

Orientation and the Sexual Construction of Race"; and "Language and the Negotiation of Sexual Identities." There is a session sponsored jointly by the AFA and SOLGA: "Commodified Romance and Intimate Selves." The annual SOLGA Board Meeting is on Friday, and the SOLGA Business Meeting is on Saturday. Thanks to all who submitted and to our fabulous program committee.

Preface: The Bookish Perspective (Continued)

Last month, I considered the process of selecting texts. I want to continue to look at books this month through a series of explorations. This small column makes full reviews tricky. Instead, I use three books of interest to SOLGA members and view them through a different kind of lens.

Part of what makes a book successful in a class is how well it engages the student. As those currently embedded in the lecture hall know, the students we teach are subject to an interminable number of distractions. We compete for attention with iPods and LimeWire. A book must grab the reader or the class quickly degenerates.

Three texts draw my interest here: *Shamans of the Foye Tree: Gender, Power and Healing Among the Chilean Mapuche* (2007) by Ana Maria Bacigalupo; *She's not the Man I Married: My Life with a Transgender Husband* (2007) by Helen Boyd; and *Irregular Connections: A History of Anthropology and Sexuality* (2004) by Andrew and Harriet Lyons. Each book offers a perspective that, by itself, makes each a good read and a well-documented, thoughtful exploration of the topic. My interest here, however, is in exploring how each engages the reader and provides insights on a broader set of ideas that in some cases the authors may not have anticipated.

What I call this "sparking" mechanism—the discovery of something entirely apart from the core of the subject matter—has, for me, frequently been one of the reasons that a student gets "all fired up" over an idea. What follows is a brief overview of each book. In the months ahead, I will pick up the idea of engagement and intersection and how each might spark interest in a sometimes-challenging audience: our students.

Shamans of the Foye Tree is a carefully written experiential ethnography providing a meticulous account of intertwined spiritual and sexual selves in Chile among those marginalized by the state where they live. The *Mapuche* are shamans whose spiritual center is connected to the *foye* tree. Their healing practices are multidimensional, reaching across social, sexual, spiritual and gender boundaries. I was pleasantly surprised by the ways in which the author is able to tease out ideas in the context of this particular group that in turn provoke ideas which seem very applicable elsewhere.

She's not the Man I Married is not an ethnography, but a deeply personal account of gender as it is lived. Helen Boyd is married and in a deeply committed relationship with her husband, who is in turn engaged in a process of self-discovery that may well wind up pulling them apart. Here, Boyd offers the reader an articulate dissection of gender through the vehicle of a personal

account. Her style makes this account compelling, uplifting and even depressing for its honesty and insight into the nature of relationships and gender identity.

Irregular Connections is perhaps the most challenging of these three books. Andrew and Harriet Lyons have done an amazing job of examining how anthropology documents sexuality and with it gender. The difficulty of fieldwork in the area of sexuality is not difficult to understand, and how the discipline then lays out the findings, and how in turn those findings map onto the theoretical terrain is a fascinating, albeit often dense, story.

We continue next month with a more in-depth look, and consider the relationship of book to reader.

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

Society for Linguistic Anthropology

MARK ALLEN PETERSON AND JIM STANLAW,
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SLA Meeting Preview

By Kira Hall (SLA Program Editor)

This year's meeting will feature more sessions than ever in AAA history, reports Faye Harrison, 2007 executive program chair. With 27 panels on the program, SLA figures prominently in this more inclusive schedule. This year we established a Program Committee to evaluate abstract submissions, hoping to make the review process more democratic. The committee consisted of six linguistic anthropologists, junior and senior in rank, from six different universities.

Program highlights include two invited sessions: "New Conditions, New Practices: Linguistic Anthropology in the New Economy," organized by Duchêne and Heller, and "Media and Voice: Papers in Honor of Richard Bauman," organized by Briggs and Urban.

The first, which takes place before the SLA Business Meeting on Friday, explores how globalization necessitates new research methods and standpoints, particularly with respect to traditional understandings of speech community, linguistic authority and identity. Engaging the conference theme of "Difference, (In)equality & Justice," panelists investigate effects of the new economy on, for instance, discourses about linguistic minorities in Francophone Canada (Heller) and communicative practices in Eastern European NGOs (Gal).

The second invited panel celebrates the diverse influences of Bauman's work on performance and intertextuality by investigating the concept of "voice" as it materializes in varying kinds of media. The subjects of inquiry are broad in scope, ranging from the circulation of "vocal mimicry" in early

South Indian phonograph recordings (Weidman) to the metapragmatic reframing of "bloopers" in US Presidential politics (Silverstein).

