

Participant

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Observer

Annual Lewis Henry Morgan Lecture
"Of the Race, But Above the Race"
By J. Lorand Matory

This year's Lewis Henry Morgan lecturer was J. Lorand Matory, a Professor of Anthropology and African & African American Studies at Harvard University. Professor Matory has done extensive fieldwork on three continents. He attended Harvard as an undergraduate and received his Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Chicago. He has published books on the Yoruba of Nigeria and the historical development of Afro-Brazilian religions. This year's lecture was held on October 22, 2008 in Lander Auditorium in Hutchinson Hall on the River Campus here at the University of Rochester. The title of Matory's lecture was changed at the last minute from "The Other African Americans: Racial Stigma, Ethnicity and the Hidden Social Curriculum of the University" to "Of the Race but Above the Race."

He immediately captivated the audience by opening with a quote from the Declaration of Independence asserting that "all men are created equal." However, it was soon clear that Matory did not intend to exalt the ideals behind this famous work, as he quickly stated that Thomas Jefferson "did not intend for these works to apply to people who look like me." Matory proceeded to provide the audience with compelling examples of the dynamics of race, ethnicity, social stratification and the role of the university. He correctly pointed out that the study of the social consequences of race has been severely neglected because people may not see the topic as "politically correct." At one point he even mentioned that he lost a job offer over the controversial nature of his research regarding race. This topic, he claimed, is "hot like a bucket of Tabasco on an ulcerous stomach."

Before jumping into the substance of his research at Howard University, Matory outlined the theoretical antecedents of his work. He cited E.E. Evans-Pritchard's idea of cross-cutting socio-political identities and Frederick Barth's assertions about the permeability of ethnic groups and their boundaries. He discussed ethnicity, nationalism, and the state's ability to reshape or dissolve ethnic identities. Nationalism is a race-making process that often labels minority groups as "ethnic." Matory then cited Irvin Goffman's work on stigma, noting that some populations are stigmatized due to culture specific judgments. These groups are often "otherized" and discredited within the general population. However, Matory made it clear that everyone has something that can be stigmatized. Within stigmatized groups, there is further stratification.

From these foundational points, Matory moved on to a discussion of his fieldwork at Howard University. He spent six months living on the Howard University campus in Washington D.C., interacting with students, faculty, and alumni from a diverse array of backgrounds. Matory pointed out that many outsiders to the Howard University community see it as a place with overwhelming unity, where the students all equally embrace black identity. However, Howard students who are classified as black in American culture come from a wide variety of national, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.

Matory then pointed out the unusual nature of American racial classification, under which a person is considered “black” if he or she has one black ancestor. This is a very rare categorization worldwide. For example, in Nigeria, there is no concept of “black;” Matory found that many of the Nigerian students he met did not think of themselves as black until they came to America. Howard contains black students from all over the world. He discovered that even in the midst of major cooperative projects at the University, there was an unpredictable array of stratification and ethnic alliances signaling the prevalence of black diversity. It’s considered rude to talk about race and ethnicity publicly at Howard, friendship circles tend to center around complexion. Such diversity is especially apparent when looking at the diverse array of black ethnic restaurants surrounding the campus. As Matory points out, the menus of these different restaurants illustrate the diasporic transformation of campus cultures. Different black ethnic groups try to distinguish themselves and often use food as a means to do so. Food, the symbol of private life at home, becomes a symbol of public life abroad.

Matory’s lecture was interesting, invigorating and informative. He left us with something to which we could all relate: university communities are disproportionately made up of people who the world has stigmatized. These are the people who have a good reason to question the world and to look at it critically. In fact, Matory argued that all knowledge is shaped by ideas of the stigmatized because those are the people who have a personal stake in redefining antecedent boundaries. Overall, Matory’s lecture was a great success.

The following day many students and faculty alike were able to talk more personally with Matory at a luncheon hosted by the University of Rochester’s Anthropology Department. Matory was charismatic and knowledgeable and talked openly and honestly with university students about activism, education, racial categories and stratification and a variety of other issues. Matory’s work and insight provides all of us with a new outlook on the relativity of race, ethnicity and social stratification. The students and faculty at the University of Rochester are sincerely grateful for the opportunity to learn from and interact with Professor J. Lorand Matory.

- Johanna Fischer

The Participant Observer is brought to you by the Undergraduate Anthropology Council

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SPOTLIGHT ON:

Alumni

Updates

JOHN TOFIK KARAM (B.A. 1996) received the 2008 Roberto Reis Brazilian Studies Association (BRASA) Book Award for *Another Arabesque: Syrian-Lebanese Ethnicity in Neoliberal Brazil*. The award recognizes the two best books in Brazilian Studies published in English that contribute significantly to promoting an understanding of Brazil.

JANE GUYER (PH.D. 1972) has been elected as a member of the National Academy of Sciences for excellence in original scientific research. She will be inducted into the academy in April 2009. A professor of anthropology at Johns Hopkins University, Jane studies material life, emphasizing food, oil, and money issues.

