

Voices

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Feminist Anthropology Meets Queer Anthropology: A Tribute to the Work of Liz Kennedy

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In this issue of *Voices*, it is my pleasure to introduce contributions that were first presented at the 2009 AAA in an AFA / SOLGA* Invited Session as a tribute to the work of Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy. As one of Liz's former students at SUNY Buffalo in the 1970s, I was delighted when another of her students, Christine Eber, and several colleagues in feminist and queer anthropology from around the country (Esther Newton, Evelyn Blackwood, and Martin Manalansan) came together to present papers on this panel, followed by comments from Liz herself. With my co-organizer Mary Gray lending support, I chaired the session and was happy to welcome Liz's life partner Bobbi Prebis and her current colleagues in Gender and Women's Studies at the University of Arizona, Laura Briggs and Miranda Joseph, as they joined audience members in honoring Liz Kennedy as a pioneer in building the fields of gender studies and queer studies. We're

now gratified to see the presentations come out in the AFA's *Voices* so that others can appreciate Kennedy's key interventions in anthropology as well as in interdisciplinary studies.

As is well-known to readers of *Voices*, several decades ago in the United States the women's movement gave shape to feminist anthropology and, somewhat later, the LGBT movement inspired queer anthropology. These two emergent areas in anthropology (and beyond) have been in steady dialogue, but have also struggled—sometimes with one another—for legitimacy in the academy and the profession. Among those who drew together these scholarly strands through oral history, ethnographic, and conceptual work was Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy. In my introduction, I offer some background to Kennedy's enduring contributions, an overview of the pieces that follow, and, finally, personal reflections on being a former student of Liz.



Liz Kennedy offers commentary following AAA invited session in her honor, with panelists and former students Florence Babb (left) and Christine Eber (right). Not shown are Evelyn Blackwood, Martin Manalansan, and Esther Newton.

*The co-sponsors were AFA, Association for Feminist Anthropology, and SOLGA, Society of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists (re-named the Association for Queer Anthropology, or AQA).

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FROM THE EDITOR...

Amy E. Harper, *Central Oregon Community College*
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This issue of *Voices* is dedicated to the inspiring work of Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy. In this regard, this issue builds on the 2009 *Voices* issue dedicated to "Founding Mothers." The contributors to this issue recount Liz Kennedy's influence in their academic research, their activism, and their personal lives. In many ways, the papers in this issue are not only a tribute to Liz as a mentor and inspiration but they also highlight the powerful intersections within feminist anthropology /queer anthropology and academics/activism. While often difficult to negotiate, these sites of boundary crossing can be transformative and can provide the space for imagining new beginnings and energizing movements within and beyond academia.

In the spirit of the boundary crossing, collaboration, and innovation Liz Kennedy inspired among her students, colleagues, and friends this issue of *Voices* includes an exploration into alternatives to the standard written essay. Esther Newton's contribution comes in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. While this presentation is in print form in this issue, we hope to explore more interactive possibilities in the future.

As always, I would like to invite others to contribute to the ongoing work of feminist anthropology by joining the AFA and the AFA listserve, and by disseminating the various opportunities AFA provides to support emerging feminist research. You will find a summary of AFA projects throughout this issue of *Voices*. I would also like to invite you all to attend the AFA business meeting in Montreal. The business meeting will be held on Thursday, November 17, 2011 from 12:15 – 1:30. In keeping with the theme of collaboration and boundary crossing AFA is hosting a dance party and reception in association with ABA/SANA/ALLA/AES/SLACA/SUNTA on Friday, November 18, 2011 from 9 pm to midnight. We hope to see you there!

FROM OUR OUTGOING PRESIDENT

Dorothy L. Hodgson, Rutgers University
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It is with some sadness that I write my last column for *Voices* as AFA President. I have so enjoyed serving the Association in various capacities throughout the years – first as Program Co-Chair (2002-4), then as an elected member of the Board (2004-6), and finally as President-elect (2007-2009) and President (2009-2011). Indeed, I want to devote my final column to the theme of service – its importance to our departments, programs, institutions and, of course, professional associations – as well as to the development of our own professional networks, scholarship and capacity to influence the institutions within which we work. Although there have been some challenges along the way, I have truly enjoyed serving the AFA for the past decade – and feel that I have been able to shape the organization and its future in some important ways. Every year the AFA, like other professional organizations, offers a range of opportunities for members to serve – as editors, reviewers, officers, and more. I have encouraged many of you collectively and individually to consider these opportunities – as a way to find an intellectual, political and social community in the midst of a huge organization, to contribute to the future of feminist anthropology, and to ensure the continuity of one of the most progressive and enjoyable sections of the AAA. The time demands are not too steep, but the return is huge – in terms of new relationships, new ideas, and new connections. I have always found that I receive far more than I give through service in terms of personal and professional fulfillment. The goals and mission of the AFA have necessarily changed over the past few decades since its founding and they will continue to change to meet new challenges and take advantage of new opportunities and insights in the field. By volunteering to serve the AFA, members can shape that future in significant ways – and I urge you to do so. I want to thank the many officers and board members who I have worked with at AFA over the years for all that they have done for AFA and for making my time with the association so enjoyable. I know that I leave the Association in terrific hands – Jane Henrici, the incoming President is a superb scholar and leader – and I look forward to continuing to serve the AFA in the future.

Dorothy L. Hodgson is Professor and Chair of Anthropology at Rutgers University – New Brunswick. She recently published Being Maasai, Becoming Indigenous: Postcolonial Politics in a Neoliberal World (Indiana) and Gender and Culture at the Limit of Rights (Pennsylvania).

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Sylvia Forman Prize

Congratulations 2010 Silvia Forman Award Winners

Graduate award

Tony Orlando Pomales (University of Iowa), "We are already a new generation: The Practice of Vasectomy in San Jose, Costa Rica" (advisors: Erica Prussing, Ellen Lewin, and Michael Chibnik)

Undergraduate award

MaryBeth Grewe (Macalester College), "Keeping the Mother in Maternal and Child Health: Infant Feeding Policy, Child Malnutrition, and Maternal Experience in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa" (advised by Dianna Shandy, Associate Professor and Chair)

AFA is pleased to invite graduate and undergraduate students to submit essays in feminist anthropology in competition for the Sylvia Forman Prize, named for the late Sylvia Helen Forman, one of the founders of AFA, whose dedication to both her students and feminist principles contributed to the growth of feminist anthropology. The winners, one graduate student and one undergraduate student, will receive a certificate; a cash award (\$1,000 graduate and \$500 undergraduate); and have their essay summaries published in the Anthropology Newsletter.

We encourage essays in all four subfields of anthropology. Essays may be based on research on a wide variety of topics including (but not limited to) feminist analysis of women's work, reproduction, sexuality, religion, language and expressive culture, family and kin relations, economic development, gender and material culture, gender and biology, women and development, globalization, and the intersectionality of gender, race, and class. Please Check the AFA web page for details of the 2012 competition: <http://www.aaanet.org/sections/afa/forman.html>

The 2011 undergraduate and graduate award winners will be announced at the AFA business meeting in Montreal.

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AFA Dissertation Fellowship Announcement

The 2010 AFA Dissertation Fellowship winner was Kristin De Lucia (Northwestern University, Elizabeth Brumfiel, advisor) with "Domestic Economies and Regional Transition: Household Production, Consumption, and Social Change in Early Postclassic Xaltocan, Mexico."

The AFA Dissertation Fellowship provides a \$2000 award to a doctoral candidate in anthropology for a dissertation project that makes a significant contribution to feminist anthropology. The award is intended for the write-up phase of a dissertation project. The 2011 grantee will be announced at the AFA business meeting in Montreal. The deadline for the 2012 applications is June 15, 2012. Please check the AFA website for updates and more complete information on the fellowship competition.

Feminist Anthropology Meets Queer Anthropology (continued from page 1)

Trained at Cambridge University in social anthropology in the 1960s, Liz Kennedy carried out groundbreaking doctoral research among the Wounaan in the Colombian rainforest. She was one of an early cohort of anthropologists, including feminists, who examined egalitarianism in the absence of hierarchies of power. After completing this work, however, Kennedy set the project aside for many years and has only re-engaged it very recently—something she addresses in her commentary. In 1969, Kennedy joined the American Studies faculty at SUNY Buffalo, where she was a founder of one of the first and most radical women's studies programs in the country. Over the years, a number of anthropology students made their way to her courses, which had a cross-cultural and internationalist outlook. After nearly three decades of program-building at Buffalo, she joined the faculty at the University of Arizona in 1998 to head the Department of Gender and Women's Studies and establish a premier doctoral program.

Liz Kennedy has always been, as she has termed it, a "collaborator." Her work includes the co-authored book *Feminist Scholarship: Kindling in the Groves of Academe* (1985). A labor of love by five feminist scholars at SUNY Buffalo, this work examined the breadth and influence of feminist thought across the disciplines. Kennedy also undertook a long-term collaboration with Madeline Davis that would define her career, the Buffalo Lesbian Oral History Project. Interviewing women of diverse class and racial backgrounds who were part of Buffalo's working-class public bar culture as early as the 1940s, Liz and Madeline recorded and analyzed the narratives of women who had received little attention from historians and anthropologists. Their book *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community* (1993) was one of the first community studies of lesbian and gay experience in the United States. This scholarship broke new ground in LGBT studies, challenging and reshaping approaches to feminism, lesbian and gay identity, and community formation. The work was no less important for its feminist process in gathering oral history narratives than for its critical rethinking of sexuality, class, and power in U.S. society.

In another collaborative project, Kennedy published a landmark collection of essays stemming from a conference held at the University of Arizona in 2000. She edited the collection *Women's Studies for the Future: Foundations, Interrogations, Politics* (2005) along with a former MA student in Women's Studies, Agatha Beins. The work traces the durability of the field even after the originary subject of women has been destabilized, and assesses its potential for the future. Kennedy is notable for showing feminist process at work in theory building and activism; she does not at all disavow the

past but shows how foundations were laid that will always be subject to renegotiation and reinterpretation. Several of her published pieces are remarkable accounts of early initiatives in women's studies, beginning in the 1970s—when universities were not welcoming of institutionalizing the movement-inspired academic field—and how these initiatives may be viewed in light of present-day turns in pedagogy and practice (Kennedy 2000, 2008).

