

Recent Honors Abstracts**2010-2011****2011-2012****Sydney A. Hare**

Advisor: Heather L. Lindkvist & Claudia Alberto-Guzman

Las Trans: Negotiating Gender, Personhood, and Citizenship in Chile

Las Trans, a group of male-to-female transgender residents living in Arica, Chile, challenge the strict dual-sex, dual-gender system of Chile's family-oriented society. Chile presents an especially interesting case when analyzing the social position of sexual minorities due to the country's historically strong ties to the Catholic Church, and, on a political level, the experience of seventeen years of dictatorship during a crucial period of time in world history. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted with *las Trans*, I consider how gender identity and gender expression affect to what extent an individual can achieve full personhood and full citizenship in this South American country. Because of *las Trans* members' gender identities, they are unable to take advantage of many opportunities that are, in theory, guaranteed as basic human rights. Specifically, they are unable to attain legitimate jobs and are instead forced to earn a living through sex work, putting them at a heightened risk of being assaulted and contracting STDs. Additionally, *las Trans* members' experience numerous barriers in effectively accessing government-sponsored institutions, like health care, which are allegedly free and accessible for all citizens. This thesis argues that such discriminatory and exclusionary practices, rooted in social discrimination and reinforced through government legislation and religious discourse, further marginalize those who fail to conform to culturally prescribed gender categories and norms.

Hannah M. Arenstam

Advisor: Loring Danforth

Representations of Australian National Identity in the Immigration Museum of Victoria

The Immigration Museum in Victoria, Australia, is dedicated to conveying the many facets of the country's long history of immigration. In my thesis I examine the representations of Australian national identity displayed in the Immigration Museum to answer the question: What does this museum reveal to Australians and others about Australia? My analysis is based on Geertzian interpretive anthropology and has also been significantly influenced by Benedict Anderson's theory of the nation as an "imagined community." During a semester abroad in Australia I conducted fieldwork in the museum from which my ethnographic data are drawn. Australia has long been a nation of immigrants, as a result two competing conceptions of Australian national identity have developed: an ethnic national identity and a multicultural nation identity, both of which are represented in the Immigration Museum. My aim is not to provide a definitive answer to the question of what it means to be Australian, but rather to analyze anthropologically an Australian representation of Australian national identity.

Alisa J. Hamilton

Advisor: Heather Lindkvist

Knocked-Up Baby Mamas: The Normalization of American Childbirth Practices in Hollywood Movies

Between 2007 and 2010 several romantic comedies premiered featuring a main character who becomes pregnant by unconventional means, and whose pregnancy carries the narrative of the film climaxing at the baby's birth. For young women with little knowledge of childbirth, such

movies potentially play a prominent role in constructing their perceptions of pregnancy and birth. I analyze this trend in the movies *Knoched Up*, *Baby Mama*, and *The Back-up Plan*. Using the theory of normalizing judgment, I examine how movies homogenize childbirth practices in the United States. I combine textual analysis of films with data gained from interviews and focus groups comprised of female college students, ages 18-25, who have not had children. Young women with varying degrees of knowledge integrate information gathered from media representations with personal experience to form diverse conceptions of pregnancy and birth that tend toward the normalized versions in films. Such normalizing images may limit perceived reproductive options and illicit negative emotions from women whose pregnancy and birth experiences deviate from socially constructed standards and ideals. This thesis aims to expose the ramifications of seemingly innocent comedy movies. By combining approaches of medical anthropology and media studies, it provides a unique perspective on reproductive politics in mass media.

2009-2010

Julia S. Caffrey

Advisor: Loring Danforth & Sarah Strong
Corporate Warrior or the Dog of Society? Hegemonic Masculinity in Popular Representation of the Japanese Salaryman (1991-2010)

In post-war Japan, the salaryman (salaried male corporate employee) enjoyed a status as a state-sponsored and mother-approved career and identity. During Japan's economic "bubble," salarymen received widespread credit for the booming success of "Japan, Inc." Since the collapse of the economic bubble in 1994, however, a period of sustained recession followed. Meanwhile, international pressure and a

shockingly low birthrate pushed Japan toward a "Gender Equal Society" initiative. As a result, the institutions that supported the salaryman were dramatically altered. Using an interpretive approach to the anthropology of gender, I analyze popular cultural representations of salarymen in Japanese satirical songs, poetry, and graphic novels to understand how this hegemonic form of masculinity has shifted and persisted in response to social and economic change. Through these representations, the salaryman emerges as a historically situated male identity, privileged male lifestage, and masculine institution. I explore how changes in employment practices have influenced models for success for young salarymen. I also discuss the enduring qualities of this institution that are increasingly seen as constraints for Japanese men. Finally, I analyze contemporary contestations of men's domestic role and interpret what these representations of work and home suggest for Japan's pursuit of a "Gender Equal Society."

