Handbook on Ethical Issues in Anthropology

Edited by Joan Cassell and Sue-Ellen Jacobs
a special publication of the American Anthropological Association number 23

CONTENTS

Introduction
Joan Cassell and Sue-Ellen Jacobs

Some Issues and Sources on Ethics in Anthropology
Murray L. Wax

The Committee on Ethics: Past, Present, and Future
James N. Hill

Cases and Solutions
Sue-Ellen Jacobs

Cases and Comments
Joan Cassell

Some Experiences in Teaching Ethics in Fieldwork Classes
Sue-Ellen Jacobs

How to Hold a Workshop on Ethical Problems in Fieldwork
Joan Cassell

Introduction

Joan Cassell and Sue-Ellen Jacobs

Many anthropologists perceive ethics as an abstract and, on occasion, intimidating set of injunctions. Discussions of moral principles--such as autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence, and justice--seem to have little relation to our daily activities as researchers, teachers, students, and practitioners.

On occasion, the concept of "ethics" is used as a weapon: my beliefs differ from yours, therefore you are unethical. Anthropologists who speak of ethics in this sense wish to improve or, at the least, reprove the behavior of others. A "Code of Ethics" in their view is

a mechanism to help regulate the behavior of those with whom they disagree. Unfortunately, as historians and ethnographers have documented, the attempt to control others in the name of morality is more likely to lead to confrontation than moral improvement.

Many anthropologists were moved to enter the discipline because of a strong concern for the peoples of the world. During their fieldwork, most have developed a strong empathy for the peoples they have studied and have felt a sense of personal responsibility for their welfare. Hence, when they use, hurt, or endanger others, it is usually not because of a vicious disposition, but because they are under strong pressures, some of which are conflicting or difficult to reconcile, and they may then drift into an expedient course of action that proves unwise.

The cross-pressures of modern fieldwork are severe, and they can easily induce an investigator to treat the host people as "subjects," rather than as fellow human beings whose autonomy must be respected. While completing a graduate degree, or submitting a prompt report to an employer or client, or resolving an intense emotional relationship, we may neglect to consider other factors in the situation or the consequences our actions will have for others. Convictions, leading presumably to the abstract and universal benefit of humanity, can be used to justify the violation of agreements entered into with good faith on both sides. Awareness that others are acting exploitatively or immorally can seductively encourage us to adopt a similar orientation. In the field especially, situations may be so complex, involve so many parties and so much factionalism, that it becomes difficult to decide what must be done.

We do not wish to make ethics seem merely a matter of isolated choices in crucial situations. Much of our lives proceeds undramatically, and often our decisions are almost imperceptible, so that only with hindsight are we aware that our course of action had consequences that we had not foreseen and now regret.

To improve the ethical adequacy of anthropological practice, we must consider not only exceptional cases but everyday decisions, and reflect not only upon the conduct of others but also upon our own actions.

Despite difficulties in writing a code specific enough to use as a mechanism of social control, a code of ethics can help improve anthropological practice. When it is conceived as a way of reflecting upon our own practices and attempting to improve them, as well as a method for regulating behavior, a code can heighten sensitivity to professional conduct. In this twofold approach, a code is concerned with aspirations as well as avoidances; it represents our desire and attempt to respect the rights of others, fulfill obligations, avoid harm, and augment benefits to those we interact with as anthropologists. Such a code is less a set of categorical prohibitions engraved in stone, than a series of aspirations, admonitions, and injunctions to be considered, discussed, and periodically altered by the community of anthropologists. The process here is as valuable as the product.

Case studies offer another way to heighten sensitivity and improve anthropological practice. An ethical dilemma may be difficult to recognize when encountered; "practical"

decisions frequently turn out to have ethical ramifications. Reading and thinking about situations faced by other anthropologists can help us to recognize our own ethical dilemmas and to make sensitive and informed decisions.

We hope this handbook, sponsored by the Committee on Ethics of the American Anthropological Association, will stimulate discussion and reflection on ethical issues. Chapter 1 contains a brief review essay and an annotated bibliography by Murray L. Wax. In Chapter 2, James Hill, a past chair of the AAA Committee on Ethics, presents the background to the formation of that Committee and the writing of the AAA's first code of ethics, the Principles of Professional Responsibility. This code, still in effect, has been revised substantially over a period of ten years.

