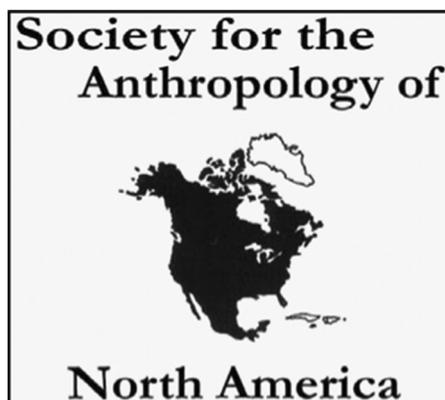


NORTH AMERICAN DIALOGUE

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF NORTH AMERICA



Volume 15, No. 1
April 2012
ISSN 1556-4819

Comparative Research Thoughts on Inactivity and an Ethnography of "Nothing": Comparing Meanings of "Inactivity" in Romanian and American Mental Health Care¹

By Jack R. Friedman

Abstract: Drawing from research in clinical mental health settings in the United States and Romania, this article considers "inactivity" as an object of study. While the "recovery movement" in the United States has attempted to combat inactivity among people with mental illnesses, many clinicians remain ambivalent, seeing inactivity both as problematic and as therapeutic. In Romanian psychiatric hospitals, inactivity is viewed as both the treatment for and the ultimate fate of people with mental illnesses. While anthropologists often study people who could be characterized as "inactive," anthropologists have rarely addressed the

experience of inactivity, emphasizing instead "productivity." This Foucauldian impulse, I argue, obfuscates the lived realities of inactivity among many people.

A minor, short-lived, but interesting scandal erupted in Romania's media in 2004.² Journalists discovered that the regional clinic that provided *ergoterapie* — "occupational therapy" — to the major northeastern city of Iași had been using patients from Iași's *Socola* psychiatric hospital as underpaid day laborers on surrounding farms, including, the article alleged, the plots of one of the medical staff. The occupational therapy clinic had insisted that this was part of a model of rehabilitation and care that ensured that patients became "active" again to help them to better recover from their illnesses. The media, on the other hand, argued that this was just another example of the ways in which Romania's most vulnerable populations — in this case, those

¹This essay was first given in a shorter form as part of a panel entitled "The Politics of Inactivity" (organized by Bruce O'Neill [Stanford University]) at the 2011 Annual Meeting of the AAA in Montreal.

²One version of the story can be found archived at <http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-arhiva-1260572-pacientii-socola-inchiriati-pentru-munci-agricole.htm> (last accessed on Dec. 12, 2011). The "scandal" later resulted in disciplinary action on the part of the Romanian Ministry of Health (reported at http://www.gov.ro/press-release_l2a39332.html (last accessed on Dec. 12, 2011)).

In this Issue

Comparative Research:

- Thoughts on Inactivity and an Ethnography of “Nothing”: Comparing Meanings of “Inactivity” in Romanian and American Mental Health Care (Jack R. Friedman) 1

Comparative Research:

- A Brazilian Anthropologist Studying Money in America (Ruben G. Oliven) 9

The Critics Corner:

- Exoticizing the Other and the Author: Commentary on *Gang Leader for a Day* by Sudhir Venkatesh (Alisse Waterston) 13

Report from the Field:

- Public Anthropology in the Field: Balancing Dual Identities as Researcher and Staff Member (Mahri Irvine) 17

Book Review:

- Being and Place
 • Thomas F. Thornton. *Being and Place among the Tlingit*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008. (Robert L. Clark and Ying Yang) 22

Book Review:

- Landscapes of Youth
 • Elsa Davidson. *The Burdens of Aspiration: Schools, Youth, and Success in the Divided Social Worlds of Silicon Valley*. New York and London: New York University Press, 2011.
 • Annette Lareau. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life, Second Edition with an Update a Decade Later*. Berkeley, LA, London: University of California Press, 2011. (Pamela Godde) 27

Maria D. Vesperi and Alisse Waterston are SANA publications co-chairs. Ideas and submissions for NAD can be addressed to the editor, Susan Falls, Anthropology, Department of Liberal Arts, Savannah College of Art and Design (sfalls@scad.edu).

Editorial Board: John Clarke, The Open University; Donna Patrick, Carleton University; Shannon Speed, University of Texas at Austin; Karen Brodtkin, UCLA; Jane Collins, University of Wisconsin

North American Dialogue is a membership benefit of the Society for the Anthropology of North America (SANA). Publishing, production and distribution by Wiley-Blackwell.

Copyright © 2012 American Anthropological Association

with chronic mental illnesses — were being exploited in the name of “helping” them to maximize their potential in the nascent — perhaps “born again” is a better term — market economy that has emerged since the end of state socialism. A woman from the village in which the patients were said to have worked was quoted in one of the news articles as saying: “I don’t think that the big bosses [*şefii*] know that the patients are made to work in the village. If they are sick, poor guys [*saracii*], they should be left to rest in the hospital, not made to work. They are unfortunate as it is.” The media story looked with great skepticism and cynicism on the claims of the therapeutic value of such an arrangement. Instead, the section headlines in the article used words like *sclav* and *rob* — literally “slave” and “serf” — to describe the psychiatric patients in these arrangements.

The ideas of “activity” and “inactivity” have long been linked in complex and shifting ways with notions of illness, health, and what counts as a “therapeutic” for treating people diagnosed with mental illnesses. Descriptors like “agitation” or “stupor” — even the broad descriptor of “depression” — have linked various states and forms of activity and inactivity to the symptoms that have been used to classify and categorize — to semiotically capture — various mental illness diagnoses.³ It is not too much of a stretch to argue that, for instance, at the heart of many of the classification schemes surrounding mood disorders — from the depression that marks out depressed mood disorders to the mania that frequently gives shape to bipolar disorders — it is the puzzle of making sense of the ways in which a person’s activity/inactivity takes shape that is central to how medicine views psychopathology.⁴

³While this essay focuses on research among adults, an additional complication can be added to this if one considers the idea of “hyperactivity” used to diagnose childhood/adolescent disorders.

⁴For instance, associations among “manic activity,” bipolar disorder, and cultural understandings of the driven, successful entrepreneur, artist, or businessperson are common in the United States. How these cultural beliefs complicate medical understandings of bipolar disorder in the U.S. — where certain “manic qualities” of a person can be viewed as exemplary traits for achieving success — has been taken up by others (e.g., Martin 2007).

In this essay, I will delimit the potential scope of this topic and focus on a subset of the particular meanings associated with the concept of “inactivity” in mental health care contexts in the U.S. and Romania.⁵ I will limit myself to discussing some of the ways in which psychiatrists think about activity and inactivity in the lives of patients in American public mental health settings and Romanian psychiatric hospitals (which act as a proxy for public mental health care in Romania which, generally, lacks a well-developed community mental health care framework (for an overview of the Romanian mental health system, see Friedman 2006). Due to limited space, my discussion of these settings will be brief and focused, leaving aside many of the issues and ethnographic details that I explore elsewhere. However, at the same time, I sacrifice some of these details to return to the broad theme of inactivity in the final section of this essay where I explore how the study of the *experience* of inactivity provides a challenge to the work of ethnography.

Inactivity in U.S. Mental Health Care: Ambivalence, Recovery, and Morality

Arguably, the newest “best-practice” approach to mental health care in the U.S. is the recovery model of care. The recovery model assumes that care will be provided in a wrap-around manner with the standard medical model of care – psychopharmaceutical interventions provided by a psychiatrist – being complemented with case management that provides not only linkages to social services (a traditional role for social workers and bachelor’s level case managers) but also a brief supportive psychotherapy through motivational interviewing and the development of linkages to group activities to help the patient to develop those skills necessary to “reenter” the

society as a productive and *active* member of their community. When possible, this will involve the use of occupational therapists and recreational therapists. In addition, peer-led activities are of central importance because these recovering peers can, in the recovery model, give hope to a person that they, too, can be in recovery from their mental illness. Support is also provided for substance abuse and to develop essential life skills.

Critics of the recovery model have argued that many of the components of the recovery model – with, perhaps, the exception of the use of peers in care – are hardly new and have been central to older approaches to mental health care since, at very least, the creation of the assertive community treatment model of care. However, one of the significant changes associated with the recovery model is the emphasis on patient “strengths” over symptoms or functional deficits. The idea is that caregivers must identify the strengths of a patient because those are the foundation stones upon which one can build an active, productive life. This emphasis on strengths is meant to get both the patient and the care provider to believe in – to have hope for – the possibilities of a patient moving beyond their status as “disabled” or “sick,” and moving toward a life in which their mental illness becomes nothing more than a single, contained part of the patient’s life. It is remarkably common, then, to hear both patients and providers who have embraced the recovery model draw on analogies with diabetes – that, like a person with diabetes, a person with a mental illness just needs to be careful in their life, to be vigilant to avoid behaviors/situations that could complicate their illness, and to be consistent in their commitment to taking their prescribed medications. If they maintain this self-discipline and vigilance just like a person with diabetes, then the person with a mental illness can lead a “normal,” active life.

A common problem with assisting a patient to become active and productive through an emphasis on patient strengths is that there is a profound gap between what many providers

⁵My research in mental health care settings in the U.S. spans the period from 2004 to the present and includes work in Illinois, California, and Oklahoma. My research in Romania includes 14 months of fieldwork in Romanian psychiatric hospitals from 2005 to 2007, which followed 34 months of fieldwork on other topics in Romania (1995–2000).

think an active life will look like for a “recovering” patient and what that patient believes an active life will entail. In particular, for most providers, their goals are the “intermediate” level of activity. When asked what “recovery means for their clients,” most speak of getting back to school, getting some training, doing volunteer work, the goal of all of which is to ultimately get a full-time job at some point. The enemy to getting well – to achieving steps along the road to recovery – is the day spent isolating at one’s home or simply watching television (or, in the case of many people who suffer from severe forms of schizophrenia, the experience of watching television at maximum volume *and* listening to one or two radios simultaneous to drown out the voices that they hear). Isolating or watching TV is characterized as “inactivity,” and “inactivity,” in the recovery model, is anathema to recovery.

Multiple messages, though, find their way into U.S. mental health care. On the one hand, patients are assumed to be suffering from “stress” in their lives – whether this is the stress associated with manic behavior, the worrying accompanying anxiety disorders and depression, or the recognition that comes with the collapse of one’s everyday life associated with mental illness – the challenge of paying rent, keeping food on the table, and maintaining relations with children, family, lovers, and friends. The patients are frequently encouraged to “rest,” but this advice is only reluctantly given because there is a sense, on the part of therapists and counselors, that a patient should not accept “rest” as the ultimate goal. “Rest” is viewed as “inactivity,” so “rest” can only function as a means to an end – a respite, a period of “recharge,” and a moment of inactivity that functions to propel the individual patient *into* activity. As such, ultimately, it is the goal of *pharmaceuticals* to achieve this “rest,” a primary experiential effect of most psychopharmaceutical families being a calming, leveling effect that creates a “restful” inactivity. On the other hand, if medications are meant to provide “rest,” the more essential features of the

patient’s *self* should reject this restful inactivity and strive for active, self-actualization to achieve recovery.

What one finds, then, is a kind of ambivalence bordering on a Batesonian double bind for many patients. While Bateson (2000[1956]) etiological explanation for schizophrenia has been roundly disproven and dismissed (primarily) in favor of genetic explanations for schizophrenia, his broader notion of the role of the “double bind” – those instances in which contradictions in the society might force a choice on an individual where any choice carries negative consequences and reinforces the contradictory nature of the choice – remains a powerful analytic. In the case of mental health patients receiving care through the recovery model in the U.S., then, on the one hand, when patients enter a cycle of care – whether this is their first time in care or they are returning to care after a period without care – they are held in a relationship that encourages inactivity (“rest”). On the other hand, these same patients are simultaneously being informed that, although they might be currently disabled by their illness, they cannot rely on “life-long care” because the goal of the recovery model of care is to create enough independence so that a patient no longer needs the specialized services provided through a mental health clinic. Care is offered, but the patient is informed that the more that the care succeeds, the more that the care will be withheld. Into this healing, relationship, then, is injected increasing amounts of ambivalence – emotional, temporal, and linguistic. Inactivity, at first viewed as a healing practice, becomes seen as iatrogenic if a caregiver continues to encourage inactivity beyond some (vaguely defined) point in the treatment.

