

2005 Annual Report
Society for Psychological Anthropology
Prepared by Dorothy Holland, outgoing President

Abstract

This year was marked by a very successful 2005 biennial meeting, held jointly with the American Ethnological Society; by the completion of a new website for *Ethos*; by a stimulating set of panels at the 2005 AAA meetings in Washington, DC and by a new volume in our book series with Palgrave. While we remain excited about AnthroSource and look forward to its benefits (e.g., selling more single issues of *Ethos* for class use), the board is concerned to have input to AAA decisions about the distribution of revenue and expenses and to learn how AnthroSource is affecting membership in SPA, other sections, and AAA overall.

1) Accomplishments during the year:

Membership

Membership totaled 600 as of November, 2005, compared to 609 for January, 2005. Figures for types of membership between those two periods show 412 regular members in November (down 12 from January), 181 student members (up 6), 4 joint (down 2), 3 life (no change) and 1 retired (up 1). Membership total as of November 2004 was 627. We would like to know how our 4.4% drop compares to that of other sections.

Financial balances [supplied by Secretary/Treasurer, Claudia Strauss]

The SPA began 2005 with a fund balance of \$41,433. Revenues generated (through November 30th, 2005) by *Ethos*, the society's journal, were \$32,598; expenses, \$32,620. Other SPA revenue (through November 30th, 2005) totaled to \$32,631; other SPA expenses, \$20,525. Total revenue was \$65,229 with total expenditures \$53,145 for a change in net assets of \$12,084. SPA's net assets at the end of the period were \$53,517.

AAA Meeting Activities [from the report of the Program Committee Chair, Holly Mathews]

This was a very successful year for SPA as we placed 14 out of 15 proposed sessions on the AAA program. These accepted sessions included 9 out of 15 individually volunteered papers. For the first time, we presented in an organized poster session.

The selection process is a convoluted one made easier this year because Linda Garro developed templates for ranking papers and sessions last year that we were able to use again. Committee members must first read all abstracts for volunteered papers and rate them A, B, C or D; providing justification for C and D ratings. Then they must rank them within each letter grade with 1 being the highest. We are also told to allocate only a certain percentage of the total to each letter category. When this process is completed, the chair has to organize these volunteered papers into sessions, give each session a title and designate a chair. Then the committee ranks these sessions of volunteered papers alongside organized sessions. The process again involves grading them first (A-D) with justification and then ranking sessions within each letter grade. Once this process is complete, the chair compiles the rankings and then schedules each session on the program. It is clear that volunteered papers are at an extreme disadvantage in this process. It is difficult to produce groupings with as much thematic coherence as organized sessions have. If a

particular paper fits no grouping, it must be “orphaned” and sent around to see if another section will pick it up. If not, it is excluded automatically from the program.

The program chairs from various sections have been in an e-mail discussion about this issue of volunteered papers. *We feel that it puts students and our colleagues at smaller universities at an extreme disadvantage since it is difficult, if not impossible, to get on the program with a volunteered paper.* We have submitted our concerns to the AAA Executive board and have made some suggestions about other possible program formats. In the meantime, our section can do some things to try and make sure representation on the program is as broad-based as possible. Those thinking of organizing sessions can try to include at least one student in their sessions. Session organizers might also make more use of the list serve to advertise potential session topics and recruit possible participants from other universities. Members might also consider more seriously poster presentations as these are not as limited. Projects involving any type of quantitative or comparative data can be presented well in a poster format. Finally, session organizers who start in advance can consider co-sponsorship with another unit. This frees up more program space for SPA-only session.

SPA SESSIONS ON AAA 2005 PROGRAM

- Globalization, Embodiment, and Identity
- Who is a good person?
- Uncanny Minds: Freud’s Unheimlich, and Mental States, Medicine, and Madness
- Recent Trends in Life History Research
- The Social Psychology of Self Construction
- Morals and Mating: How Religions Regulate Sexuality and Negotiate Marriage Contracts
- Voices and visions
- The Organization of Diversity: A Developmental Perspective
- Localities and Subjectivities
- Trauma Memory, Family Dynamics, and Therapeutic Interventions
- Defining & addressing mental health needs in Native North America: Perspectives on current cultural politics
- Memory Work, Symbolic Mediation, and the Narrative Emplotment of Self at the Margins of Empire
- Temporality and Subjectivity in Amazonia

The Stirling Award for 2005 was presented to Susan Seymour. The Condon and Boyer prizes were not awarded this year.

Biennial Meeting

A lively 2005 biennial meeting was held jointly with the American Ethnological Society, April 7-10, 2005 at the Catamaran Hotel, San Diego, California. The meeting theme, "Anxious Borders: Traversing Anthropological Divides", followed that of the 2003 meeting emphasizing psychological anthropology’s relationship to the rest of the discipline. A total of 124 SPA sponsored papers were given. The level of student participation at this year’s biennial meetings in San Diego was very healthy with students participating in at least 10 of the meeting’s 24 sessions. The student party organized by Heather Ray-Espinoza (UCSD) and Nicole Petersen (UCSD) was an unqualified success. Well over fifty students (as well as a few junior faculty!) showed up at the bayside fire-pit to talk, network, eat, and enjoy free margaritas. Prof. Valerie Walkerdine presented a keynote lecture in the Presidential Forum with commentaries from Professors Claudia Strauss and Wendy Luttrell. SPA awarded two Lifetime

Awards: one to Jean Briggs, the other to Roy D'Andrade. We regretted forgetting to bring a video camera to tape the speeches!