DAVID LADON (B.A. 2007) - The Doctors Fox are proud to share our first track recorded as a whole band with y'all. Just visit <http://www.myspace.com/thedoctorsfox> and listen to the first song, "Silly Cy." It sounds best on good speakers, of course. This past November, we had shows with Walri in Boston, Buffalo, and Rochester.

KATE NAVARRA THIBODEAU (B.A. 2001) - Kate was awarded a \$400K grant for the City of Holyoke (attached press release) and I am pretty sure it just made my career! I think I can retire at 30!!!

Holyoke Mayor Michael J. Sullivan and City Historian Kate N. Thibodeau are thrilled to announce that the National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded a grant of \$399,950 to the City of Holyoke and Wistariahurst Museum, who in partnership with Holyoke Heritage State Park, the Children's Museum at Holyoke, the Holyoke History Room of the Holyoke Public Library and Enchanted Circle Theater, will develop a city-wide exhibit and heritage tourism plan for Holyoke called *Creating Holyoke*.

Creating Holyoke's total budget of \$692,970 will allow Wistariahurst Museum and partner organizations to finalize collaboration with humanities scholars and advisers, finish design and fabrication of long term museum exhibits in three locations, educational theater components, install walking/driving tour panels and way finding signs, develop teacher guides and curriculum materials, develop a website portal, and implement community programs in the humanities.

National Endowment for the Humanities panelists commented that *Creating Holyoke* is "a model for collaboration of museums within one city and a model for interpreting urban history." They applauded the project for examining broad themes in the growth of American cities over time and that "Holyoke's history addresses central themes and issues in American history." The project also won praise for weaving together "a rich interpretation" from three disparate exhibitions, for its varied and "imaginative" range of citywide programs and on-line resources, and for its strong scholarship. The panelists expressed strong support for this "extraordinarily comprehensive project." The Endowment shares the panel's enthusiasm for this project, and applauds its effective use of local history as a lens for viewing a larger national story.

Please call Kate Thibodeau at Wistariahurst Museum, 413-322-5660 or email at kate@wistariahurst.org.

Alumni Updates Continued...

COLETTE CARMOUCHE (B.A. 2008)

I just finished my internship program and have moved to Washington, D.C. to work for Habitat for Humanity for the next year. My internship was amazing and I'm kind of sad it's over! But, I'm planning to volunteer when I can so I can still be apart of the project. I was conducting oral histories and planning and writing a cultural heritage trail for the park that would highlight the African American community the park displaced when it was built in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corp. I was lucky because two anthropologists had been contracted by my park to do a study on this community and they finished this summer so I was able to access all of their resources and oral histories they completed. I did some walking tours with past residents and they basically walked me around the park and showed me where they used to live and other significant places in the community. It was really amazing because the oldest person to take me was 83 years old and she hadn't been to the park in 20 years. Nevertheless, she still had a clear memory of who lived in the community, what orchards they had or vegetables they grew, etc. It was also exciting researching and writing the narratives that will be a part of the Heritage Trail. I'd never really done anything like that before, but it was both challenging and fun to try and write narratives that reflected the specifics of the community and what life was like while placing it in a context of what was going on more broadly in the 1930s-1940s. At the end, we had a conference in D.C. and I was able to meet the other interns that were scattered across the country.

It seemed like everyone had really cool projects too. Please share this program with other Anthro students! The program is called, Cultural Resource Diversity Internship Program and the link is: <<http://www.nps.gov/history/crdi/internships/intrnCRDIP.htm>><http://www.nps.gov/history/crdi/internships/intrnCRDIP.htm>.

CLARE TERNI (B.A. 1999) was among six graduate students at the University of Virginia to receive a \$25,000 dissertation-year fellowship. Clare, who studies anthropology, was chosen for excellence in teaching and research.

Something new to report?

please contact us...

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“The Promise of Progress: The Life and Work of Lewis Henry Morgan”

Dr. Daniel Moses is the current Director of Delegation Leaders Program for the non-profit organization, “Seeds of Peace” and a former graduate student in the history department at the University. He has recently published a biography about a cherished icon in anthropology, Lewis Henry Morgan, entitled *The Promise of Progress: The Life and Work of Lewis Henry Morgan*.

Victoria Massie: *What makes your biography different than those that have been published in the past?*

Daniel Moses: The two biographies of Morgan written decades ago offer perspectives on his life without delving too much into theory. More recent work on Morgan has been specialized. It focuses on his contribution to the study of the Iroquois, to kinship studies, to the beaver, etc. In contrast, I’ve placed Morgan as a significant American participant in a great and venerable conversation about human society, about the trajectory of human existence on this planet. Morgan is in conversation with the ancient Romans—and he’s in conversation with us. I locate Morgan in an American political, cultural and intellectual milieu. His celebration of the American experiment and his theory of social evolution are linked together. I hope that I’ve been able to show this, and to show why this matters.