Inactivity in Romanian Psychiatric Hospitals: Inactivity as Personhood and the Endgame of Social Triage

Romanian institutional settings are places where hope is in rare supply. Jonathan Stillo (2010), in describing Romanian tuberculosis sanatoria, quoted his interviewees as grimly telling

him that “no one leaves this place except the dead”. Romanian psychiatric hospitals are rarely places where people wait around to die, but they are places where, for many, it seems as though life has frozen in a state of inactivity and hopelessness, where people go on living but where the future has been amputated from the patient’s life. Contributing to this is the fact that Romanian psychiatrists tend to treat mental illness as a purely biological phenomenon, seeing no need for treatment beyond heavy doses of psychopharmaceuticals to control symptoms and to restrain dysfunctional behavior.

In essence, Romanian psychiatry is almost entirely engaged in “symptom management” rather than anything that might resemble the idea of “recovery” as it has been implemented in the U.S. There is no formal space for a focus on a patient’s “strengths,” and there is little informal thought given to the possibilities of nurturing a patient’s strengths to encourage or build upon these features to instill hope in the patient. Most inpatient settings use a heavy-handed approach to medication management, liberally prescribing large doses of benzodiazepines (esp. diazepam [Valium]) and first generation antipsychotics (esp. Haloperidol) to manage possible disruptive behavior in the cramped, usually understaffed hospital settings.

However, when asked about their experiences in the hospital, almost all of the patients who I have interviewed in Romanian inpatient settings over the years have insisted that this heavy use of sedatives in institutional settings has allowed them to improve because they have been able to “rest” (*a se odihni*). Indeed, the importance of the psychiatric hospital stay as a place for rest – and, “rest” as an end in itself, rather than just as a part of one’s treatment of the illness – has a long pedigree in Romanian mental health care. In certain ways, the mental hospital – long portrayed in the West as being a nightmarish place of uncontrolled bedlam, simmering violence, cruel wardens, and, under state socialism, the unjustly committed political dissident – was, in fact, a way of “taking the waters” for the working class.

Workers in the Jiu Valley coal-mining region, where I have conducted research since the 1990s, described the local psychiatric hospital that had stood alone on a back street on the northern edge of the regional capital of Petroșani as being a place where workers who faced “too much stress” could “escape” from the watchful eye of the state that existed in the workplace. Workers who were overwhelmed by the demands of labor in the mines that occurred at times of intensified industrial production (so-called “storming”) would sometimes check themselves into the local psychiatric hospital.

Similarly, many miners experienced or witnessed catastrophic accidents in the mines and found themselves suffering from what they (retroactively) termed “posttraumatic stress disorder” (PTSD) – although, not labeled as PTSD at the time – and an inability to return to working underground. Due to the potential political-legal consequences of refusing to work or perform one’s job, miners would, they reported to me, voluntarily commit themselves to the psychiatric hospital to “officially” document their inability to continue working underground. And, despite the tendency to “over-medicalize” the complaints of anyone who sought care in a psychiatric hospital at the time – including a heavy reliance on psychopharmaceutical “straightjacketing” of patients to ensure compliance in the hospital setting – the goal of prescribed treatment during the state socialist period tended to be the same for all patients: rest and inactivity.

Similar to the state socialist period, many Romanian psychiatrists in my current (post-socialist) research portray the role of hospitalization in treatment as a way to provide a space for solace, rest, and an escape from everyday stress for those who, outside of the hospital, struggle either with chronic unemployment and a seemingly unstoppable descent into pauperism or, alternatively, for those who need an escape from exploitative labor *la negru* – literally “in the black,” meaning “under the table” or “off the books,” without any legal acknowledgment of

one's employment,⁶ where employers regularly demand unreasonably long work days and then can rarely be trusted to actually pay the worker on time (if at all). As I have discussed elsewhere, this role for psychiatric hospitalization in Romania has been captured in the *ad hoc* clinical designation of what psychiatrists refer to as the "social cases" (Friedman 2009) — those patients who, long after intensive hospitalization services are indicated, remain hospitalized because the patient and the doctor collude in recognizing that they are too poor or are lacking in adequate social support to return to life outside of the hospital.

It is often (not always) problematic, then, to think about long-term stays in psychiatric hospitals in Romania as being a "forced" condition for patients. While many people enter care involuntarily committed, in the end, many of them seem to have no real problem with their commitment because they perceive it as therapeutic because it is a period of "rest" and "inactivity." On the other hand, there *is* a more problematic contrast that distinguishes the periods of rest via institutionalization that one sees today versus those one saw in, for instance, the state socialist period.

Under state socialism, many people either accepted or actively sought a period of time of rest and inactivity in a psychiatric hospital with the full knowledge that the ultimate goal of inactivity would be to permit the person to be better able to return to a productive, active role in the society. Post-socialist Romania, on the other hand, has been riven by such distinctly different cultural understandings of the potential futures that exist for different classes and categories of people — the nouveau riches, the struggling middle class, the small business entrepreneur, the laborer, the farmer, the student, and, by far the most problematic category, the unemployed — that inactivity can no longer be understood by

⁶The lack of legal acknowledgment of work, for instance, means that there is no record in the all important *cartea de muncă* ("work book" or "employment papers") of work so that the person can use their time legally employed in calculating a pension or to validate their entitlement to social services.

most people as a therapeutic pause along the road to a glorious, productive future, but, rather, seen as a fundamental weakness, as a sign of one's lack of fitness in the competitive world of European Union aspirations and global-cosmopolitan dreams. Inactivity, understood as "rest" by these patients, their families, their communities, and their psychiatrists, has become an epistemological, if not ontological, *cul-de-sac*, an experiential oubliette.

Ethnography and Inactivity: The Problem of Writing about "Nothing"

Inactivity and boredom have been viewed, primarily, in two different ways. On the one hand, early views of boredom suggested that this was a malady of the affluent. In the early-18th century, with the rise of the notion of "leisure time," the space of inactivity needed to be filled to combat feelings of boredom (Spacks 1995). On the other hand, there is a different account of inactivity and boredom that has remained as a simmering, but under-theorized, story: that of the causal chain that links unemployment and poverty to inactivity, boredom, and, ultimately, deviance and destructive behavior. This is not the story of the inactivity and boredom of the suburban youth who get in trouble by getting their kicks smashing mailboxes.⁷ Rather, this is the story of the loss of

⁷I am drawing a distinction here that might prove problematic but which is illustrative. Regarding youth and inactivity, if one considers the tradition of working class youth studies that emerged out of British sociology in the 1970s, one finds much discussion about the problem of inactivity (or, as one reviewer of this article pointed out, what Paul Corrigan called "doing nothing" (Corrigan 2006[1975])). I believe that the discomfort that is expressed — or remains strategically *unexpressed* — in much of this sociological work emerges from the question of whether troubled British youth behavior is a function of the contradictions in capitalism or whether it reflects something troubling about the nature of the culture of an "underclass." This uncertainty means that analyzing youth "trouble" associated with inactivity is particularly morally charged. Here, I bracket these accounts of youth inactivity because they have tended to approach this topic from the very standpoint of productivity — "bored" youths in social groups, getting together to "cause trouble," and, ultimately, produce the category of youth deviance — that I am challenging with my focus on the experience of inactivity rather than what inactivity produces.

hope and feelings of historical injustices that have lead to deep structural inequalities that have resulted in chronic inactivity and feelings of boredom that have spilled over into culturally framed active responses to inactivity and boredom. Jervis et al. (2003), for instance, considered the connection between boredom and “trouble” on a Native American reservation. They show how Native Americans in their “Grass Creek” communities link narratives of inactivity to feelings of boredom and, ultimately, to how deviant behavior – alcohol abuse, domestic violence, and so on – occur as a response to the boredom of life on a reservation.

Others, like Daniel Mains (2007), have focused on the ways in which sociality in all of its varied forms can be produced out of the experience of inactivity. Mains’ work among young unemployed men in Ethiopia examines (among other things) the ways in which chronic unemployment has created a temporal space in which “youth” (*wettat*) can no longer be seen as a transition to adulthood but, rather, has become a seemingly permanent state defined by inactivity. Mains sees this inactivity resulting in profound feelings of boredom, but, in contrast to Jervis et al.’s case, the Ethiopian youth that Mains discusses are actively engaged in both the creation of fantasies of flight and the escape (e.g., winning the Diversity Visa lottery to go to the United States) and also the social *performance* of these fantasies when these youth meet with friends to chew *khat* and to discuss their dreams. In contrast to Jervis et al.’s focus on “trouble,” then, Mains focuses on what he terms the “fix” to the temporal problem that accompanies inactivity among these Ethiopian youths.

What Jervis et al.’s work and that of Mains’ share is a research focus on what inactivity produces. Similar to Musharabash’s (2007) work on boredom among Warlpiri in the postcolonial Australian Aboriginal settlement of Yuendumu, where “practices of ‘killing time’ [...] are aimed against the same circumstances that create the potential for existential boredom” (p. 314), these scholars represent a common approach seen in

anthropological writing regarding inactivity: Rather than interrogating the experience of inactivity, they explore what inactivity produces.

Of course, anthropologists, taking their lead from several generations of Foucauldians, seem to look for productivity everywhere. In the case of “inactivity,” for instance, one is drawn to ask questions like: What is inactivity productive of? What kinds of subjectivities, discourses, biopolitics, disciplinary configurations, and systems of knowledge/power are at work in capturing inactive “populations”? These questions are fine, and I have certainly found myself asking these questions. At the same time, there is something disconcertingly “experience distant” – “etic,” if you prefer – about these questions and this obsession with productivity in the face of inactivity. I am, ultimately, uncomfortable with this approach, despite being drawn to it because in many ways it is so antithetical to the *experience* of inactivity – an experience that is frequently characterized by people living through it as a life of “nothing.”

Admittedly, this is, on occasion, the kind of “nothing” that, say, informs the sitcom “Seinfeld” – a television program that, while ostensibly being about “nothing,” in fact, was driven by the bizarre, strange, and, ultimately, hysterical events and consequences of living through “nothing.” I have certainly seen this kind of “nothing” in the lives of the people who populate my ethnography – the “little” dramas that a female Romanian patient described in terms of getting enough room for her toiletries in the nightstand that she shared with another patient, or the romantic entanglements described by one of my gay interviewees who was living in a group home while receiving mental health services in Southern California. But most of what I have seen and what I have captured in conversations and the observation of people’s lives is not just their bored inactivity but something that is profoundly boring *as ethnography* – it is the time spent having a solitary cigarette (or two or three or four ...); it is the time spent watching hours and hours and hours of television or listening to the radio; it is the time spent staring at a wall or ceiling; it is

the time spent sleeping 12 or 14 or 16 hours a day; it is the time spent walking and walking, alone, on the rough streets of North Long Beach, California or through the woods and fields or concrete sidewalks of a psychiatric hospital in Bucharest or Iași.

Inactivity, experienced *as* inactivity, is profoundly boring and is experienced as “meaningless” by many people. The question “What did you do today?” is met with a blank stare and the response: “Nothing.” I know that “nothing” is probably not true – the patient woke up, got out of bed, was given medications by a nurse, went to the cafeteria to receive meals, and so on. All of these things can be interesting to the anthropologist who is examining, say, the micro-activities that compose the daily life of these people. For the American mental health care worker, these activities can be read as signs of “recovery” – as a patient “progressing” away from illness marked by inactivity, toward recovery marked by self-sufficient activity. For the Romanian psychiatrist, these behaviors would hardly register as a change in the life trajectory of the individual patient – they might indicate that the medication is working to reduce symptoms, but they are hardly seen as signs of a patient achieving some benchmark on the road to becoming an active, productive, and cosmopolitan citizen. Lost in all of this is the *experience* of inactivity, as inactive time is experienced or interpreted *as* “nothing.”

My fieldwork experiences – both in Romania and in the U.S. – have primarily been in settings in which people have faced profound experiences of decline. For some, this decline has been associated with the symptoms of mental illness, for some, it has been the loss of social connections and the erosion of bonds with family and community, and, for all of them, this decline has been associated with socio-economic downward mobility. Inactivity has accompanied this decline in almost all cases. And, yet, from an ethnographic standpoint, I have always felt ill-prepared to deal with – to methodologically capture, to analytically interpret – inactivity because of the hermeneutic impulse built into

anthropology. The compulsion to peel away the surface to reveal the deeper meaning and connection makes it difficult to take, at face-value, an interviewee’s response that they have done “nothing” and that their plans are to do “nothing” – that their dreams have been reduced to “nothing.” Inactivity is, in many ways, invisible to traditional modes of research and writing in anthropology – a sort of unnatural object that, like many visual puzzles, leads one to reject it as a cognitive distortion that must be filled in with some sort of content. To me, then, this is the great challenge, for, to write an ethnography of inactivity is, in the end, both the challenge of writing of the *experience* of nothing while, simultaneously, being an exercise in challenging the nature of ethnography itself.

