

berkeley anthropology matters - BAM!

anthropology department † kroeber hall † university of california † berkeley

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<http://ls.berkeley.edu/dept/anth/dept.html>

Congratulations

Lawrence Cohen's book *No Aging in India: Alzheimer's, the Bad Family, and Other Modern Things* won the American Ethnological Society's book award for a first single-authored book. *No Aging in India* is a book that crosses boundaries between kinds of discourse and practice (from tabloids to ancient Sanskrit texts, from nursing homes in the U.S. to ashrams created by the middle classes in India); between disciplines (from folklore to popular culture, from medical anthropology to area studies); and between genres (from autobiography to travelogue, from ethnography to philosophy). Deeply versed in medicine, medical anthropology, and genetics, as well as India area studies and language, Cohen's book is pathmaking not only for India, but also for research on old age in America. Lawrence Cohen was awarded the prize during the business meeting of the American Ethnological Society at the recent AAA meetings in Chicago.

Aihwa Ong's book *Flexible Citizenship* (Duke University Press, 1999) received Honorable Mention for the Senior Book Award of the American Ethnological Society.

Valdimar Tr. Hafstein was elected the winner of the Krohn Prize 1999, for his essay; "Biological Metaphors in Folklore Theory: An Essay in the History of Ideas." The Krohn Prize is awarded by the Nordic Network of Folkloristics (NNF) and the prize-winning essay, along with the second and third place essays, will be printed as an NNF publication and distributed at the 28th Nordic Ethnologist and Folklorist Conference in Hanko, Norway, in May 2000.

Anthropologists in the News

Jonathan Marks was quoted in a news brief on the Discovery Channel Online in which he stated that the similar genetic composition between human and chimpanzees is a constructed fact, used in various ways to justify various things. His quotes are taken from his paper presented at the AAA meetings, "What it Really Means to be 99 Percent Chimpanzee." To read the news brief in its entirety go to:

<http://www.discovery.com/news/archive/news991122/brief4.html>

On Mon Nov 8th, the **Medicine, Markets and Bodies/Organs Watch Project** at Berkeley, under the direction of **Nancy Scheper-Hughes** and **Lawrence Cohen**, held an inaugural panel that featured David and Sheila Rothman from Columbia University, along with Scheper-Hughes and Cohen. The panel was accompanied by a press release which generated substantial media interest. Journalists from across the U.S. responded to the press release, and articles ran in the *New York Times*, *The San Francisco Examiner*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, among others, and circulated via AP and Reuters. The story was read on over 140 radio stations across the nation. Scheper-Hughes and Cohen appeared on the Channel 2 Evening News (Eyewitness News), and on CNN. They also fielded calls from journalists representing news outlets in Japan and India.

AAA Recap—by Simon Lee, *Medical Anthropology*

The AAA meetings were, in the words of one astute archaeologist, more "successful" than "joyous." A quick network analysis confirms that most believe UCB and friends acquit themselves well in public performance. This is not to discount, however, the innovative application of Heydigger's Dasein (sic) to the healing rituals of the Tswana with which I was regaled early Wednesday afternoon. Panel presentations aside, data and theory were copiously exchanged over cups of Seattle's Best in the lobby as well as the ballrooms. Short work, indeed, was made of our hospitality in 1104 where, amidst some 50 guests, one supposed slighted alumni was overheard to imperiously insist, "I never got an email, I just saw a sign on the message board!" Next year, we'll know better. This time around I benefited from Dr. Nader's sage advice in 240a that the best anthropological discussions happen in the halls—a chat with senior ethnologist, Prof. David Aberle, was a highlight of my day.

On Saturday, the AAA Executive Board adopted a proposal to add particular reporting requirements to employers advertising in the AN. A more sober reminder of this necessity came later when, walking toward the Hilton that evening, a Harvard colleague and I were verbally accosted by a passing driver. Amazed that anthropologists in Chicago might in fact be as perspicacious as they claim to be, we rushed to Boyztown to reaffirm the betwizt and between of self and Other with an ethnographic foray into indigenous drinking habits.

If a schematic of the continental U.S. were mapped onto a Gaussian curve, a certain area would approximate

the norm, if such a thing could be said to exist. Savoring my first fresh greens in a week, I much admire and give thanks this holiday that Berkeley is more west than mid, and thus a quartile left of center. Congratulations to all who braved the Windy City—N'er fear the less intrepid, we need not travel so far afield next November.

