JBA
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Introduction to the Redivivus Issue

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What's up with JBA? Why are the editors republishing pieces that appeared on the journal's website nearly a decade ago? No, we haven't succumbed to senility, not yet. The answer turns out to be more complex, and, ultimately, more interesting. When the journal was set up, the Copenhagen Business School (CBS), which hosts this and other online journals, used a software program known as Open Journal Systems, or OJS for short. The software is linked to a larger Public Knowledge Project, or PKP, so that when you are on the journal's homepage and you scroll to the very bottom in the right-hand corner, you will see "Platform & workflow by OJS/PKP." On the left-hand side, you see "This site is hosted by CBS Library." Well, recently CBS library installed a new version of the OJS software. In the interests of improving user experience, the new software introduced changes that impacted the journal's publications. Under the Archive tab accessible through the homepage, you will find all of the past issues going back to the very first one in 2012. However, you will not find any of the writings republished here.

Wait, what? Yes, the early version of the software enabled the editor to create user-accessible locations on the JBA website where PDFs could be stored. The journal made use of this capability to make accessible to the public the "field reports," "case studies," "book reviews," and "review essays" contained in this issue. However, when the new version of the OJS software was installed, that capability was eliminated,

with the result that the works contained in those locations vanished from the journal's website.

Fortunately, we still have access to those works, which provide a snapshot of the scope and ambitions of business anthropologists and of the journal at that time. Some of the pieces have been expanded and subsequently published in other venues. For example, the case studies by Kasper Tang Vangkilde, Prabhir Vishnu Poruthiyil, and Shannon O'Donnell, as well as the field report by Ana Alačovska, grew into chapters in the book *Exploring Creativity: Evaluative Practices in Innovation, Design, and the Arts*, edited by Brian Moeran and published by Cambridge University Press in 2013. The story is even more complicated, because some of these works can still be found in their original form by searching their titles in Google. They remain on the CBS website, but not directly as part of the publicly accessible journal. Moreover, they will likely disappear altogether once this issue is available.

When we read these pieces, we were impressed by their scope and relevance today, as well as by the light they shed on the vibrancy of business anthropology. They also provide a window into the visionary brain of the journal's founder and first editor, Brian Moeran. Their republication here is simultaneously a tribute to him. Thank you, Brian!

Yet we also found that there is something in this story that is relevant to comprehending the dynamic forces of modern capitalism. The story sheds light on the idea of improvement (in this case of the OJS software) and the attendant ephemerality of culture. What is gained and what is lost? Even though this is a story about one open-access journal, subsisting on the margins of capitalism and endeavoring to evade the core attractive forces of the marketplace, the pull of the larger forces of capitalism seems inescapable as we endeavor to preserve the journal's legacy while peering into its future.

Our decision to republish these pieces, however, was not based on the fact that they became (for a time) casualties of "improvements" in the system. Rather, when we read them, we realized that they continue to be vital today. The Field Reports are close-up renderings of doing business anthropological ethnography. They are close to raw field notes and diary-like entries. The Case Studies provide probing analyses of business phenomena based on anthropological research. And the book reviews and review essays reflect upon the research and conclusions of other business anthropologists and relevant writers more generally, helping to constitute an understanding of what business anthropology is and what it can aspire to be.

Field Reports

Three reports are republished here, two originally from 2011 and one

from 2012. Ana Alačovska's piece consists of field notes from a June 19, 2008 encounter and interview with Zora O'Neill, author of the Lonely Planet guidebook *Amsterdam Encounter*. The initial meeting takes place in a "hotel common bathroom," where O'Neill is described as making her own observations of the hotel, including its common bathroom, for possible inclusion of the hotel in her book. Alačovska, the ethnographer, seeks to understand what life is like for O'Neill, the travel guide author. We get question and answer back and forths, suggesting that the meeting was recorded. We learn how arduous travel guide writing, a business in itself, really is, glamorous as it may seem on the surface. Simultaneously, we see O'Neill, the travel guide author, engaged in her business activities, peeking behind a curtain to see "the only couple having breakfast in the restaurant," taking the elevator up to Alačovska's room, cuddling the upholstery in it, checking out the shower, all the while scribbling notes. Yes, Alačovska, the ethnographer, has here captured the travel guide author plying her trade.

