

## Preface

*Katherine C. MacKinnon*

The papers included in this volume are the outcome of a Kroeber Anthropological Society conference given in honor of Professor Gerald Berreman's retirement from the Anthropology faculty at the University of California, Berkeley, after 41 years of dedicated service. The conference (held April 6, 2001) was entitled "Behind Many Masks: Gerald Berreman and Berkeley Anthropology, 1959-2001," and brought together several generations of scholars, students, and friends. Over the course of his career, Gerry has been an active participant in major changes in anthropology and society. His career exemplifies an era that has provided the foundations for contemporary anthropology and the critical concern for activism in the academy. It is for these reasons that we organized the conference to celebrate the contributions Gerry has made to the discipline of anthropology, as well as to the academic community at U.C. Berkeley.

The body of the original conference was organized into four sessions that center on the main themes of Gerry Berreman's career (see Appendix A: The Original Conference Program). Papers were solicited from his colleagues and former students (see Appendix B: Volume Participants and Their Affiliations). The four main sections of this volume that comprise conference papers are: "Section I: Anthropology of South Asia"; "Section II: Social Inequality"; "Section III: "Identity and Interaction"; and "Section IV: 'The Politics of Truth': Ethics, Responsibility, and Activism." At the end of the conference there was an informal session titled, "A Participatory Conversation with Gerald Berreman," during which Gerry answered questions from the audience, reflected on his career, and commented on the current state of anthropology. Of course, a conference such as this would not have been complete without Gerry's sparkling wit and infectious humor. These qualities have translated quite nicely into print in "Section V: Final Session." Following that is "Section VI: Personal Remembrances," where five authors who were unable to be present at the conference contribute their thoughtful words.

Gerry has written about, and been actively engaged in, a wide variety of topics throughout his distinguished career. Such topics include: ethics and responsibility in anthropology, social stratification, caste and class systems, race, issues of gender inequality, political activism in the social sciences, social interaction theory, research methods, and ethnographies of peoples in India, where he did much of his fieldwork. Gerry has always been extremely concerned with social justice issues and the ensuing responsibilities of social scientists. During the Vietnam War in the late 1960s and early 1970s, he declared that the United States was carrying out a racist war, not only in Southeast Asia, but also within the United States itself, evidenced by

the disproportional numbers of minority soldiers fighting and dying in battle on the front lines. In the late 1960s, and shortly thereafter, while he was an elected member of the American Anthropological Association's Committee on Ethics (1969-71), its Executive Board (1971-74), and was nominated as a candidate for its presidency (1971), he and others drew attention to social scientists (a number of whom were colleagues in anthropology) who were gathering political and cultural information on Thai villagers for U.S. Department of Defense counter-insurgency operations. Shining light on these ethical violations led to passionate deliberations in the AAA regarding the responsibilities of anthropologists towards the people they live with, work with, and study. Eventually, most AAA members agreed with Gerry's position and the Association adopted the Committee's "Principles of Professional Responsibility" (which Gerry co-drafted).<sup>1</sup>

### **Acknowledgments**

I would like to gratefully thank and acknowledge the following people for their help and energy during the conference, and with the subsequent preparation of this volume:

**Dr. Keiko Yamanaka, Department of Ethnic Studies, and Institute for the Study of Social Change, U.C. Berkeley.** Dr. Yamanaka helped tremendously with all stages of this project, and its completion is a testament to her unwavering support. It was, in part, a labor of love: Dr. Yamanaka, as most readers of this volume will know, is the beloved wife of Gerry Berreman. Always patient, always encouraging, always hopeful, and always a joy....thank you Keiko!

**Kevin Bartoy, Ph.D. Candidate in Archaeology, Department of Anthropology, U.C. Berkeley.** Kevin did a tremendous amount of work helping to organize the conference—contacting and communicating with participants throughout, keeping the various databases, and overseeing all the major (and many minor!) details. In addition, he helped greatly in the initial stages of editing the papers for this volume.

**Drs. Laura Nader and Junko Habu, Department of Anthropology, U.C. Berkeley.** Drs. Nader and Habu were the KAS faculty advisors when I served as president of the organization from 1999-2001. They offered help and guidance throughout many KAS projects, and especially with the conference in honor of Gerry Berreman.

**Angela Jenks, Graduate Student, Department of Anthropology, U.C. Berkeley.** In addition to being a graduate student, Angela is the current KAS President and has been invaluable as my KAS contact after I finished my degree at Berkeley in 2002, got a job, and moved across the country to St. Louis.

Several organizations in the U.C. Berkeley community offered support and assistance, financial, logistic, or otherwise, to this project:

**Department of Anthropology**

**Kroeber Anthropological Society (KAS)**

**Anthropology Graduate Organization for Research and Action  
(AGORA)**

**Center for South Asia Studies**

**Institute for the Study of Social Change**

**Hearst Museum of Anthropology**

### **Final Thoughts**

As Gerry Berreman has shown by example, our interests should not be confined to the walls of academe. As anthropologists, we have a responsibility to confront and address any injustices we see in society. We need to lend our insights and voices to those situations that might benefit from our perspective. The papers presented in this volume embody this holistic, socially responsible approach and wide-ranging, active examination of the human condition. As I write this, the United States is engaged in a war against Iraq. Gerry's words from his 1968 paper, "Is Anthropology Alive? Social Responsibility in Social Anthropology," hold contemporary relevance in light of our present situation:

Our silence permits others in society less reticent, perhaps less scrupulous, almost certainly less informed, to make their own use of material presented. It leaves to politicians and journalists, to entrepreneurs, scoundrels, and madmen, as well as to statesmen and benefactors—but especially to the powerful—the interpretation and manipulation of matters about which they frequently know little, and nearly always know far less than those who collected the material or made the analyses. [Berreman 1968:392]

Gerry, thank you for speaking out and speaking the truth, and for being a guiding light for generations of anthropologists.

Katherine C. MacKinnon  
St. Louis, Missouri  
April 2003

## Works Cited

Berreman, Gerald

1968 Is Anthropology Alive? Social Responsibility in Social Anthropology. *Current Anthropology* 9:391-396.

2003 Ethics versus "Realism" in Anthropology, Redux. *In Ethics and the Profession of Anthropology: Dialogue for Ethically Conscious Practice*. Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, ed. Pp. 51-83. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.

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<sup>1</sup> He has described these deliberations and controversies in detail in his chapter titled, "Ethics versus 'Realism' in Anthropology, Redux" (Berreman 2003).