References

- Bateson, Gregory. 2000[1956]. “Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia.” In *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. Pp. 201–227. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Corrigan, Paul. 2006[1975]. “Doing Nothing.” In *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*. S. Hall and T. Jefferson, eds. Pp. 84–87. New York: Routledge Press.
- Friedman, Jack. 2006. “The Challenges Facing Mental Health Reform in Romania.” *Eurohealth*, 12(3):36–39.
- Friedman, Jack. 2009. “The ‘Social Case’: Illness, Psychiatry, and Deinstitutionalization in Postsocialist Romania.” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 23(4):375–396.
- Jervis, Lori, Paul Spicer, Spero Manson, and The AI-SUPERPPF Team. 2003. “Boredom, ‘Trouble,’ and the Realities of Postcolonial Reservation Life.” *Ethos*, 31(1):38–58.
- Mains, Daniel. 2007. “Neoliberal Times: Progress, Boredom, and Shame among Young Men in Urban Ethiopia.” *American Ethnologist*, 34(4):659–673.
- Martin, Emily. 2007. *Bipolar Expeditions: Mania and Depression in American Culture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Musharabash, Yasmine. 2007. “Boredom, Time, and Modernity: An Example from Aboriginal Australia.” *American Anthropologist*, 109(2):307–317.

Spacks, Patricia. 1995. *Boredom: The Literary History of a State of Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Stillo, Jonathan. 2010. "The Changing Role of TB Sanatoria: From Sarnac New York to Romania's Magic Mountains." *East-West Cultural Passage*, 9:101-114.

Jack R. Friedman
Norman Center for Applied Social Research,
University of Oklahoma
jack.r.friedman@ou.edu

North American Dialogue 15.1, pp. 1-9, ISSN 1556-4819. © 2012 by the American Anthropological Association. All rights reserved. DOI: 10.1111/j.1539-2546.2012.01044.x

Comparative Research

A Brazilian Anthropologist Studying Money in America

Paper presented at the panel *Challenges in Brazilian Anthropology: A Global View* during the 110th Meetings of the American Anthropological Association. Montreal, Canada, November 20, 2011.

By Ruben G. Oliven

Abstract: This article analyzes meanings of money in America. It is based on an ethnography carried out in the United States by a Brazilian anthropologist who studied financial institutions, health insurance, service clubs, compulsive spenders, restaurants, shops, scholarly, and non-scholarly articles and books on personal finance, proverbs, expressions, etc. He is currently contrasting Brazilian and North American popular music of the first half of the 20th century. The author compares attitudes toward money in the United States with those existing in Brazil and argues that money in North American society, which can be seen as a *total social fact*, is considered less polluting than in Brazil, where it is represented as something potentially dirty.

Making Americans My Tribe

Brazilian anthropology is usually considered creative and of good quality. But until recently, most Brazilian anthropologists concentrated

their studies within the country's national borders. This was due not only to a lack of funding for research abroad but also because Brazilian society was in its making, and there were many urgent phenomena to be studied. More recently, Brazilian anthropologists started studying other places, first, neighboring countries where Brazilians have migrated and later, first world nations where Brazilians are going in growing numbers (such as the U.S., Japan, and countries of the European Union). There are currently over three million Brazilians living abroad. Brazil is the sixth largest economy of the world and is becoming a major global player. It is therefore natural that Brazil should export not only commodities but also intellectuals. There is a growing number of Brazilian anthropologists doing research abroad. They are trying to understand different societies and to compare them with their own.

Between August 1993 and January 1995, I was a visiting professor at the Department of Anthropology of the University of California, Berkeley. When I decided to go to the United States, North American scholars who knew my previous work suggested that I should study some minority group in the San Francisco Bay Area such as the Brazilians who live there in growing numbers. Because I had just published a book on cultural diversity in Brazil (Oliven 1996), this would be a "natural" continuation of what I had been doing at home. Somehow, the idea did not appeal to me. I came to the conclusion that this was what one would expect from a Brazilian anthropologist in the United States, that is, that he or she should study the periphery in the center. As I had already worked on money in the lyrics of Brazilian popular music (Oliven 1999), it occurred to me that money would be a more fascinating subject. When I told North American anthropologists about my plan, they were usually enthusiastic about it but tended to say that it was a very broad subject and asked how would I be able to study it in so short a period of time. I was, of course, also concerned about the feasibility of

my project and worried about the time frame. I had no idea on how to start and where to focus my attention.

But from the moment I arrived in the United States (this was the first time I was staying a longer period of time in that country), I noticed that money was around me all the time and that I was literally submerged in my research topic. I would have no difficulty finding materials. I soon realized that money in the United States could be looked at as a total social fact, to use Mauss' expression. Believing that money is a key to North American society, I decided to look at any instance that could bring me clues: scholarly and non-scholarly articles, financial magazines, books on personal finance, proverbs, expressions, banks, investment companies, health insurance, service clubs, compulsive spenders, restaurants, shops, and so on. By looking at the multifarious aspect of money in the United States, I ended up making Americans my "tribe."

I had difficulty publishing my first article about my research, entitled "Looking at Money in America" in the United States. Several North American anthropology journals turned it down. The reviewers either hated the article or loved it. One of the reviewers who fall within the first category even said that I should not write about money in the US because there was so much poverty in Brazil. Those who liked it said that finally a non-American anthropologist was turning the mirror on America. As the reviewers were divided, editors would not accept the piece. I ended up publishing in *Critique of Anthropology* (Oliven 1998), an international journal published in London. To my surprise and satisfaction, I found out that several North American professors of anthropology use this article in introductory courses as an example of an ethnography of America.

Singing Money

Since then I have been in the United States several times, staying for longer periods of time, and usually as a visiting professor (at Dartmouth College, and twice at Brown University). I have

continued my study of money in America and published other pieces about my research (Oliven 2008, 2009). Currently, I am comparing Brazilian and North American popular music songs that deal with money. I am mainly concentrating in the first half of the 20th century because this was a formative period for the making of both Brazilian and North American society.

These are of course very different societies, and it is therefore interesting to compare them. They have in common the fact that they are "New World" societies. Both countries had native peoples when the European colonists arrived. They also had slavery until the second half of the 19th century. Whereas in the United States, slavery was more concentrated in the South, in Brazil, it was spread throughout the whole territory, and for three centuries, the economy was fully dependent on this mode of production. The first half of last century was a period of great transformation in both countries. Having abolished slavery, they received high numbers of immigrants and were going through the processes of urbanization, industrialization, and nation building. The economic crisis of the 1930s affected both countries and their populations strongly. Social life became increasingly monetized, with different reactions to this process. World War II was a major event for Brazil and the United States, and both countries fought on the same side. All of this is reflected in popular music, and one can learn a lot about both societies by comparing their songs.

Popular music is a key instance for looking at society. It reflects day-to-day life, social and political events, changes in morals, cultural values, and economic representations. In Brazil and the United States, the majority of composers are men, and they tend to use music as one of the few public spheres in which they allow themselves to speak more freely about their private feelings. They will sing about their weaknesses, their fear of loss, and their sentiments toward women. Money also tends to be a central theme in popular music and is usually related to other themes like work, social inequalities, gender relations, and love.

Ethnicity also plays a central role as regard popular culture and specifically popular music in the Americas. Ethnicity is already present in North American popular music in the 19th century through what was called *coon songs* (composed by white musicians who debased African Americans in an extremely pejorative way), *minstrelsy* and *blackfacing*. Why is it – one may ask – that at a time when African Americans were so excluded from society, they were such a central figure in popular music? One obvious reason is that music is a space frequently used to speak about subjects that are difficult to deal with. (Rubin and Melnick (2007) describe *traumas of race* undergirding popular culture and immigration (p. 5).

Ethnicity is also present in Brazilian popular music. It is related to the end of slavery and to a new model at the root of the construction of Brazilian identity, that is, of a racially mixed country. Therefore, although there is obviously racial prejudice in Brazil, the model put forward is that of a mulatto country. Many of the Brazilian composers were of African descent, and their grandparents frequently had been slaves. Brazil has no tradition of valuing work, mainly manual labor. Even after the abolition of slavery and introduction of wage labor in factories, work has never been very highly valued because the social order has always been highly exclusive. Until the 1930s, Brazil was essentially a rural society. When industrialization and urbanization started to become more important, there was a strong reaction against working and the growing monetization of life, similar to the attitudes that could be found in the *Old South* of the United States prior to the Civil War (Ogburn 1964). At that time, the *horror ao batente* (hatred of manual work) developed into *malandragem* (idleness), which can be seen simultaneously as a survival strategy and as a conception of the world through which some segments of the lower classes refused to accept the discipline and monotony associated with the wage-earning world.

The negative side of labor is reflected in Brazilian popular music. During the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s of the 20th century, *samba* composers used

to eulogize *malandragem* (idleness). It developed into a way of life and a way of regarding life. Instead of developing a work ethic, Brazilians were developing a *malandro* ethic (Oliven 1984).

The same composers who praised *malandragem* also depicted money as something ignoble, generally demanded by women who did not understand that the men they were asking it for had something much more precious to offer them: their love. Of course, one can see here a “sour grapes complex”: knowing they would never make much money no matter how hard they tried, those men looked down at the *vil metal* (filthy lucre). On the other hand, one can notice in the lyrics of these songs that money is a reality from which one cannot escape in a monetized society. But all of this is seen in a melancholic fashion. Nobody is happy to work. And money after all is very destructive: it ends love and friendship, and it invites falsehood and treason.

Gender is another part of the picture of Brazilian and North American songs about money composed at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Although most composers were male, they frequently constructed a narrator who was a woman. Women can either be sublime in the love they provide or very mean because they ask for money. In the compositions of that time, money is more and more associated with the figure of the woman (Oliven 1988). We enter here in the realm of expectations and complaints between men and women – themes that are abundant in the compositions at that time. The songs show both the masculine point of view as well as the feminine one (shown through the male imagination, as they comprise the absolute majority of the composers). As love relationships are made up of expectations, we are always before a tension between what is expected or demanded of the opposite sex and what is obtained from it. Also, always present is what was done to attend to the other’s expectations and the gratitude or ingratitude generated by the action. Popular music at that time reflects this world of

expectations and complaints in a register that is at times humorous and at other times indexes resentment.

The hegemonic musical genre in Brazil until the end of the 1950s of the 20th century was *samba*. The first composition to be registered with the name of *samba* was in 1917. Before that, there was practically no music industry and no notion of musical copyright in Brazil. In the United States, the music industry and musical copyright started earlier. In both countries, songs dealing with money also address themes like work, love, and gender relations. Several songs produced at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century in the United States deal with money where it is depicted both as an instrument that allows you access to goods in a society that sees itself as becoming affluent and also as something that is difficult to get when you are poor and nonwhite. Very often, these goods are luxury commodities.

When analyzing North American popular music of the first half of last century, one must deal with different genres, styles, and influences. There is minstrelsy, Tin Pan Alley (the place around 28th street and Broadway in New York where sheet music developed), and, of course, blues. They all deal with money but in different ways. Whereas in minstrelsy African Americans are frequently depicted as not being able to understand the meaning of "time is money" as a central tenet of modern North American life, in Tin Pan Alley songs, money is often sung of in a rather frivolous way as a means of attaining luxury (as in "diamonds are a girl's best friend"). In contrast, in blues, money is central to surviving but difficult to obtain through work.

Currently, I am examining the lyrics of North American songs dealing with money in the first half of the last century, and comparing them with the lyrics of Brazilian songs of the same period dealing with the same object. I am looking at similarities and differences. I am analyzing my findings taking into account what was happening in Brazil and the United States at that time. Specifically, I want to look at variables such as

urbanization, industrialization, immigration, ethnicity, race relations, changes in gender roles and family structure, attitudes towards work, and representations of the growing monetization of social life.

References

Ogburn, William F. 1964. "Southern Folkways Regarding Money." In *On Culture and Social Change*. Otis D. Duncan, ed. Pp. 197-206. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Oliven, Ruben George. 1984. A Malandragem na Música Popular Brasileira. *Latin American Music Review*, 5(1):66-96. Austin, Texas.

Oliven, Ruben George. 1988. The Woman Makes (and Breaks) the Man: The Masculine Imagery in Brazilian Popular Music. *Latin American Music Review*, 9(1):90-108. Austin, Texas.

Oliven, Ruben George. 1996. *Tradition Matters. Modern Gaucho Identity in Brazil*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Oliven, Ruben George. 1998. Looking at Money in America. *Critique of Anthropology*, 18(1):35-59. London.

