

**Lee D. Baker****THINKING THROUGH GENRE**

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On the cover for this issue is a headshot of the beautiful Beah Richards (1920–2000) *Courtesy of the Beah Richards Estate*. One of our contributing editors, Karla Slocum, invited Robin D. G. Kelley to contribute to *TA*, and he wrote a moving article on LisaGay Hamilton's work on Beah Richards—the award-winning actor several generations of film and television audiences have learned from and enjoyed. Witty, poignant, and cleverly crafted, Kelley interviews an artist and activist who interviews an artist and activist. Using his own artistic creativity, Kelley shows us how the rich multivalent narratives of generation and genre can evoke a circuitous story within a story within a story to unravel while tangling the meaning, importance, and the very shape of the Black radical tradition. This article is exactly what the group of contributing editors had in mind when we outlined the way we wanted to change the typical format and modify the type of anthropology we can pursue in the leaves of this exciting journal.

Also in this issue we have a wonderful article on the diasporic peoples of the Great Dismal Swamp, and Tami Navarro has edited and compiled a series of articles on Hurricane Katrina. Many of these articles were circulating on the World Wide Web in the wake of the hurricanes that devastated the Gulf Coast region as well as in the wake of the pitiful response by local and federal officials that devastated the spirit and confidence of the many black and brown, poor and disabled, old and infirm peoples who believed that they had a so-called safety net provided by hard-earned tax dollars. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita serve as the call, and the well-placed righteous indignation of several academics serves as a response. We are happy that *Transforming Anthropology* can function as these articles' academic or institutional home, and that we can publish these important articles in a forum and format that will ensure that they become part of the historic record, as opposed to the less stable World Wide Web.

Leading off our department called "Reports, Reflections, and Essays" Arlene Dávila and Elizabeth Chin, both students of the late Delmos Jones, reflect upon their lives, their positionality, and their careers. In their own unique styles, both Dávila and Chin take stock at the midpoint of their very successful careers to reflect on some of the absolute insanity faced by successful scholars of color. Both Elizabeth and Arlene, and I put myself into this cohort as well, were children during the 1960s and 1970s, and really came of age

during the 1980s—what Maureen Mahon calls the post-civil rights generation. The ironies and craziness of the academy seem all the more surreal after you have been at it for a while, yet don't have the lived experience to see "how far we have come." Rounding out this section, noted scholar Audrey Smedley uses her wealth of knowledge to critique Vincent Sarich and Frank Miele's use of history, and Lanita Jacobs-Huey provides an informative piece on stand-up comics and humor in the aftermath of 9/11.

Finally, I am delighted to report that our call-and-response department in the last issue elicited responses from the people who issued the call. *TA* is an ideal vehicle for hosting this type of academic dialogue and debate and we will continue to host these discussions. Both George Armelagos and Lesley Gill offer rejoinders, and Fatimah Jackson promises to reply to the article written by Armelagos and Kenneth Maes in our next issue. Finally, we have published the second installment of the series edited by Robert Adams Jr. entitled "Interrogating Race and National Consciousness in the Diaspora," which is followed up by a stunning lineup of sixteen book reviews carefully edited by Drexel G. Woodson. All of the editors have worked hard, and it is a pleasure to bring you *TA* 14.1. We hope you enjoy!