Caitlin E. McKittrick

Advisor: Heather Lindkvist

"Small Family, Happy Family": The Relationship between Family Planning and Childbirth Practices in South India

The use of labor-hastening technology, such as labor-accelerating drugs and Cesarean sections, has become increasingly common during childbirth in South India. In some cases, doctors preempt a vaginal delivery with a scheduled Cesarean section. In other situations, doctors perform a Cesarean section if the labor is not progressing fast enough. Women also request Cesarean sections more frequently in order to take away the pain of childbirth. Practitioners agree that interventions, specifically Cesarean sections, should be limited to two during a woman's life for her own safety. This medical practice supports the government initiatives to control population growth. Though a woman can

have a vaginal delivery after a Cesarean section, many practitioners resist such practice, which potentially limits her family size to two children. In this thesis, I contend that the Indian government's family planning policies affect obstetric practice, specifically childbirth interventions. Drawing upon ethnographic interviews, I explore how medical practitioners facilitate or resist these policies and practices in their day-to-day care of women in South India.

Nathalie C. Woolworth

Advisor: Charles V. Carnegie

The Local Significance of Global Climate Change: A Study of Environmental Impacts and Meaning in Pirane, Argentina

In Pirane, Argentina, a city of 18,000 located in the northeast province of Formosa, rainfall has decreased by two thirds, frost cycles have become unpredictable, and the intensity of heat in summer and cold in winter have increased over the last five years. The way in which these environmental changes are discussed by locals in relation to global climate change sheds light on the variability and elasticity of the larger concept. To Pirane's inhabitants, whose livelihoods depend on agriculture and natural resources, climate change is not a global problem understood through the lens of Western science or international politics, but brings a plethora of real local impacts. I approach my investigation of impacts and meaning through a study of ethnoecology – local ecological knowledge and human-environment relations – in Pirane, made more widely relevant and action-oriented through the connection of local impacts and meaning with a study of national and global forces. I bring together these accounts of meaning and action on multiple scales in what anthropologist Anna Tsing terms an "ethnography of global connection" – an exploration of "zones of awkward engagement, where words mean something different across a divide even as

people agree to speak" (Tsing 2005:xi). Ultimately I argue that understanding the local impacts and meaning of climate change in both local and global context, and recognizing the variability in perspectives expressed through discourse and action are crucial to facilitating future local adaptation as well as equitable global response to climatic change.

The Andrew Hamill Thesis Prize in Anthropology

The Andrew Hamill Thesis Prize in Anthropology is awarded annually to one or more graduating seniors who, by vote of the faculty of the Department of Anthropology, have demonstrated exceptional achievement in the senior thesis. The award is funded by an endowment established by Oliver L. Hamill in honor of his son, Andrew, a 2005 graduate.

Awardee 2012-13: Meredith Bayliss

Awardees 2011-12: Sydney Hare & Ben Tilton

Awardees 2010-11: Hannah Arenstam & Alisa Hamilton

Awardees 2009-10: Nathalie Woolworth & Julie Caffrey

Hamill Family Fieldwork Fund

Endowed by Andrew Hamill '05, the Hamill Family Fund for Fieldwork in Anthropology supports ethnographic or archaeological inquiry, prioritizing declared majors' need-based travel assistance for thesis research purposes. The fund is designed to enable those with little financial support to engage in life-altering, research-based, cultural encounters.

Awardee 2012-13: Devin Tatro

Awardees 2011-12: Colleen Fitzgerald & Jake MacIntosh

*Awardees 2010-11: Hakima Abdul-Fattah
Tiarra Abell & Nazsa Baker*

Awardee 2009-10: None

Short Term 2012**Islam in Saudi Arabia***Loring M. Danforth*

The lobby of our hotel in Jeddah on the Red Sea coast of Saudi Arabia was lavishly decorated with leather, glass, and marble. When the elevator door opened, I saw a young woman standing inside, wearing a black floor-length robe, a black scarf over her hair, and a black veil that covered her whole face, except for her eyes. I froze; I didn't know what to do. Should I enter the elevator or not? Then, after the briefest pause, the young woman looked at me and asked matter-of-factly in English, "What floor are you going to?" "Third," I said, and entered the elevator. My dilemma was solved.