Oliven, Ruben George. 1999. Money in Brazilian Popular Music. *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture*, 18:115-137. Tucson, AZ, USA.

Oliven, Ruben George. 2008. "Singing Money: Money in Brazilian and North American Popular Music." In *Economic Representations: Academic and Everyday*. D. F. Ruccio, ed. Pp. 211-232. London and New York: Routledge.

Oliven, Ruben George. 2009. "The Money Rhetoric in the United States." In *Economic Persuasions (Volume 3 De Studies in Rhetoric and Culture Series)*. S. Gudeman, ed. Pp. 159-175. New York and Oxford: Berghahn.

Rubin, Rachel, and Jeffrey Melnick. 2007. *Immigration and American Popular Culture*. New York: University Press.

Ruben G. Oliven
Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul
Center for Latin American and Caribbean
Studies Watson Institute for International
Studies, Brown University
oliven@uol.com.br

North American Dialogue 15.1, pp. 9-12, ISSN 1556-4819. © 2012 by the American Anthropological Association. All rights reserved. DOI: 10.1111/j.1539-2546.2012.01045.x

The Critics Corner

Exoticizing the Other and the Author: Commentary on *Gang Leader for a Day* by Sudhir Venkatesh

Alisse Waterston is Professor of Anthropology, John Jay College, CUNY. She has written two books on urban poverty in the US and is currently writing *My Father's Wars: Truth, Memory and the Violence of a Century*, an intimate ethnography.

By Alisse Waterston

"You're a hustler, I can see it. You'll do anything to get what you want."

Gang Leader for a Day is the story of a Chicago sociologist and his transition from a clipboard toting social scientist to a full-fledged participant-observer in Chicago's toughest, most infamous housing projects during the 1990s. It is a first-hand, personal account of Venkatesh's entrée into a world with which he had no previous familiarity by means of friendships he forged with J. T., a crack-dealing gang leader, and Ms. Bailey, a Robert Taylor Homes tenant leader and extortionist. Since its publication by Penguin in 2008, *Gang Leader* has received wide acclaim in the popular press, and its author had many invitations to discuss the book on radio and television, including the *Daily Show* with Jon Stewart. I applaud Venkatesh's success in getting word out to the general public about the value of ethnography and the complexities of urban poverty in America, a goal that many anthropologists hope to achieve. But there are serious flaws in *Gang Leader for a Day* that I highlight in the following critical review.

The epigraph that begins this essay is a quotation from *Gang Leader* that appears deep into the story: "You're a hustler, I can see it. You'll do anything to get what you want," a statement directed at Venkatesh (2008) attributed to Ms. Bailey. This quotation captures the organizing principle of the book: all the main characters have been reduced to hustlers — folks who work aggressively and determinedly to advance their own agenda and their own careers. In what follows, I will discuss ways in which this theme works and does not, and critically assess what

Venkatesh reveals and what he leaves out. What he leaves out is most important considering the ongoing malign neglect of poor people in America.

There is no question that Venkatesh is a gifted storyteller and writer. The tale he weaves is gripping, and the book he produced is a page-turner. He draws his readers in. We are there with him on the streets, in the urine-soaked stairwells, and at the table with a character named Ms. Mae or cruising with J. T. and the gang. This is no small feat, considering that so much scholarly literature is dull, pompous, and obscure, what Karen Brodtkin (2009) calls "lardball productions" (p. 22). *Gang Leader for a Day* is no lardball. Its sparse prose and sharp dialogue captivate us. I only wish Venkatesh would use his talent, his positionality and privilege, and his opportunity to reach large audiences inside and outside the academy to more explicitly reveal the roots of poverty and the mechanisms that reproduce it, aspects that lie outside the ghetto walls he portrays.

On Naiveté and the Art of the Hustle

Those of us who study and write about urban poverty and poor people have a major dilemma: how do we write engaging narrative combined with critical poverty theory together in one book? I will return to this central and unresolved dilemma at the close of this essay. For now, I focus on methodological and narrative devices used by Venkatesh in *Gang Leader*.

A key device used by Venkatesh is naiveté, purportedly his own. He invokes it to reveal the story, a narrative device. He invokes it to get information, a methodological device. He invokes it to demonstrate his tentative ties with the other hustlers he describes throughout the book. Naiveté is at the core of the art of the Venkatesh hustle.

Examples abound throughout the book. As the narrative builds, so do his claims of innocence. Early on Venkatesh describes meeting a group of *old* black men who he interviews for a study of *young* black men. He presents himself as deflated

and defeated with their responses to his questionnaire, almost ready to give up on his project until prompted by one old man's suggestion: "Before you give up," he said, "you should probably speak to the people who you really want to talk to – *young* men, not us." Are we to believe that it was the old man's idea that prompted the sociologist to study young men in a study of young men?

Over and again, Venkatesh professes ignorance or innocence that builds to crescendo: he first uses the word "naiveté" on page 10, then later in the following sampling of confessions:

they [his informants] talked my head off. Just as important, I found I didn't have to hide my ignorance – which wasn't hard, since I was quite *naïve* about politics and race in urban America. My *naiveté* about these basic issues actually seemed to endear me to them (p. 53, emphasis mine).

I also told J.T. and Ms. Bailey about ... my legal obligation to share notes with the police. 'You mean you didn't know this all along?' Ms. Bailey said. 'Even I knew that you have to tell police what you're doing' (p. 187).

As the book nears its end, Venkatesh confesses that he revealed details he received from informants about their activities to J. T. and Ms. Bailey – the very two figures who exact tribute from the sociologist's hustler informants. I call this as Venkatesh's "informing-on-the-informants" moment. "We're curious about what you've learned," J.T. and Ms. Bailey tell Venkatesh who thought: "It was probably a good idea ... to have a catch-up session. ... For the next three hours, I went through my notebooks and told them what I'd learned about dozens of hustlers, male and female. J. T. and Ms. Bailey rarely seemed surprised, although every now and then one of them perked up when I mentioned a particularly enterprising hustler or a woman who had recently started taking in boarders" (pp. 199–201).

Back at the projects, when Venkatesh was received by silence and glares from his resident-informants, he again professes naiveté. "I don't know what you're talking about," Venkatesh proclaims when a fellow named C-Note calls him on his "debriefing" with J. T. and Ms. Bailey where

he had handed them "breakdowns on each hustler's earnings: how much every one of them made, when and where they worked, what they planned for the future." Of course, "[J. T. went on to tax] every one of them," and Ms. Bailey "confronted" all the women (pp. 204–206).

"Man, I had no idea that it would even be useful to them," claims Venkatesh.

But C-Note's got his number, and exclaims, "'No!' ... You knew. Yes you did. '"

Each incident in which Venkatesh invokes naiveté seems to serve some specific purpose. On the old men and the survey episode, it is a narrative device to introduce the reader to the sociologist's critique of survey research and his use of ethnography as a research methodology for this project. Venkatesh's claim to ignorance about his obligation to share fieldnotes with authorities, and in another section, his claim of ignorance about INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) requirements suggest poor training at a very prestigious university and borders on confession to professional misconduct. Well before and throughout the time of Venkatesh's research, IRB requirements were becoming institutionalized, and there were important cases around the police subpoena of sociologists' fieldnotes including that of Mario Brajuha during the 1980s, and Rik Scarce (2005) and Eleanor Hubbard in the 1990s.

When Venkatesh, a University of Chicago sociology graduate student, "protesteth" his ignorance of race and politics in urban America, we must understand his use of naiveté as a good research strategy, "endearing" to his informants and useful for the information it generates. There is nothing wrong with holding back what you may know about a topic from your research subjects. Indeed, a mark of a good researcher is to find out what *they* know, not tell them what *you* know. However, Venkatesh takes this principle too far: he does not just pretend ignorance to them but also professes it to us, the readers, as well.

Let us return for a moment to the "informing-on-the-informant" incident described above and depicted in the chapter titled "The Hustler and

the Hustled.” Like C-Note, I believe that Venkatesh knew that the information would likely be useful to J. T. and Ms. Bailey. So why do it? C-Note gives us a clue: “You got some shit for your professors,” C-Note told him. Let us review the scenario. Venkatesh observed J. T. and Ms. Bailey in their leadership roles. He heard them talk about what they did, how they ran things. But how could the sociologist confirm it? Inform on the informant, and if there were to be no consequences, their leadership claims could be called into question – not real, just braggadocio. But if there were consequences – if J. T. and Ms. Bailey hit up on all those other hustlers – Venkatesh had his proof: J. T. and Ms. Bailey were, in fact, leaders of consequence in the housing project.

Venkatesh seems to feel remorse: “It was embarrassing to think that I had been so wrapped up in my desire to obtain good data that I couldn’t anticipate the consequences of my actions,” he admits and states his regret: “it was clear to me that other people were paying a price for my success” (p. 206). But the confession is incomplete, and the remorse is short-lived. In the very next breath, Venkatesh blames what happened on his innocence – that old refrain – not on conscious intent: “I had been so naïve up to this point,” he writes (p. 207).

The hustle continues, and it’s disturbing.

Erasure of Things Past; Absence of Things Present

Venkatesh’s portrait of the ghetto suffers from the erasure of his methodological forebears and the absence of theoretical analysis of forces outside the ghetto to help explain the full, lived experience of the urban poor and the marginality he so vividly describes. I am not sure why Venkatesh made the decision to erase and leave out; nevertheless, I dare say that it is part and parcel of the hustle.

By failing to acknowledge his social science ancestors, Venkatesh can position himself to readers outside the academy as the first and only to enter dangerous territory, to spend long

periods of time among the urban poor in the US, to carry out urban ethnography, and to tease out nuanced findings about the poor, from their kinship ties to the workings of the underground economy, including the drug economy, the local structure of gang organization, and the multiple functions of gangs in poor communities. Indeed, he makes contradictory reference to his uniqueness. At times, he invokes ethnography as an established methodology with a long history at the University of Chicago, and to other ethnographers, including one anthropologist, but never gives them their due when it comes to urban poverty research. He presents himself as exceptional in his setup of William Julius Wilson as the fall guy who relies on quantitative data, while Venkatesh is the pioneer ethnographer. Venkatesh writes: “There were plenty of sociological studies on economically disenfranchised youth, but most relied on dry statistics of unemployment, crime, and family hardship” (p. 24) ... [Wilson’s team was] trying to find hidden patterns in ... survey data that might reveal the causes of poverty. I didn’t know anyone who was walking around talking to people, let alone gang members in the ghetto” (p. 38). On his relationship with gang leader J. T., Venkatesh posits: “I had a feeling that I was talking to someone about whom most people probably knew little (p. 38) ... I was getting a *unique* perspective on life in a poor neighborhood (p. 24) ... I felt like I was doing something unconventional” (p. 38, emphasis mine).

Of course, there are lots of urban ethnographers, past and present, too numerous to name here, and there are too many ethnographies available to start tracing how *Gang Leader* builds on them. I will offer just one example. It is possible that few nonacademic readers of *Gang Leader* are familiar with *All Our Kin*, but the following passage, where Venkatesh claims discovery, screams anthropologist Carol Stack (1974) and her classic ethnography of black women’s strategies for survival in a poor community, first published in 1974: Venkatesh writes: “[I] *discovered* something more interesting, and

probably more important, than the money that changed hands in these various transactions. Many households participated in a vast web of exchange in which women borrowed, bartered, and pooled their resources to survive. One woman might offer day care ... other women might take turns cooking. In some cases, the members of a network maintained a fixed formula of exchange. ... Often a network of women would share their apartments as well" (pp. 196–197, emphasis mine). It is a pitfall to neglect the work that came before because that is erasure, and erasure is distortion, and distortion is a false picture of reality.

While Venkatesh expressed the hope that his work might "really change the public's – if not the academy's – understanding" of poverty (p. 38), the book falls short because it fails to take the story outside the ghetto for analysis. Without such analysis, Venkatesh can make his findings palatable to a mainstream readership, but it does not contest the exoticization of the urban poor or explain their plight.

I believe that as social scientists of urban poverty, our most important role is to confront power and to explain it. We must explain how social forces become embodied as individual experience, explain how collective cultural fictions obscure structural inequality and further marginalize the excluded, explain how differential access to material resources and power shape experience, shape social conditions, and shape institutional practices. And to get at that, to confront power and explain poverty, we need to step outside the ghetto and to look at how economic restructuring of America's cities over the past 40 years has generated a surplus of poor people. To get at that, we need to understand the ways in which the neoliberal economy, the blueprint for which was developed by University of Chicago economist Milton Friedman, has come to have its effects on the likes of Ms. Bailey, J. T., and the rest. To get at that, we need to understand that poverty in America is a form of structural violence, the effects of which is the kind of social suffering Venkatesh observed on

the ground, in the projects. Yes, we need the nuanced ethnographic portraits. Yes, we need to see the good, the bad, and the ugly. At the same time, we need to reveal with our analyses and explicitly in our writing the ways in which these forces, including America's attacks on its racialized and most vulnerable poor, have generated the conditions of scarcity that put people at risk for the dog-eat-dog world Venkatesh describes.