Chapters 3 and 4 contain a series of ethical dilemmas, first published in the *Anthropology Newsletter.* The column on ethical dilemmas, first called "Ethics and the Anthropologist," was originated by James Spradley in 1976, when he was a member of the Committee on Ethics. Spradley presented fictional dilemmas, providing possible solutions the following month; responses from members were invited.

When Sue-Ellen Jacobs was elected to the Committee on Ethics, she reinstituted the column, drawing on dilemmas that had been posed to her or to the Committee as a whole. All were actual dilemmas. The solutions used by the anthropologists who provided the dilemmas were published the following month, with readers asked to comment on dilemmas and solutions. Chapter 3 contains dilemmas presented by Jacobs, with the anthropologists' solutions and additional comments by readers of the *Anthropology Newsletter.*

Joan Cassell began to edit the column in 1982, when she was elected to the Committee on Ethics. She followed a slightly different formula, recruiting dilemmas from colleagues and *Newsletter* readers, and printing each dilemma with two comments solicited from anthropologists and ethicists. Chapter 4 contains the dilemmas and comments edited by Cassell. The cases are presented in the order in which they were published, with a title assigned to each case.

In Chapter 5, Jacobs briefly describes how she has used the Principles of Professional Responsibility and other materials to introduce issues of ethical responsibility in a traditional course on kinship and in a fieldwork course on methods in life history research.

In Chapter 6, Cassell offers guidelines on how to hold a workshop on ethical problems in fieldwork. These were developed and tested over a two and a half year period by Murray L. Wax and Joan Cassell, under a grant from the Ethics and Values in Science and Technology (EVIST) program of the National Science Foundation, to investigate the ethical problems of fieldwork.

We have designed this *Handbook on Ethical Issues in Anthropology* to help social science faculty introduce discussions of ethics in their courses. Such discussions, we believe, are an essential part of the teaching of anthropological theory and methods. "The moral sciences" is the way the scholars of the British Enlightenment described the research that led to

contemporary social science. We would like to think that the term still characterizes our discipline.

Note: At the 1985 AAA Annual Meeting, a coin was tossed to see whose name would go first because we felt that our contributions were equal and there was no "senior" or "junior" author.

CHAPTER 1

Some Issues and Sources on Ethics in Anthropology

Murray L. Wax

From its emergence as a distinct discipline, anthropology has been oriented toward ethics and social policy. **Edward B. Tylor** concluded his survey of human culture with the remark that "the science of culture is essentially a reformer's science" (1958[1871]:539). **A. R. Radcliffe-Brown** would claim that he was moved to initiate his studies of simpler peoples on the advice of the celebrated Russian anarchist, **Prince Peter Kropotkin**, for whom such peoples manifested a system of organization which could prove an exemplar in a world dominated by autocracy and nationalism (Srinivas 1958:xviii). In the period pre-World War I, this ideal of anthropology as an ethical calling above the petty rivalries of nationalism inspired **Franz Boas** to moral outrage when he suspected that the disciplinary role had been used to cloak espionage (1919:797).

Until World War II, much of the anthropological literature on "morals" or "ethics" was directed from ethnology toward philosophy. The latter discipline was dominated by linguistic formalism in the service of a positivistic worldview, and philosophical ethics inquired as to the possible meanings of propositions such as "X is good" (MacIntyre 1981:Chapter 2). In this situation, it was a helpful contribution for **MacBeath** (1952) to use anthropological data to exhibit the varieties of ethical systems in natural societies. **Brandt**, a professional philosopher, studied Hopi ethics (1954), while Ladd studied Navajo ethics (1957), and **Abraham Edel**, the philosopher, collaborated with **May Edel**, the anthropologist, in interdisciplinary efforts (1955, 1959). **Bidney**, a professor of both anthropology and philosophy, labored to clarify the notion of "value" (1962).

