Annual Report from AES to the AAA, 2002-2003
Submitted by Fred Myers

Continuing Projects

AES Website: The AES website functions acceptably, in a minimalist way. It continues to be partially hosted at AAA so we no longer need to change addresses when the President changes, just move some web files behind the scenes to a new location. We are hoping to take more advantage of the website as a way of communicating with members. As a first step, We have decided to begin putting sample syllabi on the website, as a means of disseminating information about pedagogy and content for teaching. Cathy Lutz has provided the first four samples. Leo Hsu, our student representative and web manager, has done a fine job of taking care of the site and clarifying what our usage should be.

Cultural Anthropology Magazine: The committee formed by the Board in 1998-1999 to develop a contemporary issues/public affairs magazine met again at the New Orleans 2002 AAA meetings. It looks as if this magazine might be started under the aegis of Palgrave Publishing. There seems to be a good deal of interest, both from Palgrave and potential contributors. A sample issue has been prepared with four full-length illustrated articles (Susan Harding, Emily Martin, Richard Lee and Ida Susser, and Fran Mascia-Lees) and two shorter pieces (by John Borneman and Tom Strong). A second issue is being planned, with potential contributions from Lila Abu-Lughod, Sandy Morgen, Lorna Rhodes, and others. We decided to create a sample issue as a web page through the AES website (a webpage describing the proposed journal already exists at the site). The committee (Dean Birkenkamp, Emily Martin, Ida Susser, Dan Segal, Don Brenneis, Louise Lamphere, Joe Dumit, Fran Mascia-Lees and two new student representatives) expects to present the sample issue to Palgrave early this year.

New Initiatives

Internal reorganization: Although AES operations are financially sound, in the last year we are still dealing with having had to cut back some of our basic operations to balance our budget. For this reason, we decided not to convene spring meetings in 2002. Spring meetings are planned for 2003, and we are planning to reconvene them on a yearly basis after that.

Spring Meetings: The 2003 AES meetings, chaired by Councillors John Borneman and Katie Stewart will be held in Providence, R.I. April 24-26, in conjunction with the Society for the Anthropology of Religion.

The 2003 AES meetings invites participants to focus on the challenges of "new" and "old" ethnographic practices. We are interested in critically engaging with what anthropologists are doing, rather than in meta-commentaries on what anthropology is about. Critiques of the "culture" concept and of fieldwork methodology have provoked much substantive experimentation and innovation as well as critiques of representation. The diversity of responses has produced such eclectic work that the discipline can appear to outsiders (or ourselves) as fractured. Often anthropologists themselves do not feel addressed by new work and hence do not critically engage each other. Therefore, some of the major goals of this meeting are 1) to re-
examine what is understood by "ethnographic encounters", 2) to query how understandings of culture and ethnography are put into practice, 3) to have these various ethnographic practices speak to each other, to consider continuities between what we've thought of as "old" and "new" practices, 4) to begin to track the generative effects of transforming practices on what we teach and write and do in different settings, and 5) to ask what kind of knowledge we produce and why it matters.

Format: We want the conference itself to reflect the ongoing methodological experimentation. We encourage experimentation with the format of panels, including such forms as author meets critics, discussions of a single account or analysis, panel discussions, and especially panels which contain substantive difference and dialogue within themselves. We also encourage innovation in the writing and presentation of individual papers such as aesthetic and/or political performances, speaking without meta-theoretical authorization.

Publications

Under the editorship of Carol Greenhouse, the American Ethnologist, continues to be strong and interesting. During her tenure, the turn-around time became short, submissions remained good and the budget under control. Virginia Dominguez began her term as editor in June, 2002. We have discovered that journal citation rankings show a decline for the AE over the past 3 years, and this suggests the need for some changes, particularly to attract new readership. A recent study identifies a significant decline in institutional print subscriptions since 1997 (-15%), eroding an important base of revenue for the journal, while our production and field office costs remain high. Outside consultants to AAA believe the decline is due to an increase in electronic database subscriptions, subscriptions which AES asked to have cancelled, but which flags the need to develop a long-term electronic strategy. Virginia plans some reorganization of the journal, changes of format (to an 8.5x11 page size), and so on, in hopes of building up the readership beyond current levels and of engaging some readers outside the discipline of anthropology itself. These changes reflect both changes in the discipline of anthropology but also our concern to keep the journal on sound financial footing. The journal is an important source of revenue, one of our major member benefits, and also of cost. One change that is being tried is a switch to a system of printing Review Essays while posting single Book Reviews to the new AE Book Reviews Online Site. The Table of Contents of each print issue will continue to list single Book Reviews. This will save pages for other kinds of articles, reduce the cost of preparing book reviews for publication, and increase the access and speed of getting reviews into the public.

