

AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGY; APPLICABILITY IN AMERICAN ACADEME

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The debate within the American anthropological discipline seems to be continuous for the past thirty years over the crises in relevancy, directions and places of the discipline in the American academic community. This article will summarize some of this debate as it has been recently discussed in the American Anthropological Association Newsletter and as the discussion plays out at the university level. I will focus on two of the discussions taking place: 1.) the validity of the four fields approach and emphasis in American anthropology, and 2.) the directions that the discipline might take in maintaining its critical role in academe, particularly in the social sciences. With this summation I will discuss my ideas of where the emphases should be with a conclusion that supports the four fields integration and the basic anthropological perspectives from this integrative holism that are the rationales for anthropology in our university curriculum.

The pages of the American Anthropological Association's newsletter, "Anthropology Newsletter", are the forum for discussion of the current status and role of American anthropology in academe and the directions which the discipline might take into the 21st Century. The discussion (debate?) is often intense and defensive reflecting the professional career commitment and passion with which anthropologists identify with their fields within anthropology, but also reflecting a commitment to the discipline as a whole and the importance they feel it has in our academic intellectual community.

I want to summarize two of the discussions taking place; 1, the viability of the four fields (linguistics, socio-cultural, biological/physical, and archeology) approach in American anthropology and 2, the directions that the discipline might take in maintaining its role in academe, particularly in the social sciences. With this summarization I also will discuss my ideas emphasizing that anthropology, especially socio-cultural anthropology, should present critical cultural analyses that must be applicable to real world situations.

James Peacock, American Anthropological Association President, outlining the challenges facing anthropology, focuses his statements upon academia and notes that academe has created "... strategies for survival", which emphasize broader teaching perspectives beyond the university into K-

12 (kindergarten through senior high school) programs, community colleges, and public service, e.g., public archeology, while sustaining creative scholarship (Peacock 1994:1). Though anthropologists reach beyond academe into the corporate world and government/non-government research projects (one half of the Ph.D.'s currently being trained find employment outside academia), it is in academia that we do and will continue to find our intellectual discourse, a discourse which passes our discipline from one generation to another and teaches our knowledge and perspectives to students in the other disciplines. Therefore, I focus my discussion upon the status and role of anthropology in the American university.

This intellectual discourse, built upon our anthropological perspective, emphasizes racial, cultural and ethnic tolerance, understanding and acceptance. In turn, this perspective is based upon the integration of our knowledge from the four fields. It is this perspective which is our important contribution to the larger academic community and to the public and public policy-making. Our discipline's perspective stressing the unacceptance of ethnocentrism and xenophobia with emphasis upon cultural, ethnic, and racial understanding and appreciation requires the integration of linguistic knowledge into the socio-cultural explanation of present cultural diversity combined with archeology's explanation of past diversity all of which are built upon a biological/physical anthropological understanding of who we are genetically as we have emerged from our evolutionary past.

However, there is a continuing discussion about whether or not anthropologists can be fully participant in a unified discipline, when in reality we are becoming increasingly specialized in our different fields and with this specialization becoming more and more difficult to understand, even inaccessible and intellectually remote from each other. In addition to this intellectual compartmentalization through specialization, one of our fields, linguistics, may be coming under increasing pressure to be eliminated from many university curriculums.

The survey of department chairs in 1994 indicates that the projections for linguistics in anthropology departments over the next 25 years is not very positive. Many departments report not having linguistic anthropology with little expectation of adding it. Those departments having linguistics generally do not anticipate expansion; "... linguistic anthropology's presence in the modal department of anthropology will remain minimally as is, with sporadic, small growth in some programs and elimination in others,..." (Givens 1994d:25). Bambi Schieffelin expresses her concern about the fate of linguistics in that, in spite of linguistic anthropologists seeing "... their efforts as valuable contributions to anthropological theory and practice as well as social policy making,..." they feel marginalized and worry about the future (Schieffelin 1993:19). Since 1972 there has been a marked decline in anthropology Ph.D. recipients who did dissertation research in linguistics,

from 7% in 1972 to only 2% in 1990 (Givens 1994a:4). The AAA Guide 1992–93 lists 6% of the anthropologists in the guide as belonging to the Society for Linguistic Anthropology.

