

Anthropology News

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Anthropology News, the official newspaper of the American Anthropological Association (AAA), is published monthly, except for June, July and August.

The mission of the AAA is to advance anthropology as the science that studies humankind in all its aspects, through archaeological, biological, ethnological and linguistic research; and to foster the use of anthropological knowledge in addressing human problems. *Anthropology News* (AN) advances this mission by providing members with news of association business; discussions of issues of vital importance to the discipline; and information on publications, professional job opportunities, research funding availability, meetings and other items of importance to members. AN promotes the discipline of anthropology and the interests of anthropologists across all subfields.

Members are encouraged to submit letters, news stories, commentaries, reports and other materials for publication. The AN Style Guide is available at <http://members.aaanet.org/an/info/styleguide.htm>. Further information on how to contribute to AN is available at www.aaanet.org/press/an/info/participation.htm. The AAA Statement on Response to Accusations in AN is available at www.aaanet.org/stmts/accuse.htm.

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DIALOGUE

The Correspondence column is primarily for the use of AAA members for the purpose of addressing issues that relate to the discipline and practice of anthropology. AN reserves the right to select and edit letters. All letters must be clearly marked for *Anthropology News* Correspondence, **not to exceed 400 words and consisting of a signed original plus an electronic copy** whenever possible. Letters published reflect the views of the correspondents; their publication does not signify endorsement by AN or the American Anthropological Association.

Who Knows Genetics?

I welcomed Rachel Dvoskin's article on the Leakey Foundation's sponsorship of journalist Nicholas Wade, at very least because it contained the closest thing to a response to my inquiry that I am likely to receive from them. Wade's book was reviewed by two biological anthropologists in *Nature* (June 15, 2006), who specifically called attention to his simplistic and error-ridden misunderstandings of human genetics, and concluded that his work was "in step with a long march of social Darwinists."

Jonathan Marks
UNC Charlotte

Rachel Dvoskin's discussion of the journalist Nicholas Wade as a Leakey Foundation Lecturer raises an issue that is of importance far beyond the event itself. The growing tendency of journalists to confuse their role as a reporter of events with that of the experts whose information is being reported is very dangerous. Good scientific reporting is very valuable and Wade is good at it, but he is not in a position to judge the merits of issues debated among the scientists. Yet he is an active advocate. I discovered this when I got in touch with him to call attention to my *The Bridge to Humanity* (2005), a book that deals with the relation between culture and biology. He refused to do so on the grounds that he agreed with biological determinism. This is simply censorship, cutting off access to one of the most public places for public attention. Wade certainly has a right to his opinions, but not the right to stifle those of others in accordance with his prejudices. This confusion between journalist and expertise is a common flaw in matters of social policy, but it is particularly odious in the scientific arena.

Walter Goldschmidt
UCLA

US Intelligence and Anthropology

I am writing in response to the call for member feedback on the issue of whether AN should or should not publish advertisements and announcements from US intelligence agencies. I strongly object to publishing such ads because this could put our members and infor-

ants in danger as well as encourage violations of the AAA Code of Ethics.

First, our code of ethics requires transparency and complete disclosure in fieldwork. How likely is it that informants would wish to become informers cooperating with an anthropologist working for a US intelligence agency? Not very likely. Indeed, they could risk imprisonment or worse if they did. For example, the case of Oscar Lewis in Cuba: one of Lewis' closest informants was placed in a labor camp after he was kicked out of the country on suspicion that he might be a CIA spy. In these conditions some anthropologists could be tempted to or even ordered to disguise their affiliation.

Second, allowing such advertising would reinforce widespread assumptions that anthropologists are spies and this could endanger those who are not. I am particularly concerned about the possible consequences for our most vulnerable members, namely graduate students. One of my graduate students was recently interrogated by the security police while doing her fieldwork in Turkey because they suspected she might be a CIA spy: though she was released, others might not be, especially if we publish these recruitment ads. Publishing these ads may also place Third World anthropologists (whose governments may be hostile to the US) under suspicion, causing them to lose their jobs or be arrested.

Finally, if we publish announcements from US intelligence agencies, would we not be obliged, in all fairness, to publish the ads of overseas intelligence agencies?