Insofar as "ethics" were topics of serious concern among fieldworking anthropologists, the central issues were relativism and intervention. Since the history of relativism within anthropology has recently been neatly summarized by **Hatch** (1983), there is little need for me to repeat the review, except to note that the issue did and does provoke considerable discussion among professional philosophers (e.g., Krausz and Meiland 1982; Wellman 1963). It is sufficient to note the exchanges between the humanistic student of civilization, **Redfield** (1953), and the "orthodox" defender of cultural relativism, **Herskovits** (1973). On

"intervention" the issue was whether or not, or how, to assist the people with whom one was involved as a fieldworker. Typically, such peoples were subjects of a Western colonial power, whose administration an anthropologist might hope to influence. For many fieldworkers the problem was intensified because of the notion that each culture was an integrated whole whose harmony might be damaged by casual intervention. Likewise, many felt constrained by the methodological ideal of the natural scientist, who was intrinsically detached from the objects of study.

These concerns were rendered nugatory by the rise of Nazism, fascism, and totalitarianism, regimes which conquered, enslaved, or massacred many peoples. In the ensuing war, anthropologists found themselves encouraged to serve in a variety of capacities. Faced with the threats of fascism and Nazism, most did so with great willingness, and, in this context, "ethics" became defined as the willingness to sacrifice professional career, or even life and limb, in the cause of "the Free World," of which the U.S. appeared to be the military and spiritual leader. Because of their cross-cultural training, a number of anthropologists were recruited into military intelligence, including the Office of Strategic Services (which was to be the forerunner of the CIA); others were commissioned as officers. Some were also involved in the complex processes after World War II, which involved peoples who had been enslaved, decimated, or displaced and were now liberated from brutal regimes. In accepting these roles, anthropologists could regard their conduct as simply the logical extension of their earlier benevolent roles acting as cultural broker or mediator, assisting peoples with simpler technology in their encounter with the civilized world.

After World War II, a polar fission of political worldviews erupted within the discipline. Federal agencies and private foundations were encouraging the growth of anthropology to match the responsibilities that the U.S. government now saw itself shouldering. A generation of dedicated and educated young people were studying anthropology and conducting fieldwork in the far comers of the earth. They returned with a sober and disenchanted view; they perceived great misery and continued oppression; projects that were publicly rationalized as benefiting tribal peoples were in fact actually benefiting members or strata of the ruling powers. Most important, the new anthropologists were encountering political rebelliousness guided by a sophisticated elite. Where, in an earlier age, fieldworkers had dealt with nonliterate peoples isolated from modern communications, now they were encountering leaders familiar with the rhetoric of Western political discourse, including its nationalism, populism, and Marxism. (Asad 1975 contains critical appraisals of the roles that anthropologists had played in the earlier colonial context.)

In North America, the witty satire and sage intercultural critique of **Vine Deloria, Jr.**, (Sioux) heralded a new age in which anthropologists were to be called to account by Indian representatives. While he is known among the public for his ridicule of fieldworkers, in collegial communication he urges anthropologists to reflect seriously about the effects of their work and to assume a helpful role in relation to the abundant problems of Indian peoples (1980). Other Native American leaders have unfurled the banner of "Red Power" and provoked a series of dramatic confrontations with federal authorities (e.g., the occupations of Alcatraz, Wounded Knee, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs offices in Washington, D.C.). These became exciting events for the media but troublesome cases for

anthropologists, because it was not clear what was desired by--or desirable for--the larger aggregate of Indian communities (Washburn 1985).

Where the pre-World War II generation of anthropologists had regarded their national military and intelligence services with an ethically neutral (or, in some cases, beneficent) eye, the following generations developed the suspicious and antagonistic view of Third World leaders. From this perspective, employment with these national agencies was a prostitution of valuable professional talents for monies and prestige; it was a betrayal of the peoples whose welfare anthropology had claimed to cherish. "Ethics" were now defined as a conscientious refusal to accept such monies or employment. Nevertheless, many of the older generation continued to have faith in the difference between a democratic United States and its (past or present) totalitarian rivals (Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, Imperial Japan, Stalinist Soviet Union). Where one group was impressed with the exploitation of peoples struggling under colonial or imperialist rule, the other was impressed with the miseries under fascist and Bolshevik-Leninist regimes. These differences erupted with the case of Project Camelot.