A third program highlight is Spear's presidential session on language inequality and endangerment, featuring Labov, Hinton, Rickford and Hill.

The topics that frame our two invited panels—globalization and media—appear across the program, with panels interrogating the link between large-scale processes and local configurations of identity. How do transnational discourses of modernity potentially shape local affective practices (Lempert)? Alternatively, how do mass mediated processes in some sense structure the very possibilities of personhood (Agha), providing stylistic resources for speaker alignment in situated social practice (Managan)? Other panels engage with the phenomenon of globalization to rethink some of the most basic categories of analysis, such as Collins' insightful panel on social class.

Challenges to previous characterizations of the linkages between language and society resonate within several panels. Mallinson and Provencher's panel seeks to enhance our understanding of the significance of space and place by considering how "the city" becomes a structuring principle in everyday urban discourses. Raclaw and Davis's panel focuses on linguistic practices of understudied queer communities that resist traditional binaries of male-female and heterosexual-homosexual.

Still other panels approach tried-and-true subjects from new standpoints, such as Barrett and Debenport's panel on cultural politics of genre, Roth-Gordon's panel on the relationship between slang and inequality, Pagliai's panel on the "non-exceptional" nature of argumentative discourse and Leavitt and Bate's panel on the poetic structuring of myth. Sicoli and Lefkowitz's panel focuses on "phonations" (voice qualities) as dynamic stylistic resources, whereas Lee and Adkins's panel focuses more broadly on the array of stylistic features that emerge within performance. The methodological concerns that surface in these panels are complemented by a roundtable discussion organized by Kuipers and Goodwin on "Field Recording and Analysis in the Digital Age."

The issue of language socialization, long central to linguistic anthropology, is also revisited from a number of new perspectives. Howard and Sanchez's panel examines the role of linguistic repetition in cultural reproduction and change. Skapoulli and Bucholtz's panel explores the ways in which students and professionals are socialized into scientific ways of thinking and knowing. Brown and de Leon's panel moves from the traditional focus on mother-child dyads to consider multiperson caregiver-child situations across cultures.

As linguistic anthropologists, we are uniquely situated to explore how the theme of inequality materializes in everyday interaction, as well as how narratives are used to reorganize some of the more traumatic instantiations of inequality, among them rape and state-sponsored violence (panels by Trinch, Hardy and Clemente). It is thus not surprising that many organizers want more conversation regarding the role linguistics

tic anthropologists should take in challenging inequality, whether within the context of language documentation (Turin and Harrison's panel) or the varied forms of activist research addressed by Bunte and Needham's panel on applied linguistic anthropology. See you there!

If you have news or views you would like to see placed in this column, contact Mark Allen Peterson (petersm2@muohio.edu) or Jim Stanlaw (stanlaw@ilstu.edu).

Society for Medical Anthropology

KATHLEEN RAGSDALE, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Council on Infant and Child Health & Welfare Calls for US Ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

According to UNICEF (2006), one-third of the world's children lack adequate shelter, 31% lack basic sanitation and 21% have no access to clean, protected water. Around the globe, children are forced to bear arms in violent conflicts and engage in pornography and other forms of sex work. Escalating numbers of "street children" suffer abuse by law enforcement authorities, and children are over-represented among refugees and the homeless. Can we do anything to change the situation? Motivated by the goal of protecting children's rights, in 1989 the UN General Assembly adopted the "Convention on the Rights of the Child," which has since been ratified by 192 of 194 countries. The wide international support of the convention reflects a worldwide commitment, unified across diverse cultural groups, to ensure children's human rights.

Indeed, the convention has been legally ratified by more member nations of the UN than any other UN human rights treaty. But one major signatory is missing: the US is one of only two countries (the other being Somalia) that has failed to ratify the convention. Although the US helped shape the provisions of the convention, and signed the convention in 1995, the treaty has not been submitted to the US Senate for a vote on ratification more than a decade later. This is no mere oversight but a governmental reluctance to embrace an international rights treaty. Opposition to the convention in the US has sought to protect prior rights (including states' rights to execute youth under age 18), but in the process undermines a crucial opportunity to support the human rights of children.