VM: *What do you hope your readers gain from reading this biography?*

DM: My hope: that reading this book inspires a sense of social possibility. More particularly, I hope the book sheds light on neglected aspects of the American dream. These aspects grow from values deeply embedded in the traditions that got their starts in Athens and in Jerusalem. Morgan was a railroad lawyer. He made his money in mining and railroads. He was a capitalist. He celebrated the progressive force of commerce. He celebrated America: for him, America embodied the commercial spirit. And yet as a young man he dressed up like an Iroquois warrior. He started a fraternity based on the League of the Iroquois. He became an advocate for Native Americans. He immersed himself in scholarship — and this scholarship was a form of quiet social protest. Morgan was imbued

with the classical and Christian values and virtues. He believed in the United States as an experiment in republican self-government. For him, it was not all about the consumption of commodities in the private sphere. Today we do not often realize the tensions that tear at the American experiment. Morgan’s life and work give us a chance to understand these tensions — and to explore what I see as the richness of our traditions. Who knows: maybe this argument will resonate more now; maybe the fortunes of the book will rise with the fall of Wall Street.

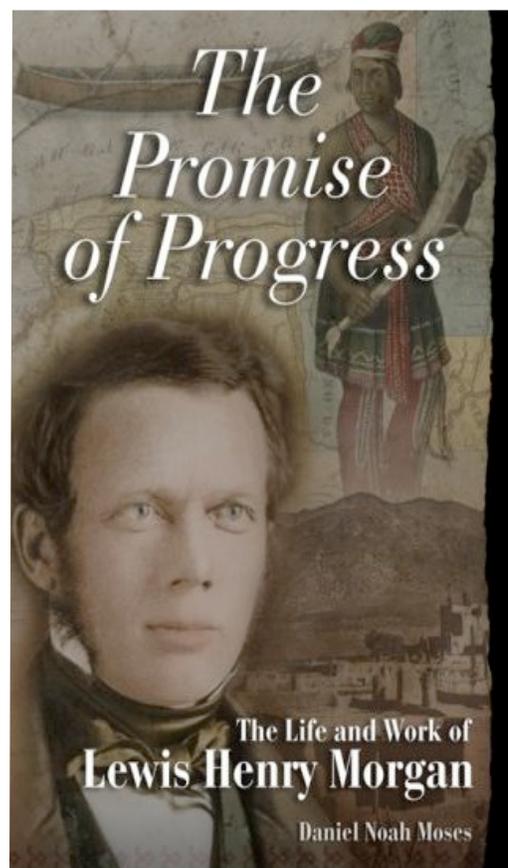


Photo from amazon.com

Travel Abroad In Egypt: A Student's Perspective

Undergraduate Anthropology Council President Devin Opotzner spent the Spring 2008 semester studying abroad at American University in Cairo. She also taught English class to Egyptian students. Opotzner was gracious enough to share pieces of her blog entries detailing the experience:

February 15, 2008

...I was looking at this long colonnade which the king used to walk through when going to celebrate this specific festival to commemorate the union of the red crown of Lower Egypt (Northern) and the white crown of Upper Egypt (Southern). I guess the kings celebrated it after 30 years' of their reign and it was called Heb-Sed, or the Jubilee Festival. When our tour guide explained this I asked him if the red and white of the crowns is where they got the colors for Egypt's flag. He explained the flag - the red for the blood of those lost in war (against Israel, among others), the black to represent their failures in war, and the white to represent victories. The falcon in the middle was developed by Nasser to represent the 1952 revolution. But the notion of anything connected between Ancient Egypt and the Egypt of today was completely unheard of. I had understood that there was this odd disconnect between Ancient Egypt and modern Egyptians, but hadn't realized it was so ingrained that my question actually seemed silly to him, and a notion one couldn't even entertain. After I spoke with him I remembered as we were going to the pyramids he was sure to explain that they are not all Egypt has to offer and was rather critical of tour groups that show up here and only go to the pyramids, Egyptian Museum, etc, because that's only the history, but not the "real" Egypt.

February 26, 2008

...After a 20 minute metro ride we arrive where they rent a building and I am shown to my classroom. Of course it's just my luck that I'm the only one without a co-teacher, but I was told I would have about 13 students, so no big deal. The classroom is a small room with a white board that you have to move frequently because it is in front of a door that goes to the bathroom and kitchen in the building. By the time all my students arrived and signed in it was almost 5:30 and I had about 23 students, about five of whom were forced to stand for the entire class period because they ran out of chairs. At this point I am essentially terrified, standing in front of the room with 23 eyes on me, knowing they won't understand a lot of what will come out of my mouth. I began by introducing myself and passing pictures around of my parents and my sister Kelly to show them my family. I talked about being a student, all very slowly, or as slowly as I could, and then had everyone introduce themselves. Most were in their early twenties and studying engineering or tourism. The only materials I had were two white board pens and a handout about complex sentences. I hadn't gotten around to printing out the full syllabus and didn't really prepare a lesson plan, both of which were bad moves, but I think it went okay. I read through the syllabus with them, told them to stop me if I'm ever talking too quickly or they don't understand something and then began explaining complex sentences. As I taught more of my own grammar background came back, but it was challenging nonetheless. I broke them up into groups to write some sentences and realized these kids were all much better at English than I anticipated.