Two of the pieces that follow, those of Evelyn Blackwood and Martin Manalansan, examine the rich and expansive ideas and the wealth of historical material in *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold*. Blackwood appraises the way that the work enhanced understanding of butch and femme (or fem) identities and how this queered our notions of gender, not only for studies based in U.S. communities but for international queer studies like her own in Indonesia. Both she and Manalansan call attention to the signal achievement of the work in bringing to light the lives of working class lesbians across racial lines at a time when most historical and contemporary research focused more exclusively on middle class and white lesbians. Thus, the work is an exemplary and compelling account of the intersections and border-crossings in queer lives, something that is as relevant today as when the book was published in 1993. Esther Newton, the author of classic ethnographic works in LGBT studies who here presents her recent initiative in creating the University of Michigan Lesbian History Website, also speaks of the impact and scope of *Boots of Leather* in transforming knowledge about lesbian lives in the twentieth century.

On the panel, Christine Eber and I shared our memories, mine from the later 1970s and hers from the 1980s, of our experiences as students of Liz Kennedy. In her contribution, Christine discusses Liz's role as an inspiration in feminist scholarship and as a role model in guiding Eber toward becoming the sort of engaged feminist and activist scholar of Maya women's weaving cooperatives in Chiapas, Mexico that she is today. She reveals that her work in gathering life histories of women was a direct result of the training she received with Liz Kennedy.

In my experience, too, Liz Kennedy had a profound influence on the sort of feminist anthropologist I would become, and in retrospect I can see that our career paths have been more alike than I would have anticipated. Carrying out my doctoral research in the Peruvian Andes, I framed a feminist subject that has carried through my research and teaching in cultural anthropology and gender studies. It was only later that I incorporated more attention to race and non-heteronormative sexuality, but that became central to my work as well, in my research in Nicaragua, Cuba, and southern Mexico. At this point, both Liz and I are returning

to our first subjects and locations of research, and questioning how our feminist and queer scholarship may shed light on the indigenous peoples with whom we conducted doctoral research and began our careers. I'm pleased to think that we have this ongoing connection.

In what remains of my introductory comments, let me share some brief recollections that I offered on our AAA panel. While these are snapshot images of more significant moments in my experience as Liz Kennedy's student, they may serve as benchmarks from a time when feminist anthropology was fledgling and queer anthropology was a bare trace on the horizon. Perhaps my earliest memory of Women's Studies and of Liz Kennedy at SUNY Buffalo was in 1974, the year I began my graduate studies, when a picket line wrapped around the administration building to demand support for the program, and we wore bright yellow buttons reading "Women's Studies: The Issue is Oppression." A couple of years later, in 1976, I had my first course with Liz, Women in Cross-Cultural Perspective, which was formative to my thinking as I prepared to carry out doctoral research in Peru. I had already found my way to feminist anthropology, but Liz introduced me to an engagement with debates in gender and sexuality studies and, beyond the classroom, to activism, leading me to join the socialist feminist and anti-imperialist group Action for Women in Chile (AFWIC). I remember that Liz wrote the lengthiest comments on my papers—not on the papers, actually, but rather on many pages of hand-written notes, coded with numbers that referred to places in my text; it could take a few weeks to get my papers back, but the comments were always well worth the wait, once I took a deep breath and read them. While I was doing my doctoral work in Peru in 1977, I wrote confessional letters to Liz about the perils I was encountering in field research and questioning the feminist politics of research. I returned from the field to face the critical stance of activists like my friends in AFWIC, who challenged the right of scholars to build careers based on research in the "third world." I was able to handle the critique in large part because of the process of learning from Liz to engage in such important debate.

After returning home from Peru, I became a member of the teaching collective for Women in Contemporary Society, the core course in Women's Studies at that time. I joined about a dozen undergraduate students and a faculty supervisor, who met for marathon five-hour meetings each week preparing for classes that were led by pairs of us in intense discussion sessions. I also recall endlessly running off mimeographed copies of readings for class and somewhere I know I still have the pile of mimeo copies of articles we used back then. We had all-women classes, utilized "rotating chair" to decenter the classroom, and concluded each class with "criticism-self-criticism" to offer both critique and support of the group's process. As a middle-class, white, then-straight,

26 year-old from a small town in upstate New York, I taught with Suzanne, a more worldly-wise 19 year-old Jewish working class lesbian from New York City. I remember the day we picked out dresses from my closet for a class meeting at my apartment, where we showed students how to do self-exams. I'm still amazed, as are my current students, to think of the parade of students nervously passing by us as we sat with speculums, mirrors, and flashlights.

My recollections of our feminist process of the 1970s suggest how fundamentally we pushed the limits of the university to allow for experimental, transformational teaching and learning. What now gives me some shivers down my spine was quite exhilarating back then and I'm more than a little proud to have taken part in such a heady time for feminism in the academy. Liz Kennedy's leadership through that period was phenomenal and if the SUNY Buffalo administration found her to be a thorn in its side, it was precisely her principled determination that made the program one of the earliest and most radical in the country (Kennedy 2008). I realize now what exhausting work this must have been, yet she kept at it for nearly three decades, even when it meant setting aside her own scholarship to do so.

I remember during the years I lived in Buffalo, 1974-79, that Liz was working with Madeline Davis on their now-classic *Boots of Leather*, and that I attended presentations of parts of the work-in-progress, with Liz and Madeline alternating reading from narratives of butch and fem lesbians whose lives stretched back decades earlier in the city. Later, when I was teaching at the University of Iowa, I invited Liz and Madeline to speak at the university and in the Iowa City community. I recall the powerful, emotional response of women at the gatherings who felt that the lives of women like themselves, working class and lesbian, fem and butch, were finally being represented. When the book came out, it produced a similarly profound effect on so many more, from community-based lesbians to those in academic appointments in gender and queer studies, and in the field of anthropology—as this issue of *Voices* makes clear.

One more memory stands out as exemplifying the powerful effect Liz Kennedy had on her students, in this case on me. While I was still in the beginning stages of writing my dissertation, I applied for my first job, a visiting position at Colgate University in anthropology and women's studies, and was invited for a job interview. I remember that the night before the interview Liz came to my apartment and listened intently as I nervously rehearsed my entire job talk. When I finished, Liz surprised me by suggesting a radical reorganization of my talk. Startled though I was, and terrified that I would not have the time to make the changes, I nonetheless set to work that night with Liz's corrective vision of what the paper could be and amazingly enough I got the job. The one-year appointment turned into three and launched my career as a feminist anthropologist.

Liz has been a remarkable touchstone over the years. We see each other too infrequently, usually at conferences or when I visit my sister in Tucson, and I always value the times we spend together. I was delighted a few years ago to be one of the external evaluators for the University of Arizona's Gender and Women's Studies Department. Our team concluded that Arizona might just have the strongest doctoral program in women's studies in the country, due in no small measure to Liz's leadership during her years as director. We were impressed, moreover, by Liz's newfound talent as a fundraiser for Women's Studies, as she worked with volunteers to build the Women's Plaza of Honor through a highly successful campaign at the University of Arizona. She continues to provide strong mentorship as a senior faculty member and feminist activist-scholar, and that extends to her many former students and colleagues around the country.

Recently, I was designing a new course in Transnational Feminism at the University of Florida and used Google Scholar to find relevant work. Up popped Liz Kennedy's name and the title of her recent co-edited book, *Women's Studies for the Future: Foundations, Interrogations, Politics*. Although Liz is best known as an Americanist, long associated with American Studies at SUNY Buffalo, she (like that program) holds a clear perspective on the United States in the world. In this book, based on a landmark conference she organized at Arizona, she and her co-editor Agatha Beins brought a critical concept of the transnational to the fore just as it was looming larger among feminists on a global scale.

Liz Kennedy stands out as a pathbreaker and boundary-crosser, uniting concern for gender, race, class, sexuality, and nation in her work. Now, as she returns to where she began, reconnecting with the indigenous society with whom she began her life as a scholar, she is showing us once more that we must reach out farther to embrace subjects and peoples who have been insufficiently represented. In her remarks that follow the panelists' pieces included here, Liz demonstrates the breadth of her interdisciplinary vision as she has come full circle to the Wounaan in the Colombian rainforest; this time she brings years of experience as a scholar-activist in feminist and queer studies to re-engage questions about difference, social exclusion, and perseverance. Liz Kennedy has always been a pioneer and a collaborator, casting a wide net and setting a high standard for feminist accomplishment—a model we might all hope to emulate.

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Florence E. Babb is a past president of the Association for Feminist Anthropology and the Vada Allan Yeomans Professor of Women's Studies at the University of Florida, where she is also on the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology and Latin American Studies. She is the author of Between Field and Cooking Pot: The Political Economy of Marketwomen in Peru ([1989] 1998) and After Revolution: Mapping Gender and Cultural Politics in Neoliberal Nicaragua (2001), both with University of Texas Press, as well as of The Tourism Encounter: Fashioning Latin American Nations and Histories (Stanford University Press 2011). At present, she is working on a feminist anthropology of indigeneity based on long-term research in Andean Peru.

“Tell them what kind of anthropologist you are!”

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“Tell them what kind of an anthropologist you are!” Liz Kennedy said to me one day in 1988. I had just returned from thirteen months of dissertation fieldwork in Chiapas, Mexico and was struggling with how to talk about the strident inequalities of life there from a feminist perspective. I wanted badly for Liz to know that I had not squandered all that she had given me as my professor. But I had not spoken clearly about the political significance of my work with women’s weaving cooperatives at a talk that I had given, which prompted Liz to say these words.