Ana M Alonso
U Arizona, Tucson

The Department of Defense and allied agencies have the intention of mobilizing anthropologists for interventions in the Middle East and beyond. Military and intelligence agencies and their subcontractors will be seeking to fund and contract us, and it is likely that larger, more permanent initiatives are in the works.

Over the last several months, we have created an ad hoc network, the Network of Concerned Anthropologists, with the objective of promoting an ethical anthropology. Working together, we have drafted a pledge of nonparticipa-

tion in counterinsurgency. We invite all anthropologists to join this effort.

We, the undersigned, believe that anthropologists should not engage in research and other activities that contribute to counterinsurgency operations in Iraq or in related theaters in the "War on Terror." Furthermore, we believe that anthropologists should refrain from directly assisting the US military in combat, be it through torture, interrogation or tactical advice.

US military and intelligence agencies and military contractors have identified "cultural knowledge," "ethnographic intelligence," and "human terrain mapping" as essential to US-led military intervention in Iraq and other parts of the Middle East. Consequently, these agencies have mounted a drive to recruit professional anthropologists as employees and consultants. Although often presented by its proponents as work that builds a more secure world, protects US soldiers on the battlefield or promotes cross-cultural understanding, at base it contributes instead to a brutal war of occupation that has entailed massive casualties. By so doing, such work breaches relations of openness and trust with the people anthropologists work with around the world and, directly or indirectly, enables the occupation of one country by another. In addition, much of this work is covert. Anthropological support for such an enterprise is at odds with the humane ideals of our discipline as well as professional standards.

We are not all necessarily opposed to other forms of anthropological consulting for the state, or for the military, especially when such cooperation contributes to generally accepted humanitarian objectives. A variety of views exist among us, and the ethical issues are complex. Some feel that anthropologists can effectively brief diplomats or work with peacekeeping forces without compromising professional values. However, work that is covert, work that breaches relations of openness and trust with studied populations and work that enables the occupation of one country by another violates professional standards.

Consequently, we pledge not to undertake research or other activities in support of counterinsurgency work in Iraq or in related theaters in the "War on Terror," and we appeal to colleagues everywhere to make the same commitment.

Catherine Besteman
Colby C

Andrew Bickford
George Mason U

Greg Feldman
U British Columbia-Vancouver

Roberto Gonzalez
San Jose State U

Hugh Gusterson
George Mason U

See Correspondence on page 4

Correspondence

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Gustaaf Houtman

Jean Jackson
MIT

Kanhong Lin
American U

Catherine Lutz
Brown U

David Price
St Martin's U

David Vine
American U

What are the ethical responsibilities of anthropologists planning to participate in the Iraq war as government employees, consultants or advisers?

The answer is simple. Anthropologists are never to participate in an unlawful war. To do so is an illegal act. Those who do participate in an unlawful war can be considered war criminals.

The Iraq war is unlawful because:

- It violates our Constitution in that the Congress did not declare the war.
- It violates the Nuremberg Principles of never conducting an aggressive war.
- It violates various articles of the Geneva Conventions including the access of the International Committee of the Red Cross to prisoners, torture of prisoners and so forth. The US is a signatory of this treaty and therefore it becomes law of the land.
- It violates the UN Charter. As the US is a signatory of this treaty it becomes law of the land.
- It violates the US War Crimes Act of 1996.

George N Appell

Going Digital

How do you select which AN articles are online on the AAA website? Of course if it is the author's preference that the article not be online, then I completely defer to her. But it seems to me a pity that "Online Voice Tools Can Help Us Teach and Learn ..." in the September AN is not one of the pieces that is online (except, presumably, through AnthroSource). If it

were online and included the urls for the electronic resources mentioned therein, the readers could click as they read and see the two intriguing resources she is talking about. This would streamline and enrich the article tremendously. No?

Liz Coville

We select articles that we think are timely and have a wide public appeal to post on the AAA website for a limited time. That said, I agree that it would be wonderful if we could provide links to electronic resources and other online references in AN stories published electronically. We have explored doing so, and hope that the redesign of the AAA website will offer such an opportunity in the future.