They had grammatical errors, but wrote sentences such as, “When I saw Devin’s sister’s picture, I realized how much they looked alike,” or, “After I finish studying English, I hope to get a good job in America.” So many of them want to learn English so they can come to America, which is ambitious but also sad because I know how challenging it will be for most of them to try and get there. It was extremely refreshing to see students who were there because they knew it would “move them toward better” (which I corrected to “help me become better”) and who were so earnest and willing to learn. I laughed a lot and got them to laugh a bit with me. Oh, and I taught the “I before E except after C” rule today, which was great fun for me because someone misspelled “friend” and I remember doing the same thing and being taught the same rule.

March 8, 2008

...After leaving the mosque we crossed the street and entered the market. Expecting a vast amount of harassment and general hassling, I was immediately pleasantly surprised to find that the vendors rarely go much further beyond clever calls and noises to get your attention. From the first few minutes I felt compelled to say it was way better than I expected but I held my tongue to avoid speaking too soon. We stopped in a spice shop where Amy and I asked about Bedouin tea, something we’d been looking for since Dahab where we had it a few times and really enjoyed it. We mostly used Arabic to ask, and though they didn’t have it we had a fun conversation about America with the store clerk who loved Stallone movies. Following that we kept meandering, becoming bolder with our bargaining and Arabic skills. Having learned my numbers last week I was impressing many of the vendors (so they said) and they would drop their prices immediately because I spoke good Arabic. The flattery worked for me and usually I would get the price I wanted at the last minute by feigning walking away. Most of the goods were the same, various scarves, hookahs, alabaster pyramids, and stuffed camels, but the goods changed when we were in the gold and silver section of the market for a while, the tiny, winding streets lined with jewelry shops. Everyone had something to say to get our attention, but when we needed directions or advice they would always drop their game to help us out.

- Devin Opotzner



Photo from Devin Opotzner.

Dangerous Culture

Celebrated Croatian author Dubravka Ugresic graced our campus during the fall semester and gave a lecture accompanied by a question and answer period. Her new collection of essays, *Nobody's Home*, was the first book published by the University of Rochester's new foreign translation publishing enterprise, Open Letter Press. It was also the first book read by my ANT 274 – Creative Ethnography class. Ugresic also came and spent an entire class with us before her larger talk, accompanied by Director of Open Letter Press, Chad Post.

Ugresic had nothing prepared in advance, and wished that we ask her questions concerning the material from her book, or anything else for that matter. The whole experience reeked of nervous undergraduates, until the topic of ethnic/national identity came up—it's a subject that is featured prominently in much of Ugresic's work, especially *Nobody's Home*. As a citizen of the former Yugoslavia, Ugresic bore witness to the many ethnic wars that resulted from the dissolution of the ethnic conglomerate: the creation of hatreds that were not present before, i.e. Croats hating Serbs, Bosnians hating Moldovans. Hence, much of Ugresic's writing takes a rather bleak view of "ethnic identity"; the pieces from *Nobody's Home* that dominated the conversation were "Identity" and "Little Dog—Big Bark." Now, as an anthropology student, my academic career thus far has been dominated by the study and glorification of culture. The two aforementioned pieces seem to push highly against the notion that ethnic identity is important; in fact, she suggests its dangerous. But in today's world, countries are ever-shrinking, splintering, and offering autonomy to areas based solely on the idea of ethnic identity. Isn't this a good thing? Often, even a less oppressive thing? Isn't the opposite an empire?

In the ensuing discussion, I realized that the answer was both "yes" and "no." Ethnic/cultural identity can often act as a wonderful thing, a societal binder experienced by all in some way, shape, or form in our own lives. But Ugresic has seen firsthand the abuse of cultural identity, usually by higher-ups making international and domestic power-plays by manipulating various ethnic and religious groups alike to achieve their own ends. When ethnic identity is not just worn as a badge of pride, but as the marking on the war-shield, it can lead to terrible things. Ugresic witnessed many of these atrocities.

I went into the meeting thinking that it was going to be heated: a jetlagged author who appears to hate the concept of cultural identity vs. a room full of ravenous undergraduates ready to impress their teacher and defend their discipline to the last soldier. Instead, I partook in a wonderful discussion, with a witty, yet serious, author who managed to open my eyes to one simple fact: culture can be dangerous. As anthropologists, we deal with kinship charts, ethnographies, textbooks, and mountains of fieldnotes; but we always need to be careful, because any one of these things could potentially be turned into a bomb.

- Jesse Bia

A Conference Summary, by Professor Thomas P. Gibson

Report on Religion and Culture in the Indian Ocean Region, 18th Century to the Present

On 3-5 October 2008, the culminating event in the Religions and Cultures Initiative of the Mellon Central New York Humanities Project convened in the Kahin Center for Advanced Research on Southeast Asia at Cornell University. This was a workshop on Religion and Culture in the Indian Ocean Region, 18th Century to the Present organized by Professor Thomas Gibson of the University of Rochester and Professor Anne Blackburn of Cornell University. It followed several previous public events on different campuses sponsored by the initiative, including a one-day symposium on Religious Transgressions of Modernity, held at the University of Rochester on 20 April, 2007, and a three-day workshop on Music Moves Religions: Performance Networks in Indian Ocean Cultures, held at Syracuse University 18-20 April, 2008.