In this paper I reflect on Liz’s contributions to feminist anthropology by exploring how she influenced my work with Tzotzil-Maya women in San Pedro Chenalhó, Chiapas, Mexico, a township with a strong base of support for the progressive Catholic movement and the Zapatista Army of National Liberation. In these social movements the women are creating new relations and structures that foster autonomy and cooperation and that resist hierarchy and domination, all key themes in Liz’s scholarship and life. I will take you briefly through my studies with Liz at SUNY Buffalo, my efforts to follow her model of teaching, and my recent life story project with “Antonia,” a friend from Chenalhó. My intent in this personal reflection is to shed light on the role that Liz has played and still plays in training feminist scholars to speak and write honestly and powerfully.

Radical pedagogy

In 1982 and 1983 I took two courses with Liz that laid the foundation for my work as a feminist anthropologist. Cross-cultural Studies of Women was a two-semester course with the first semester covering women’s lives in classless societies and the second in class societies. It was a heady time for me reading the classics in feminist anthropology and gaining a firm grounding in a historical and class analysis. The empirical evidence in the readings convinced me of the reality of diverse forms of oppression and the need to study their contours from the perspectives of the people who experience them on a daily basis. Studying how male dominance has evolved and operates in concert with other forms of domination filled me with a passion to do my own empirical research on women’s lives.

I remember that not many women anthropology graduate students took Liz’s courses. Most of my women peers in the anthropology department at SUNY Buffalo seemed to feel pressured to study what the men thought was important. But I was deeply relieved to find my way over to

the American Studies Program where Liz and several other anthropologists had joined scholars from other disciplines to create an alternative academic community. Observing Liz interacting with colleagues and students in a non-hierarchical way while merging scholarship and activism, gave me courage to overcome doubts about the rigor of my research because I wanted to collaborate with women in liberatory projects. The many advances in anti-colonialist and collaborative research since the early 80s have subdued these doubts. But no influence has been more inspirational to me than Liz’s model of collaboration and activism and her encouragement to pay attention to the material conditions of women’s lives and how oppression works.

I adopted Liz’s approach in my teaching and it has been the single most important factor in my being able to make my classes empowering for students and to maintain my morale as a professor at two large state universities. Liz modeled for me how to share power in the classroom through egalitarian methods such as the rotating chair and discussions co-facilitated by students. She showed us how to engage in forms of debate and dialogue that were deeply respectful. We learned from her how to look for strengths and weaknesses, rather than dismiss ideas or practices whole cloth. She showed us how to build on diverse ideas and experiences to create an inclusive feminist praxis.

Before I was her student, Liz knew me as an artist in the Latin American solidarity movement in Buffalo in the 1970s. She appreciated my work in this movement and once I was her student helped me build on those experiences to find my special contribution as a feminist scholar. Liz encouraged me to explore class relations and socialist feminist critiques, while the artist in me was more inclined to symbolism and discourse. But Liz respected and appreciated my humanistic bent and I realized how much I needed an historical materialist analysis. The diverse approaches to exploring women’s lives that Liz introduced me to in her classes helped me develop a politics of intercultural perception and interaction that blends humanistic and political economy approaches and keeps social justice concerns at the center. In retrospect, I can see how Liz’s teaching and research foreshadowed tensions between feminist and queer theorists over the centrality of material or discursive practices in shaping diverse realities and identities (McLaughlin 2006). To me Liz is a sterling example of how to remain autonomous in one’s thinking while cooperating with others to create synthetic conceptual frameworks.

The politics of representing others’ realities

The postmodern turn in analysis began around the

time I was conducting my Ph.D. fieldwork. I felt pressure to downplay analyses of material conditions and systemic inequalities related to patriarchy, capitalism and racism. But my research in Chiapas validated for me the lessons I learned from Liz about paying attention to material inequalities. Socialist feminist studies of links between cultural and economic forms of oppression resonated with the experiences of the women I set out to learn from in Chiapas.

Since the 1980s, women in Chenalhó have focused on telling me about the abuses of power with which they struggle that stem from inequalities in their households, communities, and integration into the larger society. In the 80s they were just beginning to organize artisan cooperatives in order to gain greater control over their products. In the context of the Zapatista movement, which began in 1994, many women intensified their efforts to create cooperatives and to construct political identities as both women and indigenous people. In the process they named their oppression and learned how to connect it to historical and material roots.

Over the decades, social justice concerns became increasingly important to the women of Chenalhó and in my work with them. Although I did not hear the term “activist anthropology” in the 1980s, soon after I began my research I realized that the only ethical stance I could take in my relationships with women was to assist them in developing social analyses and economic and political strategies that they could use in their struggle for social justice. This awareness and commitment made me different from many of my anthropology colleagues, as it had made Liz different.

I didn't make Liz's life easy when I was her student by writing my dissertation in a narrative style. (I should note that Liz was not my dissertation advisor. In her capacity as a member of my committee she went far beyond what is expected of someone in that role). I was influenced at the time by experiments in ethnographic writing and wanted to build on my previous work as a creative writer. Despite any skepticism she may have harbored, Liz supported my desire to use a reflexive and story-telling style to represent how and what I had learned about women's lives in Chenalhó. Liz's many comments in the margins of drafts of my dissertation helped me explore the tension between discourse and materiality in my representations of women's lives.

Liz has inspired me to write powerfully so that my work will be used by the people it is about for their own empowerment. At the time she conducted her own dissertation research in a Wounaan community in Colombia in the 1960s, Liz said that she did not feel that she was a powerful enough writer to write a book that the Colombian government would not use against Wounaan. For this reason she did not write an ethnography based on her research, often the ticket to an academic position.

Liz's experiences with Wounaan were an important

reminder to me of the broader implications of my work when I was writing my ethnography of women's experiences with their own and others' ritual and problem drinking in Chenalhó (Eber 1995). While writing my ethnography and later ushering it into a Spanish edition, Liz's experiences guided me in my reflections about my responsibilities to the people of Chenalhó.

The Buffalo Lesbian Oral History Project showed me the importance of oral history and life stories to explore women's agency and their roles in social movements. I will never forget the packed room at a west side Buffalo library the night that Liz and Madeline Davis read selections from *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community*. At that presentation they opened a dialogue with the public on the book-in-progress. Following Liz's work on this project, I began to think about doing life histories with women in Chenalhó, especially with “Antonia”, the woman in whose household I had lived in 1987. Eventually, in 2002 Antonia and I began work on her life story.

In Fall 2009 I was reminded of Liz's influence on my life story project with Antonia when graduate students in a course on writing in anthropology read the first draft of the manuscript. Four students from Tunisia, Venezuela, Colombia, and Puerto Rico said that Antonia's story could be the story of their grandmothers. Their insights reveal that readers can see in Antonia's story how patriarchy, racism, and poverty make for similar outlines of women's lives, despite cultural influences. I am confident that I would not have paid as much attention to these aspects of women's lives, and from women's own perspectives, had Liz not shown me how important this is to do.

Friendship and collaboration

It seems like just yesterday that Liz encouraged me to read the 1983 article by Maria Lugones and Elizabeth Spelman exploring dialogue and friendship to help feminist scholars work together from different racial and ethnic locations. That essay gave me much food for thought about my research in Chiapas. Eventually I found my own authentic way to relate to women as friends, comadres or co-mothers, and collaborators in creating economies of solidarity across borders. The latter work involves assisting women in weaving cooperatives to find fair trade markets for their products and educating the U.S. public about the negative effects of capitalism. In the past few years I have been trying to respond to requests from my friends to understand the larger context of the exodus of young men from their community in search of work in Mexican cities or in the U.S. In 2006 Chiapas reached first place among Mexican states in the numbers of migrants leaving the state for the United States. For example, Antonia's son who is my godson, left Chiapas when he was eighteen and eventually

found work in a string of Chinese restaurants in Southeastern states. Following his journey from Chiapas across the Arizona desert to find work in my country, has challenged me as a godmother and in the process has helped me understand more deeply the challenges women in Chenalhó face to nurture their children and maintain their families.

Most recently, I have been working with Las Cruces-Chiapas Connection, an organization I helped form in 2003 in Las Cruces, New Mexico, to assist the people of Chenalhó in their efforts to resist the Mexican government's plans to resettle them in "model rural cities," a euphemistic label for the process of displacing indigenous people from their lands to make way for tourist development, mono-crop agriculture, and industrial production (CIEPAC 2010).

The escalating repression of social activists and human rights defenders in Mexico has deepened my concern about the implications of collaborating with women in Chiapas. In light of increasing human rights abuses in Mexico, I proposed to Antonia that we use a pseudonym in her life story to avoid reprisals against her or others in the Zapatista movement. Antonia left the decision to me, saying that she doesn't know what the future may bring. Guided in part by Liz's example of ethical and engaged research, I decided to use a pseudonym. While the English and Spanish editions are in production, I will seek a way to produce a separate book for Antonia and her family that will bear her real name and photos so that her children and descendants will know who she is and how she struggled for a better world.

So what kind of an anthropologist am I?

I am an activist feminist anthropologist committed to social justice who collaborates with women and their families and communities with the larger goal of understanding and confronting the historical and material roots of women's subordination and exploitation, and who stands with them as they try to dismantle the systems that oppress them.

The mistakes I've made along my journey are my own. Whatever merit lies in my work is due in large part to Liz Kennedy's tremendous generosity to me when I was her student trying to find my place in the world as a feminist and a scholar.

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From Butch-Femme to Queer Masculinities: Elizabeth Kennedy and LGBT Anthropology

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In the sometimes contentious spaces between feminist and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) studies in anthropology, one of the leaders bridging those differences has been Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy. She is one of the foremothers in the field of feminist and LGBT anthropology whose leadership and research encouraged so many others. In this article I focus primarily on her book *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community* (1993). Co-authored with Madeline Davis, this book examines the place of butches and femmes in the lesbian community in Buffalo, New York, in the 1940s and 1950s.