Emerging out of the intricate infighting within the federal government, and reflecting the goal of the Department of Defense to outmaneuver the Department of State, the Project was inherently self-contradictory. On the one hand, it was to be staffed by academicians and its data were to be publicly available; on the other hand, it was to be of service to the military in stabilizing friendly regimes and inhibiting their overthrow. On the one hand, its orientation was to protect democracy; on the other hand, to safeguard the allies of the United States, regardless of the shape of their regime. Such an intermixture had led to successful projects during the Second World War, when the target peoples had been either enemies or the passive subjects of one or another military hegemony. But, in the post-World War II era, it encountered the strenuous opposition of the intellectual and political leadership of the Third World. U.S. social scientists found themselves accused of being tools of Yanqui imperialism, or, at the least, unforgivably naive. Meanwhile, in Washington, the rivals of the military used the embarrassment as an opportunity to restrain its abilities at sponsorship within limits that excluded much of the comparative studies that were the province of anthropology. The military could sponsor research in high technology, but not in culture, social organization, and political stability. To the older generation of anthropologists, this signified that the military was to remain encapsulated within a technical worldview, and this was a source for regret and concern; to the younger generation, this was a step in restraining a military service that had become the instrument of overt imperialism (Beals 1969; Deitchman 1976; Horowitz et al. 1967; Wax and Cassell 1979).

By the time that the United States had become militarily involved in the conflict in Southeast Asia, the pendulum had thus swung far in the direction where "ethics" were defined as a refusal to have any dealings with the military side of government, or with any aspect of government that seemed to sustain an imperialistic orientation. While the political rhetoric was heated, the literature dealt with important and difficult issues. (See the essays by Berreman et al. in "The Social Responsibilities Symposium," 1968.)

In the revulsion following the Nuremberg trials, there emerged a powerful social movement emphasizing the notion of individual moral responsibility, regardless of the dictates of the officials of the state or of other organized bodies. Correlatively, there emerged the notion of monitoring the conduct of physicians and biomedical researchers, so that they did not abuse or exploit their patients in the name of science or any other ideological principle. The regulatory system thus instituted spread to include any scientific discipline that could be regarded as having "human subjects" who were subjected to procedures that imposed risks, or that might, without their consent, be inflictive of harm. The resultant biomedical literature is now considerable, and while it is diverse and uneven, at its core are essays of depth which illuminate the critical social issues (see National Commission 1978). If there is a weakness to the literature it derives from the predispositions of mainstream U.S. culture, namely its individualism, its reluctance to accept the notion that there may be values more significant than life (brute existence), and its inability to face the dilemmas that ensue when social resources are finite.

As this movement (Wulff 1979) gained momentum, anthropological fieldworkers found themselves confronting Institutional Review Boards (IRBs), whose existence was mandated by the federal government as a condition of institutional eligibility for participation in the economy of grants, fellowships, and contracts. Since the relevant commissions had taken no testimony from anthropologists about the moral issues of their research, the regulations were framed to control the activities of biomedical researchers, and so applied but clumsily to the process of fieldwork. Meanwhile, university administrators were using the regulatory system as a device to regulate or even suppress such activities as public opinion polls conducted by student newspapers. The resulting institutional friction generated not only movements of protest but of inquiry and research that have helped to illuminate the ethical issues in anthropological fieldwork (Wax and Cassell 1979). In this process, "ethics" for anthropologists became redefined as having to do with the nature of interaction between fieldworker and hosts, and, in particular, with such issues as "informed consent" and with whether or not benefit (or harm) might issue from the project (Cassell and Wax 1980). The morality of covert field research remains a key issue; it is noteworthy that this issue could not and cannot arise in many traditional anthropological contexts (e.g., Raymond Firth in Tikopia; Jean Briggs among the Utku of Chantrey Inlet), but it can and does arise when fieldwork is attempted among modern urban populations (Bulmer 1982).