Religion and Culture in the Indian Ocean Region involved several innovative features. Following the model of the previous conference on Indian Ocean music at Syracuse, which included several musical performances, the workshop at Cornell began on Friday evening with a performance of Indian classical dance in the Odissi style by Pratibha Jena Singh. It served as a particularly auspicious inspiration for the conference because of the close aesthetic relationship between this dance form and traditional Hindu temple sculpture.

Saturday was organized around three panels each of which consisted of four papers that had been circulated in advance. Each panel was chaired by a fifth scholar who did not submit a paper but introduced and moderated the discussion. While five of the twelve papers were based primarily on the study of Islam, four on Hinduism and three on Buddhism, the panels were deliberately organized to foster discussions that cut across these religious traditions, across disciplinary boundaries, and across traditional geographic areas. Panel I was chaired by a historian and included papers by a historian, an anthropologist and two art historians discussing trade, politics, architecture and textiles in East Africa, western India and Southeast Asia. Panel II was chaired by a historian and included papers by two anthropologists, a historian and a scholar of religious studies discussing Muslim, Buddhist and European intellectual responses to the colonialism in East Africa, Southeast Asia, and South Asia. Panel III was chaired by an anthropologist and included papers by two anthropologists, a historian and a scholar of religious studies on new Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist movements in East Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia.

Sunday was organized around the comments of three graduate students on the previous day's discussion. The students are pursuing their doctorates in Religion, Anthropology and Asian Studies. As a result, their responses touched on very different aspects of the conference and stimulated much further discussion. By the end of the day there was a consensus that the careful blending of regions, religions and academic disciplines had been a great success and that it could lead to a cohesive and innovative publication. As it happened, two of the conference participants currently edit monograph series on the Indian Ocean: Zulfikar Hirji for Routledge, and Eric Simpson for Columbia-Hurst. Preliminary discussions have already been initiated with these publishers. Professor Gibson of the University of Rochester has agreed to act as editor of the monograph and will make every effort to incorporate the contributions of the panel chairs and the graduate students as well as of the panelists themselves.

UAC Travels Down to D.C.

Last fall, four anthropology students—senior Devin Opotzner, juniors Anna Tobin and Sara DuBois, and sophomore Victoria Massie—attended “Supporting Social Movements,” the fifth annual public anthropology conference at American University in Washington, D.C. Public anthropology is a movement to take knowledge gained through anthropological practices beyond the academic arena. Anthropologists of this movement extend their efforts to civic engagement and activism, addressing public problems, concerns and interests through engagement and collaboration with societies and dedication to speaking publicly about their work. Attendees of the conference—including anthropology students, as well as activists focused on the environment, gender equality, indigenous rights, fair trade, peace and other causes—discussed ways in which ‘objective’ research can be bridged with activism as a means to advance progressive movements.

Conversations took many forms. In a roundtable discussion of strategies for participatory and collaborative research, attendees described an anthropologist’s role in an ethnographic relationship, stressing the value of reflexivity and the importance of dialogic methodology. Speakers encouraged communities to represent themselves by speaking publically about their concerns, but also recognized the ways in which representation can be facilitated and legitimated by a researcher. Participants of this discussion also reflected on the question, “Who benefits from our research?” Responses to this question brushed upon issues of motives and funding for research as well as compensation to subjects for their knowledge and time.

Later, in a panel discussion titled “The Militarization of Anthropology? Anthropologists and the Military,” an anthropologist, a student interested in cultural militarization, and a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War spoke about the ethical and moral compromises made by anthropologists who are hired by the military to gain knowledge of “cultural terrain” on human terrain teams. To protest against these particular compromises, and to promote change in general, one panelist suggested two different tactics. First, he stated that one can support an institution and then “beg for changes from within.” Or, second, one can completely withdraw support from the institution and advocate one’s position publicly.

Lastly, keynote speaker Laura Nader from the University of California, Berkeley, addressed what she termed “strategies of subordination”—ways in which the powerful justify positional strategies—and the need to reverse them. Explicit in her discussion was the need to “study up,” by studying the powerful and affluent rather than only the marginalized. Also, Nader stressed the need to demystify the language used in anthropology so as to reach a broader audience who could sustain social movements, leading to social progress, which Nader defined as success.

-Sara DuBois

Yes, We Can

In the fall semester of high school, my life was centered on Marching Band. Monday through Thursday, after a long academic day, I would make my way to the old elementary school football field for practice. As suggested by the term, my fellow instrumentalists and I, through careful training, played our respective musical devices while simultaneously putting our bodies through various conformational changes. One moment, a sixteen-note run would take hold off my fingers and, through different combinations, produce the expected musical line as my lower body shifted marching formation accordingly: forward to the left, backwards to the left, and forward to the right in 5.2 seconds all while maintaining my torso's parallel configuration to the front of the field. "Difficult" would be an understatement, but through each subsequent rehearsal, each step would become easier, each formation sharper, and we became ever more ready to measure our skills to those of our peers at the Saturday competition.