Toward the very end of his book, Venkatesh declares: "because naiveté had worked in the past, I'd stuck with this strategy" (p. 232). The time for that is over. We must all be awake, aware, and responsible. Our challenge is to write the good story, write theory at the same time, and still draw readers to our words (Waterston 2009). We must refuse to write about the poor unless we make clear the ways in which the complex of social and political forces that *they* did not create have effects on what happens to them. And we must write this even for those readers most likely to feel threatened by such explanations of poverty in America. Our informants deserve it.

References

- Brodin, Karen. 2009. "Remember When Writing Was Fun? Why Academics Should Go On a Low Syllable, Active Voice Diet." In *Anthropology off the Shelf: Anthropologists on Writing*. A. Waterston and M. D. Vesperi, eds. Pp. 21–34. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Scarce, Rik. 2005. *Contempt of Court: A Scholar's Battle for Free Speech from Behind Bars*. Lanham, MD: Rowman Altamira.
- Stack, Carol. 1974. *All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in A Black Community*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Venkatesh, Sudhir. 2008. *Gang Leader for a Day: A Rogue Sociologist Takes to the Streets*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Waterston, Alisse. 2009. "Writing Poverty, Drawing Readers: Stories in Love, Sorrow and Rage." In *Anthropology off the Shelf: Anthropologists on Writing*. A. Waterston and M. D. Vesperi, eds. Pp. 65–78. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Alisse Waterston
John Jay College of Criminal Justice,
City University of New York
awaterston@jjay.cuny.edu

North American Dialogue 15.1, pp. 13–17, ISSN 1556-4819. © 2012 by the American Anthropological Association. All rights reserved. DOI: 10.1111/j.1539-2546.2012.01046.x

Report from the Field

Public Anthropology in the Field: Balancing Dual Identities as Researcher and Staff Member

By Mahri Irvine

Abstract: I explore some of the challenges I have faced as a public anthropologist who fulfills multiple roles as researcher, staff member, and volunteer at a prison reentry organization. I discuss the strategies I used to establish my research agenda with the reentry program, the ethical challenges I face working as an anthropologist and as a staff member, and the benefits of working with an organization. This article may prove useful for students who are in the planning stages of research projects, or for anthropologists considering the rewards and challenges of working with a nonprofit organization.

In this article, I explore some of the challenges I have faced as a public anthropologist who fulfills multiple roles as a researcher, part-time staff member, and volunteer at a nonprofit organization. In particular, I will explore my attempts at identity management, or “impression management” (Berreman 2007; Curran 2010) as I balance my desire to conduct research with my aspirations to serve my research participants in ways that benefit them. I am at the midpoint in my dissertation fieldwork; my site is a prison reentry organization in the Washington, DC metropolitan area, and I have volunteered and worked with this organization for the past 2 years. I hope that this article will prove particularly useful for students who are in the planning stages of their own dissertation or thesis research, and that others will find value in my analysis of the rewards and challenges of working within the bounds of a

nonprofit organization rather than working as an independent researcher who is free of any ties, and obligations, to organizations.

In crafting a public anthropology project in which I work as an engaged political activist (Scheper-Hughes 1995) and in responding to Bourdieu’s (2003) call for a “scholarship with commitment,” I have directed my passion for the antisexual violence movement toward a dissertation that explores the ways in which gender, class, and race impact women’s experiences of surviving sexual violence in the Washington, DC area. My interpretation of public anthropology draws on McGuire’s (2008) conceptualization of praxis and Hale’s (2006) invitation for scholars to engage in activist research. My work explores the impact that sexual violence has had on the lives of women who have been caught up in the US criminal justice system, and how racist and classist biases in the justice system have impacted these women’s lives. The vast majority of incarcerated women and girls are survivors of sexual violence before they become incarcerated (McDaniels-Wilson and Belknap 2009), and my decade of experience as an advocate for sexual violence survivors guided my decision to focus on this topic for my dissertation.

Establishing a Research Agenda

Because I was unfamiliar with the topics of incarceration and reentry, I decided to volunteer at “Open Arms,” a prison reentry organization, to connect me with potential research participants. Many anthropologists may be cautious about partnering with nonprofit organizations because of concerns that such groups perpetuate the status quo (Rodriguez 2007). While I shared this initial concern, I quickly became impressed with Open Arms. A majority of the staff are formerly incarcerated individuals; they create a compassionate and informed environment as they help clients. Open Arms is run in an egalitarian, client-centered manner; clients are given opportunities to voice their opinions about Open Arms’ services.

Determined to “give back” to my research community, I began my preliminary fieldwork not merely to assess Open Arms as a research site but because I wanted to serve the clients and staff in beneficial ways. I took on a number of different volunteer roles that had little to do with my research goals: I assisted with fundraisers; I did data entry and filing; and I answered the phones and substituted for the receptionist. My transition from general volunteer to researcher went smoothly, in large part because I remained active as a volunteer. I felt that it would be unwise, and unethical, to stop volunteering and focus exclusively on my own research goals. While I hope that my research will prove helpful in changing prison policies to more compassionately address the needs of incarcerated women – and ideally, encourage policy makers to reframe their ways of thinking about incarceration – I know that this type of policy impact will take years, if not decades. Even though my research may eventually achieve my goals of positively benefiting my research community, I know that my community will not see the impact of my work any time soon. Therefore, it was important for me to develop a plan in which I was able to serve my research community in ways that benefit them in the short term as well as in the future.

Continuing to serve as a volunteer while I conduct my research has proven to be successful in the sense that my willingness to answer phones, stuff envelopes for fundraising drives, and help clients shop in our free clothing boutique has continued to assure the Open Arms’ staff that my loyalty is to the organization, and not merely to myself. On the other hand, this strategy has significantly slowed down my research. I advise students who plan to serve as both staff/volunteers and researchers to be aware that fulfilling duties for an organization may considerably delay their data collection goals. This delayed research agenda may be even more frustrating when those types of jobs seem mundane, boring, or stressful.

Students striving to create a committed public anthropology project may find that their research communities prioritize and value things that

appear uninteresting or irrelevant to students’ research agendas. For example, I work as a facilitator for Open Arms’ nonprofessional gender-based violence support group. Clients who participate in the support group often stray off topic to express frustrations about reentry challenges instead of gender-based violence. While I am primarily interested in helping women deal with issues of trauma and abuse, our clients frequently have more pressing issues related to their living situations and economic challenges. My co-facilitator and I have had to continually reassess the validity of the group, and we recently decided to expand the focus of the group so that the women’s needs are being effectively served. This situation has encouraged me to reexamine my commitment to my research community and compel myself to be much more flexible as I facilitate the support group, to be sure that I am actually meeting the needs of my research community, rather than merely following my own research agenda.

In contrast to Greenough (2006), who explains the difficulties she experienced during fieldwork as she tried to apply academic theories to her data, I find that I can easily connect theories to my research community, but I need to refrain from being overly enthusiastic in trying to explain such theories to my clients at inappropriate times. For example, when a client expressed her sadness about not having money to buy her children Christmas gifts, my ideal response was to launch into an explanation of how our capitalist culture influenced her. Instead, I reminded myself to remain quiet and let other clients comfort her in a way that made much more sense to her, in her current situation. In fact, as Curran (2010) discusses in his own experiences with the raced and classed aspects of impression management, I know that I must constantly be aware of how I, a white woman, present my ideas and my research agendas, to be respectful and receptive of the goals and desires of my clients and research participants, most of whom are black and less economically privileged than me.

Blurred Boundaries and Ethical Dilemmas

Researchers who balance multiple identities may be required by their employers to conduct research that is irrelevant to, or even contrary to, their own research goals. Fortunately for me, my ethics have not been challenged by the goals of Open Arms. However, as I strive to maintain my positive relationship with Open Arms' staff, I find myself agreeing to conduct research about issues that seem mostly irrelevant to my own interests. For example, I will soon begin conducting research for Open Arms about the reasons why women often fail to keep their appointments. While this topic may have little to do with my own research interests, and it may slow down my own timeline to complete my data collection, I recognize that this research will benefit the organization. As student researchers develop their research goals, they must recognize that if they choose to work within an organization, they may need to substantially increase their timeline to accommodate the needs of the organization. Of course, it is also important for anthropologists with specific agendas and goals to bear in mind that research findings – even research findings that do not seem interesting or relevant – can ultimately provide valuable insights for our projects.

Working as a staff member, volunteer, and anthropologist often leads to complex situations in which I need to evaluate how boundaries between these different roles sometimes become blurred and problematic. Many anthropologists have discussed the discomfort that results when their research respondents do not realize that the research is still continuing even in a social setting. Curran (2010) notes that the sometimes stealthy strategies of ethnographers are not intentionally unethical, but they often arise because of certain situations in which researchers and research subjects form social bonds and enjoy spending time together. This classic anthropological dilemma – when should the anthropologist disclose that he or she is in “research mode”? – is further complicated when the said anthropologist is working

as a staff member and needs to maintain professional boundaries with clients, yet still wants to pursue possible friendships.

In contrast to anthropologists who easily develop strong friendships with some of their research participants, I must be cautious about the ways in which I connect with clients. Because I am a staff member, I need to establish professional boundaries; I should avoid showing favoritism toward clients I have interviewed. I want to show the women that I value them as more than mere research subjects, but showing an overly personal interest in my research participants may inadvertently cross a professional boundary that needs to be maintained for the sake of the organization and other staff members.

The following situation illustrates the complexities of balancing my desires to conduct research, assist research participants with personal problems, and maintain a healthy and safe staff-client relationship. One of my (favorite) clients and research participants, Sarah, sought me out for advice about a personal issue, but due to scheduling constraints, the only time I had to talk with her was during my lunch break. I had been planning to walk over to a local deli, and I invited her to come with me. Our conversation went well, but despite the positive outcome, I felt distinctly uncomfortable with the situation because I am fairly certain that most other staff members do not spend their lunchtimes talking with clients. Moreover, I had purchased a snack for her, potentially complicating our relationship by emphasizing my privileged economic status. Additionally, during lunch with her, I felt as though I was slipping back and forth between a conversation with a friend and a counseling session with a client. This situation was confusing for me, and it might have been for her as well.

If I were not affiliated with Open Arms, I believe that I would have been able to avoid this type of complicated and possibly ethically compromised situation because I would have been able to function solely as a researcher-turned-friend in response to Sarah's query for advice. Instead, I had placed myself in a position in which

I had to constantly evaluate my behavior and conversation to ensure that I minimized any negative impact of blurring the boundaries between staff member and anthropologist. Svašek (2010) notes that empathy serves as a powerful tool for developing and strengthening relationships while in the field, but empathy “may also cause anxiety and insecurity, as it raises moral questions about the nature of friendship ... in the field” (p. 91). My awkward – and yet important – lunchtime experience with Sarah illustrates the complex challenges that arise for a public anthropologist who strives to fulfill professional responsibilities to an organization, intellectual responsibilities to a research agenda, and moral responsibilities to a (potential) friend.

Assessing the Benefits of Partnership with an Organization

While there are certainly challenges that arise from this situation of working as a staff member, volunteer, and researcher, I believe that the benefits far outweigh the risks. First, there is a logistical benefit of working with a reentry program that is especially helpful for anthropologists who want to conduct research about formerly incarcerated individuals who have been recently released from prison. This benefit comes in the form of office space – a place to conduct private interviews in a space that research participants view as safe and comfortable. Students and other researchers who are interested in working with recently released individuals should be aware that many of their potential research participants may be homeless, living in halfway houses, shelters, or drug treatment programs, or have otherwise tenuous living situations that make it difficult to find private and comfortable interview spaces. Because of my affiliation with Open Arms, I am able to use Open Arms’ office space to conduct interviews. If I were operating as an independent researcher, it would be difficult – and at many times impossible – to find a comfortable setting to interview my research participants.