The ferment among social scientists led the federal government to revise its regulations (Thomson et al. 1981 appraises the new regulations from the perspective of the American Association of University Professors). Despite these revisions, some researchers have continued to be critical of the very premises of the regulatory effort (Douglas 1979; for a critical British view, note Punch 1986). Critics such as **Warwick** (1982) assert that social researchers have wrought much harm; opponents such as **Galliher** (1980) respond that the regulatory system serves to protect malefactors from exposure.

An incidental consequence has been that a number of philosophers have moved from the linguistic analysis of moral statements to an engagement with social policy. Others have reviewed the history of ethical deliberation from a standpoint that is influenced by the sociology and anthropology of knowledge. Particularly outstanding has been the work of

Alasdair Maclntyre (1966, 1981), a professional philosopher who has an excellent familiarity with the social sciences.

Summary Recommendations

Barnes (1979) is oriented historically, viewing social research as having first begun within a "natural science paradigm" where ethical considerations were minimal. Moving beyond that paradigm, one realizes that social inquiry initiates dealings with fellow scientists, citizens (hosts, informants, respondents), project sponsors, and gatekeepers. From each, one may anticipate criticism and either assistance or restrictions. Familiar with a wide range of literature, and knowledgeable about the criticisms that inquiry has provoked, **Barnes** has performed an anthropological critique that is of great value.

Barnes (1977) contains the texts of three lectures delivered in Bangalore, India, and so is especially sensitive to the concerns of non-Western peoples. In illuminating fashion, he reviews a number of instances of research, including the Wichita Jury Study, the Glacier Project (study of a London factory by a team from Tavistock), Kashmiri Pandits, Zuni, and Camelot. The issues include deception, and knowledge as power and as property.

Appell has been a pioneer in the modern concern over fieldwork ethics. For those who are interested in case materials, his 1978 volume contains a large variety solicited from a number of working anthropologists.

Sieber (1982) and **Beauchamp** *et al.* (1982) grow out of the same project, sponsored by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and attempting to bring social research within the orbit of discussion of protection of human subjects. The essays in the **Beauchamp** volume focus mainly on psychological and sociological research, with the notable exception of an essay by **Cassell**. By publishing her collection as two volumes, **Sieber** has managed to make of the one listed here a collection of especial interest to anthropologists, with essays by **Cassell**, **Glazer**, **Johnson**, and **Wax**.

Cassell and **Wax** (1980) is the product of a series of conferences of fieldworkers. A special issue of the journal *Social Problems*, it contains contributions by the philosopher-theologian **William F. May**, the American Indian spokesman **Vine Deloria, Jr.**, anthropologists **Appell**, **Chambers**, **Jacobs**, **Schensul**, **Trend**, and the team of **Hessler**, **New**, and **May**, as well as sociologists **Galliher** and **Thome**.

Rynkiewich and **Spradley** (1976) contains a variety of cases focusing predominantly on the issues created for subordinated peoples (and fieldworkers) by powerful bureaucracies. While the cases may be dated, the issues remain vital.

Green (1984) is a special issue of *The Wisconsin Sociologist* featuring essays by anthropologists **Barnes**, **Montandon**, and **Wax**.

Warwick is experienced in cross-cultural research in the South Pacific. In his 1980 essay he effectively communicates the criticisms that such research has provoked, and this makes

it of value for cautioning those who hope to conduct overseas projects. Perhaps because he is himself so critical (1982) of the ethical practices of social researchers, he does not always take pains to differentiate the rhetorical flailings of Third World gatekeepers from the actual failings of Western researchers.

Many of the formal textbooks on the protection of human subjects in social research have concentrated on psychological experimentation and sociological surveys. Depending on their projects, anthropologists may find value in some of them (e.g., Diener and Crandall 1978; Bower and de Gasparis 1978). **Reynolds** (1979) has a useful set of appendices containing such items as "The Nuremberg Code" (1946), "The Declaration of Helsinki (1964), and "a composite code; use of human subjects in research."

In this review, I have focused on issues as they have been posed for North American anthropologists, but I have tried to cite some other literature. In addition to the works of **Barnes**, **Bulmer**, and **Punch**, already cited, I should mention **Akeroyd** (1984) and **Kloos** (1985).