This Saturday was like any other. Each member arrived at the band room at the crack of dawn. Tired and irritable, we would wait until our band director so graciously posted the seating chart. I didn't want to be near Chanise. Her voice carried such power that I would temporarily become deaf with every spoken word and her body odor was just as unmerciful. It would be quite cruel and unusual punishment to place me near her on the two and half hour bus ride to the competition. As first chair clarinetist, I deserved much better. Mr. Hayes held the key to my comfortable trip in his hand, and with help of scotch tape, hung it on his office window. I was relieved. I was safe, victoriously escaping Chanise again, and, according to the piece of paper, was positioned beside my best friend, Taylor.

Once on the bus, I claimed the window seat. I had to wait for Taylor's response. If she disapproved, an epic battle to defend my territory would have begun, a battle so monumental, it would suggest *The Odyssey* was mere child's play. Luckily, Taylor did not resist. Now, as stated before, we band members were forced to be awake at the blasphemous hour of 7 a.m. My body needed sleep. I rested my head against the window, closed my eyes, and drifted into the subconscious unknown.

Boom! My slumber was abruptly interrupted by some ridiculous noise. Supposedly the bus had driven over a pothole. That was entirely unnecessary. I attempted to fall asleep again but the political chatter was too much to ignore.

"Taylor, who did you vote for?" asked Dan.

"G. Dubya!"

I had to speak. "Taylor, how can you vote for such an idiot? He can't even properly pronounce the word "nuclear." I tell you, anyone, and I do mean anyone, can become president of the United States of America. "

"Well, Tori, why don't you run?"

"The day America elects a black person to the oval office is the day hell freezes over." The Civil Rights Movement may be over, but I'm only fifteen, and I know America's still got a long way to go. There are still parts of town where I know I shouldn't be at late after dark. I still watch people hang Confederate flag bumper stickers on their trucks, or wear it on t-shirts. They suggest my idea that this behavior is offensive is somehow unfounded and that I am unaware of my history. And you want me to believe that America is ready for a person of color to run the country?

November 4th, 2008

I am writing this at 11:31 pm. It was a half an hour ago that America reminded me why I am proud to call this nation my home. This is so overwhelming. I have no words to encompass the magnitude of this moment. I feel inescapably vacant. I can't let myself feel right now because the sensation may be too strong. America may very well be on its way to truly living up to the fundamental creed established in her inception. This moment is much bigger than myself. My children and their subsequent generations may be able to see the day where they "may not be judged by their skin, but by the content of their character." It is the beginning of a new era. A dream conveyed on the steps of the Lincoln memorial in 1964 is surely coming to fruition, as the seemingly unthinkable will occur on January 20th, 2009. It is on that day my people's seeds of struggle, sowed in the midst of lynchings, castrations, burnings, and constant degradation, will produce the harvest we have been anxiously waiting for. It is on that sacred day that a man with skin of bronze and hair of wool will be sworn in as commander and chief of the very nation that only 143 years ago would have considered him nothing more than property.

Yes, we can. Yes, we did.

- Victoria Massie



Photo from nowpublic.com

Presentation to the Society for Applied Anthropology

Earlier this month, when all of the other UR students were heading back to Rochester, I was driving south to Santa Fe, N.M. I had been accepted to present a paper at the Society for Applied Anthropology's (SfAA) Annual Meeting. I had decided to apply to the conference at the recommendation of a professor and because the conference was a great opportunity to network in the anthropological community. The SfAA conference was expecting over 2,000 anthropologists from all over the world, and I was anxious to hear and meet anthropologists from a wide range of disciplines.

I read my paper during the last time period on the last day, so needless to say I could count the number of people in attendance on my hands. My paper was titled "Observations of a Child Health Clinic in Rural Malawi," and was based on fieldwork performed during a trip to Malawi last summer with a group of students from UR. Using data gathered through direct observation, interviews with health service assistants and participating parents, as well as additional library research, I described the operation of a rural health center in the village of Gowa, Ntcheu District, Malawi. In rural Malawi, health centers are thought to provide health care and education that improve the quality of life, eradicate contagious diseases and increase healthy years, especially among children under ten years of age. The health clinics described some of the child health practices that villages learn in order to make beneficial choices regarding children. After spending five days practically living at the conference center, I learned a few things that I feel are of value to the next generation of anthropologists.

First, I learned that when you work just as hard as everyone else to be at a conference (possibly even harder, since I had to apply for funding), the people there treat you like an equal. Even though I was one of the maybe dozen undergraduates at the conference, I wasn't treated as a student (like I'm used to being treated); I was treated as a colleague. Whenever I asked questions at the end of presentations or approached people to talk with them more, they listened to what I had to contribute to the dialogue, taking my critiques and advice as they would from anyone else in the field.