Best jokes heard at AAA—by Pam Stern, Anthropology

Informant to a reflexive anthropologist: “Enough about you, let’s talk about me.”

What happens when you cross a mafia don with a post-modernist? He makes you an offer you can’t understand.

Holiday Happenings

Don’t forget the annual **Anthropology Holiday Party** on 12/17 from 3 to 7 pm in the Worth Ryder Gallery. The Museum staff will be joining Anthropology for what promises to be the gala event of the Anthropology social season. There will be the usual spread of excellent food, wine, and a raffle of really good door prizes. Don’t miss it.

As usual the arrival of the holidays has made UC Mail Services very nervous as it anticipates being asked to deliver packages from J. Crew, Victoria’s Secret and Lands End—*because really, who is home in the middle of the day? And who wants to be greeted with that little yellow note informing you that your package is now deep in the bowels of the U.S. Post Office and you will now have to spend an entire Saturday morning getting your package out again—if they can find it. If they don’t tell you your package is still tooling around the Bay Area in some mail truck. . . .* Ahem. Still, it isn’t fair to ask Mail Services to deliver such items on top of the thousands of pieces of mail it already processes. So this is what will happen. Mail Services is going to guess that that Harry & David Tower of Treats is not university business, and your Tower will not be delivered to your department. Instead you will be sent a note saying Mail Services has your package. You can pay an additional fee to have them deliver your package, or you can go down to 2000 Carleton Street and retrieve it. Now, those who have gone to the Mail Services workshops (Juliet) *assure* us that you will *not* receive a lecture from Mail Services when you go down to claim your package. We’ve asked several times, “Are you sure? No lecture?” and she says, “Really, no lecture.” Personally, we think just a *hint* of a lecture *might* leak out, so we’re going to find other ways of getting our packages this holiday season.

And don’t be putting your stamped holiday cards in the outgoing mail bins either. This also makes Mail Services hop up and down.

In Memoriam

Dr. Albert B. Elsasser, an important contributor to P. H. Museum history, passed away early 11/29 due to kidney failure. Memorial Services will tentatively be held 12/19. Call Robin Stephenson in the Museum (643.7648) for the date for the services. Cards can be sent to his wife, Winifred Elsasser, at their home, 824 Park Way, El Cerrito, CA 94530.

Department News

The **Kroeber Anthropological Society** (KAS) will meet at 5 pm on Friday, 12/3 in the Gifford Room. The KAS publishes a journal and hosts noontime talks and other events. Anyone interested in joining this group is welcome to attend. For more information, contact Lisa Bourgeault at 650.357.7448 or lisabour@uclink4.berkeley.edu.

Disseminating information in Anthropology is an interesting task. If you put information up on the website, you immediately run into those who say, “I never read the website.” This is such a simple straightforward stance that thoughts of having web information dance around have been discarded in favor of other dissemination methods. A favorite is the time-honored *flyer* tradition. With this method you put up a flyer and your flyer instantly joins the one hundred other flyers posted anywhere at any one time. People try to make their flyer more noticeable by printing on ever more brightly colored paper, by adding pictures, or the latest in flyer *savoir faire*, printing the flyer on a colored printer. However, the odds of your flyer being ignored are still great. People start thinking about *where* to put their flyer—some have tried on the walls near the Anthro mailboxes (highly visible! but nixed as unsightly) or putting flyers *in* the mailboxes, resulting in 1) crazed graduate students (because of sharing with those who never pick up their mail) and 2) faculty claiming “nope, nope, never got it” (because they threw it away). A workaround to the tossing-faculty is to put the flyer *in an envelope* with their name on it (preferably typed) and seal the envelope. The tossing-faculty picks up the envelope, thinks it is important, opens it, and then hahaha, it is only your flyer. *Then* they toss it, but you can hope that something about your announcement penetrated their consciousness in the time between the opening of the envelope and the projection into the garbage can. A third dissemination method is email—which encounters those who “don’t have email” and the more wily “have email but never read it”—so announcements have to be printed out and put in the mailbox again (get out that envelope). In this age of advanced technology, the answer is *to do all of the above all the time*. This doesn’t solve the dissemination problem, but everyone feels better.