

## Editor's Introduction to Issue #17

*Hecky Villanueva*

Dear gang<sup>1</sup>,

Social scientists, especially anthropologists and sociologists, have long been interested in the concept of time (Holtorf 2003). Munn (1992:93) noted that the numerous studies on sociocultural time reflect the pervasiveness of this "inescapable dimension" on human activities and experiences, while Gell (1992) posited that time is a "scarce resource, which must be distributed socially" (Hoskins 1994:766). Change, the transition from one state to something different, occurs through the passage of time. In this regard, this year (2006) was significant in terms of time and change. In the United States, election exit polls and political analyses indicated that the numerous corruption scandals, the inept prosecution of the "war on terror", and the debacle in Iraq led to the resounding defeat of the GOP in the recent Congressional elections (AP 2006, Bacon 2006, Kohut 2006, McIntyre 2006, Murphy 2006, Nagourney 2006, Usher 2006). One of our aspirations for the forthcoming Democrat-controlled Congress is the abatement of the attacks by neoconservative politicians, corporate lobbyists, and their allies on science research and academic integrity; in particular, in the suppression and distortion of scientific findings, manipulation of government science advisories, restrictions on public statements by governments scientists especially on the climate change and endangered species debates, and the attempts to ostracize scholars against the Iraq invasion (Giroux 2006, EDF 2005,

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<sup>1</sup> "Dear gang" is the greeting used by "Doc Haury" (Emil W. Haury), second department chairperson of the UA Department of Anthropology, to the readers of the newsletter then known as the *Atlatl*. Former Arizona Anthropologist editor, John Murphy, wrote a short history of the *Arizona Anthropologist* in Issue 16.

Perez 2005, UCS 2005, Wilson 2004, Special Investigations Division-House of Representatives 2003).

With this backdrop, the *Arizona Anthropologist* documents change and has witnessed it in various communities throughout the world. This is demonstrated through diverse articles and updates published for over sixty years. The *Arizona Anthropologist*, formerly the *Atlal*, established in 1944, is among the oldest and longest running graduate student-produced and peer-reviewed journals in the United States. We welcome submissions of anthropological interest for peer review from graduate and undergraduate students. Many contributors are now renowned academics and researchers.

Issue 17 explores intriguing aspects of the ever-debated issues of globalization and the economic and cultural implications of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. These issues, among others, are the constant fodder of academic debate, election propaganda, and xenophobic activities. Two articles in this issue look at aspects of culture change through language interaction in the U.S.-Mexico border region. The first is by Arizona State graduate student Eric Johnson who analyzed the linguistic interactions between the host community of Puerto Peñasco/Rocky Point, Mexico and its predominantly American international tourists. The second is by recent University of Arizona anthropology graduate, Brian Hawkins, who wrote about the dynamics of American popular culture as embodied in the musical genre of hip-hop on Mexican youth in the border town of Nogales, Sonora. Both articles provide a nuanced approach to the interaction of two cultures in a border region that is rapidly urbanizing.

Closer to home, the University of Arizona Department of Anthropology celebrated its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary in March 2006 with a series of seminars, colloquiums, poster-exhibits, laboratory visits, socials, a gala dinner, the launch of the Raymond H. Thompson Award, and importantly, a scholarship fund drive. Department Chair John W. Olsen provided a short history of the department in the preface. The *Arizona Anthropologist* was an active participant in the anniversary activities and used the occasion to present a new logo, suggested by longtime webmaster Amy Margaris and designed by Victoria Phaneuf. The new logo is a *quipu*, a mnemonic device of knotted multi-colored strings, made out of llama wool, among other materials, and used by the Inca to

relay messages and record activities (Miller n.d.). We hope that the *Arizona Anthropologist* does as good a job as the keeper of the *quipu*, the *Quipucamay*, did.