Second, I learned that there are infinite possibilities for an anthropologist today. At the SfAA conference, I met people who were self-described anthropologists who never taught at any school, who spend their entire workdays doing a wide range of activities including (but certainly not limited to) research, management, consulting, and advocacy. I was constantly reminded of Professor Foster's quote, "Anthropology is training for nothing in particular," because the wide range of people I met at the conference proved it to be true.

The last important thing that was re-affirmed for me was that the future of the field of anthropology is unknown, precisely because people are practicing anthropology in so many different ways. I attended three presentations on the function of anthropology in the military, and more on the anthropologist's role in advocating human rights or equality. The ethics, merits, and usefulness of anthropology mixing with foreign policy and the rules of battlefield engagement were presented and debated, but in the end, the choice lies with the individual.

As someone who is still trying to figure out what and how I want to do with regards to anthropology, going to the SfAA conference was an experience that I recommend to any student. I didn't get answers to all of my questions, but I met people from such different careers in anthropology that I am no longer scared of my future—no matter what the job market or Professor Foster's quote have to say. I now have one presentation under my belt, I've met some inspiring people, and I have contacts at graduate schools to which I might apply.

-Anna Tobin

Faculty Update: A Year In Review

Anthony Carter became a Senior Faculty Associate at the end of June 2008. The University regards this as retirement. Professor Carter sees it as a rearrangement of responsibilities that permits him to focus on the work to which he attaches the most importance. He continues to teach half-time. In December “Creative Providers: Counseling and Counselors in Family Planning and Reproductive Health,” appeared in *Demographic Research*. He is currently writing a paper on the role of narrative in reproductive counseling. Both papers are part of a larger project concerned with how people manage birth, illness, and death. He has particularly enjoyed working with Anna Tobin on a paper on primary health care in Malawi and with Chelsea McGuire on an AIDS prevention project in the Dominican Republic.

Ayala Emmett is chairing the Society for Humanistic Anthropology (SHA) 2009 Fiction Award Committee. At the SfAA 2009 Meetings in Santa Fe she co-chaired a round Table “Chapter and Verse” sponsored by the Society for Humanistic Anthropology and organized and chaired a SHA sponsored session “Without Footnotes: Writing Creative Ethnography.” Professor Emmett’s paper in that session, “In the City of Jerusalem” was adapted from her ethnographic novel *After the Disappearance* and drew on ethnographic material from her book, *Our Sisters’ Promised Land: Women Politics and Israeli-Palestinian Co-Existence*. Professor Emmett is working on her manuscript, *Intimate with God: Religion, Gender and Modernity*.

Robert Foster continued his research into the P.G. Black collection of Pacific Islands artifacts, speaking about his work to seminars at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Exeter in England. At Exeter, Bob also gave a talk titled “Three Things that I Know about Use Value” to a workshop on Material Geographies: Interdisciplinary Perspectives.” In the fall, Bob received the Goergen Award for Distinguished Achievement and Artistry in Undergraduate Teaching. This summer Bob will be a visiting fellow at the Australian National University, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, where he will offer classes and give a public lecture.

Thomas Gibson has had an unusually busy year pursuing his own research interests since being granted a full year of leave from teaching and administration. His leave in the Fall Semester was funded by an ACLS/SSRC/NEH International and Area Studies Senior Fellowship. His leave in the Spring Semester was approved for chairing the Department of Anthropology from 2005-2008. He presented papers at The Johns Hopkins University, Cornell University, Syracuse University, National Tsing Hua University in Taiwan, as well as annual meetings for the American Anthropological Association and the Association for Asian Studies. In May, a translation into Bahasa Indonesia of the first volume of his series on the Makassar of Indonesia, *And the Sun Pursued the Moon: Symbolic Knowledge and Traditional Authority among the Makassar*, will be published under the title of *Kekuasaan Raja, Syeikh dan Ambtenaar* by Innawa Press in Makassar, Indonesia. His translator, Nurhady Sirimorok, is now at work on the second volume, *Islamic Narrative and Authority in Southeast Asia*, which received Honorable Mention for the Clifford Geertz Award in the Anthropology of Religion in 2008. Professor Gibson hopes to complete the third volume, on *Ritual Knowledge and Social Movements in Islamic Southeast Asia*, before he returns to teaching in September.

Faculty Update: A Year In Review

Eleana Kim has been continuing to write and present her research on Korean transnational adoption. In October she presented in Seoul, South Korea at the annual American Studies Association of Korea conference. She also gave public presentations at the University of Irvine and UR's Susan B. Anthony Institute this spring. With Greta Niu (English) and Joanne Bernardi (MLC), she co-organized the Global East Asia Humanities Project, which kicked off with a two-day symposium in early February. This summer she plans to put the finishing touches on her book manuscript and to start a new project on ecological and cultural life around Korea's demilitarized zone.

Maryann McCabe gave a talk on urban food retailing at the UR library series, "Get Your Greens Locally." The talk was an historical comparison of public markets in the U.S. and included results of research conducted by students in the Local and Global Market Research class at the Rochester Public Market, South Wedge Farmers Market and Westside Farmers Market. Professor McCabe also presented a paper on vitamin practices among U.S. consumers at the Society for Applied Anthropology meetings held in Santa Fe, NM. This summer she plans to complete a paper on the role of brands in mediating relations between production and consumption in the U.S.