Another important benefit of being affiliated with Open Arms is that being connected to this organization provides me with a central point of contact for my research participants. As a component of my public anthropology project, I hope to offer several of my participants a chance to coauthor a policy report with me about my research findings. Several women have indicated an interest in this opportunity, but I will not approach this aspect of my project for another year, after I have collected all of my data and started the analysis. Many incarcerated women face challenges regarding their living situations, and I have already lost touch with several of my participants because housing, employment, and transportation problems have resulted in them drifting away from Open Arms. To my relief, however, most of my research participants seem to eventually return to Open Arms, seeking additional assistance or companionship from other clients and staff. For example, I interviewed Keandra this past summer, and we became rather close. She seemed interested in being a coauthor with me, and I told her that I would stay in touch with her about the opportunity. However, after she was released from the halfway house, she disappeared, and I began to worry when she did not answer my calls or emails. To my horror, I learned from another client that Keandra had relapsed (she struggles with an addiction to crack) and was living in a crack house because she had nowhere else to go.

I constantly worried about Keandra, fearing that her relapse would lead to another arrest, imprisonment, a return to prostitution, or even death. However, my fears were dispelled; approximately 3 months after I had lost contact with her, she appeared at Open Arms one evening just in time for our support group. I was not only relieved to see that she was safe and relatively healthy, but I also began to realize the great benefit that my affiliation with Open Arms provided me. Open Arms serves as a central point of reference in the lives of many formerly incarcerated women, and being connected to this organization makes it far easier for me to remain connected to women when they drift away, and then come back seeking

further assistance. Therefore, I encourage students who are considering the benefits and burdens of being affiliated with an organization to explore the organization's centrality to the lives of their research community. If an organization provides important resources for its clients, then the clients may be much more likely to stay in contact with the researcher by connecting through the organization, rather than independently.

The ability of compassionate community organizations to provide important resources to their disenfranchised clients is another valuable benefit for students and researchers who may be interested in affiliating themselves with these types of organizations. Babior (2011) discusses the negative ways in which her research at a Japanese domestic violence shelter impacted her; she notes that as she lived and worked at the shelter, she began to share her clients' fear of and hostility toward men, and broader society. Jacobs (2011) also notes the impact of vicarious trauma on his work with survivors of gender-based violence; he explains that at times, he experienced despairing views about men and their potential for goodness. Fortunately for me, I have not had this type of emotional response, even though my fieldwork days are filled with hearing stories of violence and abuse. While I have a supportive partner, friends, and healthy self-care strategies to help support me, I believe that in large part, I am able to maintain a relatively positive outlook on life because of the numerous resources that Open Arms provides to clients.

Being directly connected with an organization that provides beneficial free services helps alleviate the feelings of despair and inadequacy that might otherwise overwhelm me. The clients I work with face difficult and seemingly insurmountable obstacles, but by being connected to Open Arms, I am able to confidently connect them with services that directly help them. Compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma are very real risks for social service providers (van Dernoot Lipsky 2009), and anthropologists working with underprivileged communities are certainly in danger of having these reactions as they work

extensively with disenfranchised individuals. It is beneficial for researchers to be connected with compassionate organizations because of the emotional relief that such a connection can provide for the researchers. Smith explains that emotionally engaging with research participants and making small, yet genuine, efforts to help them "serve to acknowledge the complex, shared emotions of fieldwork and really of every human encounter" (Smith and Kleinman 2010:181). In their discussion of the various ways that anthropologists can work with their research subjects, Smith and Kleinman (2010) state: "Engagement, thus, also involves advocacy" (p. 185). As a public anthropologist, I strive to serve my research community as an advocate – remembering that advocacy takes a variety of forms. One simple and effective way to work as an advocate is to connect with an organization that is able to provide resources far beyond our own individual capabilities.

As Jacobs (2011) notes, being connected to an organization or system that creates a "chain of solidarity" to assist gender-based survivors can help us avoid secondary trauma or burnout (p. 135). At the midpoint in my fieldwork experience, I feel extremely fortunate that I have found a research site that perfectly exemplifies Jacobs' "chain of solidarity"; I hope that other students and anthropologists are able to make connections with organizations that provide not only material, but also emotional, support. Making a commitment to a public anthropology project brings about additional pressures and stress as scholars try to ensure that their work will genuinely, positively impact their research communities. Making a connection with a supportive and compassionate community organization may be one of the best strategies to help public anthropologists find the support they need as they craft meaningful research projects.

References

Babior, Sharman L. 2011. "Participant and Observer: Reflections on Fieldwork in a Women's Shelter in Tokyo, Japan." In *Anthropology at the Front Lines of Gender-Based Violence*. J. R. Wies and H. Haldane, eds. Pp. 29-49. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

Berreman, Gerald D. 2007[1972]. "Behind Many Masks: Ethnography and Impression Management." In *Ethnographic Fieldwork: An Anthropological Reader*. A. C. G. M. Robben and J. A. Sluka, eds. Pp. 137–158. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2003. "For a Scholarship with Commitment." In *Firing Back: Against the Tyranny of the Market 2*. Pp. 17–25. New York: Verso.

Curran, John. 2010. "Emotional Interpretation and the "Acting" Ethnographer: An Ethical Dilemma?" In *Anthropological Fieldwork: A Relational Process*. D. Spencer and J. Davies, eds. Pp. 100–118. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars.

Greenough, Karen Marie. 2006. "Dispatch from the Sahelian Range: Renegotiating Expectations and Relationships among the Wodaabe of Niger." In *Dispatches from the Field: Neophyte Ethnographers in A Changing World*. A. Gardner and D. M. Hoffman, eds. Pp. 137–151. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Hale, Charles R. 2006. "Activist Research v. Cultural Critique: Indigenous Land Rights and the Contradictions of Politically Engaged Anthropology." *Cultural Anthropology*, 21(1):96–120.

Jacobs, Uwe. 2011. "Gender-Based Violence: Perspectives from the Male European Front Line." In *Anthropology at the Front Lines of Gender-Based Violence*. J. R. Wies and H. Haldane, eds. Pp. 129–138. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

McDaniels-Wilson, Cathy, and Joanne Belknap. 2009. "The Extensive Sexual Violation and Sexual Abuse Histories of Incarcerated Women." *Violence against Women*, 14(10):1090–1127.

McGuire, Randall H. 2008. *Archaeology as Political Action*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Rodriguez, Dylan. 2007. "The Political Logic of the Non-Profit Industrial Complex." In *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*. Incite! Women of Color Against Violence, ed. Pp. 21–40. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 1995. "The Primacy of the Ethical: Propositions for a Militant Anthropology." *Current Anthropology*, 36(3):409–420.

Smith, Lindsay, and Arthur Kleinman. 2010. "Emotional Engagements: Acknowledgement, Advocacy, and Direct Action." In *Emotions in the Field: The Psychology and Anthropology of Fieldwork Experience*. J. Davies and D. Spencer, eds. Pp. 171–187. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Svašek, Maruška. 2010. "In 'The Field': Intersubjectivity, Empathy, and the Workings of Internalised Presence." In *Anthropological Fieldwork: A Relational Process*. D. Spencer and J. Davies, eds. Pp. 75–99. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars.

van Dernoort Lipsky, Laura with Connie Burk. 2009. *Trauma Stewardship: an Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Mahri Irvine
Department of Anthropology,
American University
mahri.irvine@american.edu

North American Dialogue 15.1, pp. 17–22, ISSN 1556-4819. © 2012 by the American Anthropological Association. All rights reserved. DOI: 10.1111/j.1539-2546.2012.01047.x

Book Review

Being and Place

- **Thomas F. Thornton. *Being and Place among the Tlingit*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008.**

By Robert L. Clark and Ying Yang

How do cultures sustain relationships with places? In *Being and Place among the Tlingit*, Thomas Thornton elegantly presents the case that culture, identity, and place are deeply intertwined; that groups define and structure themselves in relation to geographical places. Early in the book, Thornton's Tlingit consultant responds to the author's inquiry about Sitkoh Bay, an important subsistence site: "You have to understand. There's a history about that place. We've got stories on it." Building upon this foundational statement, the book underscores how Tlingits define geography through generations of shared history; how their memories of place and perceptions of family, space, and order underline a shared history of subsistence. For the Tlingit, and native peoples more generally, "place is not only a cultural system but the cultural system on which all key cultural structures are built" (Thornton 2008:4). Of particular importance to the book's emphasis on the primacy of place are the differing means by which Tlingits and the US

government remember history, and the role of language in maintaining knowledge of the stories that define the group's identity. For the Tlingits, the universe is animistically self-aware, filled with human and nonhuman life forms comprising its moralizing consciousness, while culture is an interpretive, semiotic apprehension of the environment that transcends mere survival.

Thornton defines place as "a framed space that is meaningful to a person or group over time," further subdividing it into space, time, and experience. These aspects are mutually supportive, linking culture and geography to the knowledge that sustains people. In calling for broader attention to the topic of place within anthropology, Thornton comprehensively describes the genealogy of the term within a Euro-American philosophical context. Tracing the notion of place to Plato, the author grounds the concept in philosophy, history, and other fields, addressing connections among space, power/knowledge, globalization, and modernity. At root, place is a conceptual adjunct to culture rather than solely a concrete reality, a role that differs from traditional understandings of places as locations for performing actions and creating meaning. Instead, the author suggests, place is tied to cultural artifacts that derive meaning from it; separation of culture from its places results in irrelevance (of stories, rituals, and knowledge) and, thence, to forgetting. Conversely, connections to places — as the settings for stories, for production, as landmarks — secure Tlingit senses of self.

Central to Thornton's argument are the different ways of charting places. On maps, Europeans and white Americans have traditionally portrayed unbroken expanses punctuated by topographical features named for prominent politicians, wealthy benefactors, and explorers. Tlingit, and perhaps hunter-gatherers as a whole, view topography as chains of resources, navigational aids, and points of interest; the names indicate the ways in which human beings relate to the landscape through generations. In oral traditions, place names are woven into larger tapestries of culture, situating people within history and their

connections to the land. Yet due to changing subsistence patterns and the passing of older generations, Tlingits have lost knowledge of many place names, a trend both symptomatic of and contributing to cultural dislocation. The almost total loss of the Tlingit language, accelerated in the past by Indian schools and missionaries, was particularly destructive to Tlingit culture, damaging geographical, subsistence, and ritual knowledge. Thornton (2008) estimates that half of Tlingit toponymic knowledge has been lost. Because fewer than 500 Tlingits are currently fluent in the language, this trend is likely to continue (p. 73).

Despite these losses, the Tlingits strive to maintain their ties to the land. The book suggests that Tlingits "culturalize space and spatialize culture" through four mechanisms that focus and vitalize their relationships with place. Social organization, language, material production, and ritual processes establish human relationships with the environment by defining connections among people, land, and place. Social changes wrought by colonialism, such as the Russian fur trade of the early 1800s, the commencement of American occupation in 1867, and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, have transformed Tlingit relationships to the land as well as their means of subsistence. As economic and political pressures have reshaped Tlingit livelihoods and mappings of land and places, these factors have in turn altered kin structures and patterns of land usage.

Chapter 3 was of great interest, highlighting the interrelationships among toponyms, stories, natural phenomena, and subsistence. By illustrating the ways in which Tlingit and Euro-American naming systems reflect distinctive ways of relating to the land, it underlines how cultures experience landscapes differently. Place names, the book suggests, are conceived under specific natural and social circumstances, which are in turn mediated by culture. For example, whereas nonnatives have tended to name features such as mountains and glaciers, the maritime Tlingits focus on inlets, streams, bays, and settlement sites. Tlingits likewise place great import upon

so-called ensembles, kin-like constellations of geographic features. Thornton (2008) suggests that for them, toponyms are metonymical, “invoking shared historical experiences and legends and grounding them in a material reality of the continuous present” (p. 101). These historically constituted relationships bind the group to the land they inhabit, bringing the past into the present for the edification of younger generations. Clan histories further underscore the connections between group and land, foregrounding the mutual dependence of place, ownership, and identity (Thornton 2008:105).

Through an anecdote describing the cultural misunderstandings surrounding the naming of a middle school in Juneau (*Dzántik'i Héeni*, Flounder at the Base of the Creek), Thornton persuasively argues that place names define a cognitive terrain built upon generations of experience. The author's retelling of the story of the Salmon Boy, in which a child disrespectful of the fish is transformed into one of them and lives for a time in their undersea village, reinforces this point by illustrating how myth both concretely and metaphorically describes places and natural phenomena. Such stories describe both things (geographical features) and natural processes (salmon spawning cycles, glacial advances, and retreats) in ways that would be most effective with audiences who know something about the locales and phenomena described. For example, part of this story asks listeners to envision herring and salmon comically hurling insults at each other. The exchange provides both a humorous sideshow to the story and an accurate description of the life cycles of the two fish. Thornton (2008) points out that the myth contains detailed accounts of resource usage and topography, representing both knowledge of the land and means of facilitating subsistence (pp. 69–70). Together with Tlingit concepts of *shagóon* (history/destiny) and *at.óow* (ownership and obligation), the retelling of these stories by elders possessing knowledge of the setting facilitates Tlingit ways of apprehending and interpreting the world, while simultaneously asserting collec-

tive stewardship of the land and its resources. As the author has it, acts of naming make Tlingits feel that they belong to the country.

