

Conference Report:

*Art Bochner*

**Ethnography for the Twenty-First Century: Alternatives and Opportunities.**  
St. Pete Beach, Florida, January 26-30, 2000,  
organized by Carolyn Ellis and Art Bochner

The Couch-Stone Symposium took place on January 26-30, 2000 at the Dolphin Beach resort on St. Pete Beach, Florida. The Symposium was organized by [Carolyn ELLIS](#) and Art BOCHNER who were ably assisted by Spencer CAHILL and Donileen LOSEKE. The University of South Florida was the host University. More than 250 people, representing Australia, Great Britain, Canada, and the United States (as well as nineteen different disciplines), attended the symposium. Obviously, SSSI<sup>1</sup> has become both multi-disciplinary and international in scope. It also reflects what Mary and Ken GERGEN called "the qualitative revolution" in the social sciences.

The theme of the Symposium was "Ethnography for the Twenty-First Century: Alternatives and Opportunities." Consequently, the Symposium featured numerous "alternative" forms and perspectives on ethnographic representation including ethnodrama, media/digital storytelling, personal narrative, autoethnography, audio and video documentary, unscripted, emergent conversation, literary, video, and artistic forms of representation, memoir, and pressure-cooker projects. Mary and Ken GERGEN presented the first keynote talk, an integrated conceptual and ethnographic performance that focused on "Representation as Relationship."

A second keynote lecture was given by Arthur FRANK who focused on "Illness and the Interactionist Vocation." The featured performance, a stunning enactment of "Handle With Care: An Ethnodrama About Living With Metastatic Breast Cancer," was presented by Ross GRAY, Jan LIVINGSTON, Christina SINDING, Mary Sue DOUGLAS, and Patricia BOWER." Based on GRAY's qualitative research, the performance involves participation from several cancer survivors whose stories are embedded in the script. Audience reactions to the performance were filmed at the Symposium for broadcast on Canadian Public Television.

In addition to these stimulating and evocative presentations, the Symposium included programs on "Ethnography and Spirituality, Ethnographies of Race, Feminist Ethnography, Wounded Storytelling, Gay and Lesbian Identity Work, Ethnographic Aesthetics, Dis/Enchantment by Academe, and a free-flowing, open conversation session on "Stories that Conform/Stories that Transform." Of course, plenty of time was set aside for informal chats, beach walks, and having fun. Music was provided by the Quivering Rhythm Hounds and Carolyn and Art

---

1 Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction is an academic organization of social science and humanities scholars from many disciplines interested in interactionist and qualitative research. The society holds its annual meeting every August in conjunction with the American Sociological Association and also holds a smaller symposium in the Spring of each year.

were seen still quivering on the dance floor after midnight. Plans have been initiated to publish a book based on the conference.

### **Author**

Report written by Art *BOCHNER*, for additional information ask Rose JENSEN.

E-mail: [Jensen\\_r@mail.lynchburg.edu](mailto:Jensen_r@mail.lynchburg.edu)

### **Citation**

Bochner, Art (2000). Conference Report: Ethnography for the Twenty-First Century: Alternatives and Opportunities. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 1(2), Art. 41, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0002411>.

Revised 7/2008