Daniel Reichman conducted fieldwork on migration and entrepreneurship, focusing on how circuits of migration between the U.S. and Honduras have changed cultural ideas of success and failure in Honduras. This study took him from a sea-cucumber processing plant on the coast of Maine to family-owned coffee farms in the mountains of Honduras. He continued to write about migration and social change, presenting work at the Meetings of the Society for the Anthropology of Religion among other venues.

Senior Send-off

As the year comes to a close another bright group of intelligent anthropologists make their way into the world outside of the University of Rochester. Although time has quickly passed, we celebrate the graduating anthropology majors in the class of 2009.

Anais Blin

Julie C. Broadbent

Amy Fukie Carvalho

Kelly Ann Clabbers

Christelle Domercant

Amanda P. Fuleihan

Joel Michael Langdon

David Mark Mahon

Miriam Elayne Moody

Catherine Gay Mueller

Samantha Rose O'Connell

Leah Frances Ofsevit

Devin Margaret Opotzner

Daniel M. Reade III

Sarah Elizabeth Rogers

Gemma Katherine Sole

Brittiny Marie Spinetto

Rachel Ellen Stern

Philip Andrew Stratigis

Deborah Alejandrina Ventura



Miriam Moody (above) and Devin Opotzner (below) developed honors theses this year. Moody's research was titled, "In The Negev, The Nation Will Be Tested: Education and Identity Among the Negev Bedouin in Israel." Opotzner's research was titled, "Prisoners Of Our Own Device: Locals, Nomads, Backpackers and Global Tourism in Dahab, Egypt."



Photos from Ro Ferreri

George Carlin, Anthropologist, 1937 - 2008

So, confused at all? A little bit shocked? Possibly even offended? Good. George Carlin would be pleased. But you may ask: “Wasn’t George Carlin a comedian?” Yes, he was, and quite possibly the greatest of all time. He worked from the late 1950s all the way through to 2008, blazing a path for those to follow, with his last live HBO Special airing just three weeks before his death. Controversial, talented author, in-your-face, hilarious, cynical, offensive: definitely. But anthropologist? Seriously?

Well, let’s get old school on the matter. Anthropology roughly translates as “the study of man.” Ok, easy enough. Let’s use that as a jumping off point. Shouldn’t that mean, in theory, that anyone who happens to be studying people, their cultures, and mannerisms is practicing the art of anthropology? If so, then Carlin should be up there along with Mauss, Malinowski, and our very own Lewis Henry Morgan among the demigods of our discipline. Carlin’s vast body of work, particularly his later routines, focus exclusively on such cultural matters, often using cultural taboos as a metaphorical knife with which to repeatedly stab society.

A favorite topic of his happened to be that of religion, a bread-and-butter issue among us anthropologists. A very vocal ex-Catholic and practicing Athiest (or “Sun Worshipper” as he preferred), Carlin was always able to poke gargantuan holes in to what he saw as mindless dogmas and superstitions of organized religion (I highly recommend the logical genius of “There is No God” from *Complaints and Grievances*.) That being said, while being critical, he was also completely willing and able to understand the intricate roles that religion has played in history and throughout peoples’ lives. In other words, he could hold his own opinions while also examining and giving credence to those which he did not identify/agree with. The man spoke in contradictions. Very anthro.

But what about all that swearing and gross sexual stuff which always seemed to come up in every routine? Shock value. It is instantly attractive to some, and repulsive to others; essentially, it weeded out those who couldn’t handle what was to come. Ever notice that Carlin always *started* his routines with some pretty nasty stuff, but always ended in long, even poetic, monologues? Anthropology has been doing this FOREVER. What do you think Malinowski was doing when he titled his 1929 ethnography *The Sexual Life of Savages in Western Micronesia*? Eye-catching isn’t it? Was Margaret Mead not breaking all kinds of taboos when she wrote about the sex lives of young girls in Samoa in 1928? As a woman no less! Ever seen the ethnographic film *Les Maitres Fous*? Let’s just say its not a first-date movie, unless animal sacrifice and slobbering happen to be your thing; but hey, I’m not here to judge. Anthropology has always been shocking; we are always the ones breaking the taboo barriers, not just to attract an audience, but because they often need to be addressed in order to get at the heart of a culture. Taboos, when properly examined, can reveal a fortune of knowledge about any given society. At this task, Carlin was a master.

In summary, George Carlin devoted his life to the study of human beings and the cultures they produced. Instead of writing ethnographies, he staged them. He didn’t just make jokes, but wove intricate maxims inspired by the reality which surrounded him. Oh yeah, and he was pretty funny too, which never hurts (somebody should have told Durkheim that little tidbit). Carlin took a crazy, incredibly confusing world and always managed to make just a little bit of sense out of it. If that isn’t the job of an Anthropologist, then I don’t know what is. So in honor of the late, great George Carlin, I present to you Seven Words You Will Never Hear in Anthropology (But *Should*): “No Degree Needed For Career In Anthropology”

- Jesse Bia