References Cited

Akeroyd, Anne
1984 Ethics in Relation to Informants: The Profession and Governments. In *Ethnographic Research: A Guide to General Conduct.* Roy F. Ellen, ed. Pp. 133-154. London: Academic Press.

Appell, George N.
1978 *Ethical Dilemmas in Anthropological Inquiry: A Case Book.* Waltham, MA: Crossroads Press.

Asad, Talal, ed.
1975 *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*. London: Ithaca Press.

Barnes, J. A.
1977 *The Ethics of Inquiry in Social Science.* Delhi: Oxford University Press.
1979 *Who Should Know What? Social Science, Privacy and Ethics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Beals, Ralph L.
1969 *Politics of Social Research: An Inquiry into the Ethics and Responsibilities of Social Scientists.* Chicago: Aldine.

Beauchamp, Tom L., et al., eds.
1982 *Ethical Issues in Social Science Research.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.

Berreman, Gerald et al.
1968 Social Responsibilities Symposium. *Current Anthropology* 9:391-435.

Bidney, David
1962 The Concept of Value in Modern Anthropology. In *Anthropology Today: Selections.* Sol Tax, ed. Pp. 436-453. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Boas, Franz
1919 Correspondence: Scientists as Spies. *The Nation* 109, No. 2842 (December).

Bower, Robert T., and Priscilla de Gasparis
1978 *Ethics in Social Research: Protecting the Interests of Human Subjects.* New York: Praeger.

Brandt, Richard B.
1954 *Hopi Ethics: A Theoretical Analysis.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bulmer, Martin, ed.
1982 *Social Research Ethics: An Examination of the Merits of Covert Participant Observation.* New York: Holmes and Meier.

Cassell, Joan, and Murray L. Wax, eds.
1980 Ethical Problems of Fieldwork. *Social Problems* (special issue) 27:259-378.

Deitchman, Seymour J.
1976 *The Best-Laid Schemes: A Tale of Social Research and Bureaucracy.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

Deloria, Vine, Jr.
1980 Our New Research Society: Some Warnings to Social Scientists. *Social Problems* (special issue) 27:267-271.

Diener, Edward, and Rick Crandall
1978 *Ethics in Social and Behavioral Research.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Douglas, Jack D.
1979 Living Morality versus Bureaucratic Fiat. In *Deviance and Decency: The Ethics of Research with Human Subjects.* C. B. Klockars and F. W. O'Connors, eds. Pp. 13-33. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Edel, Abraham
1955 *Ethical Judgement: The Use of Science in Ethics.* Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Edel, May, and Abraham Edel
1959 *Anthropology and Ethics.* Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas.

Galliher, John F.
1980 Social Scientists' Ethical Responsibilities: Looking Upward Meekly. *Social Problems* (special issue) 27:298-308.

Green, Charles S., III, ed.
1984 Sociology as Moral Inquiry. *The Wisconsin Sociologist* (special issue) 21:4.

Hatch, Eivin
1983 *Culture and Morality: The Relativity of Values in Anthropology.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Herskovits, Melville J.
1973 *Cultural Relativism: Perspectives in Cultural Pluralism.* New York: Vintage.

Horowitz, Irving Louis, ed.
1967 *The Rise and Fall of Project Camelot: Studies in the Relationship between Social Science and Practical Politics.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

Kloos, Peter
1985 *Anthropological Problems: Whose Problems?: Working Paper No. 54.* Leiden: Institute of Cultural and Social Studies, University of Leiden.

Krausz, Michael, and Jack W. Meiland, eds.
1982 *Relativism: Cognitive and Moral.* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Ladd, John T.
1957 *The Structure of a Moral Code: A Philosophical Analysis of Ethical Discourse Applied to the Ethics of the Navaho Indians.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

MacBeath, Alexander
1952 *Experiments in Living: A Study of the Nature and Foundation of Ethics or Morals in the Light of Recent Work in Social Anthropology.* London: Macmillan.

Maclntyre, Alasdair
1966 *A Short History of Ethics.* New York: Macmillan.
1981 *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory.* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research
1978 *The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research.* 2 vols. DHEW Publication Nos. (OS) 78 0013, 78 0014. Washington, D.C.: USGPO.

