

## Annual report, 2006, Society for Psychological Anthropology

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Tanya Luhrmann, President-elect, 2007 – 2009  
Jean Lave, Board member  
Steve Leavitt, Board member  
Robert Lemelson, Board member  
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1. **Status, Activities and Accomplishments.** What has your section accomplished in 2006? The following are suggested categories of activities and accomplishments.

I might say overall that for a mid-size, not very large Section, the SPA does a lot of things and thanks to the work of many of our members, continues to sustain them well.

The SPA Board proposed a strong slate of officers for the 2007 elections. We also recruited an excellent group of new SPA officers: Alex Hinton, Book Series Editor; Ashley Maynard, Secy-Treasurer; Bambi Chapin, Newsletter Editor. The SPA also recruited new members for the three prize selection committees we sponsor.

The SPA awarded the Stirling Prize for the best book in psychological anthropology to Prof. Joao G Biehl (Princeton) for his book, "*Vita. Life in a Zone of Social Abandonment.*" We awarded the Condon Prize for the best student paper to two students: Merav Shohat (UCLA), "*Narrating Anorexia.*" & Michael Baran (U Michigan), "*Girl You are Not Morena.*" The SPA also awards the Boyer Prize for the best book in psychoanalytic anthropology, but the committee did not award a prize in 2006.

The SPA Board was active in two Section Assembly issues during 2006. The first was the formula for allocating AS revenues; we were active in efforts to change the proposed formula so that the AA did not receive its very large proposed share increase, while Section publications received a greater share. This effort was largely successful. The SPA Board also was active in efforts to insure that no Section publication would go under financially due to the transition to

AS revenues. The EB ultimately did institute a loan program for this purpose at the 2006 meetings.

### ***Grants made to the SPA***

The SPA was very fortunate in receiving a grant from one of its Board members, Robert Lemelson, to further the goals of the SPA. The Board approved two initiatives over the next three years: The Lemelson/SPA Conference Fund, and The Lemelson/SPA Student Fellowships: *The Lemelson/SPA Fellows*. [See below under new initiatives for additional information.]

### ***The SPA publishes the journal Ethos. [from the editor's report.]***

The SPA made a transition in *Ethos* editorship to Janet Keller; we redesigned the *Ethos* cover and developed a new and much-improved website for *Ethos*. Submissions to *Ethos* are increasing and thus far, subscriptions are holding steady.

Janet Keller took over as editor in 2005, at the University of Illinois. We published four issues (34.1-34.4) and a total of 557 pages. Our issues appeared on time or one to two weeks before the scheduled subscriber receipt date. One special issue was published in 2006 (34.2). A total of four special issues were submitted for review in 2006 (27 special issue manuscripts). We received a total of 81 manuscripts (of which 6 were originally submitted to University of Connecticut prior to our editorship). This total number of submitted manuscripts represents an increase of 64% of submitted manuscripts in 2005. We accepted 16 manuscripts and requested revision and resubmission for 16. Average time from submission to final acceptance in 2006 was 142 days. Average time of submission to publication was 408 days. 12 book reviews have been published on the *Ethos* website. In 2006, we began using the redesigned *Ethos* website and journal cover.

Plans for 2007: In March, at the Society for Psychological Anthropology biennial meeting, we will discuss potentially increasing our allotted page numbers per year and increasing the trim size of the journal. The increased trim size will not affect expenditures significantly, but increasing page numbers may. We hope to have a decision regarding this potential change by June 2007. To increase membership in SPA, we have discussed providing a free, one-year subscription to all published authors. We will decide on this action at the SPA biennial meeting.

- Membership numbers (for 2006). List any factors you think may be affecting Section memberships.

### **Membership**

Current membership (as of September 30, 2006) is 391 regular, 159 student, and 7 other (joint, life, and retired). That's a drop of 6% in regular members and 11% in student members from one year ago. During the same time period regular membership dropped by 3% in the AAA as a whole, but AAA membership gained in some other categories (students, International, and un-/underemployed). We are not sure what is affecting SPA membership declines. We are

considering a proposal to provide a 1-year free membership for all authors published in *Ethos* who are not SPA members, hoping to capture some of these after that year.

- Financial balances for both Section budgets and publication sponsored budgets, if applicable (for 2006). List any factors you think are affecting finances.

#### Summary of Finances

AnthroSource revenues are behind the AAA's projections for 2006 due to a late launch and free trial subscriptions: SPA's share was originally projected to be \$13,747, but the more realistic projection is now \$5,492. Still, the SPA is projected to end this year with a \$2,565 surplus, increasing our fund balance to \$47,552.

The greater worry is for next year. The AAA is predicting that *Ethos* print subscription revenue will drop by half next year, due to general trends in library print subscriptions, libraries' increasing preference for AnthroSource over print journals, and discounts to libraries that maintain both print journal and AnthroSource subscriptions. An increase in AnthroSource revenues is projected, but not one sufficient to make up the difference. Hence the AAA is projecting that SPA will end 2007 with a \$10,700 loss in net assets. This is a serious concern.

#### Ethos Subscriptions

Institutional subscriptions to *Ethos* held steady between 2005 (392) and 2006 (390). This is noteworthy at a time when libraries are dropping journal subscriptions.

- AAA meeting highlights.

We had an excellent invited program at the AAA in San Jose. ***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.

