FOREWORD

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This issue of the WAN journal has been long overdue - however late, I am privileged to present this set of six papers in a forum with which I have associated myself with great pride and greater hope. My interaction with this journal and the WAN has been for almost a decade now, since I was a doctoral student at the Department of Social Anthropology at Delhi University, in India. Allowing myself a few lines at the very beginning, I would like a personal dedication to Arturo Escobar, our colleague, a gifted anthropologist and most of all, the rarest of all breeds – a generous scholar. Arturo and I have not met yet, however my association with him captures a bit of the WAN spirit and I shall not hesitate to express that here.

At the time of my first association with WAN, I was struggling to find a disciplinary place for my endeavors which involved an unlikely doctoral project that I ambitiously designed for myself. This project took me from Delhi, India to Beirut, Lebanon for my fieldwork with an intention of understanding what recovery implies in the everyday world of post-war urban conditions. That was not a journey easily transcribed in disciplinary routine as it entailed a fieldwork encounter between two locations that so far could only be thought of as 'peripheries' in the ubiquitous paradigm of the 'center-periphery'; especially when 'peripheral' anthropologists were expected, willingly or otherwise, to be studying their own selves. Some of the issues that troubled me at the time found some clumsy expression in an essay that I was advised to send to Arturo. Almost a year later (it was a difficult year for Arturo), Arturo did not fail to reply and I was surprised and excited to receive, some very sensitive and encouraging comments and an invitation to publish in the second WAN journal issue. I have, with pride and commitment, retained that association. Thank you, Arturo.

This issue was intended as a volume that would collect a set of presentations made at a panel organized by Gustavo Ribeiro and myself at the IUAES Inter-Congress held in Antalya, Turkey, October 3-6, 2010. The panel was called "(Re)-Connecting Global and Local Anthropologies. Debating UNESCO's World Social Science Report 2010 and the World Anthropologies Network" and was held on the 5th of October, 2010, as the closing event of the session "Globalization and Anthropology". While some of those excellent presentations have found their way into this issue, I am happy to have two other contributors…both of whose work have a special place in the way I imagine the WAN intent to be. Faye Harrison is Professor of Anthropology and African American Studies based at the University of Florida and Vasundhara Bhojvaid is a PhD student of Social Anthropology at the University of Delhi. Both essays, along side the others (as I introduce below), suggest that the struggle for a meaningful re-orientation of anthropological knowledge production practices in inclusive ways does not chart a static map. In fact, the dilemmas, the challenges are yet embedded in the 'centers' (Harrison) as much as they are in the changing horizons of the 'peripheries' (Bhojvaid). The compelling WAN intent remains – the goal is not about mapping an alternate cartography (or creating dubious labels like the "global – south"); nor is it to pre-empt hegemony to locations of centrality (in other words, recognize struggles both within the centers or peripheries). Rather, the need is to reveal the inequities that any practice of knowledge production, whether disciplinary or bureaucratic, epistemological or locational, support. Further, criticism alone is not sufficient – the force of argument must lie in the innovative potential that can be harvested from understanding the challenge in all its fullness.

While each essay speaks for its own engagement with the politics of knowledge production within (and rapidly moving out of) the disciplinary contours of anthropology, I frame them in three pairs. First, the demand for innovation is addressed by Gustavo Lins Ribeiro's and my own contribution. I note here a valuable practical consideration that Ribeiro channels through his earlier conceptual formulation of 'cosmopolitics' (Ribeiro 2006). Following his notion that anthropologists undertake their work, not just in disciplinary terms of inclusiveness, but rather, in more active political work, he urges that difference and diversity be taken beyond its ironic encapsulation in metropolitan hegemonies of appropriation. His suggestion is to actively build organizational support for WAN (World Anthropologies Network) or the WCAA (World Council of Anthropological

Associations) so as to enable a larger, different and diverse network of anthropologists which may yet provide the forum for a new politics of knowledge production. This, indeed, would be a keener understanding of what diverse does mean in anthropological work; how the persistence of English persuades us to re-examine diversity and difference and how we could think of accommodating that diversity in equitable language practices. In so far that anthropological method articulates a disciplinary practice, my own contribution in this issue hopes to suggest a methodological innovation. By attempting ethnographic or empirical encounters between locations that deny any former anthropological cartography, for instance, north vs. south, metropolitan vs. periphery, self vs. other, I propose a way of allowing emergent encounters that enable the empirical meeting of locations through connections of resonance and association. I connect Delhi and Beirut through an exploration of the idea of 'recovery' after crises and show how such encounters could entail an epistemological politics.

Petr Skalnik and Vasundhara Bhojvaid both deal with researching the state, but from separate anthropological moments that measure the changing terrain of anthropological research on the 'state'. First, Skalnik explores the question of how the conceptualization of the 'state' is so much a product of actual state presence in research activity - wonderfully illustrated by his personal trajectory of studying the state (in Africa) within and outside communist regimes. This does seem to throw up an interesting 'dilemma' about our grounds of doing anthropology - in the collapse between the merging of the conditions of study and the object of study - and its place in the politics of making knowledge. In another way, Skalnik's sensitive essay tells us about what challenges 'peripheral' disciplinary practices hold within themselves, especially when the stake is the formulation of a critique to dominant state theory. Bhojvaid studies the state, but from another moment in anthropological endeavor – the study of Europe by an Indian student of social anthropology – a reversed gaze of sorts. Her work in researching a legal domain that has similar resonances in both India and Denmark, show what horizons of practice open up - first, when the classical tradition of field work come to be reversed – How does the object of study come to be formed in this new equation? Second, what do such reversals (India studying Denmark) allow in the understanding of an anthropology of the state? Especially, when the reversal enables a conversation on a common ground (in this case, a law

regarding state transparency) between locations that would have otherwise remained separate as incommensurable contexts.

Faye Harrison and Alcida Ramos both bring poignantly personal, yet, compellingly relevant experiences to their essays. Harrison writes about the peripheralization, heirarchization and often, the negation and silencing of those (in her emphasis, the AfroDiaspora) whose profound presence in knowledge making was systematically removed from the discipline's memory. But, Harrison does not call for a mere inclusion of these erased voices as a nod towards the fashionable trend of ethnic inclusions in the metropole. She traces her own work and career to suggest the singular importance of understanding the implications of, in her words – 'interlocking dimensions of difference, inequality, and power' – that permeate the business of doing anthropology, however our locations, our bodies, our identities are placed. The last essay by Ramos echoes this theme, but takes us into a literary metaphor – an imagination of a utopia, a dream 'Cosmanthropolis' - that captures in expressive eloquence the pathos that our discipline circumvents in maintaining its authority and power over indigenous knowledge. Through this metaphor, she urges us to look closely at the wily manipulations hiding in the metropole under the alleged inclusions of 'difference' and commits herself to paving the path towards the possible anthropological utopia glimmering in the WAN.

I thank Marisol de la Cadena, Gustavo Ribeiro, Suzana Narotzky and Sandy Toussaint for their invitation to edit this issue. Without Eduardo Restrepo's masterful skills in delivering these writings, this journal would remain only an aspiration. Last, but with the deepest of sentiment, I thank all the contributors for their patience in bearing with me the unavoidable delay of this issue. In a continuous struggle to bring those ideas that mainstream academe look upon askance, this WAN issue is another step forward.

References cited

Ribeiro, Gustavo Lins. 2006. World Anthropologies: Cosmopolitics, Power and Theory in Anthropology. *Critique of Anthropology*. 26 (4): 363-386.