

and Africa, so as to encompass all first generation migrants and others who see themselves as bearers of a Latin American culture. The composition of our membership and our flagship journal should accurately reflect this conceptual change.

Latin American and the Caribbean

"Latin America" is a misnomer for the continental region extending south of the US. Each one of the countries on this region has its own history, its national and regional dialects of Spanish, Portuguese and many other languages, often including local forms of English, Japanese, Korean, German, Dutch and other non-Latin-derived languages. The colonization of what today are called Latin America and the Caribbean started in the 16th century and was carried out mainly but not only by the Spaniards, the Portuguese, the British and the Dutch. And, as indigenous activists point out repeatedly, the region was already inhabited by myriad peoples, with distinct cultures and languages of their own. Historical derivatives of these languages are still in use today through ample territories and inflect regional dialects of national languages such as those of Mexican Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese. It would be very hard to justify the existence of a region known as Latin America on solely linguistic criteria, given the great diversity of languages spoken there. The main criteria to group all these nations under a single concept, thus, have been geo-political, mainly derived from the economic and political interests of the US and of European countries, reflecting their own internal politics and foreign affairs.

The Caribbean Islands are also a complex mosaic resulting from centuries of interaction between indigenous, European and African cultures and languages as well as the constant and sustained interaction with the continental lands. Regional dialects, music and food, and the trade in goods, money and even arms during several centuries could not be understood in large areas from Mexico to Venezuela outside their close relationship with the Caribbean. The Caribbean as a region comprising the islands in the Caribbean Sea, then, is also a conceptual construct stemming from geo-political interest and foreign policies elsewhere. In fact, much Latin-America scholarship now takes continental regions as part of the Caribbean.

Anthropology

During the second half of the 20th century, anthropology questioned previous analytical models that approached single communities and regions as self-contained "cultures" distinct from one another. Some of the new theoretical models responded to the need to account for "modernity" and its impact on the areas of the world where anthropologists conducted fieldwork. Approaches based on the concepts of globalization and transnationality have continued the theoretical work of previous decades in their emphasis on the connection between the global and the local.

Furthermore, the development of ethnic politics in the US since the 1960s has fueled an identity movement based on the collective creation of a

Latino identity representing a connection between people now living in the US and the countries where they or their ancestors came from.

Anthropologists have been quick to identify and study these emerging cultural phenomena. Our professional associations, however, have only slowly changed to acknowledge these new ways of living in and theoretically approaching the world. We think it is time to take stock of this diversity so as to reflect in our section the changes in subject matter, approach and regional focus that now characterize the research interests of our membership.

We invite you all to discuss this proposal to change our society's name and to send us feedback and ideas on how to create a vibrant academic community out of our AAA section.

SLAA President Gabriela Vargas-Cetina (gvcetina@tunku.uady.mx) is professor of anthropology at the U Autonoma de Yucatan (UADY). Please send articles and news of interest to our membership to Beth Conklin at beth.a.conklin@Vanderbilt.edu.

Society of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists

DAVID L R HOUSTON, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Putting the Past into the Future

The play of this column's title on this year's AAA meeting in Washington DC is deliberate, albeit a bit clumsy. I write this column with a knowledge that what is "now" appears two months hence, something I have always found challenging. Deadlines are, well, deadlines, and the pace and flow of life moves on, no matter the circumstance. This month's column is written under a cloud of despair and sadness. Two days before this deadline, there was a senseless tragedy. A random act of violence took the life of a good friend and colleague, Jim Petersen. His loss is difficult to measure, even more difficult to sort out in my mind. I am thinking ahead to the semester, beginning in two short weeks. The many students that Jim mentored and inspired, advised and taught will feel his loss just as acutely as I. This will greet them as they arrive back on the campus. Writing for two months away is distant and disconnected.