Schieffelin, in a paper prepared for a 1993 Wenner-Gren Foundation Symposium on the Future of Anthropology, notes that there are basic funding problems for linguistic research in cross-cultural and social contexts because research funding is being appropriated by non- -anthropological computer modeling seeking artificial intelligence through computational linguistics as a "hard science". Not only is there a lack of interest in funding agencies for studying language as used by real speakers, there is likewise a lack of interest by socio-cultural anthropologists themselves in learning linguistics and linguistic competence in the languages of the people they are researching. "Most ethnographers never really tell you in what language, and how, they conducted their fieldwork. And it is not polite to ask" (Givens and Skomal 1993:20).

Schieffelin laments the decline in an interest in linguistics and the perceived need to be trained in linguistics by cultural anthropologists. She questions the authenticity of fieldwork without linguistic competence and notes that if we are really interested in dialogical ethnographic representation and the voice of the other, then we must be able to transcribe that voice.

At both the research and academic levels, linguistics, especially sociolinguistics, is important for understanding "... the relevance of language to broader cultural and political issues" (Givens and Skomal 1993:21). Sociolinguistics is an important subject area of socio-cultural anthropological integration of linguistics into research, teaching, and application to public policy making, especially with minority education and political rights.

In contrast to the decline in an interest in linguistics and a fragmentation of it from anthropology, the other three fields continue to maintain importance for an integrated approach to the study of humans and culture. The current trends in biological/physical anthropology probably emphasize more strongly than the other fields the importance of continued holistic integration of the discipline. C. Loring Brace stated that "... biological/physical anthropology has no validity on its own, but must be pursued along with the other three fields to be meaningful" (Givens and Skomal 1993:1). The 1994 survey showed that biological/physical anthropology will grow in the modal department as there is growing interest in paleoanthropology and evolutionary anthropology among the public and an interest in medical health and forensic anthropology within the discipline. In fact there is a shift from a perception that biological/physical anthropology is primarily supportive of archaeology to it being supportive of medical concerns (Givens 1994b:7). This interdisciplinary importance is well stated by Fatimah Linda C. Jackson's concerns about the problem of racist appropriation of the data from the Human Genome Diversity Project. This

fear is grounded in biological/physical anthropology's data having been used for racist and genocidal agendas and from the fear that we don't even trust ourselves, e.g., biological/physical anthropology is still recoiling from Carleton Coon's grand racial synthesis. Jackson stresses that we must develop "cohesive biocultural models" for the HGDP upon "... historical, linguistic, ethnographic, archaeological, morphometric, biochemical and other data in a cohesive package to guide (rather than follow) the molecular biology" (Jackson 1994:18). Jonathan Marks also emphasizes the importance of grounding human evolutionary genetics in critical anthropology as a reminder to the biological sciences of the human factors involved, especially scientific empirical arrogance and ethnocentrism. (Marks 1994:19–21).

Archaeology is the growth field within American anthropology with department chairs projecting it "... as being the most lively, exciting and attractive program in the department,... a kind of university show piece." (Givens 1994a:4) As cultural resource management (CRM) and contract archaeology has increased, so has a direct applicability of archaeology to employment of both undergraduate and graduate students in department research projects. Cultural resource management also creates a department and university profile into the local communities with public archaeology bringing community and media participation into the university and its public relations. Archaeology is the public's stereotypic Indiana Jones image of what anthropology is all about. Yet, anthropology department chairs emphasize archaeology being part of a three or four field department with reminders that archaeology's theoretical foundations are in cultural anthropology. It is socio-cultural anthropology which is the core of all departments of American anthropology, though "archaeology will dig in and narrow the gap" (Givens 1994a:4).

Socio-cultural anthropology with 50% of our professional membership remains the teaching/research core of American anthropology in academe. The undergraduate student comes to our universities from a K-12 program where there has been no formal instruction in anthropology, no specific anthropology in the curriculum. However, the popular media has a strong programing on anthropology topics from National Geographic TV specials on human evolution or early human adaptation studies to post-modern film heroes like Indiana Jones. Also, there is a "new age" student interested in the relativity of diverse cultural values, especially cultural values of humans in touch with their inner psyches, nature, and collective human values seeking harmony and balance spiritually and secularly with the environment and other humans. This 1990's idealism is attracting students to anthropology and its attempt to extract from cross-cultural diversity human values obscured by American culture. This not only attracts students into majoring in anthropology, but it also attracts students into multi-disciplinary programs which include socio-cultural anthropology and its cross-cultural perspective.