Since the November 2001 AAA meetings, the Board okayed the serious discussion of terms of a contract proposal to move the publication of AE from AAA to Duke University in hopes of increasing readership and revenue with the support of a major University Press. This courtship went to significant lengths, including a visit to Duke University Press by our new editor, Virginia Dominguez, but in the end, we were unable to proceed with Duke. The ultimate ownership of AE lies with the AAA, and the AAA is attempting to come up with an overall publication plan for its entire journal list. AAA has been helpful in helping clarify the stakes and terms of alternative publishing venues, and the AAA has renegotiated some of the charges made to AES which had becoming increasingly burdensome.
A major issue to be faced by academic publishing and especially of scholarly journals is electronic publication.

Book Prizes: At the Spring Meetings, AES will award the Elsie Clews Parsons Prize to the best graduate student paper submitted. AES will award two book prizes at the 2003 AAA meetings. Teresa Caldeira is the head of the committee for The Sharon Stephens First Book Prize and Julia Paley is the head of the committee to decide the Senior Book Prize.

AES EXECUTIVE BOARD 2001-2002

PRESIDENT: 2001-2003
Fred Myers
Department of Anthropology
New York University
25 Waverly Place
New York, NY 10003
O: 212-998-8555
H: 212-979-6721
FAX: 212-995-4014
fred.myers@nyu.edu

PRESIDENT-ELECT: 2001-2003
Catherine Lutz
Department of Anthropology
University of North Carolina
Campus Box 3115
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3115
O: 919-962-3353
H: 919-929-9696
FAX: 919-962-1613
lutz@email.unc.edu

SECRETARY: 2001-Present
Ralph Litzinger
Department of Cultural Anthropology
Box 90091
Duke University
Durham, NC 27708
O: 919-681-6250
H: 919-416-0520
FAX: 919-681-8483
litz@duke.edu

TREASURER: 2002-Present
Hugh Gusterson
Anthropology Department
COUNCILLOR: 2001-2005
AAA 2002 MEETING CHAIR:
Kenneth M. George
Department of Anthropology
5240 Social Science Building
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Madison, WI 53706-1393
O: 608-262-5818
H: 608-441-5661
FAX: 608-265-4216
kmgeorge@facstaff.wisc.edu

COUNCILLOR: 2000 - 2004
Gertrude Fraser
(212) 573-4693 (W)
(908) 608-0690 (H)
email: G.FRASER@FORDFOUND.ORG
123 Summit Avenue, Apt. 3
Summit, NJ 07901

COUNCILLOR: 1999-2003
SPRING MEETING CO-CHAIR: 2003
Kathleen Stewart
Department of Anthropology
University of Texas, Austin
Austin, TX 78712
kstewart@mail.utexas.edu

COUNCILLOR: 1998-2002
SPRING MEETING CO-CHAIR: 2003
John Borneman
Department of Anthropology
McGraw Hall
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York 14853
jwb5@cornell.edu
COUNCILLOR: 2002-2006
Mayfair Yang
Department of Anthropology
University of California
Santa Barbara, CA 93106
yangm@anth.ucsb.edu

EDITOR, AMERICAN ETHNOLOGIST
Virginia R. Dominguez
University of Iowa
Department of Anthropology
114 Macbride Hall
Iowa City, IA 52242
O: 319- 335-1866
FAX: 319- 335-0653 (for correspondence, not for manuscripts)
eajournal@uiowa.edu

GRADUATE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE: 2001-2003
Leo Hsu
Department of Anthropology
New York University
25 Waverly Place
New York, New York 10003
O:
Lh206@nyu.edu