Stacy Lathrop
AN Editor

Understanding Culture

As a way of engaging student interest in my introductory anthropology courses, I collect uses of the term *culture* and mentions of *anthropology* in the mainstream media, to demonstrate how much cultural anthropology has to offer in understanding a wide range of issues in our contemporary world. Just in the last few weeks, apart from the many references to ethnic or national cultures, the term *culture* was used to explain: why the French think too much; the differences between drinking practices of Russian and US astronauts; the breakup of a Catholic Church in Brooklyn as its African (Igbo) members leave; why the Japanese are not looking forward to jury duty; the reason debt is ensnaring poor, especially African Americans; why drivers in Cairo do not pay attention to traffic lights; the role of violence among inner-city youth; the torture at Abu Ghraib; and corruption in the nation's capital.

And mentions of *cultural anthropology*? A local college is initiating a one-day "college curriculum" for parents footing the bill of their very high tuition as a way of reminding them of the importance and fun of college. "I love it," said one parent. "I'll take a class in anything, art, anthropology, whatever."

What's wrong with this picture? Culture obviously counts, but what about cultural anthropology, the key to understanding culture?

Serena Nanda

John Jay C of Criminal Justice, CUNY

PS Is someone listening? After I wrote my letter, the *New York Times* had a front page article on the controversial issue of using anthropologists attached to the military in Afghanistan and Iraq entitled "Army Enlists Anthropology in War Zones."



ENGENDERING ANTHROPOLOGY

This year marks two decades since the founding of the Association for Feminist Anthropology in 1987, providing a welcome opportunity to assess the ways in which feminist anthropology has been fundamental in advancing anthropological inquiry and practice. This is the last

in a five-part series on engendering anthropology that takes stock of how far we have come in bringing gender into critical focus in anthropology.

The Future of Feminist Anthropology/ The Feminist Future of Anthropology

FLORENCE E BABB
U FLORIDA

When I opened this series with a commentary in the April AN, I noted that this year marks 20 years since the founding of the Association for Feminist Anthropology (AFA). Although precursors to feminist anthropology can be traced back much earlier, this anniversary year presents an opportunity to look back at what has been accomplished and to look forward to what we expect to see in the future.

The warm reception at AN to launching its first series focusing on gender paved the way to invite seven distinguished anthropologists to write commentaries, which have appeared in these pages in recent months. In this final part in the series, I want to take stock of the insights offered and then suggest what we can anticipate in the years ahead.

Transforming the Discipline

Rayna Rapp (May AN), whose pioneering work in feminist anthropology has long defined the field, offered a generous and far-reaching commentary on what a new generation of scholars has achieved in drawing gender more centrally into anthropological analysis. Citing work from the US and elsewhere, she credits a diverse group of anthropologists for their part in transforming the discipline well beyond the point when it was sufficient to "add women and stir"—at present, a feminist, gendered perspective is widely considered critical to a comprehensive

understanding of human history and social processes. Indeed, she argues, we generally find that research and writing that neglects to examine gender (and other key social vectors like race and class) are substantially weakened.

However, arriving at this point has not come easily within the various subfields of anthropology, as related by contributors Susan Gal, Leslie Sue Lieberman and Margaret Conkey (September AN). Gal points out that from the early work that sought to understand gender differences in language, "The feminist project in linguistic anthropology has become an extended meditation on how expressive signs ... participate in these power-laden processes." Today she notes those who would ignore the relationship of language and gender do so at their peril.

COMMENTARY

Conkey acknowledges that anthropological archaeology came somewhat late to appreciate the significance of gender to understanding the past, but she writes "even among some of the most entrenched skeptics, the inquiry into gender in archaeology and into how and why gender makes a difference, now has to be taken into consideration." Gradually, more sophisticated analyses of the body, identity, sexuality and materiality are coming to receive attention and we can ask, "What would a feminist practice of archaeology look like?"

For her part, Lieberman writes "Until recently, feminist perspectives were lacking in many of the traditional areas of biological anthropology."

Commentary Policy

AN Commentaries are designed to explore diverse views of the discipline from an anthropological perspective. Commentaries reflect the views of the authors; their publication does not signify endorsement by AN or the AAA. Authors are expected to verify all factual information included in the text.