There continues to be a basic undergraduate need/interest in trying to understand who they are as humans, of where they fit in the collective human phenomena. Socio-cultural anthropology within the three other anthropological fields, which are within the context of an ever-growing awareness of a finite earth with cultures in confrontation and competition over resources, yet with the human potential for cooperation (possibly the real adaptive social survival adaptation in human evolution), offers the curriculum to American university academe trying to adjust its intellectual purpose in a rapidly changing world.

This diversity, yet inclusiveness of our curriculum, is exemplified by a partial listing of some of the professional sections within the American Anthropological Association: American Ethnological Society, Archeology Division, Association for Africanist Anthropology, Association of Black Anthropologists, Association for Feminist Anthropology, Association of Latina and Latino Anthropologists, Biological Anthropology Division, Council on Anthropology and Education, Council for Museum Anthropology, Council for Nutritional Anthropology, Society for the Anthropology of Europe, Society for Medical Anthropology, Society for Urban Anthropology, Society for Latin American Anthropology, etc., a sampling of the 31 sections.

It is impossible to summarize the breadth and depth of American anthropology as exemplified by these sections. An example of the range of research, perspective and critical concern in social-cultural anthropology is exemplified by Carole Nagengast's comments about women and human rights (Association for Feminist Anthropology). She concludes and says it so well, that the rationales of the cultural relativist arguments essentializing tradition and culture denying women protection against physical and psychological gender violence, e.g., genital mutilation, rape, denial of education, etc., require an encompassing global view (anthropological) which creates a space beyond the local cultural group where common human experiences can be discussed. (Nagengast 1994:16–17). I would suggest the same comment and perspective for the present situation in Croatia, Bosnia, and Serbia and the international political discussions trying to resolve this conflict. These discussants desperately need the research knowledge and perspectives of anthropologists.

The discussion and dialogue about "The Four Fields: Myth or Reality" in the 1992–93 Anthropology Newsletters reached a consensus in editor David Givens' words, that "... the four fields are both mythical and real" (Givens and Skomal 1993:1). It is mythical in that only 28% of anthropology departments have all four fields represented; but, it is real in that intellectually we maintain a perspective based upon training and networking into the interdisciplinary specialization within the four fields paradigm. The consensus was repeatedly stated that the holistic perspective of American anthropology and our attempt to understand who we are depends upon the four field view

and its multidimensional perspective (Givens and Skomal 1993:1, 19). Interestingly, it was noted that the University of Oxford in a climate of interdisciplinary openness is uniting anthropological subfields into the American paradigm (Givens and Skomal 1993:19).

While anthropologists have debated with themselves within the fields and between the fields others have moved into our subject area. This is particularly true with ethnography-social-cultural anthropology as cultural studies, the journal *Cultural Anthropology*, raised questions about textual representation in ethnography and whether anthropology is a science or humanistic (humanities) discipline.

The new editors of the *American Anthropologist*, Barbara and Dennis Tedlock, want to forge more links with cultural studies and the humanistic approach; however, this editorial shift from "scientific" is seen by some anthropologists as a "... 'wholesale capitulation' to postmodernism and the self-reflexive turn of recent cultural anthropology" (McMillen 1994:A 17). Marvin Harris' reaction to the shift to a humanist genre, e.g., poetry, in the first edition of the *American Anthropologist* under the Tedlock's editorship, observed that this shift of genre is "... just anthropologists studying themselves" (McMillen 1994:A 17).

There is no doubt that cultural studies with its journal forum, *Cultural Anthropology*, or the journal, *Anthropology and Humanism*, have forced a shift from the self-assuredness of scientific positivism and theoretical reification that have been the science and social science foundation of anthropology to reflexive self-doubt. This post-modern introspection within anthropology is generated by Clifford Geertz, James Clifford, George Marcus, Michael Fischer, et.al., which in turn is built upon a larger questioning of textualization, e.g., Edward Said's *Orientalism*, Jean- -Francois Lyotard's essays, et.al., which are in a context of Nietzsche, Michel Foucault, et.al. It is the et.al. that makes one quickly realize how the post-modern self-reflexive critique is overwhelming anthropology with not only doubt, but with the sheer volume of its genre. How can we cope with the situation? I think that we must re-establish assuredness in former axioms which allowed critical analysis of Western cultural assumptions. Ethnocentric economic/political perspectives remain as the assumptions of corporate market economics, which are the basic foundation of our cultural interaction with the "others" who in turn are the subjects of our anthropological inquiry. Likewise, ethnocentric assumptions are the foundation of emergent ethnic nationalism. More than ever, from the reflexive self-doubt, we must salvage the critical perspectives which have allowed us to question the effects of market world systems, cultural ethnocide, racism, gender bias, etc. With this largeness of our intellectual project re-establishing critical self-assuredness within social-cultural anthropology we can return to what I think is our primary purpose in academia, teaching our anthropological perspectives which raise an awareness