Ethos [from the report of the Editor Designate, Janet Keller]

At University of Illinois we completed our first year as the incoming editor of *Ethos*. We received a total of 52 manuscripts (of which 26 were originally submitted to University of Connecticut last year – i.e. 2004). Even 52 represents a significant decrease (27%) from the total submissions in 2004. Of the 52 we have accepted 11. We have rejected 14 manuscripts, and suggested revise and resubmit for 16. The remaining manuscripts are in process.

Reviewer participation has been exceptional. We have over 100 participating reviewers so far and everyone on the editorial board has been terrific. Our reviewers average a turnaround time for review of 33 days. It has taken about 88 days from submission to first decision, and we hope to stay near that timeline in the future. As we have not published an issue yet, we do not have an average time from submission to publication.

We have solicited 6 book reviews which will be posted on the new *Ethos* website – 1 is already up - and are working in the book displays now to invite editors to send additional review copies. We plan to use the SPA listserv to solicit books reviewers.

We and the outgoing editor, Sara Harkness, have been at work on newly designed website and journal. The *Ethos* cover and the *Ethos* website will be integrated. Specific additions to the *Ethos* website include a “Current Contents plus” page which will house article enhancements like video or audio footage, additional photographs, author commentaries, awards etc.

The first 2006 issue (34.1) will focus on the 2005 SPA Presidential Forum. The Keynote Address by Valerie Walkerdine and the 2004 Condon Student prize-winning essay by Julia Cassaniti are featured, as well as comments by SPA members and a dialogue with cultural anthropologists beyond SPA. The 34.2 issue will be a special issue on History and Memory, and we anticipate that 34.3 and 34.4 will include final transfers from the U Conn office, and possibly a second special issue.

Website

The big news about SPA's websites concerns the *Ethos* website. Work went on this year on the new website with the launch taking place January 2006. The journal cover and the website have integrated designs. The site is easy to navigate and appealing. It includes a “Teach with *Ethos*” section.

The SPA website continues to serve us well and our electronic publications editor, Steve Leavitt continues to upgrade the site. It was one of the main sources of information about the biennial and made online registration and hotel reservations easy to accomplish.

Outreach

Our decision to meet jointly with AES was our largest outreach effort. We consider the *Ethos* website an important improvement in outreach. It greatly facilitates international (as well as domestic) access. We also began conversations with the Practicing Anthropology Working Group (PAWG) and hope to be more involved with their efforts at the next AAA meeting.

SPA Book Series [from the report of the Editor of the Book Series, Doug Hollan]

2004 saw the publication of our first book in the new Palgrave series, *American Individualisms: Child Rearing and Social Class in Three Neighborhoods*, by Adrie Kusserow. A second book, *Finding Culture: Methods for the Cultural Analysis of Talk*, edited by Naomi Quinn, was published in 2005. A third book is now in press, *Becoming Muslim: Western Women's Conversions to Islam*, by Anna Mansson McGinty.

Contributing Editor's Report [from the report of the AN Section Editor, Kathleen Barlow]

The SPA column this year mainly took up the events of the biennial meeting and the prizes that were awarded. Two issues were devoted to the sessions at the AAA meetings, which were drastically re-organized because of the move to Atlanta. The efforts to include the Lifetime Achievement Awards acceptance speeches in the column eventually resulted in some coordination with ETHOS and the new Ethos website to make the talk by Jean Briggs available.

The column also highlighted the work of Valerie Walkerdine, President's speaker at the biennial meeting in San Diego, and the Stirling Prize winning book by Patricia Gherovici, [The Puerto Rican Syndrome](#).

The recently expressed interest in having more communication with those working in practicing/applied areas relevant to psychological anthropology could be explored through the column in the near future. There was a discussion on the LISTSERV about a year ago of these kinds of issues and some of those participants will be contacted to contribute to a column.

2) Future plans or activities (3-5) year time frame:

We are already beginning plans for the next biennial conference which will be held in Santa Monica, California, in the spring of 2007. Other projects that should see realization in the near future are the book review feature of the *Ethos* website and the debate and dialogue activities planned for the web. We will, of course, continue our usual range of activities including 3 prizes, the book series, the journal and so forth.

3) Other Items

Issues/Recommendations for the Long-Range Planning Committee:

- We had some surprises from UC Press regarding what could and could not be placed on our *Ethos* website. We're pleased to hear that Alison Pryor is beginning to develop policy on this issue.
- AAA might consider organizing some financial workshops for sections considering such things as establishing an endowment fund for the prizes awarded by the sections.

Issues/Recommendations for the AAA Executive Committee:

- SPA looks forward to the work of the AAA Commission on Governance. We consider it important for sections to have more formal avenues of section input into AAA decision making. For the near future, we are especially concerned about decisions regarding the

sharing of AnthroSource revenue streams and expenses.

- Reviewing the policy that disallows journal ad exchanges could be useful. This is an almost unique position taken by AAA when compared to other scholarly associations. Exchanging ads can open SPA to new constituents.

Leadership

Dorothy Holland completed her last year as President. Tom Weisner became the new President at the SPA Business meeting at the 2005 AAA meetings. Tanya Luhrmann succeeded Tom Weisner as the President-elect. New Board members, Jean Lave and Steve Leavitt came into office as Linda Garro and Bob Desjarlais rotated off the Board. Janet Keller served as incoming Editor of *Ethos* while Sara Harkness completed her final year. Other Board members included Holly Mathews and Rob Lemmelson. Other Officers included Claudia Strauss, Secretary-Treasurer; Kathleen Barlow, *Anthropology Newsletter* editor; Doug Hollan, SPA Book Series Editor; Steve Leavitt, Electronic Publications Editor; and Jason Troop, student representative.