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Access

The question of open access to anthropological research has become a topic of considerable interest, one with consequences for all journals of the American Anthropological Association, particularly *American Anthropologist*. On October 6, 2008, the AAA Executive Board announced that:

In a groundbreaking move aimed at facilitating greater access for the global social science and anthropological communities to 86 years of classic, historic research articles, the Executive Board of the American Anthropological Association announced today that it will provide, free of charge, unrestricted content previously published in two of its flagship publications—*American Anthropologist* and *Anthropology News* . . . after a thirty-five year period . . . “Our Association is committed to the widespread dissemination of anthropological knowledge,” noted Oona Schmid, AAA Director of Publishing, “and our Executive Board is acting to support this goal in two ways: supporting the sustainability of our publishing program and facilitating access to more than eight decades of studies and content in the discipline.” [AAA 2008]

I am delighted by the fact that anyone worldwide will now be able to access, for free (so long as they have a computer and an Internet connection), content from *American Anthropologist* from its initial issue in 1888 until 1973. I played no role in this decision, which as noted above was taken by the AAA Executive Board. However, given the decision’s import, it seems appropriate that I briefly highlight what I see as three key issues regarding questions of open access.

A SHARED VISION

First, I strongly suspect that the philosophy of making anthropological content as widely read and as accessible as possible is supported by all anthropologists. Regardless of subdiscipline, the vast majority of anthropological knowledge is generated by engagements with interlocutors and field sites around the world. Most anthropologists rightly thus see an ethical imperative to make the results

of that knowledge available to the broadest possible audience. In particular, open access through the Internet often presents the only way that scholars, practitioners, educators, and activists in the so-called “developing world” can access anthropological knowledge produced in the so-called “developed world.” For instance, a range of communities in Indonesia have worked to make my scholarship on gay, lesbian, and transgender Indonesians more available in that country because it can contribute to a range of social and political debates, but questions of open access have at times hindered that goal of greater distribution.

Although the American Anthropological Association has long worked to make anthropological scholarship more accessible to “developing world” scholars, true open access would greatly facilitate this interchange and also create more possibilities for “developed world” scholars to access and be influenced by the research of their “developing world” colleagues. Even in “developed world” contexts, of course, access remains a crucial issue. For instance, this is the case for researchers and scholars without institutional affiliations, for researchers and scholars whose institutions can only afford to pay for access to a few anthropological journals, and for various publics who may not be scholars but desire access to anthropological research. In addition, open access helps anthropologists build scholarly community and disseminate their work to wider audiences. This is of particular benefit to junior scholars but is germane to all anthropologists.

RESPECTING COMPLEXITY

Second, in my experience, all parties to this debate have good intentions. I have occasionally encountered a degree of posturing that does little to recognize the complexities involved and the responsibilities at stake for ensuring the financial health and success of anthropological knowledge production, including (but not limited to) the question of AAA publications.

For instance, it bears noting (because it is almost never mentioned) that although the existing system is not open access for readers, it is open access for authors. To take this journal as an example: as it stands anyone in the world can, completely free of charge, submit a manuscript to *American Anthropologist*. Should the manuscript be accepted for publication, all costs of copyediting, typesetting, printing, circulation, and advertising are covered by *American Anthropologist* itself; the author incurs no costs whatsoever. In a “white paper” released in mid-2008 to American Anthropological Association sections that publish journals or newsletters, Oona Schmid, Director of Publishing for the American Anthropological Association, examined the current state of open-access publishing. Among her findings were the following:

1. The most prevalent method for supporting Open Access titles has been to incur minimal expenses and rely on volunteers and in-kind donations. If you look at the list of the 49 anthropology journals listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals, 26 list academic departments or universities as publisher. By definition, an Open Access journal is an online entity and virtually all such titles only publish digitally. Many do not spend money on typesetting; some do not copyedit. The editorial offices often do not conduct peer review (or suffice with an internal read) and their online platforms may be basic. A study of all the journals in the directory found that 98 percent of traditional journals (using the traditional model of selling library subscriptions) copyedit whereas 72 percent of Open Access journals did; more than 80 percent of traditional journals used internal and external reviewers, compared with 37 percent of Open Access journals.

2. Another widespread practice involves adopting author fees. This model can occur at an article level, so many journals still use a traditional subscription model and also offer a mix of articles that are gated and ungated, becoming “hybrid” journals. Peer-reviewed journals, particularly those with low acceptance rates, can not cover their costs at [even the common minimum fee of] \$3,000 an article . . . The author fee is popular in the natural sciences, where research funding is more prevalent and several institutions actively support such fees being included in their grants. In anthropology, research grants are scarcer and publishing covers a more expansive range than the research article. It remains to be seen how commentaries, reviews, and nonresearch publishing activities are funded in this model. It is also unclear how anthropologists who cannot rely on grants would afford publishing fees. [Memorandum on open access funding models, July 21, 2008]

Schmid also noted as additional models the funding of open access journals through donations and grants, by asking libraries to donate and become “institutional members,” or through advertising (which has only been attempted for some medical journals).