I revisit some of the foundational concepts developed in the book to ask how they advanced feminist and queer theorizing. I make two points in that regard. First, *Boots of Leather* returns the categorical pairing of butch-femme unapologetically to feminist discourse, recouping it as a proud marker of lesbian identity rather than an unreflective imitation of heterosexuality. Second, Kennedy's discussion of butch-femme in *Boots* prompted a number of questions about binary gender, making it one of the key texts leading to the development of work on female and queer masculinities.

To better understand the contributions of Kennedy's work in *Boots*, I first briefly situate it within the historical context of lesbian feminism. In the 1970s as lesbian feminism came into its own, it seemed to turn away from those butches and femmes who had been at the heart of many lesbian networks and communities in the U.S. in the preceding decades. Writers Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon in their classic work *Lesbian/Woman* (1972) hailed the new lesbian first and foremost as a *woman*. The feminist critique of patriarchal oppression required that all vestiges of men's control, authority, desires and claims on women be erased, even by those lesbians who were more comfortable enacting masculinity. For Martin and Lyon, their book was a call for lesbians to be proud of their womanhood, to take power as women, and to stop being "an adjunct or appendage to a man" (1972: 12). Their reservations about butch-femme roles stemmed from their view that these roles only reinforced women's inferior status because they maintained the gender hierarchy. According to Martin and Lyon (1972), women's inferiority was not to be tolerated anymore. Women needed to establish that they were equal to men, a goal that could not be achieved, they felt, if a woman "plays the traditional male chauvinist butch role" (1972: 81).

By the end of the 1970s lesbian feminism came under attack for its perceived failures: for its separatism, its ideological privileging of white middle-class women's perspectives and issues, and its rejection of butch-femme identities. Women who had identified as butch or femme before the 70s responded to the loss of butch-femme standing in the community by reclaiming the passion and power of those identities and trying to distance butch-femme roles from accusations of heterosexual imitation (see, for example, Nestle 1992). The generation of androgynous, "women-loving," egalitarian lesbians who came out in the 70s, however, did not find butch-femme ways of being meaningful, except as fashion statements or as the performance of a self-conscious butchness that played at being butch but did not personify it (see Lewin 1996).

"Lesbian" had become an identity that was defined as "lifelong, stable after 'coming out,' autonomous of heterosexuality, sex-centered, politically feminist, not situational, and exclusive of marriage" (King 2002: 42). According to Katie King, the lesbian-feminist political claim that 'lesbians don't ape heterosexuals' attained a global coherence that delegitimated butch-femme pairings and distanced framings of lesbian identity from "local" versions of "butch-femme." In fact some persistent critics continued to categorize butches and femmes as an embarrassment, as nothing more than dupes of the sexological theories of inversion (Halberstam 1998, referring to Sheila Jeffries). Reflection on the butch-femme generation did not seem to offer any new analytical perspectives.

Relations between dominant ideology and gender transgression

Kennedy's work in *Boots* intervened in this conceptual impasse by exploring the cultural and historical specificity of butch-femme and by querying the analytic relation between gender ideology and gender transgression. Drawing on feminist theory concerning patriarchy and men's dominance, much of the early literature on female-bodied gender transgressors, now more typically identified as female masculinity, tended to cast the transgression as resistance to an oppressive gender ideology, usually identified as male dominance or patriarchy. For instance, some scholars argued that gender transgressive identities, such as camp and drag (Newton 1972, 1993) and transgendered identities (Bolin 1994; Dickemann 1997) result from a hierarchical gender system of compulsory heterosexuality and oppositional genders. Some argued that in such a system women who

desired other women were forced to transgress gender.¹

Kennedy and Davis agreed that butch-femme identities in the U.S. developed in a period in which “elaborate hierarchical distinctions were made between the sexes” (1992:63). But they also pointed to the difficulty of imagining something that was not offered by the dominant culture. Sexuality, they said, was embedded in gender to such an extent that “ungendered sex would be hard to imagine” (1993: 327). Because men and women were culturally constructed in the U.S. as polar opposites (“the opposite sex” being a typical folk designation for the two genders in the U.S.), behaviors and privileges associated with men, including erotic attraction to women, were limited to men and thus could not be imagined in any other way. Kennedy and Davis document that it was not until the 1950s and 60s that a cultural redefinition and separation of the categories “sex” and “gender” make possible same-sex attraction, that is, women with women and men with men. Through this richly detailed and meticulous historical study of a lesbian community, Kennedy and Davis demonstrate the force of certain historical and ideological factors in creating identities. Their attention to the production of butch gender transgression offered an extremely useful analytical approach highlighting the importance of cultural dynamics and social histories over concepts of fixed or essentialized and deviant natures.

Kennedy’s analytical insights into butch-femme transgressions prompted my inquiry into the conditions that produce gender transgression among female-bodied individuals in Indonesia. Like the 1940s butches of Buffalo, NY, tombois construct themselves as masculine (although this statement is not to be interpreted as suggesting some evolutionary progression from butch to lesbian). *Tomboi* is the word used in Indonesia for masculine females and is derived from the English word “tomboy.” In effect they are gender transgressors who nevertheless reflect the dominant ideology in their representation of masculinity. One of the questions that I addressed early on in my research was: What social conditions produce transgression of the dominant ideology?

I explored this question in relation to tombois in West Sumatra who identify as ethnically Minangkabau (Blackwood 1998). This ethnic group is well-known for its matrilineal kinship, a non-patriarchal system in which women have power with men. Whether a dominant ideology produces gender transgressors, and in what form, depends, I suggested, on a number of processes, only one of which may be an oppressive gender hierarchy. In the case of tombois in West Sumatra, they are not the product of an oppressive patriarchal system. Rather tombois’ gender transgression is partly the product of a Minangkabau matrilineal kinship ideology that imagines gender as rigidly distinct and based on two sexes. As I continued to develop my analysis, other

processes became equally important in producing gender transgression, not just locally dominant gender ideologies but their intersections with modernity, Islam and the state as well as the circulation of national and transnational discourses on sexuality and gender.

Diversity of butch-femme identities and female masculinities

Another key insight from Kennedy’s work in *Boots* that has been useful in my own work is her argument that butches and femmes reflect and yet transform gender meanings. Rejecting the view that butches were a static imitation or ill-conceived attempt to be men, Kennedy and Davis revealed a diversity of meanings of butchness in the lesbian community in Buffalo, New York. This included women who always felt butch, women who became butch after finding themselves attracted to women, and women who became butch after finding that there were only two sorts of women in the gay bars, butches and femmes. The range of possibilities, although clearly associated with lesbianism at that time by women in the community, presages work on female masculinities.

Kennedy’s work on butch-femme engaged a number of questions about binary gender that prompted the development of work on female and queer masculinities. Kennedy and Davis argued that, far from imitating heterosexuality, butches created and experienced themselves as different, “as ‘homos,’ neither traditional men nor traditional women.... Their carefully cultivated masculine appearance advertised their difference and indicated a woman’s explicit sexual interest in another woman” (1993: 374). Butch was the distinct marker of the lesbian community. The resistance expressed by butches to the heterosexual world underscored for Kennedy and Davis the difference that was butch gender transgression. Butches were at the forefront demanding that lesbians should not hide but claim what they deserved. Together butches and femmes created a consciousness of shared identity that generated self-esteem, solidarity and community for lesbians in industrialized/urban areas throughout the U.S. and set the stage for gay liberation (Kennedy and Davis 1993). Kennedy and Davis highlight the agency of these women as active forces in history: creating space to socialize, creating intimate relationships, resisting an oppressive environment and developing pride in their identities.

Importantly Kennedy and Davis’ (1993) work addressed whether butch-femme communities reproduced male hierarchy and divisions among women or challenged men’s power. They found that butch-femme gender difference was not always hierarchical; sexually femmes took on an active sexual agency as they responded to butch attentions. Butches did not challenge gender polarity, but they did claim men’s privilege for themselves, while femmes challenged the notion

that a woman could not live without a man. As Kennedy and Davis observed, “[B]utch-fem culture both drew on and transformed the dominant society’s male supremacist and heterosexual uses of gender” (1993: 379).² In this way they argued that butch-femme derived from heterosexual models, but also created a specifically lesbian culture and lifestyle (Kennedy and Davis 1993).

Kennedy and Davis demonstrated that being butch was queer, although of course they did not use that term. Their understanding of butch leads to and prompts the development of work on female masculinities. Halberstam (1998) uses the term “female masculinity” to argue for a sense of ambiguity and blurring of boundaries. In developing this term she hoped to open up exploration of masculinities across female bodies, particularly performances of masculinities by butch lesbians. By examining female masculinities Halberstam was trying to shake loose the claims of lesbian writers that masculine women, such as Anne Lister, were lesbians who had no other way to express their desires for women than by being mannish, a claim that situated masculine behavior only as pretense.³ Halberstam emphasizes the contingencies of gender without resorting to notions of fluid or ‘free-flowing’ gender. By not fixing a position called “transsexual” or “transgender” or “butch lesbian,” Halberstam offers a way to think about female masculinities that can incorporate differing versions of masculinities. This concept in turn has been useful for thinking about female masculinities such as those found in Southeast Asia and elsewhere.⁴

Tombois’ relation to the category “man”

My own work continues to draw on the insights of Kennedy and Davis in *Boots* as I think further about how queer gender might reproduce the gender binary but at the same time transform it (Blackwood 2010). I investigate how tombois lay claim to the social category “man,” that is, the ideologically dominant conception of manhood that circulates through much of Indonesia, and yet transform that category in contradictory and complex ways. In speaking of themselves as men, tombois state that they not only dress and act like men, they physically embody masculinity as well. Yet, their self-positioning as men is not uncomplicated. Despite articulating a sense of self that they consider to be nearly the same as other men’s, tombois enact different versions of masculinity and femininity as they move through space. They take up multiple subject positions as they move from the familiarity of domestic spaces inhabited by kin and neighbors to the anonymity and vulnerability of public spaces. By focusing on moments of interaction within particular spaces, I suggest that tombois, and by extension other masculine females, enact a contingent masculinity that is conditional and dependent on context, not fixed and normative.