### ***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
- 
- Spring meeting activities (if applicable). No meeting held in 2006
  
  - Internal communications including website development and use of a list serve (if applicable).

### ***SPA 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. We are using the website for the 2007 Biennial Meetings Registration.

- Outreach efforts to, for examples, other sections and scholarly societies, government agencies, public education, and underrepresented minorities

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.

- Changes in bylaws or governance structure (if applicable). None

2. Future plans or activities (3-5) year time frame including efforts to increase membership

- What projects does your Section have underway?

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#### The Lemelson/SPA Conference Fund

The SPA intends to provide support to its members to fund conferences on significant topics in the field of psychological anthropology. Members can apply to the Lemelson/SPA Conference Fund to organize a conference at their home institutions. The fund will support requests for department meeting expenses to host the conference, and travel and housing expenses and honoraria to bring outside speakers to the conference. The Fund encourages student participation in such conferences, and will consider requests for funding for students from the host institution to assist in organizing the meeting, and funding to bring limited numbers of students to attend from other institutions. Applicants can request funds to defray costs of preparing, editing and submitting the papers from conferences for publication, including honoraria to authors. The Lemelson/SPA Conference Fund does not provide support for meetings associated with the SPA Biennial or AAA, since one of the goals of the fund is to bring such events, and the intellectual energy that goes with them, to member faculty and their institutions throughout the country.

The Lemelson/SPA Conference awards will be made by a committee appointed by the President of the SPA, with the advice and approval of the Board of the SPA. The specific requirements for the submission of applications by SPA members, such as the timing of submissions, duration, amounts, accounting, expectations of awardees and their institutions, and other considerations in implementing the Lemelson/SPA Conference awards will be developed by the President, President-elect, and the SPA Board, with suggestions from the SPA membership at large, prior to implementation. Normally, institutions cannot receive more than one such award. It is expected, pending SPA Board approval, that these Lemelson/SPA Conference awards will be available for applications in the Fall of 2007. It is expected that one or two such conference awards will be made in each of the next three years, and that awards will be made in the range of \$10 – 20,000 each.

#### The Lemelson/SPA Student Fellowships: *The Lemelson/SPA Fellows*

Graduate students in the field of psychological anthropology will be selected for research training awards each year: *The Lemelson/SPA Fellows*. These awards can be used for field research funding to encourage 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. Lemelson/SPA Fellows will be recognized at each SPA Biennial Meeting and at the SPA Business Meeting at the AAA each year. Fellowships will include travel and expenses to attend the AAA meeting and the SPA Biennial Meeting. The

Lemelson/SPA Student Fellowships will be awarded by a committee appointed by the President of the SPA, with the advice and approval of the Board of the SPA.

The specific requirements for the submission of applications by students, such as the timing of awards, duration, amounts, accounting, expectations of awardees and their institutions, and other considerations in implementing the Lemelson/SPA Fellows program will be developed by the President, President-elect, and the SPA Board, with suggestions from the SPA membership at large, prior to implementation. Normally, students will receive awards after their first year of graduate training, and prior to full dissertation fieldwork. Students cannot receive more than one such award. It is expected, pending SPA Board approval, that these Lemelson/SPA Fellow awards will be available for applications in the Fall of 2007. It is expected that up to five awards will be made in each of the next three years, and that awards will be made in the range of \$5 - 7,000 each.

### ***SPA Book Series***

The SPA has a Book Series with Palgrave Press. Douglas Hollan served as editor through 2005. Alex Hinton has agreed to take over editorship for the next five years.

The book series is in good health. We now have four books published in the Palgrave series: *American Individualisms: Child Rearing and Social Class in Three Neighborhoods*, by Audrie Kusserow, *Finding Culture in Talk: A Collection of Methods*, edited by Naomi Quinn, and *Becoming Muslim: Western Women's Conversions to Islam*, by Anna Mansson McGinty. *A Study of Values: American, Japanese, and Vietnamese*, by Roy D'Andrade. Four other works submitted this year are currently under review.

- What (if any) collaboration is your Section doing with other Sections or outside groups on these projects? None
  
  - Do you have any plans for membership and for new or changing publications? None
  
  - Do you have any plans for making your section more inclusive? We are always trying to make SPA more inclusive.
3. Other Items. Please tell us what your chief concerns and issues are, especially if they are not previously noted.

In order of importance:

1. AS revenues sustaining *Ethos*
2. SPA membership growth
3. Greater AAA focus on the health of its Sections

- What issues would you like raised or recommendations would you like to make to the Long-Range Planning Committee?

The AAA should first and foremost, above ALL other issues, be concerned over the intellectual projects of its members and should focus on ways to insure that those intellectual projects are sustained. Those projects are largely, though not exclusively for sure, happening within Sections. In my view, the SA publications and members currently are the heart of the intellectual life of the AAA. AS content is provided essentially for free from the Section publications. The AAA budget should reflect this. Communications from the AAA, and EB decisions that affect Sections, should include Sections more than they do at present. Why did the SA have to fight for an equitable allocation of AS revenues, and why did the SA have to fight for some EB program to assist sections during the transition to AS revenues? Such concerns should be at the top of the AAA and EB agenda and the EB should be asking Sections what they can do to assist. The reorganization currently planned in AAA governance hopefully will address some of these concerns.

What issues would you like raised or recommendations would you like to make to the AAA Executive Board?

(See comments above.)