Clearly, the first two options identified by Schmid—the most common ones currently in use—should give us pause. Reducing expenses is by definition salutary, but it is difficult to eliminate expenses for the basic work of editing and production. Open access journals are not cost free:

it bears emphasizing that the dominant models for open access publishing insist on the highest standards of peer review and editorial oversight. As one overview notes, open access:

is compatible with copyright, peer review, revenue (even profit), print, preservation, prestige, career-advancement, indexing, and other features and supportive services associated with conventional scholarly literature. . . . The question is not whether scholarly literature can be made costless, but whether there are better ways to pay the bills than by charging readers and creating access barriers. [Suber 2007]

“Open access” cannot be equated with “vanity publishing” by any stretch of the imagination. The question, then, is forging alternatives to the gated subscription model for meeting the financial needs of scholarly publishing.

In this regard, the second option, author fees, could in theory make a journal open access for readers, but such a journal would no longer be open access for authors. This could create a new hierarchy, where only scholars at wealthier (and in all likelihood predominantly U.S.-based) institutions could obtain the money to publish, and other scholars would be excluded from an ostensibly “open access” publication—able to freely read the work of wealthier scholars but unable to publish their own research. There are, of course, possible ways to avoid this problem. For instance, an “institution-pays” rather than “author-pays” framework might help, but such a model would leave unresolved the problem of independent or practicing scholars without an institutional affiliation and would also leave unresolved the major discrepancies that exist between wealthier and less-wealthy institutions. There may be ways to implement a “sliding-scale” system in which wealthier institutions in effect subsidize independent scholars or those from less-wealthy institutions, but of course this presumes that scholars from those wealthier institutions are having articles published and could thus create pressures to ensure a proportion of accepted articles be from such wealthier institutions.

COLLABORATION

Thus, my third point is that, because of these complexities, it will prove crucial in the next few years to foster greater collaborative engagement between associations, publishers, and anthropologists. For instance, the American Anthropological Association is not a monolithic bureaucracy but a surprisingly small group of hard-working staff. They are supported by anthropologists who take up positions in the American Anthropological Association, from the president to members of the executive board and a range of committees and section leaders. These positions involve substantial labor, no remuneration, and reflect great devotion to the discipline. I am always confused when I encounter anthropologists—who notably are almost never those who are now serving or have served in AAA positions—speaking

of “the AAA” as if it were a singular entity with a unified point of view.

The move to make *American Anthropologist* and *Anthropology News* content that is more than 35 years old accessible free of charge is certainly an important step toward greater access, as is the fact that members of the American Anthropological Association can now opt out of the print versions of *American Anthropologist* and *Anthropology News* (you can select these options whenever you renew your membership). Further collaboration can help forge new solutions to move us even closer toward true open access. As Christopher Kelty has noted, one possible unintended consequence of making AA content more than 35 years old accessible free of charge is that it will, in effect, foster an impression of an anthropology that is out of date, because the most recent decades of insightful scholarship will remain less accessible (Christopher Kelty, personal communication, October 9, 2008). Clearly, few of us will (or should) be content to regard *American Anthropologist* as now being “open access”—and because most other journals published by the American Anthropological Association are less than 35 years old, they will not be affected by this decision. It certainly behooves us all to remain informed and work toward true open access to anthropological scholarship.

Alongside my research in Indonesia, I have been conducting research on the topic of virtual worlds for several years. This work has impressed on me both the rapidity of technological change and the enduring cultural logics and practices that shape (and are in turn shaped by) these technologies. The Internet has created exciting new possibilities for the dissemination of anthropological research as well as new possibilities and genres for anthropological research. My sincere hope is that by working together, anthropologists will continue to stand at the foreground of these debates over technology, scholarship, and social change.

A NEW COVER DESIGN FOR THE JOURNAL

You have almost certainly noticed our new cover design. When I became AA Editor-in-Chief, *American Anthropologist* had not had a cover redesign since March 2002. After seven years, it is appropriate to provide a fresh look for the journal. Although no change in cover design will please everyone, I am thankful for the support I received from our designer, our associate editors, and others in vetting potential designs and arriving at this final choice.

