Language*, Americans define a lie primarily by whether or not they perceive an intent to deceive. In this case, the editors often do not

believe they are intentionally deceiving anybody. The professional journalist associations disagree.

Indian newspapers—relatively free from censorship but not always free from reprisals—handle the problem by using bylines that avoid creating persons. Bylines such as "By a Times of India correspondent" shift the indexical authority from the reporter to the newspaper itself. The newspaper essentially takes the responsibility for assuring readers that it had a representative at the event, and that this story resulted, and is accurate.

I once described this to the editor of the Washington DC newspaper. He told me he couldn't do that because "it wouldn't look right." Cultural convention indeed, Dr Eco.

Please send your comments, contributions, news and announcements to SLA Contributing Editors Jim Stanlaw at stanlaw@ilstu.edu or Mark Peterson at petersm2@muohio.edu.

Society for Medical Anthropology

JANELLE S TAYLOR, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

SMA Student Paper Prize Competitions

The SMA announces the competition for the Rivers Undergraduate Student Paper Prize, and the Charles Hughes Graduate Student Paper Prize. The Rivers Prize recognizes the outstanding paper written by an *undergraduate* student; the Hughes Prize recognizes the best paper written by a *graduate* student. Please encourage your students to apply.

Both prizes carry a \$250 cash award, and the journal *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* will have right of first refusal on winning manuscripts. Winners' names will be announced at the SMA business meeting during the 2006 AAA meeting in San José, CA.

Papers should not exceed 20 double-spaced pages, not including bibliography, and *no identifying information or acknowledgments should be contained in the manuscript*. Please include a cover letter containing: the paper title, which competition it is being entered into (Hughes or Rivers), the author's name and student status (and the advisor's name, if any), an email address, a postal mailing address and a phone number. Papers must have been written while a student, in this or the preceding academic year only.

Entries must be sent electronically and must be received by *June 15, 2006*. Please refer to <http://medanthro.net/awards/polgar.html>, and address any questions to the prize committee chair, Elisa (EJ) Sobo, at esobo@mail.sdsu.edu.

Veterans Health Administration Meeting on "Implementing Equity"

By Elisa J Sobo (San Diego State U)

About 550 researchers, policymakers, providers and health care executives participated in 185 paper sessions, poster sessions, workshops and interest group meetings at the 24th National Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Health Ser-



Elisa J Sobo

Research and Development meeting (February 15–17 2006, Arlington, VA). The meeting's theme, "Implementing Equity: Making Research Work for Diverse Veteran Populations," was selected to reflect the VHA's "commitment to promote effective translation of research findings into evidence-based clinical practice that specifically aim to improve the quality of care and eliminate disparities in health and healthcare for veterans." As such, the conference dealt with many issues of interest to medical anthropologists.

The keynote address was given by Uwe Reinhardt and his son, Captain (USMC) Mark Cheng Reinhardt. Captain Reinhardt, who recently returned from duty in Iraq, spoke about the difficulties that military men and women may face when transitioning from military to civilian (including disabled civilian) life. He emphasized the importance of streamlining the transfer of healthcare from the Department of Defense to the VHA.

Reinhardt focused on economic issues. Responding to an audience question about pay-for-performance initiatives, he proposed that military leaders could have a supply of funds from which to reward comrades whenever they do something to protect each other from harm. His son thought the idea absurd: comrades support each other out of loyalty and duty—because of a moral imperative, not an economic one. Healthcare workers should do the same for the patients they care for.

The moral imperative concept was (coincidentally?) also part of a workshop on implementation research that I convened and conducted with VHA colleagues for the meeting. The workshop taught that a good way to implement change is to identify, key into and leverage cultural values. It also introduced participants to the variety of methods that anthropologists and organizational psychologists use to research these.

Joel Kupersmith, chief research and development officer, discussed the VA's long-term vision. Some key areas for development are: polytraumatic injuries (brain injury, burns, spinal cord injury) and genomic medicine, especially in regard to the opportunity the VA has, with its nationwide electronic medical record system, for large-scale descriptive studies. Next year's meeting theme is "Improving the Quality of Care and Outcomes for Veterans with Disabilities throughout the Continuum of Care." For more information, see www.hsrd.research.va.gov/about/national_meeting/2006/.

Vance Wins Kessler Award

Congratulations to Carole S Vance (Columbia U) who received the 14th annual David R Kessler Award in December 2005 in recognition of her contributions to sexuality studies, and delivered the 2005 Kessler Lecture on "Travels with Sex."

An anthropologist whose work deals with sexuality, policy, rights, science and visual represen-