The sadness arising from a tragedy like this is difficult to understand. Random outbursts of violence, directed against an unknown person or persons, with the hazy objective of somehow seizing wealth for immediate gratification, are hard to fathom. There are doubtless individuals in every society whose past and temperament dictate their future. That their paths intersect with those we love and cherish may be accidental, but it hurts no less. The mind wonders if it is somehow "fate," that a future was predestined, unavoidable. This is difficult to accept. Our past—whether the shared heritage of an entire social collection or the path of an individual—is an accretion, constructed through a myriad of variables, and only a tiny percentage of those variables remotely connect to

what we deliberately do, think or say. "Fate" in this case seems little more than a painful confluence of random variables, arranged by chaotic eddies of complex existence, the future seemingly little more than the sum of a hodge-podge of "parts." The past becomes our own imposed order, a carefully sifted collection of memories arranged to shine the best light on our collective or individual experiences. You are dearly missed, friend, and will not be forgotten. Your past is very much a part of our future.

Past, Present . . .

It has been a busy year for this division. There is a new slate of SOLGA officers and changes in the AAA committees involving SOLGANS. Rudolph Gaudio is the newly elected co-chair of the SOLGA section. Karen Nakamura was elected to the Committee on Minority Affairs in Anthropology. Thanks in part to Christa Craven, the AAA Executive Board formed a commission to more closely examine the many issues arising from the 2004 meeting experience.

. . . and Future

This year's annual AAA meeting should prove interesting following the challenges of last year. SOLGA has quite a few sessions at this fall's meeting. The draft schedule shown here is subject to change; a final version should be available online before this issue of AN arrives at your door.

We have "Queer Subjects: Boundaries in Question," on Nov 30; "Bringing the Past (Back) into the Present: Exploring the Present Tense of History in Queer Lives—Part I," on Dec 1; "Bringing the past (Back) into the Present: Exploring the Present Tense of History in Queer Lives—Part II," on Dec 1; "Histories of Sexual Citizenship," on Dec 1; "Marry, Marry Quite Contrary: Pasts, Presents, Futures of Alliance, Here and There," on Dec 2; "Queering Social Movements Research: Ethnographic Views of LGBTQ Activism," on Dec 3; "Bringing the Past (Back) into the Present: Exploring the Present Tense of History in Queer Lives—Roundtable Discussion," on Dec 3; and "The Echo of Queer Voice," on Dec 4. There will be a SOLGA Board and business meeting on Dec 3.

I hope to review *Irregular Connections: a History of Anthropology and Sexuality*, by Andrew and Harriet Lyons and *Queering Creole Spiritual Traditions* by Randy Conner and David Sparks.

Please send any comments, suggestions, ideas for new columns or other material to David Houston at dlrh+an@uvm.edu.

Society for Linguistic Anthropology

JAMES STANLAW AND MARK PETERSON,
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

This month we present a commentary by Geoff Sant, a graduate student in Asian Studies at Columbia University, on the linguistics of two post-war occupations. Geoff is a specialist on mod-



ern Chinese history and has spent several years in Taiwan researching Japanese-Taiwan relations.

The Language of Two Occupations: Taiwan and Japan; Iraq and America

By Geoff Sant (Columbia)

Two years have passed since President Bush's first comparisons of the occupation of Iraq to the post-war occupation of Japan, making statements such as "America did not run from Germany and Japan following World War II." But we should hardly expect many similarities between the occupations of Iraq and postwar Japan because the circumstances are completely different. And yet, Bush is right in that there is a strong similarity between Iraq and a Japanese occupation. The Japanese occupation that Iraq resembles occurred in 1895, and it was Japan who did the occupying.

Japan claimed Taiwan as the spoils of victory after defeating China in the 1895 Sino-Japanese War. The Taiwanese did not wish to be occupied and undertook both passive resistance and guerilla warfare. James Davidson, an American reporter who was embedded with the Japanese troops, reported cheerleader-style on the Japanese routing of Taiwan fighters: "The Japanese, by a skillful manoeuvre, attacked the enemy from two sides and inflicted a defeat, in which about two hundred of the foes were killed and one hundred and ten taken prisoners, while the Japanese loss was but eleven." "[The Japanese] kill[ed] twenty of the enemy without loss to himself," mustering "wonderful" never-before-used .315 caliber bullets versus "old blunderbusses that no one dared to use."