Key to this sense of belonging is an understanding of the symbols of place, which both represent and attach one to a location from which one is absent. The Tlingit concept of *at.óow*, or “owned things,” describes sacred possessions (comprised a name, story, sign, and design) that also embody place. The most sacred *at.óow* is clan crests: obtained in the mythical past; they also determine the future. Similar in some ways to European coats-of-arms, they bind people to specific locations, from which they derive their names, characteristics, and identity. Simultaneously referential to the past and the future (*shagóon*), the crests tell the story of the clan's origins and destiny. Indexing the group's relationship to the land in both present and mythical space/time, they draw together and animate the structures that create Tlingit ideas of space.

By stressing place and place names as primary categories of importance through which contemporary Tlingits mediate self-identity, and privileging native concepts of space over the taken-for-granted modes of western thought that have dominated the Alaskan landscape for the past century and a half, Thornton's work builds upon the current trend of Tlingit corporate self-publication and reinvention of culture through pan-regional events such as the well-known Celebration 2000 (Sealaska Heritage Foundation 2000), efforts at place name reclamation among Alaska natives in a larger sense in the middle of western cultural hegemony and the geography altering forces of climate change (Fienup-Riordan, lecture at The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Fellowship 2010), and nationally on the level of Native American trends toward social and economic empowerment; for example, the recent casino movement with consequently large cash influxes to Connecticut Pequots, and the 1989 recognition by the US Congress of Iroquois influences on the Constitution. Although consciously responding to the existing literature of North America natives, Thornton's work also

adds to our understanding of Native Alaskan conceptions of place as historical constructs coexisting in uneasy confluence with the governmental assignments and personality-centric naming conventions of the recently dominant Euro-American mold. *Being and Place among the Tlingit* is not, therefore, merely an interjection of Tlingit subjectivities into Aristotelian notions of place and being, but itself builds upon recent trends in scholarship connecting history to the present.

Although he consciously positions the work specifically in relationship to the genealogy and philosophy of place and landscape within sociology (e.g., Walter 1988), psychology (e.g., Altman and Low 1992), and anthropology (e.g., Field and Basso 1996), as well as more fluid interventions of post-modernist thinkers (e.g., Appadurai 1996), Thornton also responds, purposefully or not, to a triad of local, regional, and national trends among Native Americans and perhaps to hitherto marginalized ethnic populations as a whole. The relatively recent attempts by native tribes and corporations to have repatriated a variety of cultural artifacts and human remains under Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) (i.e., Qin, Wen-Jie: Return of a Totem Pole 2006); and the growing momentum of a tribal museum movement espousing a different perspective from similar Euro-American institutions are phenomena at the vanguards of these movements (e.g., Clifford 1997; Saunders 1997).

The last half-century has seen magnanimous changes that occur to Northwest Coast studies, beginning perhaps with the pioneering work of de Laguna (1960, 1972) – a move away from the ethnographic present toward greater account of the public, hidden (and perhaps haunted) transcripts of history. Anthropologists have also continued to work in the classical, ethnographic sense, documenting the daily lives of communities and the upkeep of cultural identity in the middle of pressures resulting from globalization, tourism, and legal tradition (e.g., Bierwert 1999; Dombrowski 2001; Miller 2001). Likewise, recent years have witnessed growth in the trend of

native peoples toward expressing their own voices (among Tlingits, see, e.g., Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1994, 1995, 1998). In the Northwest, other works have broadly documented the history of white-Indian relations in maritime environments (Fisher 1992), and a series of more narrowly focused phenomena, such as missionization (Bolt 1988; Harkin 1993, 1996; Kan 1996, 1999), government suppression of native rituals such as the potlatch (Cole and Chaikin 1990), and slavery (Donald 1997).

If one criticism is to be leveled, it is that Thornton could have more explicitly addressed the complex and sometimes-controversial role of native corporations in interpreting and furthering native interests. Native corporations, created by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, administer the claims created by the act by allocating shares to Alaska Natives. One possibility could be that the corporations damage, native connections to place, replacing traditional values with business-driven corporate ones. Commodification of the land is contentious in native communities, especially when corporations control land not traditionally under the jurisdiction of the groups that administrate it, or utilize management practices that degrade the environment, such as clear-cutting. Yet the corporations also invest in research, language and heritage programs, community jobs, and the revitalization of culture. Further analysis might elicit how these revitalization movements interface with toponymical reconstruction of Tlingit names. Once documented, how will this knowledge be used? How does the reclaiming of toponyms fit into other aspects of Tlingit cultural revitalization, such as repatriation (e.g., the Harvard's Peabody Museum's 2002 repatriation of a Tlingit *at.óow*, a Cape Fox totem pole)?

Conclusion

Just as anthropologists no longer focus on documenting kinship terms or rites of passage in an unchanging ethnographic present, the relationship of fieldworkers to their fields in the

early 21st century has also changed. Broadly speaking, over the past half-century, anthropology has become less concerned with *capturing* the essence of a people in a kind of cultural cookbook (a legacy of salvage anthropology and cultural colonialism), through the strict lens of a particular model of culture (e.g. evolutionism, structural-functionalism, cultural ecology), and instead has trended toward approaching more narrowly focused phenomena within specific genres of cultural critique such as post-modernism, feminism, and specific modes of engaging the field such as reflexivity and activist anthropology.

In the framework of the Northwest Coast, we have correspondingly become less concerned with cultural groups such as “The Tlingit” as a monolithic entity analogous to James Fenimore Cooper’s oft-critiqued “One Giant Indian,” and more focused upon understanding the diachronic historical processes that have shaped, and continue to modify, cultural forms through the present moment. At the same time, the foregrounding and legitimization of reflexive perspectives have broadened anthropological accounts to both include the ethnographer as part of the field site and to bring to account the relationship between ethnographer and the community being studied (see, e.g., Kan 2001). Coastal southeast Alaska and British Columbia, as anthropological places of interest, have been privy to powerful historical events and forces that have altered the cultural-geographic “landscape”: the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 and the Supreme Court of Canada’s 1997 *Delgamuukw* decision of 1997 being two of the most influential.

Being and Place among the Tlingit is an important and solidly presented ethnography that responds to these trends by highlighting the ways in which the Tlingit, historically and in the present, define themselves through place. It addresses how external pressures affect the meaning of ritual, story, and language, as these artifacts of culture decouple from the places they describe. As a result of this process of forgetting, people lose their

connections to land and heritage. Yet all is not lost. Thornton closes the book with several case studies wherein Tlingit actors reappropriate lands from which they had become estranged; places formerly seized by commercial interests or the state. Throughout, he has suggested that native practices of land stewardship commingle self, community, land, and environment. In addressing the dynamic interplay of these variables, Thornton has portrayed a uniquely Tlingit way of engaging with the landscape as a nexus of life itself.

References

- Altman, Irwin, and Setha M. Low. 1992. *Place Attachment*. New York: Plenum Press.
- Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bierwert, Crisca. 1999. *Brushed by Cedar, Living by the River: Coast Salish Figures of Power*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Bolt, Clarence. 1988. “The Conversion of the Port Simpson Tsimshian: Indian Control or Missionary Manipulation.” In *Out of the Background: Readings on Canadian Native History*. R. Fisher and K. Coates, eds. Pp. 219–235. Mississauga, ON: Copp Clark Pittman.
- Clifford, James. 1997. *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Cole, Douglas, and Ira Chaikin. 1990. *An Iron Hand Against the People: The Law Against the Potlatch on the Northwest Coast*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Dauenhauer, Richard, and Nora Marks Dauenhauer. 1994. *Haa Kusteeyí, Our Culture: Tlingit Life Stories*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Dauenhauer, Richard, and Nora Marks Dauenhauer. 1995. “Oral Literature Embodied and Disembodied.” In *Aspects of Oral Communications*. U. Quasthoff, ed. Pp. 91–111. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Dauenhauer, Richard, and Nora Marks Dauenhauer. 1998. “Technical, Emotional, and Ideological Issues in Reversing Language Shift: Examples from Southeast Alaska.” In *Endangered Languages: Language Loss and*

Community Response. L. Grenoble and L. Whaley, eds. Pp. 57–98. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dombrowski, Kirk. 2001. *Against Culture: Development, Politics, and Religion in Indian Alaska*. Lincoln: University of Alaska Press.

Donald, Leland. 1997. *Aboriginal Slavery on the Northwest Coast of North America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Field, Steven, and Keith H. Basso, eds. 1996. *Senses of Place*. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.

Fisher, Robin. 1992. *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia 1884–1890*. 2nd edition. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Harkin, Michael. 1993. "Power and Progress: The Evangelical Dialogue among the Heiltsuk." *Ethnohistory*, 4:1–33.

Harkin, Michael. 1996. "Engendering Discipline: Discourse and Counterdiscourse in the Methodist-Heiltsuk Dialogue." *Ethnohistory*, 43:643–661.

Kan, Sergei. 1996. "Clan Mothers and Godmothers: Tlingit Women and Russian Orthodox Church Christianity, 1840–1940." *Ethnohistory*, 43(4):613–641.

Kan, Sergei. 1999. *Memory Eternal: Tlingit Culture and Russian Orthodox Christianity Through Two Centuries*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Kan, Sergei. 2001. "Friendship, Family, and Fieldwork: One Anthropologist's Adoption by Two Tlingit Families." In *Strangers to Relatives: The Adoption and Naming of Anthropologists in Native North America*. S. Kan, ed. Pp. 185–217. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

de Laguna, Frederica. 1960. *The Story of a Tlingit Community: A Problem in Relationship between Archaeological, Ethnological, and Historical Methods*. Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin. P. 172. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.

de Laguna, Frederica. 1972. *Under Mount Saint Elias: The History and Culture of the Yakutat Tlingit*. Smithsonian Contributions to Anthropology. P. 7. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Miller, Bruce. 2001. *The Problem of Justice: Tradition and Law in the Coast Salish World*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Qin, Wen-Jie. 2006. *Return of a Totem Pole*, Film. Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, & Watertown, MA: Documentary Educational Resources.

Saunders, Barbara. 1997. "Contested Ethnie in Two Kwakw'akw' Museums." In *Contesting Art*. J. MacClancy, ed. Pp. 85–130. London: Berg.

Sealaska Heritage Foundation. 2000. *Celebration 2000*. Susan W. Fair and Rosita Worl, eds. AK: Sealaska Heritage Foundation.

Thornton, Thomas F. 2008. *Being and Place among the Tlingit*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.

Walter, Eugene Victor. 1988. *Placeways: A Theory of the Human Environment*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Robert L. Clark
Mansfield University
rlclark@mansfield.edu

Ying Yang
Shippensburg University
yyang@ship.edu

North American Dialogue 15.1, pp. 22–27, ISSN 1556-4819. © 2012 by the American Anthropological Association. All rights reserved. DOI: 10.1111/j.1539-2546.2012.01048.x

Book Review

Landscapes of Youth

- **Elsa Davidson.** *The Burdens of Aspiration: Schools, Youth, and Success in the Divided Social Worlds of Silicon Valley*. New York and London: New York University Press, 2011.
- **Annette Lareau.** *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life, Second Edition with an Update a Decade Later*. Berkeley, LA, London: University of California Press, 2011.

By Pamela Godde

In an era of intensifying globalization of labor and capital, of increasing economic insecurity, and of a concern over the competition of youth to perform well in schools, in the community, and in their future workplaces, Elsa Davidson's *The Burdens of Aspiration* and Annette Lareau's second edition of *Unequal Childhoods* are as timely as they are insightful. Conducting her work among students in two high schools (one of which she is a former student), corporate employees, middle-class residents, and other individuals in Silicon

Valley at the end of the tech-boom era, Davidson navigates the social landscape of youth, exploring the lives of teens growing up in a technology-driven and self start-up, success-oriented culture. Lareau's updated *Unequal Childhood* parallels Davidson's discussion of inequality and its effects in adulthood – from unequal high schools to unequal networks, work, and resources. Both scholarly works emphasize the polarization that prevails in American neighborhoods and schools and tightly link class to aspirations of, and choices for, work in adulthood.