Finally because Elizabeth Kennedy’s work speaks to the historical specificity of lesbian identity categories, she reminds us that the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) categories of Europe and the United States cannot be applied easily to gender and sexual meanings and practices in other contexts. I think this is an important reminder as we consider how to take her work forward to a queer generation of activists and scholars. How do we bridge differences across feminist, gay, lesbian, queer and queers of color scholarship? To continue the work that Kennedy and others have begun, we need to push our thinking beyond an ever recurring desire for stable or singular subject positions and begin to think in terms of contingency and multiple allegiances. We need to continue to reframe the issues and use what we do best as anthropologists and ethnographers, feminists and queer scholars, to make sense of complex and contradictory queer lives in a global world.

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¹ The relevant literature includes, among others, Epstein and Straub 1991; Katz 1976; Newton 1984; Wikan 1977.

² They use the spelling "butch-fem" in line with the usage in the community they studied.

³ Lister, born in 1791 in Halifax, England, kept diaries from 1817 to 1840 in which she wrote in coded text about her love affairs with women. A well-to-do woman, Lister was called "Gentleman Jack" by Halifax residents.

⁴ See Wieringa, Blackwood and Bhaiya 2007; Morgan and Wieringa 2005.

Report on the Zora Neale Hurston Travel Award

We are please to congratulate the following students, who each received grants for travel to the 2010 American Anthropological Meetings in New Orleans

Vanessa Agard-Jones, New York University

Judy Anderson, University of Florida

Courtney Desiree Morris, University of Texas at Austin

The Zora Neale Hurston Travel Award has been an AFA tradition since 2002. The award honors the contributions of pioneering African American anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston (visit the AFA website for further information on her contributions and accomplishments). Eligibility is restricted to students and recent PhDs focusing on issues of concern to feminist anthropology. Preference is given to individuals from under-represented US groups. The winning awardees will be notified prior to the AAA meetings, but the awards will be formally announced and checks given out at the AFA business meeting held in conjunction with the AAA meetings. The winners of the 2011 awards will be announced in the next issue of *Voices*. See the AFA website to apply for the Hurston Travel Award.

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Association for Feminist Anthropology

Horizons of Hope: Queer Futures and the Legacy of Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy

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“Queerness is not yet here....Queerness is essentially about the rejection of a here and now and an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world.”

José Esteban Muñoz
2009:1

“Hope is a risk.”

Lisa Duggan and José Esteban Muñoz
2009:279

Hope animates this essay. It is the fuel that has propelled and sustained me through the years. But this hope has been attained not just through mere hard work on my part but rather it was nourished through valuable intellectual and emotional support provided by mentors such as Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy. She has enabled me and others in my generational cohort to forge into careers in anthropology and lives devoted to the examination of LGBTQ and feminist issues. Through her strong intellectual spirit, Liz Kennedy continues to provide me with important sustenance of hope which enables me to forge on with my work.

Liz Kennedy is one of my foremothers. This intellectual and affective lineage was established due to the enduring influence of her work and to her generous capacity for mentorship and guidance. Her work and her career have served and continue to serve as a model for and inspiration to me and other queer anthropologists. I originally intended this essay to be a sweeping personal and intellectual examination of the impact of Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy's work, mentorship, and career on my generation of queer anthropologists. I realized it was impossible to do so satisfactorily within the limits posed before us in this special issue of *Voices*. That said, I will attempt to at least touch briefly on the depth of Liz's work. In this essay, I focus on a couple of Liz's pivotal ideas through a re-reading of *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community*, her landmark scholarship co-authored with Madeline Davis. These ideas are about time or temporality in relation to emotional bonds and the intersectionality of identities and identity categories.

In bringing into sharp relief the historical and cultural specificities of working class lesbians in Buffalo, Liz, with her co-author Madeline Davies, not only inaugurated an innovative way of studying and thinking about LGBTQ

communities, she also inspired succeeding generation of scholars who were trying to grapple with the complexities of sexuality, gender, race, class and ethnicity. In re-reading *Boots of Leather*, I am struck by several things. First, there is vibrancy, an exuberance that spills out of the pages – out of the words and deeds of the women whose life narratives propel the argument and ethos of the book. The book itself is a meticulous and sensitive braiding of the life histories of African American, Native American, and White working class lesbians that showcases how these women are enmeshed in unequal structural and historical forces and processes. Moreover, the work provides a sensitive, nuanced and ultimately compelling account of the various intersections and boundary-crossings queer and non-queer people encounter and enact in everyday life. Such lessons are ultimately as resonant today as they were almost two decades ago.

I originally embarked on a rereading of *Boots of Leather* as a kind of looking back, a travel through time through a linear chronology from past to present. However, I realized that this act of re-reading is not just about reappraisals from the point of view of the present, but rather involves a re-examination of time or temporality itself, an act of re-envisioning of time that unsettles the past, the present, and most importantly, the future.

This kind of rereading is also an attempt to unsettle ideas and preconceptions. It is a furtive limning and a furtive search to find meaning in what otherwise is a moribund morass of a normative life in academia. We settle into academic life, write, teach, hopefully get tenure, then get “sentenced” to a life defined by bureaucracy. At this point in my career, I am interested in trying to access the affective and intellectual sparks and emotions that were triggered by works like *Boots of Leather*, to gain inspiration one more time at a moment when the future is dimmed by the forces of neoliberal conservatism.

In this regard, I wish to situate Liz's work within queer theory. I am not suggesting however, that Liz labels herself as a queer theorist, but I believe and argue that her ideas predate the inquiries under the aegis of “queer.” Queer theory is invested in and pivots around a notion of the future or a futurity. I would argue that the future isn't a product of fancy avant-garde critical theory but is in fact part and parcel of the grounded investment of LGBT and Queer Studies and politics in providing some sense of hope and future for people who have felt unwanted, isolated, ostracized, and somewhat unsure about their own survival. At the same time, futurity is an investment on the possibility and relevance

of creating change in situations of power inequalities and injustice. In other words, future here isn't just a point in time but a provocation toward action. Therefore, futurity is a kind of exhortation to take up the cudgels of a dissident life as well as a commitment to seeing and envisioning alternative ways of living apart from or beyond the normal. And finally, it is a futurity that is ingrained in and articulated by the life stories of the Buffalo, New York working class lesbian community in *Boots of Leather*.

One way I think a queer futurity is suggested in the book is through Kennedy and Davis's meticulous mapping of serial monogamy. A highly debatable topic, serial monogamy, according to Kennedy and Davis was often seen as evidence of the inherent failure of lesbians to build mature emotional relationships. However, they put forward the idea that serial monogamy is itself an alternative emotional formation that defies normative temporal framings of dyadic romantic and sexual relationships, which revolves around notions of "permanency" and "forever-ness." In their analysis there is a shift to recognizing the importance of the episodic and the oftentimes fleeting nature of emotional relationships. In other words, each relationship was framed within a new horizon of hope – that this one will last. While it might fail, the fact of failure isn't a dead end but an impetus to build a new relationship, thus creating not so much a cycle of failures but a tenacious attempt to rebuild new structures of time and affect with another person or set of persons.

In addition to serial monogamy, I believe *Boots of Leather* unsettles the temporal telos of butch and fem as well as lesbian and straight. Whereas butch and fem were often located within a kind of linear maturation, that is, people settle into particular gender/sexual roles and identities and stayed put, *Boots of Leather* disrupts this chronology to illustrate moments or examples of crossings and fluidity. Instead of a reified lesbian identity, *Boots of Leather* maps the complicated and often circuitous routes of identity formations that their informants recounted. Unlike progressive notions of self-maturity or self-realization, Kennedy and Davis noted the rather fluid and permeable boundaries and their multiple transgressions between the borders of butch and fem, and those of lesbian and straight. This argument highlights the messiness of identity and identity formations in ways that defy the facile temporal notions of gay liberation and queer identity formation.

This is not to suggest, however, that such boundary crossings were passively celebrated. In fact, such crossings were meticulously mapped against the fraught and difficult fissures between races, classes and ethnicities. In a wonderful and meticulous manner, Kennedy and Davis mapped out the divergent ways in which African American and White working class lesbians constructed spaces and practices of sociality in the mid-twentieth century. The book shows there were spaces of segregation and relatively autonomous cultural

worlds as well as crucial interclass and inter-racial encounters. When I first read this book, I was struck by its insistence on the specificity of social and individual experiences that come from people's social locations. It was important to me as a scholar of color to note that unlike previous scholarship that attempted to provide a monolithic gay or lesbian community, this scholarship was a highly focused one that I believe paved the way for succeeding research on various LGBT communities.

Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold anticipates the calls for intersectionality that would enliven critical race and queer studies scholarship of the late 1990s. Kennedy and Davis in their final section wrote:

We have before us the challenge of thinking of new ways of drawing the boundaries, free from nineteenth century moral imperatives, that capture the full complexity of human sexuality. This history shows clearly that to develop gay and lesbian politics solely around the concept of a fixed identity is problematic, for it requires the drawing of static and arbitrary boundaries in a situation that is fluid and changing. The challenge we face – to organize a movement that both defends gay rights in a homophobic society on the basis of the assumption of a fixed gay identity, and envisions a society where sexuality is not polarized into fixed homo/hetero identities – is difficult but worthwhile. The complexity entailed is not a contemporary phenomenon, but is part of working-class lesbian history. We need concepts that will take into account the persistent and the fluid, the butch and the fem, and the Black, the white, the Indian, the Hispanic, the Asian-American lesbian. Playing with the idea of multiple identities, while understanding the dramatic changes lesbian resistance has attained in lesbian life, identity, and consciousness throughout this century, begins to lay the groundwork for creating a world where [as stated by Jonathan Katz] 'who we love and how we love them is a matter of aesthetics.' (387)

Allow me to end this rather meandering reflection and homage by recounting a moment in the early nineties after a long day's work at COLGIA, an AAA committee given the task of inquiring into the status of lesbian and gay anthropologist in the profession. I was with Liz Kennedy and Esther Newton, and Esther had just proudly announced to both of us that she has been promoted to full professor. Liz happily added, "I was promoted too." There I was, a graduate student procrastinating with finishing his dissertation after being told by my adviser that I would never find employment with my work on gay Filipino immigrants. There I was, a witness to a conversation between these two senior scholars I respected and who were, to my mind, rather belatedly being

conferred academia's highest rank. I was humbled by their tenacity to continue with their line of work at all odds and their resolve to undertake risky projects. Moments like this one as well as my numerous encounters with Liz Kennedy when I was a graduate student at the SOLGA meetings, enabled me to imagine a possible life in anthropology and to imagine a future where I would have some expectations of professional success and recognition as well as a modicum of personal satisfaction. Liz Kennedy is an important anthropologist who has been and remains an inspiration for me and for my generation of queer anthropologists.