Last spring I spent a month in Saudi Arabia with a small group of Bates College students. We visited Dhahran, the center of the oil industry on the Persian Gulf; Riyadh, the conservative capital in the center of country; and Jeddah, the more liberal, cosmopolitan port of entry for the millions of pilgrims – "guests of God" – who have traveled to the holy city of Mecca from all over the Muslim world for 1,400 years. The narrow streets of the old city of Jeddah are full of people from Yemen, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. In several empty lots I

saw Somali boys playing soccer while their mothers sat on nearby doorsteps talking with their neighbors.

Many Americans have dangerously inaccurate views about Islam. A well-known politician who visited Bates last year told students that Muslims were "fundamentally different from Americans." This is clearly not true. Many Muslims are Americans, and many Americans are Muslims. Perhaps he meant to say that Muslims are fundamentally different from Christians. But this is not true either. Muslims, like Christians and Jews, are "People of the Book," since they believe in one God and share a common religious tradition that includes the Torah, the Old and the New Testaments, as well as holy figures such as Adam and Eve, Abraham and Isaac, Noah, Moses, and Jesus.

Any view that sets up a fundamental opposition between different "kinds" of people – Black and White, Christian and Jew, Protestant and Catholic – must be avoided at all costs. Dichotomies like this distance and dehumanize "other" people; they can also lead to the kind of violence we know from South Africa, Nazi Germany, and Northern Ireland. Such a view also implies incorrectly that all Muslims are somehow "the same;" it ignores the tremendous diversity that exists within a Muslim world that includes countries as different as Morocco in North Africa, Albania in Europe, and Indonesia in Southeast Asia.

This same politician told Bates students that all Muslims, unlike all Christians, believe that the Qur'an must be taken literally and is not subject to interpretation. Again this is not true. Muslims have just as wide a range of understandings of the Qur'an as Christians do of the Bible. In addition to the two major divisions of Islam – Sunni and Shia – there are four major, and many minor, schools of Sunni Islam, as well as a mystical tradition of Islam known as Sufism. Followers of some forms of Islam do not even consider followers of other forms to be real Muslims.

Saudi Arabia, with its vast oil reserves and powerful military, is one of the most important countries in the Muslim world. It is a totalitarian state ruled by an absolute monarchy. Saudi citizens do not enjoy many of the rights that Americans take for granted, such as the right to elect their leaders and the rights to freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, and freedom of religion. This unfortunate situation is not a result of the fact that Saudi Arabia is Muslim country, any more than the fact that some Central and South American countries are totalitarian states is a result of the fact that they are Christian countries.



During our stay in Saudi Arabia we encountered people with many different interpretations of Islam. Some Saudis said that the Qur'an forbids women from driving. Others said that the Qur'an does not forbid women from driving. Still others said that the ban on women driving is the product of a traditional patriarchal society and has nothing at all to do with Islam. A group of Saudi university students I spoke with disagreed strongly about whether I, as a Christian, could touch the Qur'an. One young man told me I could not touch the Qur'an since I was not "clean." When I protested, he modified his position: "I was not spiritually clean." I protested again, and he said: "I was not spiritually clean in a Muslim way." To this I agreed. A young Saudi woman dismissed his whole argument out of hand. Of

course I could touch the Qur'an. How else could I learn about Islam?

We met Saudi Muslims who reminded me of conservative fundamentalist Protestants, others who reminded me of mainstream Catholics, and still others who reminded me of liberal Unitarian Universalists or Quakers. One Saudi woman claimed that scientists have proven that homosexuals are immoral and that God had sent AIDS to punish them for their evil ways. A few days later a highly respected Sufi leader told us that life should be based on the principal of balance. "The Bill of Rights, the Ten Commandments, and the Qur'an," he said, "are our tools to create balance and order in society. Unity in diversity is an example of balance. Jews and Christians and Muslims share a great deal. Islam is the religion of freedom. Allah is the God of everyone, even people who don't believe in Him. We are trying to share our love with you right now – Muslims and Christians, Saudis and Americans."

On our last day in Dhahran we visited a mosque at the invitation of a young Saudi man who had a bushy black beard and wore a long white robe. "We're so happy you guys are here with us today," he said, welcoming us to his mosque. "We have differences in culture, but this is an opportunity for us to get together and resolve our differences." Then the imam, the leader of the mosque, invited us to attend the mid-day prayer. A group of twenty men gradually formed two lines across the mosque. A businessman in a coat and tie stood next to a construction worker wearing a sweat-stained robe and ragged turban. They held up their open palms in prayer, knelt down and touched their foreheads to the red carpets that covered the floor, and rose to their feet again.