Echoing Pierre Bourdieu's (1984, 1993) work on class identification, taste, and capital and Michèle Lamont's study of social "boundary work" (Lamont 1992; Lamont and Molnár 2002), both *The Burdens of Aspiration* and *Unequal Childhoods* have strong theoretical implications regarding class reproduction, social boundary making, and growing up in the United States in the 21st century. At the same time, while both books are based primarily on the argument that class plays a key role in shaping aspirations and future prospects, they intersect the literature on youth, race, ethnicity, and education (e.g., Christerson *et al.* 2010; Conchas 2006; Lewis 2003). For both authors, while race matters and contributes to how youth conceptualize their position in society, class standing matters more.

The Burdens of Aspiration

Against a backdrop of the politics of class – in which the politics of race, ethnicity, and gender are intimately bound – and through the depiction of the disparate educational contexts of lower and working-class Morton High and middle-class Sanders High, Davidson accurately reflects the worlds that youths face today – not only in Silicon Valley but also across the United States – and the burdens of aspiring to varying definitions of responsible citizenship. How students come to make the choices they do is never a straightforward process, but it is influenced and shaped by intensifying globalization of tech workers; regional, national, and global discourses of at-risk

youth; a neoliberal market economy; and corresponding policy making. Davidson approaches her analysis through a contrast of the idealized representation of citizenship as shaped by the high-tech corporations of Silicon Valley, with the political, racial, and economic realities of everyday life in her portrayal of processes of self-perception and aspiration formation. Aspirations to match real worlds with idealized worlds pose a burden to youth and are marred by realities of social exclusion, social belonging, and privilege.

The Burdens of Aspiration examines how students strive to attain various forms of social, cultural, and economic capital to best position themselves for what may ultimately be a tenuous future. Students draw social boundaries, learn to identify themselves in a particular frame (e.g., as "at risk" or as "brilliant"), and make choices and set goals accordingly. For example, Armando, the working-class Latino of Morton's Biotechnological Academy who "manages his aspirations" and his at-risk status by choosing a career based on giving back to the community (enlisting in the Marine Corps) rather than pursuing a career with a major biotech company, contrasts with Katherine, the middle-class white student of Sanders High who negotiates opposing values of self-knowledge and cultivation versus personal materialism to eventually market herself as a "strategic cosmopolitan." That schools are a great equalizer in U.S. society is challenged through an exploration of resources, narratives (ranging from "at risk" to "digital divide" to "brilliance" to "the Hewlett Packard (HP) way"), and environment (an open-campus versus a closed-campus) made available to students and parents alike in disparate parts of the Valley. Despite differences, Armando and Katherine share a common "fear of slipping" – whether into a status of "at risk" or into a lower socio-economic class – and they share the burdens of aspiration, which includes the burden of responsibility for one's social and economic security.

At the same time, Davidson's work is more than an ethnography on the variations of tastes, values, fears, and aspirations that youth espouse.

It is also a historical overview of the Valley's high-tech boom and bust, with an emphasis on corporate interface with (and reinvention of) local schools (through such programs as Challenge 2000), as well as an important work that bridges the relation between changing school environments and the ever-growing hierarchical global labor market that demands a flexible but self-responsible citizenry. Davidson argues that both types of schools – those of Morton and Sanders – do more than reproduce class standing; they contribute to producing the types of flexible citizen-subjects required by a neoliberal economy. The role that local high-tech corporations (e.g., Agilent and Hewlett-Packard) and global market forces play in both enlarging or bridging the gap in social inequality through definitions of success and the ideal citizen sparks Davidson to raise a variety of questions, including the role of private funding in the public sector; the concomitant responsibility of social reproduction on processes of citizenship formation; and agency in setting aspirations and choices. Yet, while Davidson hints at a hegemonic force at play, she is careful to show that students have choices, even if made ambiguous by the influences of school environments, family values, neighborhoods, and past experiences.

The subject breadth of *The Burdens of Aspiration* is indeed wide, and Davidson ensures not to sacrifice the complexity of the subject. Yet, while such breadth is a strength, it compromises the depth of Davidson's ethnographic work with the students of Morton and Sanders High Schools. With a focus on the high-tech landscape in the broader context of a neoliberal order in chapters 3, 4, and 5, Davidson diverts attention away from the individuals who comprise the heart of her ethnography in chapters 2 and 3. With a little more than a third of the book devoted to the narratives and self-perceptions of high school students, *The Burdens of Aspiration* is as much about the world of Silicon Valley during the boom and bust eras of the technological industry as it is about the Armandos and Katherines who people this world.

Unequal Childhoods

Ten years after the original study that undergirded *Unequal Childhoods*, Lareau returns to her informants to discern how patterns of childrearing may have influenced pathways and to what extent class continues to matter beyond childhood. In her second edition of *Unequal Childhoods*, Lareau advances her objective of "making invisible inequality more visible" (p. 265) and reaffirms that social class is an important determinant – at times more important than either race or gender – of educational and work outcomes.

The first edition of *Unequal Childhoods* takes the reader into the world of 12 children of three social classes and two races where parents adopt varying patterns of childrearing. Childrearing practices of white and black middle-class parents – who engage in "concerted cultivation," filling their children's lives with an endless stream of activities designed for enrichment and actively fostering their children's talents – is contrasted with childrearing practices of white and black working-class and poor parents – who abide by a "logic" of natural growth, allowing their children to grow without the constraints of a regimented schedule. While all families share certain practices (e.g., all families have rituals that provide children with a sense of family membership), the content of such practices varies according to class, and this variance, as we see in the second edition's update, contributes to the outcome of educational and career choices. Furthermore, aspects of concerted cultivation that middle-class parents engage continue through the high school, college, and even work experience of their children, proving valuable resources in achievement.

The strength of Lareau's update to her *Unequal Childhoods* is, like the main material of the book, the depth of personal information of each of her subjects as well as the longitudinal nature of the research. We are provided a window onto the lives of Melanie Handlon and Alexander Williams a decade later, after they have completed high school – or not – and are making their way in the world. The strength is also on Lareau's own

brave reflection on the nature of fieldwork, including the limits of longitudinal work, and, uniquely, on the candid reactions and feelings of her informants toward the book and the way they are represented. Her comments on what might be perceived as a weakness in the research — namely sample size and how to accurately measure social class — as well as her addressing issues of recruitment, ethics, and questions of intervention methodologically position her work and remind the reader of the very real nature of fieldwork.

Lareau's in-depth ethnographic work on the intimate everyday world of family practices in childrearing provides a complementary study to Davidson's work, which, while perhaps lacking ethnographic depth, contributes theoretical breadth and addresses the very questions that Lareau raises of broader social influences (e.g., the globalization of the U.S. labor force) on youth and class reproduction. Where Lareau's work details how youth come to have the values they do, Davidson's work explains how youth perceive themselves *vis-à-vis* such values. Similarly, by conducting ethnographic research in Morton's Biotechnological Academy, Davidson addresses Lareau's questions about the effects of different access to educational resources in determining career outcomes. Her findings support Lareau's argument that institutions "prioritize and reward particular cultural traits" and, therefore, certain class standing (p. 265). Even where Davidson's and Lareau's books have subtle differences in perspectives on common themes (e.g., Davidson's finding that middle-class youth have an aware-

ness of working-class lifestyles contrasts with Lareau's argument that middle-class youth having little or no awareness of life in other, differently advantaged nearby neighborhoods), such differences only prove theoretical fodder for future work on class and youth.

References

- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1993. *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Christerson, Brad, Korie L. Edwards, and Richard Flory. 2010. *Growing Up in America: The Power of Race in the Lives of Teens*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Conchas, Gilberto Q. 2006. *The Color of Success: Race and High-Achieving Urban Youth*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Lamont, Michèle, and Virág Molnár. 2002. "The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28:167-195.
- Lamont, Michèle. 1992. *Money, Morals, and Manner: the Culture of the French and American Upper-Middle Class*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lewis, Amanda E. 2003. *Race in the Schoolyard: Negotiating the Color Line in Classroom and Community*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Pamela Godde
California State University, San Marcos
pgodde@earthlink.net

North American Dialogue 15.1, pp. 27-30, ISSN 1556-4819. © 2012 by the American Anthropological Association. All rights reserved. DOI: 10.1111/j.1539-2546.2012.01049.x



**TO JOIN SANA, PRINT THE FORM BELOW,
ENCLOSE A \$25 (\$10 Students) CHECK MADE OUT TO: AMERICAN
ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, AND MAIL TO:
Membership Services
American Anthropological Association 2200 Wilson Blvd,
Suite 600 Arlington, VA 22201**

Dear AAA,

I am a member of the AAA. Please enroll me as a member of the Society for the Anthropology of North America. Enclosed please find my \$25 (\$10 students) annual membership fee.

NAME: _____

AFFILIATION: _____

ADDRESS: _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____



A • M • E • R • I • C • A • N
A N T H R O P O L O G I C A L
A S S O C I A T I O N
I

North American Dialogue (1556-4819) is published in April and October on behalf of the American Anthropological Association by Wiley Subscription Services, Inc., a Wiley Company, 111 River St., Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774.

Publisher: North American Dialogue is published by Wiley Periodicals, Inc., Commerce Place, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148; Telephone: 781 388 8200; Fax: 781 388 8210. Wiley Periodicals, Inc. is now part of John Wiley & Sons.

Delivery Terms and Legal Title: Where the subscription price includes print issues and delivery is to the recipient's address, delivery terms are Delivered Duty Unpaid (DDU); the recipient is responsible for paying any import duty or taxes. Title to all issues transfers FOB our shipping point, freight prepaid. We will endeavour to fulfill claims for missing or damaged copies within six months of publication, within our reasonable discretion and subject to availability.

Copyright and Photocopying: Copyright © 2012 American Anthropological Association. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior permission in writing from the copyright holder. Authorization to photocopy items for internal and personal use is granted by the copyright holder for libraries and other users registered with their local Reproduction Rights Organization (RRO), e.g. Copyright Clearance Center (CCC), 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, USA (www.copyright.com), provided the appropriate fee is paid directly to the RRO. This consent does not extend to other kinds of copying such as copying for general distribution, for advertising or promotional purposes, for creating new collective works or for resale. Special requests should be addressed to: permissionsuk@wiley.com

Journal Customer Services: For ordering information, claims and any inquiry concerning your journal subscription please go to www.wileycustomerhelp.com/ask or contact your nearest office.

Americas: Email: cs-journals@wiley.com; Tel: +1 781 388 8598 or +1 800 835 6770 (toll free in the USA & Canada).

Europe, Middle East and Africa: Email: cs-journals@wiley.com; Tel: +44 (0) 1865 778315.

Asia Pacific: Email: cs-journals@wiley.com; Tel: +65 6511 8000.

Japan: For Japanese speaking support, Email: cs-japan@wiley.com; Tel: +65 6511 8010 or Tel (toll-free): 005 316 50 480.

Visit our Online Customer Get-Help available in 6 languages at www.wileycustomerhelp.com

Associate Editor: Shannon Canney

Production Editor: Aaron Yeo, Email: nad@wiley.com

Online Information: This journal is available online at *Wiley Online Library*. Visit wileyonlinelibrary.com to search the articles and register for table of contents e-mail alerts.

Access to this journal is available free online within institutions in the developing world through the AGORA initiative with the FAO, the HINARI initiative with the WHO and the OARE initiative with UNEP. For information, visit www.aginternetwork.org, www.healthinternetwork.org, and www.oarescience.org.

Aims and Scope: North American Dialogue (NAD) is the newsletter of the Society for the Anthropology of North America. NAD provides a forum for North Americanist scholars, activists, and practitioners to share works-in-progress, to disclose findings, raise issues, describe fieldwork, and offer political and theoretical analysis as it is happening. Readers learn what their North Americanist colleagues are worrying about now and working on today.

NAD publishes two issues per year, in the spring and fall. Members of the Society for the Anthropology of North America receive NAD as a benefit of their membership. Please visit <http://sananet.org> to learn about becoming a member.

Wiley's Corporate Citizenship initiative seeks to address the environmental, social, economic, and ethical challenges faced in our business and which are important to our diverse stakeholder groups. We have made a long-term commitment to standardize and improve our efforts around the world to reduce our carbon footprint. Follow our progress at www.wiley.com/go/citizenship

Disclaimer: The Publisher, American Anthropological Association, and Editors cannot be held responsible for errors or any consequences arising from the use of information contained in this journal; the views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Publisher, American Anthropological Association, and Editors, neither does the publication of advertisements constitute any endorsement by the Publisher, American Anthropological Association, and Editors of the products advertised.

ISSN 1556-4819 (Online)