At the 2009 AAA annual conference, I attended the SOLGA business meeting. I was struck by the fact that I did not know at least two-thirds of the people who were present. There were many young faces of people under 30. A new generation, or should I say generations, of LGBTQ scholars have emerged. They now live at a time when LGBTQ Studies are part of many university curricula and programs. I wondered at first what it would mean for these young people to encounter Liz's work not as a "historical artifact" but as a living testament to the hopefulness of capacious analysis and sensitive ethnography, and to a generosity of spirit and the value of taking risks.

Now, I am sounding like a paternal figure trying to scold a "younger" group of people. I surely hope not. While it would seem that "generation" popularly connotes conflict and discontinuity, I want to end this essay by thinking about how various generations can be mutually influencing each other and are not just points in a linear chain of reproduction. As these younger scholars forge on with their work, a critical look "back" at the discipline would immensely benefit them. By "back" I do not mean the past as something that is positionally behind us – but rather I use the idea of the past as actually invigorating the present. These younger scholars would do well to read *Boots of Leather* so as to go beyond thinking that queer and LGBT studies started with Butler and Sedgwick, and to acknowledge that this work speaks not only to the period in which it emerged but that it also provides pivotal lessons that resonate today. They would also do well to recognize the achievements and struggles of Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy, not as some figure from queer anthropology's past, but as a vibrant scholarly voice that surely rises above the most fashionable theoretical flavor of the month.

I started this essay with a gesture towards hope. I attempted to show how Liz's work has been a source of hopeful and productive inspiration for myself and others. Culling from the work of Lisa Duggan and José Esteban Muñoz (2009), I am thinking of how a critical view of hope can be a bastion against scholarly complacency, of hope not as lazy daydreaming but constituted by the taking of risks, flights of fancy, and radical steps towards action. It is in this context that I situate Liz's legacy. When I read Liz Kennedy's

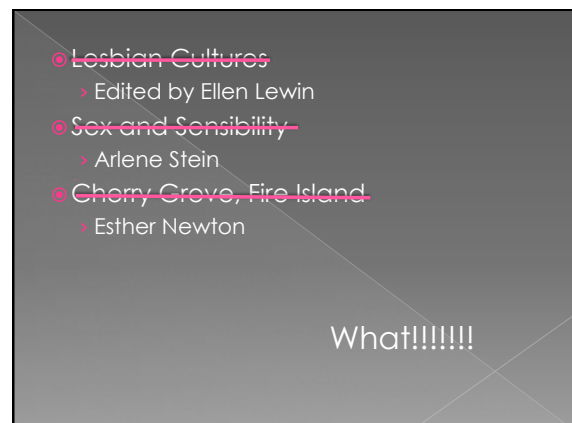
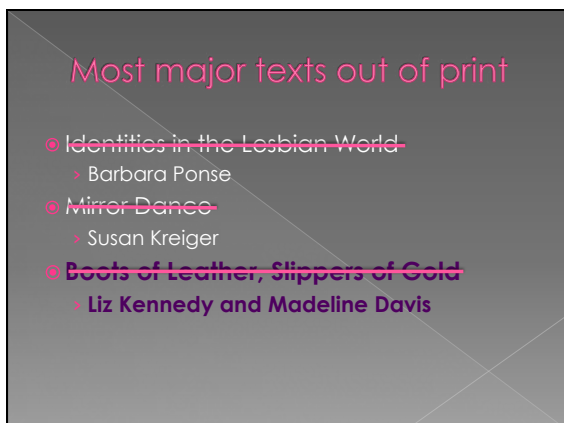
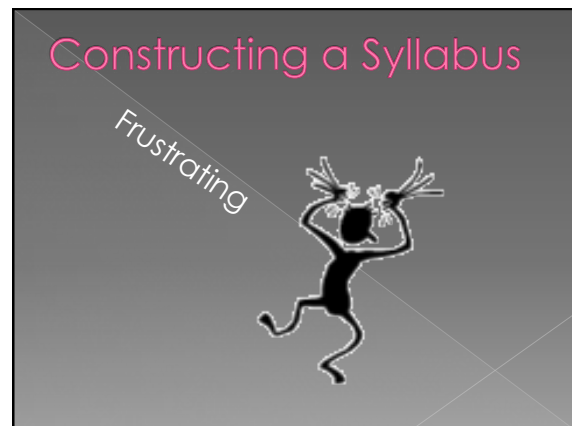
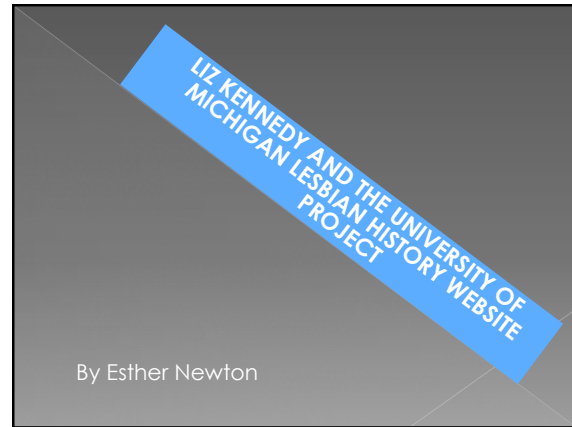
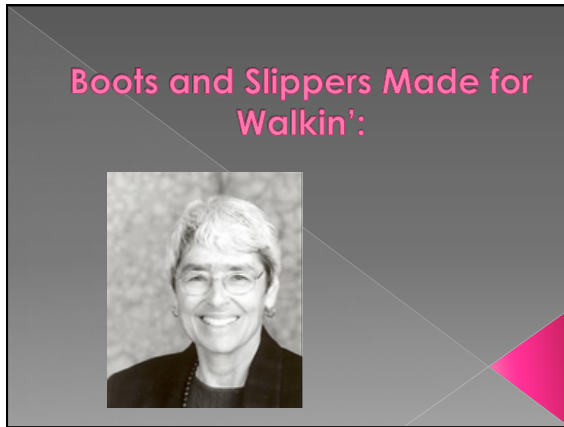
work, I think of the past, the present, and the future embedded in a lively and open-ended approach to struggles and exigencies, which can in turn open up new modes of queer possibilities and futures.