“FOR FURTHER READING”

As I have indicated previously, I consider one dimension of *American Anthropologist's* mandate to be supporting the other journals published by the American Anthropological Association. The continuing presentation of “From the Editor” writings by the editors of other AAA journals is one way that I have worked to build the visibility

of these journals. Another way in which I hope to support other AAA journals debuts with this issue of *American Anthropologist*. At the end of research articles, following the author's own bibliography, you will find a “For Further Reading” section that lists a number of citations that are in some way relevant to the article in question. This serves as a resource for those interested in pursuing in more depth topics raised in any particular research article; it can also hopefully increase interest in other journals. The emphasis, as discussed above, is on other journals published by the American Anthropological Association, but of course I seek to support anthropological research everywhere, and “For Further Reading” sections will also include some references to research appearing in journals not published under the auspices of the American Anthropological Association.

Identifying appropriate publications to include in these “For Further Reading” sections is a time-consuming task, one I could never hope to accomplish unaided. I am therefore eternally thankful that five graduate students at my home department of the University of California, Irvine, have agreed to serve as editorial interns for the journal. At present, their one and only duty is to select publications to appear in these “For Further Reading” sections. In so doing, they provide an important service to the journal, and I hope that the experience will prove stimulating and rewarding for them.

IN THIS ISSUE

In addition to a series of fascinating reviews, as well as “From the Editor” articles by the editors of *Anthropology of Work Review*, *Cultural Anthropology*, and *Visual Anthropology Review*, this issue features seven research articles that demonstrate the continuing breadth of contemporary anthropological inquiry—across topics, methodological approaches, and theoretical frameworks. Work in linguistic anthropology, biological anthropology, sociocultural anthropology, and archaeology is represented, and the authors draw on research concerned with North America, South America, Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and Australia. In “The Threat of the Yrmo: The Political Ontology of a Sustainable Hunting Program,” using research conducted in Paraguay, Mario Blaser explores the productive conflicts and misunderstandings that emerge in the context of current debates over “indigenous knowledge” and conservation. In particular, Blaser shows how these debates over what might appear to be epistemology—knowledge—also bring into being entities in the domains of nature and society that have real-world consequences. Lisa Frink, in “The Identity Division of Labor in Native Alaska,” calls on archaeological and cultural anthropological research to investigate shifting relationships between gender, labor, and selfhood. In “From John McCain to Abu Ghraib: Tortured Bodies and Historical Unaccountability of U.S. Empire,” Christina Schwenkel looks at a set of

claims and counterclaims regarding contemporary human rights abuses in Vietnam and Abu Ghraib, linking these to historical debates over humanitarianism and compassion in the context of the war between the United States and Vietnam.

Katarzyna A. Kaszycka, Goran Štrkalj, and Jan Strzałko's article, "Current Views of European Anthropologists on Race: Influence of Educational and Ideological Background," reports on what many will find to be surprising results of surveys regarding European anthropologists' opinions regarding biological understandings of race, showing significant and sometimes counterintuitive differences depending on generation, politics, and education. In "The Language That Came Down the Hill: Slang, Crime, and Citizenship in Rio de Janeiro," Jennifer Roth-Gordon investigates how members of Brazil's urban underclass (as well as more middle-class citizens) draw on and redeploy slang in ways that challenge but sometimes also reify inequalities in the modern nation-state. In "Of Clues and Signs: The Dead Body and Its Evidential Traces," Zoe Crossland uses the contemporary Australian debate over the remains of the infamous 19th-century outlaw Ned Kelly as a point of departure from which to examine the relationship between bodies and evidence in contemporary forensic anthropology. In "Governmentality and the Family: Neoliberal Choices and Emergent Kin Relations in Southern Ethiopia," James Ellison demonstrates multifaceted linkages between kinship in southern Ethiopia and sociopolitical dynamics shaped by national and transnational notions of selfhood, choice, rights, and development. I should note that in addition to the usual reviews of books and visual media that appear in this issue of *American Anthropologist*, you will also find an interview with Paul Henley, who is Director of the Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology at the University of Manchester.

TRANSITIONS

Beyond the new cover design, several other changes have taken place at *American Anthropologist*. Neha Vora, Editorial Assistant for the journal since I began my tenure as AA Editor-in-Chief in mid-2007, left the journal in August 2008 to take up a tenure-track position at Texas A&M University. Although I was sad to see her go, I was thrilled at her success in completing her Ph.D. and moving on to the next phase of her career. I am just as thrilled that Yoon Choi has agreed to take Neha's place as Editorial Assistant for *American Anthropologist*. A short welcome from Yoon appears in this issue.

After many years of serving as Visual Anthropology Review Editor for *American Anthropologist*, Karl Heider has decided to step down from this position. I have long known Karl as a fellow scholar of Indonesia whose work on national culture and mass media was crucial to my own intellectual development. I enjoyed being able to work with him in the context of *American Anthropologist*; he will be missed, but that sense of loss is tempered by the fact that Marc Moskowitz has agreed to take his position. You will also find a short welcome from Marc in this issue of *American Anthropologist*; please join me in thanking him, and Yoon, for their willingness to support the journal's work.

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