One initiative of the former editors was their call for more reflexive articles on fieldwork. One such article is by new mother, Kate Goldade, on the impact and implications of bringing her newly born daughter with her during dissertation fieldwork in Costa Rica. The lessons learned and the questions raised, especially on aspects of transnationalism in research, should be helpful to those contemplating bringing family members with them into the field.

Another article is a commentary-essay on writing styles vis-à-vis anthropology. Five graduate students, including this Editor, enrolled in Tom Mcguire's writing class and produced this collaborative essay. It deconstructs the literary genre popularly known as New New Journalism by reviewing the works of five popular nonfiction writers and commenting on how writing style, nuance, and research rigor can be compatible. The article emphasizes that "Writing is critical to two main anthropological goals: to communicate useful knowledge about humanity and society; and to stimulate interest, discussion, and action on issues that are of societal import" (Burke, Leckman et.al. 2006).

In recognition of the quality of papers that win the annual Dozier Award for best student paper submitted to the Anthropology Department, the *Arizona Anthropologist* publishes the faculty-reviewed and chosen paper without peer review. This year's awardee is archaeologist Luke Premo, a newly minted PhD, now with the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology. His paper argues that agent-based models (ABM) can provide paleoanthropologists with simulations of possible behavioral dynamics and site formation processes of past societies and paleoenvironments. ABM is used in other disciplines and anthropology would do well to include it in its analytical toolkit.

The last paper is by a linguistic anthropology graduate student, Satoshi Abe, on the Iranian practice of *ta'arof*, which is a form of "institutionalized language interaction" through which respect is conveyed between acquaintances. Examining the *ta'arof* practice allowed him to explore how language interactions influence how the self is constantly negotiated in a communicative and social context. The paper

is intriguing because, Abe, a Japanese graduate student, uses interviews and his own personal experiences to write about a particular language practice. This illustrates the possibility of graduate students reaching to within their own unique experiences to write reflexively about their research interest. This can be one way of preparing for dissertation writing.

By summer, the *Arizona Anthropologist* would experience the inescapable pervasiveness of time and change with the graduation and/or departure of several long-term officers and staffers. Congratulations to former editors Trena Valado, Colin West, and Matt Iles-Shih for either earning a PhD, post-doctoral fellowship, or in Matt's case, moving on to Oregon. Longtime webmaster Amy Margaris had many reasons to celebrate this year including earning her PhD, marrying *Arizona Anthropologist* volunteer reviewer and post-doc Jason Haugen, and quickly getting an academic appointment in Ohio. Currently, there are three *Arizona Anthropologist* officers doing dissertation fieldwork research.

Thank you to all our volunteer anonymous reviewers who were patient, helpful, and insightful with their comments (reviewers are listed alphabetically in the journal's website). We also appreciate the advice and encouragement of our faculty adviser, Dr. Trudy Griffin-Pierce, and the invaluable work of *Arizona Anthropologist* treasurer, Kay Orzech, production editor, Nikki Arendt, and other volunteer staff, including incoming Issue 18 co-editors Victoria Phaneuf and Derek Honeyman.

Much has happened in 2006. As anthropologists, we need to be in the thick of things. For some of us, we live and work in the confluence of basic research and applied work. How are we to relate to our stakeholders in terms of information and communication flows? How do we express ourselves in an intelligible and comprehensible manner that is timely and addresses issues of societal concern? Or should we just confine ourselves to generating the best possible knowledge base our skills, experience, and resources allow us and leave the interpretation and dissemination to others more literally inclined? How do we ensure that the information we generate is not appropriated by others for their own agendas or the truth distorted (Mills 1963; Jorgensen 1971)? Stapp (2005) wrote that the non-anthropological reader is not really interested in our "specific research results". Rather, the reader is more interested in

both the “knowledge gained from research” and how it affects or is related to their own lives. The transformation of research data into useful information that enables a more critical awareness or encourages reflection on issues of direct concern should be an important task of anthropological writing.

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