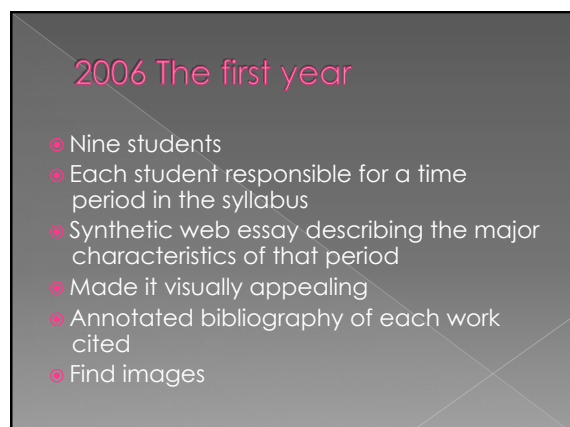
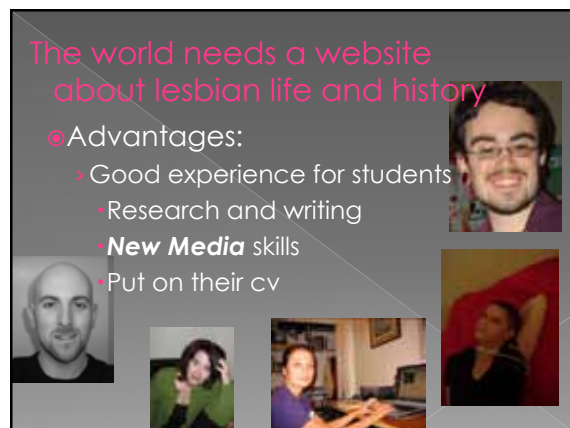
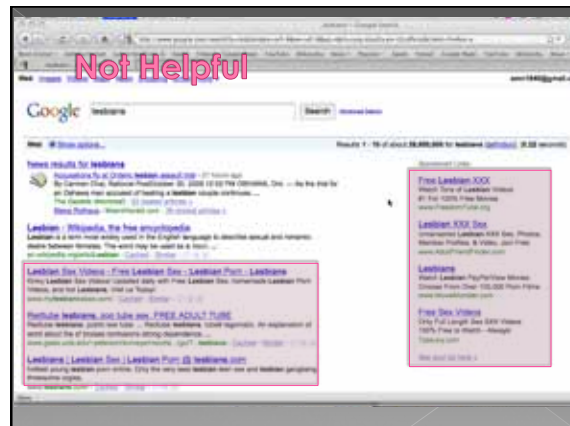
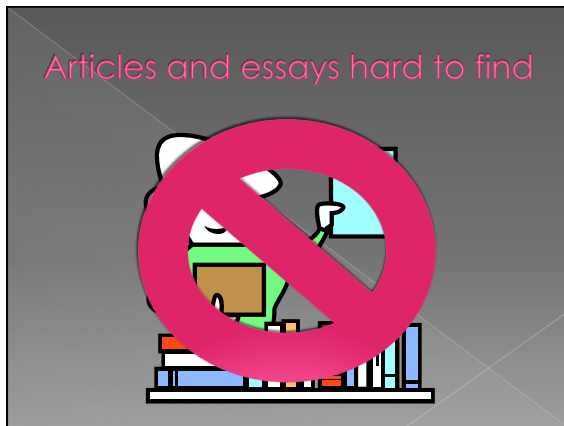
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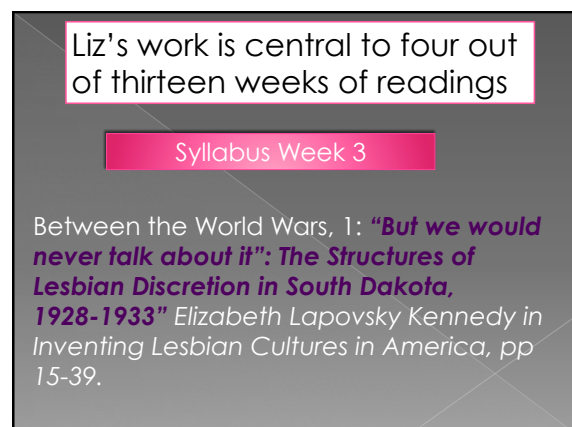
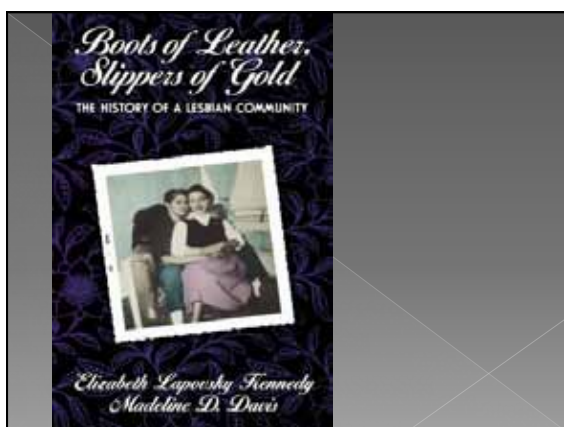
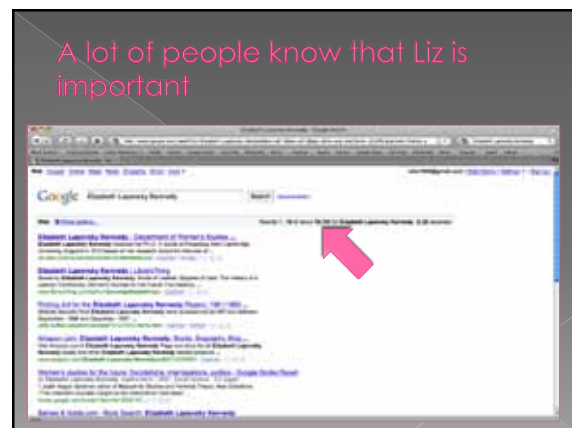
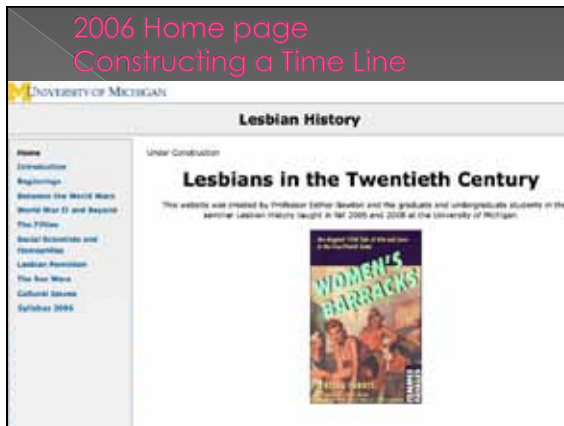
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Boots and Slippers Made for Walkin': Liz Kennedy and the University of Michigan Lesbian History Website Project

Esther Newton







- ◉ a complete departure from the working class Buffalo lesbians
- ◉ An upper middle class woman from the Midwest
- ◉ Lived discretely as a lesbian for most of her life
- ◉ Liz demonstrates the overwhelming importance of class in lesbian history

Week 4

Between the World Wars, 2: "To cover up the truth would be a waste of time," and "I could hardly wait to get back to that bar: Lesbian Bar Culture in the 1930s and 1940s," in Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold, Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline Davis, 1993 Routledge pp. 1-66.

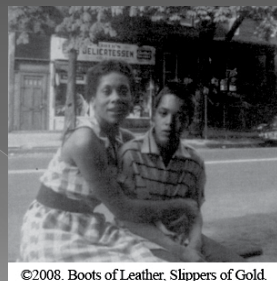
Week 5

World War II and Beyond: "A weekend wasn't a weekend if there wasn't a fight," and 'Maybe 'cause things were harder...you had to be more friendly'" in Boots of Leather pp. 67-150

Week 7

The Fifties II: "We're going to be legends, just like Columbus is," and "Now you get this spot right here" in Boots of Leather, 151-230.

- ◉ Liz and Madeline Davis showed that you could recover lesbian history narratives
- ◉ Construct them into a larger lesbian/gay narrative and into 20th century history

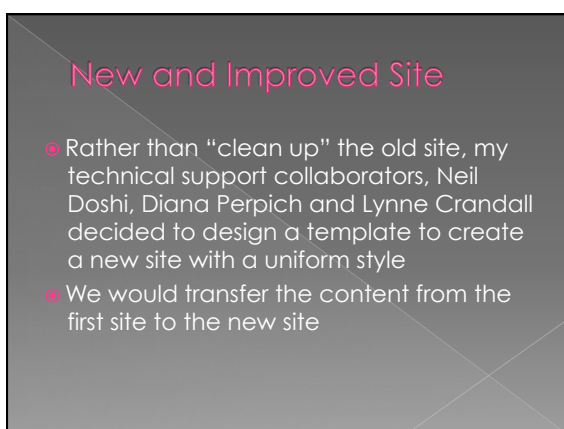


©2008. Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold.

Even from subjects who had previously been silenced

Scholarly Impact

- ◉ Completely interrupted the narratives of romantic friendship and wealthy expats as the sole origins of lesbian culture and leadership
- ◉ Put working class bar lesbians of the 30s-50s at the center of 20th century lesbian history



Ideas for the future

- Next seminar, 2010, new work
- Archive of my digitized interviews of lesbians from Cherry Grove
- Other archives, primary material, outstanding essays
- Links (please link your site to our site and we will reciprocate)

<http://sitemaker.umich.edu/lesbian.history>
Any suggestions?

Thank you Liz

- For all your personal and professional contributions
- For championing the cause of feminist and lgbt anthropologists
- And especially for devoting your career to the study of lesbian history



An Interdisciplinary Career: Crossing Boundaries, Ending with Beginnings¹

Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy, University of Arizona

Having been located in American Studies and Women's Studies for my entire 40 plus year career, I consider myself an interdisciplinary scholar. Therefore, I was honored that this tribute by colleagues and former students took place in the AAA, indicating that my work was useful to practicing anthropologists. Listening to people's generous comments about the impact of my work on their lives and scholarship was a great pleasure. I can't deny how hard I worked, sometimes to the point of obsession, to provide a meaningful social context for thinking about lesbian/gay/ transgender history, in particular butch-fem roles, by bringing together the perspectives and methodologies of history and anthropology, and to reach a scholarly and more popular audience by combining goals of social justice with research and teaching. Thank you Florence, Christine, Esther, Evelyn and Martin for noting my accomplishments, and making them your own, so that they are transformed and I can in turn learn from them as we build the field of feminist, queer studies.

At the panel itself I offered my reflections on *Boots of Leather Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community*, more than fifteen years later. But here in *Voices* I would prefer to share some thoughts about being an interdisciplinary scholar, and what it means that I began my career as a social anthropologist doing an ethnography of the Wounaan, an indigenous people of Colombia and Panamá.

The title of the panel, "Feminist Anthropology Meets Queer Anthropology," resonated with the boundary crossings that were central to my career. Feminism, and particularly socialist feminism, was momentous in shaping all my intellectual work and led me, like many others, into lesbian and gay studies. Marxism also gave me the tools to think historically and broaden my anthropological training. Consciously in *Boots of Leather* we tried to center feminist theory while doing gay or perhaps queer history and ethnography (I resisted the use of queer at first because it has often been used in the past and still today to ignore or devalue feminism). The panel mentioned many of the boundaries I tried to cross, including the bringing together of feminist, anti-racist and anti-capitalist perspectives, the building of women's studies, and the combination of activism and scholarship. But one boundary crossing was absent: Bringing together feminist and queer frameworks

with ethnographies of indigenous peoples. In my case this is the bringing together of the beginnings and endings of a career. If not mentioned here, where will it be mentioned?

I started my career as an ethnographer of "tribal" culture. At Cambridge University my advisor, Professor Meyer Fortes, wanted me to study women in West Africa, sharing with me the admirable work of Phyllis Kayberry on the Cameroons. But I was not interested. I spoke up regularly about my desire to study an indigenous group in South America. I had done my M.A. at the University of New Mexico and already had some familiarity with American Indian cultures of North America. Fortes made clear that my going to Latin America was not possible because he didn't have any contacts there. For placement of his students, he was used to relying on the contacts created by the British Empire. But I was lucky. At a conference, a colleague of his met Professor Gerardo Reichel - Dolmatoff from the University of the Andes, in Bogotá, Colombia, who shared information about his recent trip to the Chocó, and mentioned that the Wounaan were an interesting people who had not been thoroughly studied by anthropologists. This information was relayed to Fortes, and he arranged that the rainforest of the Chocó, two days canoe trip up from the Pacific Coast, would be the site of my fieldwork. My two years of fieldwork with my ex-husband, Perry Kennedy, had a profound impact on my, indeed our, lives.