Punch, Maurice
1986 *The Politics and Ethics of Fieldwork.* Beverly Hills: Sage.

Redfield, Robert
1953 *The Primitive World and Its Transformations.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Reynolds, Paul Davidson
1979 *Ethical Dilemmas and Social Science Research: An Analysis of Moral Issues Confronting Investigators in Research Using Human Participants.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Rynkiewich, Michael A., and James P. Spradley, eds.
1976 *Ethics and Anthropology: Dilemmas in Fieldwork.* New York: John Wiley.

Sieber, Joan E., ed.
1982 *The Ethics of Social Research: Fieldwork, Regulation, and Publication.* New York: Springer-Verlag.

Srinivas, M. N., ed.
1958 *Method in Social Anthropology: Selected Essays by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Thomson, Judith Jarvis, et al.
1981 Regulations Governing Research on Human Subjects: Academic Freedom and the Institutional Review Board. *Academe* 67:358-370.

Tylor, Edward Burnett
1958[1871] *Primitive Culture. Volume 11: Religion in Primitive Culture.* New York: Harper Torchbook.

Warwick, Donald P.
1980 The Politics and Ethics of Cross-Cultural Research. In *The Handbook of Cross-Cultural Psychology.* H. C. Triandis and W. W. Lambert, eds. Pp. 319-371. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
1982 Types of Harm in Social Research. In *Ethical Issues in Social Science Research.* Tom L. Beauchamp et al., eds. Pp. 101-124. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.

Washburn, Wilcomb E.
1985 Ethical Perspectives in North American Ethnology. In *Social Contexts of American Ethnology: 1984 Proceedings of the American Ethnological Society.* June Helm, ed. Pp. 50-64. (Washington, D.C.: American Anthropological Association.

Wax, Murray, L., and Joan Cassell, eds.
1979 Federal Regulation: Ethical Issues and Social Research. *AAAS Symposium No. 36.* Boulder: Westview Press.

Weliman, Carl
1963 The Ethical Implications of Cultural Relativity. *Journal of Philosophy* 60:169-184.

Wulff, Keith M., ed.
1979 Regulation of Scientific Inquiry: Societal Concerns with Research. *AAAS Symposium No. 37.* Boulder: Westview Press.

CHAPTER 2

The Committee on Ethics: Past, Present, and Future

James N. Hill

This article sets a brief historical context for a consideration of the future of the Committee on Ethics (COE) of the American Anthropological Association, a future which is very much open to debate at this time.

Should the COE continue to exist? If so, what should it be doing? For example, should the Committee continue to try to handle individual grievance cases involving tenure, plagiarism, and the like, or should it be concerned only with ethical problems that might damage the reputation of the Association or the profession? Equally important, should the Committee on Ethics evaluate and recommend action to the Board of Directors (the former Executive Board) on cases involving only members of the Association, or on cases involving anthropologists who are nonmembers as well? Finally, should the COE be investigating cases at all? Perhaps it should simply continue its role of educating the membership on ethical matters, by writing columns in the *Anthropology Newsletter,* by writing books, by organizing panels and symposia on ethical issues, and so forth.

Before discussing these and other questions, let me review briefly the history of the COE. Why was it considered necessary to have an ethics committee, and are these reasons (or others) still important today? To set the context, we must go back to the beginning, before the COE existed as a formal entity.

This takes us back to 1965, when the Association's Executive Board received expressions of concern over the U.S. government's support of social science research in foreign countries. It was alleged that the Department of Defense, and other governmental institutions, were using anthropologists to gather data to help them in their insurgency and counterinsurgency activities. The most notorious instance was Project Camelot in Chile, where the army had a contract with American University to study sociopolitical factors that could lead to internal warfare in that country. The army, it was believed, was directly and indirectly funding clandestine social science research, the results of which were to be used to prevent "the natives from getting restless" and revolting against the Chilean government. Public protests over this alleged perversion of professional research goals led to the project's cancellation by the Department of Defense, but the matter hit the presses worldwide, and a result was that many legitimate social science research projects in Chile were forced to suspend operations (Beals 1967:2).