A few days after our return to Lewiston, I was walking down Lisbon Street early on a Friday afternoon. I saw a Somali man who had been a student in the English class I teach at the Adult Learning Center. Services at the mosque had just let

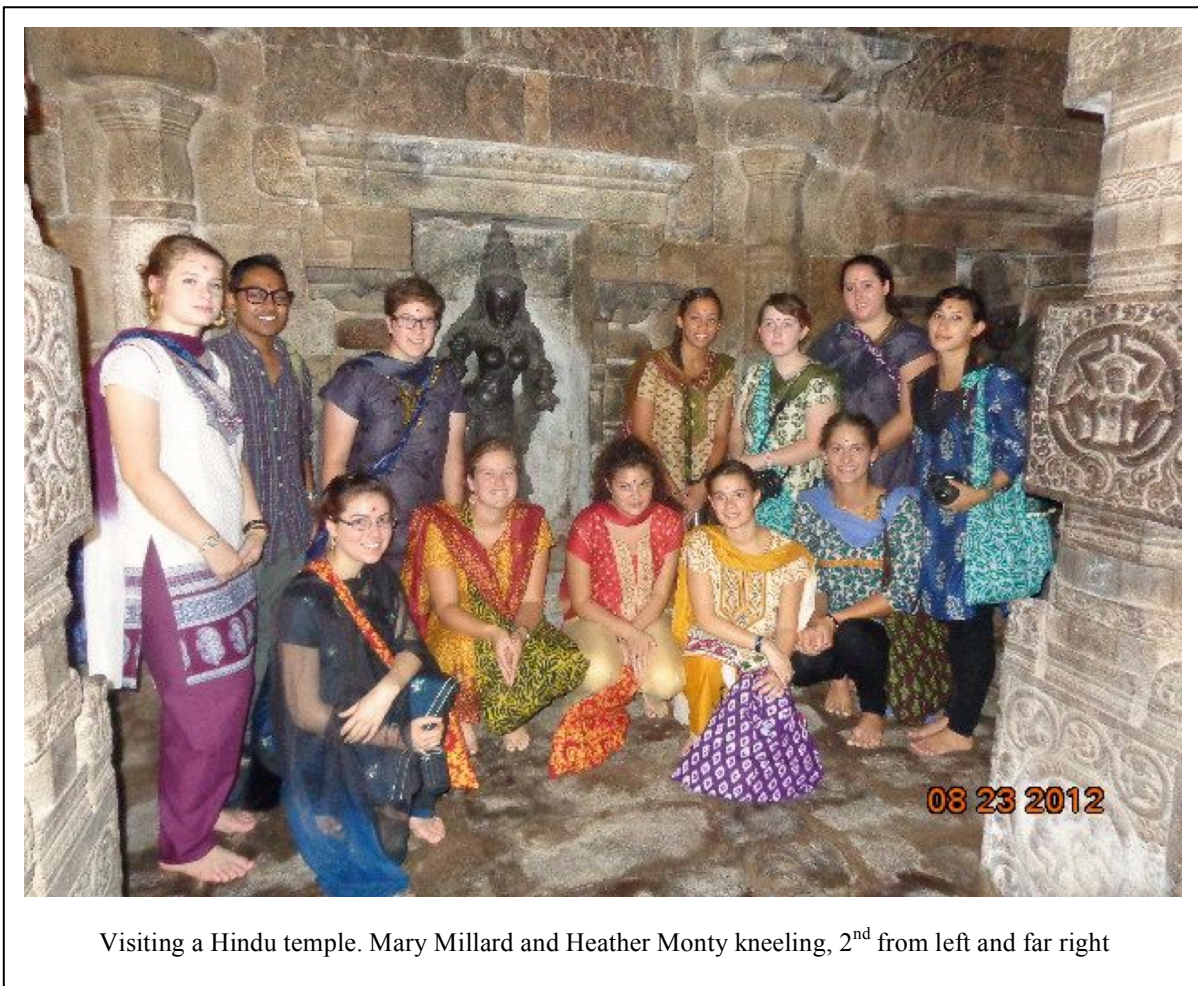
out. He was excited to hear that I had visited Saudi Arabia. He had lived in Jeddah for two years before coming to the United States and settling in Lewiston.

In the end, Muslims and Christians – like members of other religious, political, or ethnic groups – are

different in many ways. But they are also very similar; they share a common humanity. This is the paradox of cultural diversity. The world is very large, but it is also very small. Lessons learned in Saudi Arabia can be put to good use on Lisbon Street.

SITA Program

South India Photos



Visiting a Hindu temple. Mary Millard and Heather Monty kneeling, 2nd from left and far right