We lived in Wounaan houses dispersed along the Siguirisúa River. Their culture and social organization inspired the imagination of two idealistic young people in the mid-1960s. Wounaan social organization had limited, if any, hierarchy. All people contributed and belonged equally, and were accepted for their individual variation. Wounaan were proud of their way of life and their language, and thought



Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy
Photo credit: Margaret Randall

it was about time that Westerners had come to learn about Wounaan culture. They had a keen sense of comparative culture, for instance, grasping early on that my pencil was for me, like their machete was for them, an essential work tool. They asked if it was true that people starved in our society because they did not have a way to earn a living, when deprived of access to land? They laughed that we had narrow standards of beauty. What happened then to those who didn't fit our standards? Men and women without the interference of the state formed lifelong intimate relationships always recognizing that they could end at any time.

At the same time that I learned the details of Wounaan culture, I learned firsthand about the expansion of world capitalism and its devastating effects on indigenous cultures. While we were in the Chocó, Texaco geologists arrived to survey the area to determine if the oil deposits were substantial enough to make it worth their while to flood the area so that platforms could be floated in to extract the oil. There was even a plan to damn the Atrato River and make it flow backwards. In all these cases the plans just assumed the indigenous people would be relocated, not respecting their close relationship with the land. Luckily the cost to enact these plans was always too expensive, given the extreme climate of the Chocó, one of the rainiest areas of the world, and in the end none came to fruition.

My field work experience gave me hope for what was possible in human society while knowledge of capitalism's tremendous powers of destruction filled me with sadness. Both emotions are never far from my consciousness and have been powerful influences throughout my career.

Fieldwork taught me that economic and cultural systems, or what some call material conditions, shape consciousness and behavior; within them there is individual variation but all within a specific frame, some of which are more supportive of human growth and creativity than others. This hope is what has kept me going, imagining new projects, knowing the potential for humans in positive environments. The sadness has been equally powerful. For the most part I have kept it locked away; however, it inevitably erupts, shocking me with its force. It comes when I try to discuss the fieldwork experience, or when I am showing a film about the destruction of the habitat of the !Kung people of southern Africa, and therefore the destruction of their way of life. Like many citizens of the 20th and 21st centuries, I carry inside me the pain that comes with being implicated in genocide and ethnocide. The decision to not publish my research on the Wounaan or disseminate the films we made, or the photos and stories I collected, was my individual attempt not to make it easier for capitalism to remove

Wounaan from their land and to disrupt their culture. In the 1960s I had few other options.

By taking the position not to publish or disseminate my material on the Wounaan I became entrapped in a set of contradictions. By protecting Wounaan I was also not giving back to them any of the material I had collected or the films I made. They were all in my house and not even a final copy of my dissertation had been sent to Bogotá. I, who was so critical of imperialism and the colonial situation, had reproduced it in the name of not wanting to harm Wounaan. After leaving the field in 1966 there was no easy way to communicate with the Wounaan, without going there in person.

This situation created the perfect time for me to begin to do feminist and gay and lesbian, and eventually, queer work in the U.S. As I developed new intellectual tools through my work in building women's studies and researching LGBTQ history, I was not able to apply them easily to rethinking my field work experience. It was such a formative experience that it was frozen in a moment of time. It did not help that the dominant social anthropological research methodology of the 1960s had been structural functionalism, which looked at society at a particular moment of time. In addition, I had no contact with Wounaan so did not see how their social life was changing and how they were organizing to engage and resist the expanding capitalist world. It was hard for me to grasp the amount of change that was taking place. By the 1990s the Chocó became the site of increasing violence fomented by narco traffickers and paramilitaries, making a return visit extremely challenging.

I attempted to mollify these painful contradictions, by committing myself to doing support work for Native American issues in the U.S., and keeping up on Native American, anti-racist and anti-colonial scholarship so I could work with American Indian Studies students who were interested in gender and queer issues. Even so, I tried to push my experience of field work with the Wounaan comfortably to the back of my mind. This situation was fortunately disrupted when in 2003 I received an email from Julie Velasquez Runk, just finishing her doctoral studies in anthropology and forestry at Yale University. She had studied land use of the Wounaan in Panama and had read my dissertation and wanted to speak with me about my observations and experiences from the 1960s in Colombia. I invited her to come to my house to look at all my materials—photos, films, field notes, stories—and we talked non-stop for a week-end. She encouraged me to think of digitizing everything and making the material available to the Wounaan. In the process of reviewing the stories, I

discovered that I had been so fluent in Wounaanmeu, I had used that language for the painstaking process of transcribing and translating. However, now I could not remember the majority of the words. I was mortified at what was lost, but Julie didn't worry. She reminded me that there are Wounaan who can transcribe and translate these stories now. Yes, I had to start remembering that the Wounaan were active participants in the 21st century, many living and working in cities, reading and writing their own language, participating in political organizations to fight for land rights, and attending church regularly.

Under Julie's leadership, we slowly hatched a project with Wounaan of Panama that would transcribe and translate the stories collected by North Americans—two linguists, and the two of us—over the last 60 years. The project would also index and archive the stories, making sure they would be available to Wounaan into the future. The grant would also support other kinds of language documentation such as the creation of a Wounaanmeu/ Spanish dictionary and a Wounaanmeu Grammar. (We focused on Panama to benefit from Julie's more than 10 years work in Panama and avoid the increasing violence in the Chocó.) On the second attempt the project was funded by the NSF Documenting Endangered Languages Division. I am still looking for funds to digitize my films and slides.

My friends and colleagues comment how wonderful it is that I returned to this work, closing the circle, so to speak. But in some way I felt I didn't have a choice. A powerful force pulled me to return. Throughout my career I had this ethical compulsion and now I had a chance to actualize it. It wasn't exactly freely chosen. I can explain this force best by mentioning that at about the time Julie contacted me, or perhaps a little earlier, my ex husband, who was not an academic or an anthropologist, started mentioning to me that we needed to do something to return the films and the photos to the Wounaan. As we had built our lives around social justice that included anti-imperialist work, we needed to recognize that conditions had changed and there was a possibility of reestablishing contact with Wounaan and transforming our relationship with them, first and foremost by returning the materials we had collected.

How does one return to field research, more than 40 years later? Can one combine queer and feminist research frameworks and ethnography of indigenous people? Slowly I have come to realize that the question is not can I make this combination, but this combination is what allows my return, and paved the pathway for my return. It gave me the tools to start the dynamic process of reevaluating my knowledge of the Wounaan. I could no longer see my work

in 1964-1966 as representing Wounaan society and culture, but needed to put it in the context of what came before and after. I could no longer see the Wounaan of Colombia as separate from those in Panama because of the international border but needed to look at complex patterns of migration in the context of state regulation. In short, I needed to understand the dramatic changes wrought in the last 50 years and contribute my knowledge to helping Wounaan frame a dynamic history.

At the same time the skills of building women's studies and doing anti-racist work, helped me to listen to Wounaan criticisms of the many faces of colonialism and to support their efforts to confront them when determining the projects in which they participate. My description of the NSF grant above is deceptively simple. It hides all the complexities of collaborative research between North Americans and indigenous peoples of Latin America. How do all parties negotiate the power relations inherent in 400 years of colonialism and the concomitant gender, race, class, sexuality and nation based oppression. Feminist and queer scholarship, particularly that of indigenous scholars, with their meticulous attention to the interconnectedness of systems of power have been very helpful. However, the answers will have to wait until the future, hopefully with a collaboratively written article by all parties to the research collaboration.

So far my work with Panamanian Wounaan is limited to this language documentation project. We do not have the resources to expand the focus, not even to analyze changes in stories over time. Following the premise of feminist and queer methodology that research with indigenous people should be determined by them, I don't know what direction future research will take. Right now, Wounaan priorities for research are related to land rights and language preservation through bilingual education. Both priorities allow ample opportunities for analyses of gender and sexuality, so that feminist and queer perspectives could be relevant. For instance, my recent experiences with Wounaan have been in the outskirts of Panama City, where urban life typically means that men are working for wage labor, causing changes and strains in the egalitarian culture that I knew from the 1960s and which also still seems common in rural areas. In casual conversation I have heard Wounaan men mention that women's expectations of men's participation in housework are unrealistic. It is my impression that as Wounaan prioritize preserving their language and culture, many would find illuminating analyses by North American indigenous feminists that show the lack of gender hierarchy in many traditional societies and attribute gender hierarchy

to contact with western political, legal and economic systems. Although I am not at this point clear about the ways queer perspectives will be useful to Wounaan, tools for interrogating sexuality could provide, at the least, analyses of changing sexual discourse. For example, elders have commented regularly on the presence of bawdy comments in the old stories our project is transcribing. For many these comments are problematic because they go against the teachings of the evangelical churches in which they are active participants. How can contemporary Wounaan respect the tradition of their elders while honoring their current religious beliefs? Obviously, future possibilities for research are multiple, and probably won't be determined until well after I have retired.

Crossing boundaries has led me to a rich and rewarding, if at times scary, career in research and teaching. It has encouraged me to analyze institutions, contemplate a variety of theoretical perspectives, and engage issues of practice for change. I hope that this panel contributes to deepening anthropology's ties with and support of interdisciplinary areas such as feminist studies and queer studies on campus, while also strengthening the Association for Feminist Anthropology and the Society of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists and increasing the production of feminist and queer scholarship in anthropology itself.

¹*Thank you to Florence Babb and Mary Grey for organizing this panel. Also, to Florence Babb and Erin Durban for giving me helpful feedback on an early draft of this Comment. Many thanks to Perry Kennedy for checking my memory of events from more than 40 years ago, and to Julie Velasquez Runk for sharing her wisdom about field research with contemporary Wounaan, and for suggesting the phrase, "Crossing Boundaries," to describe the work we do.*