of the effects of ethnocentrism, racism, gender bias, and the social/cultural consequences of market and national economic growth paradigms.

With all that we have to offer American academe, what are the statistics explaining our place and size in that community? Only 16% (352) of the nation's 2157 colleges and universities offer an anthropology degree with only 93 offering a Ph.D. The Ph.D.s granted in American anthropology have averaged around 400 per year since 1974. However, when compared with other disciplines, the 367 doctorates awarded in anthropology in 1992 represented only 0.9% of all the Ph.D.s awarded in 1992. Though we are a comparatively small discipline, there is room for cautious optimism. The surveys of our anthropology departments show an increase in undergraduate enrollments which indicate that the 1990's will eclipse the record enrollments of the 1970's (Givens 1994c:4–5). My department at Appalachian State University has had an increase in enrollment to 113 BA degree majors, which is four times what it was eight years ago.

However, this popularity of anthropology creates ethical problems of intellectual credibility in academe. What we are constantly dealing with is that professionals in other disciplines assume that they can research and teach anthropology. This often comes after reading a single book, often "pop culture", in anthropology, e.g., in our university new wave psychologists, English professors, etc., give little consideration to their professional credibility, much less ethics, when taking students to view Southwest Pueblo religious rituals and curing ceremonies. Fortunately, in my university, with the 1990's shift to environmental consciousness paradigms, the new sustainable development undergraduate/graduate program is located within our anthropology department and is directed and being developed by a social-cultural anthropologist. He represents the meld between his experience in the Peace Corp in Honduras, a critical anthropological consciousness built upon political economy paradigms, and an anthropological humanistic charisma that has built this program to equal our program in traditional anthropology. On the other hand, I have a colleague who is fighting a seemingly losing professional confrontation with biological environmentalists in Madagascar where she is trying to get professional socio-cultural medical anthropological input into the environmental protection projects attempting to prevent deforestation. This public policy high profile project seems to exemplify the problem, "that anyone can do anthropology", as the environmental biologists work on projects trying to resolve the peasants need for land and the deforestation problem.

So, in a sense, anthropology spins outward becoming the domain of other disciplines while within our discipline the trend is towards fragmentation. The 10,394 paid memberships in the American Anthropological Association, 1994, represent diverse research orientations and specialization within not only the four fields, but within the 31 different

sections of the AAA. This produces not only distance between fields, but within fields, and communication becomes difficult, e.g., Mayanists really don't talk to East Europeanists unless they happen to be in the same departments even though they have the common denominator of being social-cultural anthropologists. However, it is in the holistic integrated curriculum for our undergraduate students that we can find not only the common denominator for Mayanists and Europeanists, but for paleo-archaeologists, linguists, and biological/physical anthropologists. For our majors, we are still preparing them in the four fields which they remain responsible for in our graduate anthropology programs. With our other undergraduates, anthropology remains part of the social science electives which are part of the requirements for the liberal arts emphasis in our Bachelor of Arts/Science programs in American universities and Colleges.

We absolutely require that our professors of anthropology be able to teach the undergraduate students what the current interpretations might be in human evolutionary theory, in genetic studies of race, gender issues, the relativism of cultures, and have a knowledge of diverse cultural ethnographies and explanatory theoretical paradigms for the diverse human cultural phenomena, as well as understand basic linguistics and archaeological methodologies and theory. All of this is built upon the four fields approach which brings together our unique intellectual matrix that no other discipline offers academe. Anthropology attempts the Renaissance man/woman approach of trying to bring together the discipline to understand who we are as human beings. The undergraduate student is probably most receptive to this very basic question, and the undergraduate experience the most opportune for the conjunction that anthropology brings to this question through linguistics, biological/physical anthropology, archaeology and social-cultural anthropology in the American university curriculum.

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