In Davidson's writings, his descriptions often barely mask an intense pride in the Japanese troops and their superior firepower. At one point he writes, "Their task appeared almost heroic." This combination—overt neutrality, but a deep pride in the superior firepower and the victories of the troops that he accompanies—reminds us of the reports that came from embedded reporters in Iraq. Embedded CNN reporter Bob Franken, for example, wrote in 2003, "The Iraqi 10th Armored Division was operating from here. It was supposed to be a formidable force, but the US Marines have encountered little resistance... It's been highly smooth sailing." Another embedded CNN reporter, Martin Savidge, wrote: "If there was a

fight, it was short. ... Obviously, [the Marines] expected more of a fight than they received."

Overall, it was relatively easy for Japan to conquer Taiwan. Five months after landing on the island, Governor-General Kobayama announced that the island was pacified, and that major combat operations were over. This announcement was eerily repeated in President Bush's May 1, 2003 claim that "Major combat operations in Iraq have ended."

Both announcements were premature. Davidson wrote: "After the easy victory gained by the Japanese forces over thousands of Chinese regulars during the late war, it may seem incomprehensible that in Formosa they have been unable to put down [the rebels]. The difficulty is not in fighting the rogues. That in itself would be an extremely easy task. It is in finding them. A village may be attacked at night; by daylight, [the rebels] have fled into the hills." This description is essentially the same as the comments made in December 2003 by US Army Brigadier General David Grange: "The techniques [of the Iraqi insurgents] have been ... shoot and scoot, you know, disappear, fade into the population to survive."

In 1903, Davidson lamented "The Japanese have found it almost impossible to obtain Chinese informants in whose statements they can place trust." In 2003, Major General Don Shepperd commented, "You want to treat them nicely, you want to win their heart and souls, and now in the back of your mind, you have to assume that every one of them is unfriendly, every one of them might have a weapon."

With their "cakewalk" turning into a fiasco, domestic critics of the Japanese occupation of Taiwan complained that all of this "might have been avoided had a larger force been introduced during the earlier days of the occupation." This, too, mirrors one of the primary critiques of the war in Iraq: that the Bush administration should have sent many more troops in the beginning.

Like some members of the Bush administration, the Japanese had expected that the occupation of Taiwan—so rich in natural resources (especially the camphor trees that Western nations needed for popular medicines)—would pay for itself. Instead, the insurgency forced the Japanese government to spend millions each year on island security. Logging expeditions were ambushed, and loggers were beheaded. This reminds one of current Iraq: a

July 29, 2005 article in the *Washington Post* notes that security costs make up as much as 36% of the total expenses involved in major projects, and that these high costs are forcing "authorities to scale back efforts in some areas and abandon projects in others."

Of course, the insurgency did not last forever: after seven years, the Japanese were able to wipe out the last of the guerrilla leaders. Whether or not the two occupations continue to resemble each other, the similarity of the language used to describe, justify, explain and even criticize the two occupations is striking. It is a cliché that history repeats itself, and yet it would seem that something else is repeated as well: the language used to describe the events that are being repeated.

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

Consulting in Medical Anthropology

Elisa J Sobo (San Diego State U)

Medical anthropologists who want to reach those who have power to implement changes within health care might consider independent contracting and consulting instead of or as an adjunct to more traditional academic work. During my years as a hospital employee I came to know many people who did just that. I learned that becoming a contractor/consultant is as easy as saying it is so, but developing a business and being successful is not. You must be willing to package (and repackage) your skills and offerings in ways that appeal to the changing market. You must be persistent and flexible. Many successful full-time consultants build business incrementally, giving up their day jobs only after having created a sound business base. This column provides an overview of how to move into consulting/contracting; it is excerpted from a larger essay that provides in-depth guidance as well as references and links to various resources (see www.medanthro.net/newsletter/index.html).

Business Plans and Models

A business plan or model reflecting a well-considered understanding of your customer, your competition and market trends is essential for anyone intending full-time consulting/contracting (and is mandatory if you seek to secure a business loan). You will also need to create a fee schedule; most contractors/consultants differentiate between hourly, day-long, by-the-week or longer-term jobs, and rates also may vary by type of work (advising only, data collection, analysis, report preparation, project direction, proposal writing, etc). At the least fees must cover operat-



There is a strong similarity in the language used to describe, justify, explain and even criticize the current US occupation of Iraq (L) and the Japanese occupation of Taiwan in 1895 (R).