From Amsterdam we are off to Japan, where ethnographer Camellia Nieh has volunteered for a team. What kind of team? We have here what appear to be pages from her field notes, deeply contextual, presuming understanding rather than explaining for a reader. We only gradually learn and infer from her account what is going on: "There is a layer of sludge and straw on top of everything. It contains contaminants and must be cleared, one shovelful at a time." Someone is said to have driven down from Fukushima. The ethnographer refers to "evacuees." We gradually understand that the team is there to help in the aftermath of a disaster, a tsunami, the devastating tsunami of March 11, 2011 we infer. The ethnographer, however, is especially focused on the team of volunteers and how it gelled. There are objective descriptions and expressions of the ethnographer's feelings: "After working with the self-organized group for four days, we really felt like a team by the end." No interviews, no quotations. These are the ethnographer's raw data concerning team formation.

From Japan, we head back to Copenhagen, where the report's author, Louise Lyngfeldt Gorm Hansen, is writing to us as readers, not making notes to herself. She tells us who she is: "a non-anthropologist," a "doctoral student interested in anthropological methods." She is attending a course on the ethnography of business. With other students, she is assigned to report on a two-day workshop involving a group of prominent business anthropologists. The author reveals her difficulties in understanding what is going on, what people are talking about, who is who. This piece is introspective, insecure. The author wants to enter the culture of business anthropology, but is unsure whether she ever will. The report exhibits the difficulties involved in entering into other cultural worlds, in this case, the difficulties of becoming a business anthropologist. The journal's editor, Brian Moeran, wisely opens this piece with a note,

explaining that "this field report expresses perfectly the kind of confusion almost all of us experience when entering the field."

Case Studies

There are seven of these in the redivivus issue. Further removed from actual field experience, from the empirical basis of ethnography, they are designed to be standalone analyses, accessible to readers. Less need be said to make sense of or contextualize them. You will enjoy each and every one, but you will also be impressed by their range. Is all of this business anthropology, you might wonder.

Clayton Childress's piece concerns a novel, *Jarrettsville*, as it goes through the process of commercialization and commodification, with different actors in the process strategically framing the novel in different literary genres. Yes, that's business. Kasper Tang Vangkilde studies the German luxury fashion company Hugo Boss, exploring what it took for a design team to come up with "a creative concept for a funky-formal fashion collection." Business, for sure. What about Shannon O'Donnell's contribution? Hers is an ethnographic account of a complex musical coordination, unfolding over multiple performances. Seven string quartets, playing together four at a time, endeavor to realize a complex musical creation by British composer Sir John Tavener. Business? Well, yes, musical performance is business. Performers and composer alike make a living off of their music. In this case study, creative coordination and organization come to the fore.

Then there is an ethnographic study by Prabhir Vishnu Poruthiyil. He unravels a complex confrontation between activists and a global fashion firm that began with complaints regarding abusive labor practices in an Indian factory, a supplier of the global firm. There is no question that this is about business. However, it is also, more complexly, about globalization, state actors, national pride, and political alliances. We go from this drama played out across nations to the fifth of the case studies, an amateur ethnographic account of the very same business anthropology workshop described in the field report by Gorm Hansen, only this time there are five students, one of whom is Gorm Hansen, attempting to coordinate their thoughts and observations. Is this case study about business? Well, in some ways it is about the emergence of research on and for businesses as a specialty within the academic discipline of anthropology. Fair game for business anthropology to study it?

The penultimate case, by Daniel Johnson, concerns acting classes, and, more specifically, acting classes designed to train business people in self presentation using theatrical techniques. Business? Yes, but of an intriguingly offbeat sort, such as anthropologists are particularly good at finding. Finally, the last case is by Siew-Peng Lee. Hers is an autoethnographic account of her "experience of being a change

management consultant in what was then one of the 'Big Six' accountancy firms." Yes, this too is business anthropology, where a former consultant reborn as a PhD in social anthropology reflects back upon her work experience, when she truly was one of the "natives," living the life within a business organization that she would later go on to study as an anthropologist.