The Status of the Convention in the US

Calls for the US to bring about Senate consideration of ratification have been made by the American Academy of Pediatrics, former President Jimmy Carter, the Youth Advocate Program International and Covenant House, among others. Common to pleas for ratification is the assertion that children, because of their vulnerability, are worthy of care and protection. While issues related to the concept of federalism (by which

states rather than federal authorities hold jurisdiction over such affairs as education and juvenile justice) may, in theory, interfere with US ratification, other countries with federalist systems have ratified the convention (including Brazil, Germany and Mexico). Unlike many of its global partners, the US has opposed bans on children under 18 serving as soldiers in armed conflicts, and several US states not only sanction lifelong imprisonment for minors but seek to reserve the option of capital punishment for minors—practices at odds with globally sanctioned children's rights. Then again, Liberia, Sudan, Uganda, Afghanistan, Burma and Sri Lanka have ratified the convention, although these countries have been sites of government or rebel use of child soldiers.

Why the US Should Ratify the Convention

Signatories to the convention have established a globe-spanning consensus on the significance of children's human rights. Through the convention's articles, children are granted the right to have their "best interests" as the prime consideration in their treatment, a goal that is consistent with the broadest of human obligations. The SMA calls for initiation of the signatory process within the US, given that the US is an influential global power whose ratification of the convention would support and help activate programs to reduce poverty and provide health and education for all children.

An early spokeswoman for children among anthropologists, Margaret Mead stated, "The solution to adult problems depends in large measure upon how children grow up today." Yet the US has become a distinct impediment to the global recognition of children's rights through its failure to ratify the convention more than a decade after it was adopted by the UN. Out of an ethical responsibility to make public its support for humane public policies, the SMA calls for Senate submission and approval of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This article is excerpted and adapted from the original SMA Policy Committee: Public Policy Statement developed and prepared by the CICH Policy Statement Task Force Subcommittee, whose members include Cindy Dell Clark (chair), María Claudia Duque Páramo, David Rosen, and E J Sobo (ex officio). For the full policy statement, see: www.medanthro.net/stand/childrights/index.html.

Please send contributions to the SMA Contributing Editor Kathleen Ragsdale (kathleen.ragsdale@ssrc.msstate.edu).

Society for Psychological Anthropology

BAMBI CHAPIN, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

NEW! Grants for SPA Members

Information and applications at www.aaanet.org/SPA.

The Lemelson/SPA Conference Fund

New funding is available for conferences on significant topics in the field of psychological anthropology. In each of the next three years, the SPA plans to award one or two conferences organized by SPA members at their home institutions; \$10–20,000 each. The fund will support conference planning, travel, housing and honoraria, as well as costs of preparing, editing and submitting conference papers for publication. Student participation is encouraged. The deadline for applications for 2008 is December 1, 2007.



The Lemelson/SPA Student Fellowships

Graduate student members of SPA are invited to apply for research training awards to support work preparing for dissertation research in the field of psychological anthropology. These awards can be used for field research funding to support initial fieldwork, exploratory research for planning dissertation research, methods training to prepare for dissertation research and pilot studies to prepare for more extensive research applications. The deadline for applications for 2008 Student Fellowships is February 1, 2008.

SPA Events at the AAA Annual Meeting

The annual SPA Business Meeting will be held Friday evening, September 30 at the 2007 AAA Annual Meeting in Washington DC, in the Marriott's Virginia C Room (6:15–7:30 pm). A cash bar will follow in the same room (7:30–8:30 pm). All SPA members and guests are invited!

The SPA is sponsoring three invited sessions at this year's meeting. The first will be held on Thursday morning, "Assessing Violence and Traumatic Stress: Intradisciplinary and Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Cultural Difference and Inequality" (10:15 am–12:00 pm). This session will focus on debates about the usefulness of psychiatric categories such as "post-traumatic stress disorder" (PTSD) across and within cultural groups. Research presented will reveal the troublesomeness of the diagnosis for anthropologists who have used it in field research. Patterns of identification and treatment of PTSD and associated disorders bring to light social inequalities and the differential access to social justice that treatment could facilitate following sociopolitical violence.

The session supports the meeting's central theme by encouraging the "intradisciplinary and interdisciplinary cross-fertilization" of research and interpretations of traumatic stress in various communities. Discussants Joseph Westermeyer (U of Minnesota) and Peter Guarnaccia (Rutgers) provide interdisciplinary perspectives on traumatic stress and culture-bound syndromes from the disciplinary perspectives of psychiatry, psychology and anthropology.

On Friday morning will be "Forgetting Anthropology: Implications of Forgetting and Memory for Self Understanding and Social Integration" (8:30–10:45 am). This session is inspired by Milan Kundera's statement that "the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting." Kundera continues,