UC Irvine

UC Irvine Previously Published Works

Title

Intersections and conversations

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/61m5w598>

Journal

American Anthropologist, 110(2)

ISSN

0002-7294

Author

Boellstorff, T

Publication Date

2008-06-01

DOI

10.1111/j.1548-1433.2008.00021.x

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Peer reviewed

Intersections and Conversations

Readers will note an unusual number of “From the Editor” pieces in this issue of *American Anthropologist*. Although I have final decision-making authority on all questions regarding manuscripts submitted to this journal, it bears emphasizing that managing *American Anthropologist* depends on the work of many individuals. The somewhat stilted moniker I have inherited, “Editor-in-Chief,” does not tell the whole story. For instance, the AA Editorial Board plays a crucial role in the everyday work of the journal, above all because it is they who help me identify appropriate reviewers for manuscripts. In addition to this editorial board, I have created five Associate Editor positions for the journal (these persons also sit on the AA Editorial Board). In my “From the Editor” piece published in the previous issue of *American Anthropologist* (110.1), I noted that my decision has been to create:

a system in which there are five Associate Editors for *American Anthropologist*. For a flagship journal I believe this added layer of editorial oversight will help ensure that manuscripts get the most comprehensive and informed reading possible. These Associate Editors represent archaeology, biological anthropology, linguistic anthropology, and sociocultural anthropology, as well as an Associate Editor for practicing anthropology. One could imagine structures with more Associate Editors (for instance, an Associate Editor for practicing anthropology for each subfield, or Associate Editors for fields like medical anthropology, visual anthropology, legal anthropology, and so on). I believe that the structure of five Associate Editors outlined above strikes the best balance in terms of being maximally broad and minimally cumbersome, and I hope that readers of *American Anthropologist* will support me in this decision.

In the following pages, you will see welcome messages from all five of these Associate Editors. I am deeply thankful for their willingness to step forward and participate in the editorial work of *American Anthropologist*. Following these messages from the Associate Editors, you will find four

“From the Editor” pieces, written not by myself but by the editors of other AAA journals. I have solicited these pieces because I believe that a key aspect of *American Anthropologist*’s mission is to support other association journals. If I may cite my previous piece once again:

American Anthropologist is one of over twenty journals published under the auspices of the American Anthropological Association. It is unusual in that unlike every other journal (save *Anthropology News*), *American Anthropologist* is not published via a section (in the way that, for instance, the *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* is published by the Society for Linguistic Anthropology). As Editor-in-Chief, I am strongly committed to furthering the idea that *American Anthropologist*’s “section” is not just the membership of the entire AAA, but specifically these other AAA journals.

One immediate action I have taken in support of this idea has been to invite the editors of other AAA journals to have “From the Editor” pieces published in *American Anthropologist* itself. My hope is that this will acquaint readers with AAA journals of which they may be unaware. Future issues of *American Anthropologist* will also feature such “From the Editor” pieces written by the editors of other AAA journals. We are lucky as an association to have a stunning range of top-notch journals, all in various ways experimental, innovative, and featuring solid, cutting-edge scholarship. I encourage you to take a look at these journals via print or AnthroSource—and if your institution’s library does not subscribe to any of these journals, please urge them to do so.

The research articles featured in this issue of *American Anthropologist* reflect the broad range of subdisciplinary, theoretical, and methodological interests of members of the association. In “Collective Action in Action,” Michael Gurven and Jeffrey Winking investigate questions of altruism and prosocial behavior, moving between ethnographic and experimental game methods and also between the

specificities of fieldwork in lowland Bolivia and broad questions of methodology in sociocultural research. Barbara L. Voss's article "Domesticating Imperialism" turns an archaeological eye toward questions of sexuality and colonialism, bringing a fascinating perspective to questions about the place of gender and sex in New World encounters. In "Scaffolding Imitation in Capoeira," Greg Downey draws together theories of pedagogy and neurological research on imitative learning to craft a novel approach to questions of embodiment and education; we also feature a photo taken by him on this issue's cover. E. Paul Durrenberger and Dimitra Doukas combine ethnographic, historical, and quantitative methods in "Gospel of Wealth, Gospel of Work" to explore ideologies of labor and consumption in the United States. Bettina Shell-Duncan provides an extensive analysis of debates over female genital cutting, selfhood, and justice in "From Health to Human Rights." Finally, in "The 'Old West' in the Middle East," Stephen W. Silliman examines uses of the "Indian Country" metaphor in the context of current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

It should be clear that a range of crosscutting themes emerge from these articles. These include questions of learning and knowledge, questions of language and politics, and

questions of method and social change. I have not explicitly grouped the articles around such themes. I might, of course, choose to create such groupings in some future issue of *American Anthropologist*, but for this set of research articles, I think readers will find it productive to discover the unexpected and polyvalent manner in which these themes emerge and intersect.

As is usual for *American Anthropologist*, this issue includes a range of fascinating single book reviews and review essays. A more unusual review featured in this issue is by George W. Stocking Jr. and concerns *Eskimo Story (Written for My Children)*, a manuscript written by Franz Boas and circulated privately among his family until published in 2007. Stocking both situates this discovery in the broader oeuvre of Boas's writings during this period and provides helpful speculations concerning the manner in which it was written (incl. its abrupt ending).

I invite you to enjoy this issue of *American Anthropologist*. Both the messages from the Associate Editors and editors of other AAA journals, on the one hand, and the research articles and reviews, on the other hand, speak to the vitality of the multifaceted conversations characterizing our discipline.