Book reviews and review essays

These six pieces are just what you would think, reflections on books, in this case, books published a decade or more ago. But they have a distinctive place in the redivivus issue. If the field reports are on the side of raw notes written for oneself as basic ethnographic data, and if the case studies represent ethnographic analyses designed for a broader readership, the pieces in this section represent an additional reflexive layer, looking back on and gathering together works that may be of interest to business anthropologists.

The first is a report by Pedro Oliveira on a textbook entitled *Business Anthropology*. Oliveira considers the book a "precious resource" that "could help future generations of anthropologists to push forward a discipline whose potential to affect business successfully is hitherto unexplored to its full extent." The review provides an anchoring point, defining the field of business anthropology. The second review in this issue, by Claire Grauer, describes a book entitled *Organizational Ethnography*, a student's "guide to becoming an organizational ethnographer." This is a how-to book, and its inclusion here challenges readers to compare it to the *Business Anthropology* textbook discussed in the first review. Organizational and business anthropology are overlapping areas. In what measure are they (or should they be) the same or distinct?

The third review takes us further afield into the anthropology of work. This is a long-established subfield with its own journal, *Anthropology of Work Review*, that has been published regularly since 1983. The book, reviewed by Arceli González-Vázquez, concerns female garment workers in Morocco, the book's author having worked for a year in the factory she describes. Inclusion of the review on the JBA website raises the important question of the relationship between business anthropology and the anthropology of work, two areas of anthropology that have sometimes been at odds over how to pursue the collective good. Should it be by helping to steer businesses from the inside or should it be by critiquing them from the outside?

A distinct question comes up in the next review: what role should business anthropology play in business school curricula? Karl Palmås reviews a book published by the Harvard Business Press entitled *Rethinking the MBA: Business education at a crossroads*. According to

Palmås, the book's premise is that business school curricula need rebalancing. In particular, they should include more emphasis on "fieldwork," complementing the abstract mathematical orientations associated with finance and economics. While Palmås has questions about the practicality of MBA training the book proposes, he concludes nevertheless "that business anthropologists are acutely needed within business schools."

Each of these four reviews, by virtue of their juxtaposition originally on the JBA website and now in their republication, stimulate us to reflect on where business anthropology is situated disciplinarily and institutionally. What these reviews have in common, however, is a recognition of the centrality of ethnographic research to business anthropology. This is not as clearly the case in the final two reviews. The first of them is by Clayton Childress, whose case study of the novel, *Jarrettsville*, was discussed earlier. His review concerns a study of the book publishing industry by British sociologist John B. Thompson. The book deals with empirical macro-sociological issues, how the publishing industry is organized and operates, but no mention is made of ethnography, suggesting that JBA readers will want to know about matters pertaining to business well beyond ethnographic research.

The final review in this issue is by Helga Wild. Hers is a lengthy, probing, in depth explication of the work of Michel de Certeau, especially his *Practice of Everyday Life*, but other of his works as well. There is no reference to ethnography. There is considerable explication of terms and concepts, such as strategy versus tactics, writing and orality, ruses, murmurs, and much more. The various explications sum around the ideas of "the common man" and "the everyday," where local culture spontaneously emerges but disappears outside the repressive forces of institutions. Business organizations are among the repressive institutions, though they are not mentioned in the review, except in connection with "the response of Fiat leadership to the workers' attempts to discuss their own change ideas with them. The workers' input was cordially rejected…" The review and de Certeau's works alike are highly theoretical and philosophical. By including this review, JBA's founders seem to suggest that business anthropology needs to pay attention as well to high social and cultural theory, even if that theory does not directly engage business per se.

So, with this introduction, we invite you to luxuriate in these treasures recovered from the earliest history of the *Journal of Business Anthropology*.

Oh, yes, and by the way, the short answer as to why we are republishing these materials is that our go-to person at the Copenhagen Business School Library, Claus Rosenkrantz Hansen, suggested we do so.

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