

Editorial Introduction

This issue of JASHM begins with a thought-provoking essay by Israeli anthropologist Emanuel Marx who draws our attention to 'ways of seeing'. In 'How Do We See With and Without a Camera?' (infra pp. 231) Marx compares the still camera, the film camera and the human eye as three methods of imaging people and events. He questions the extent to which instruments of observation predetermine what can be observed and concludes that the human eye turns out to be the least determined and, paradoxically, the most efficient way of picturing 'reality'. Indeed, he tells us, human observation is so underdetermined that by just looking we do not see anything — we have to define in advance what to look for.

In the context of ethnographic field work, this highlights the important relationship between theory and data: first it is necessary to formulate a theoretical question and only then can we focus on certain persons and events that are directly relevant to the problem at hand. Harré puts it this way;

Theory becomes a device for focusing our attention. Theory precedes fact ... because a theory determines where in the multiplicity of natural phenomena, we should seek for its evidence (1986:83).

A continuous dialogue thereby ensues between the facts we collect and their interpretation in light of some theoretical purpose. In the end, Marx observes, '...the tight fit between a complex theory and a large array of data determine the scientific worth of an ethnographic study'. This is an important and timely reminder of the relationship between observations and theoretical propositions within the discipline, since many anthropologists have retreated from 'theory' in favour of 'ethnography' during the past decade. Several calls for a renewal of theoretical thinking within the discipline have emerged more recently, however (see; Knauff 1997; Hastrup 1995, 1997; Moore 1996, 1999; Reyna 1997; Strathern 1995).

Great art, like theory, also teaches you 'how to see'. This is one of the salient points made by philosopher David Best in the second article in this issue (infra pp. 235) supported, in part, by the following instructive anecdote about Picasso:

It is reported that during the occupation of France in the last war, a German officer visited Picasso in Paris. Impressed by *Guernica*, which, of course, Picasso had painted as an expression of his revulsion at the bombing of the little Spanish town of that name by the German fascists, the officer pointed to the painting and asked: "Did you do that?" to which Picasso replied, "No, you did." (infra p. 236)

Best thus exposes the incoherence of the "autonomist" view of the arts as self-contained and incapable of expressing anything about life outside their domain.

Best asks, 'How is it possible to understand the arts of other cultures'? Since the arts are inextricably bound up with the whole way of life of a society, he argues, understanding requires entering into a conceptual dialogue with an alien culture, a process that makes extraordinary demands on the imagination and risks the possibility of emotional disturbance. He provides an important

cautionary note for well-meaning but misguided educators who underestimate the complex processes of cross-cultural understanding in the arts in their efforts to embrace multi-cultural education.

Following Best's article, Ned Searles' paper on Inuit modes of social interaction (infra pp. 247) provides a clear ethnographic example of exactly how genuine understanding risks emotional disturbance and places demands on the imagination, thereby supporting Best's point. Searles was confronted with a serious problem at the start of his dissertation field research: how was he going to conduct ethnographic research if he could not ask questions of his informants?

What began as a methodological dilemma soon turned into an interesting theoretical problem and his paper documents this process. Searles explores the nature of 'co-presence' among Inuit people, amongst whom preferred modes of social interaction, as well as methods of teaching and learning, often avoid spoken communication. He draws attention to the fact that 'Different ideas about mind, body and causality are involved in the most mundane contexts of human, social interaction but they are not always easy to recognize or understand' (infra p. 259).

Searles maintains that understanding competing systems of knowing and being involves learning to *act differently* in the presence of others. In other words, 'participant observation' requires full and serious attention during fieldwork to the learning of visual-kinesthetic acts or action signs *in addition to* acts achieved with words. Although this strategy might be considered normal practice for anthropologists of human movement, it is worth noting that it remains foreign to most anthropologists. Socialized into the disembodied mores of Western academia, researchers are frequently alienated from understanding bodily practices as ways of knowing (see Farnell 1999: 344).

The fourth article in this issue, 'Traditional Dance in West Africa' by Georgiana Gore (infra pp265) also begins with 'ways of seeing' and the omnipresent problem of categories. What one person sees as 'dance' may not be classified as 'dance' by its practitioners, who will undoubtedly have their own terms of reference for conceiving and classifying human movement systems. Gore's essay skillfully combines historical methods with an anthropological perspective. Its value lies beyond its immediate purpose, in that it not only documents important historical sources for the dances of this geographic area, but also provides excellent guidelines for how to approach the problem of finding and using historical sources in any other region or dance tradition.

This issue concludes with a brief report by Frank Hall on a conference in Istanbul that was convened by the Study Group on Ethnochoreology under the auspices of the International Council of Traditional Music (ICTM) in 1998. The study group meets annually, and a sample call for papers is included to provide JASHM readers with further information as well as contact addresses and website locations. Readers may also wish to note that a JASHM website is currently in preparation at the University of Illinois.

The Editors

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Editorial Correction

The editors regret the following errors in the Review Essay by Joann W. Kealiinohomoku of *Hula Pahu: Hawaiian Drum Dances* by Adrienne L. Kaeppler (JASHM Volume 10(3) Autumn 1998: 103-107).

1. The comment on the glossary on p. 106 should have read "Hapa as in *hapa haole* (*hapa* is a transliteration of the English word 'half', but *haole* is Hawaiian for literally 'no breath' popularly understood to mean foreigner).
2. The diacritics on the Hawaiian words were unfortunately omitted. Wherever an ordinary apostrophe was indicated in the Review Essay it should have been written as an inverted apostrophe, as in Hawai 'i. Also a macron should have been superscribed over the second syllable /a/ in the name Kalakaua as in Kalakāua.