Since that time, evidence has been presented which suggests that these allegations greatly exaggerated and oversimplified the actual situation with respect to Project Camelot. In fact

it now seems, to some at least, that the allegations of clandestine anthropological research (which are still believed by many) represent myth rather than fact (cf. especially Horowitz 1967; Deitchman 1976; Wax 1978).

It is not a concern of this paper to resolve this or related issues. What is important is that because of Project Camelot, and later conflicts (especially the Vietnam War), it was widely believed that various U.S. government agencies (such as the Department of Defense, the Department of State, and the CIA) had large-scale involvement in contracting with universities, private agencies, and probably individual anthropologists, in order to gather mission-oriented intelligence data under the guise of legitimate anthropological research. The fear was that anthropologists were, wittingly or unwittingly, serving as spies for the United States and other so-called friendly governments. Questions were raised concerning the ethics of this, especially given that the research was allegedly clandestine, and the results were believed to be secret and not subject to free publication (Beals 1967)./1/ Government funding of all social science research became suspect: these activities were seen as posing a threat to the integrity of the universities sponsoring social research, to the social sciences themselves, and to the individuals allegedly involved in the research (Beals 1967:4). While the story was far more complex than I can convey here, the major fears of many anthropologists were twofold: (1) that anthropology's resultant bad reputation would close off future field opportunities abroad, and (2) that the information being gathered would be used by our government or others to control, enslave, and even annihilate many of the "Third World" communities that were being studied. This was the era of the Vietnam War, and it is well known that such atrocities were in fact taking place.

If the war had not been so unpopular, the ethical dilemmas involving government-funded research would probably not have surfaced; but they did, and in November 1965, the Executive Board of the AAA presented a report on the matter to the Council of Fellows, which in turn resolved that the Board should investigate the situation in detail. The Board then constituted itself as a special "Committee on Research Problems and Ethics," headed by Ralph L. Beals (UCLA). The subsequent "Beals Report" was presented at a plenary session of the AAA in November 1966, and later published in the Fellow Newsletter (Beals 1967); it claimed to substantiate the existence and gravity of the situation I just described, and led the Executive Board to prepare a "Statement on Problems of Anthropological Research and Ethics" which was adopted by the Council of Fellows in 1967. This was and is a code of ethical conduct for anthropologists. In the meantime, there were more reports of alleged unethical conduct, and a great deal of controversy was generated.

In 1968, the Executive Board appointed an official "Interim Committee on Ethics," which met once in 1969 to deal with its twofold assignment: (1) to plan the nature of a standing committee on ethics, including its tasks, authority, scope, membership, relationship to the Executive Board, and so on, and (2) to make recommendations on issues involving the nature of ethical relationships anthropologists should have with one another, with students, with host peoples, host governments, host scientific societies, research sponsors, funders, their own government, their universities, and their employers. The committee was also asked to explore means by which any standards of ethics could be enforced (a problem which has never been resolved).

The committee report (Aberle and Schneider 1969) proposed an elected standing "Committee on Ethics," responsive to the membership and independent of the Executive Board; it also presented a draft code of ethics. The report was highly controversial (see, for example, Leeds 1969), some anthropologists charging that "such a committee is not needed and won't work" and "a committee on ethics is itself unethical."

Nevertheless, a nine-member standing COE was elected in 1970 (see AAA 1971a), its first charge being to recommend to the Executive Board what its role and functions should be. The main caveat was that the COE was constrained to work through the Executive Board, never independently; it could do virtually nothing without Board approval. This is still true today. (Although the "Executive Board" became the "Board of Directors" in 1983.)

In March 1970 (still during the Vietnam War) the issue of clandestine research surfaced again, this time with respect to social science research in Thailand. Some documents allegedly implicating a number of Thai experts in unethical complicity in U.S. counterinsurgency programs in Thailand were stolen from a university professor's unlocked files, given to the Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, and published in *The Student Mobilizer* (Chis et al. 1970: most of this was written by Alan Myers). The documents were also sent to the chair of the COE who, with another member of the COE, proceeded to condemn publicly the actions of numerous Thai experts without first informing them of the charges.

The essence of the accusation was that these anthropologists (and others) were being funded by, and were contracting with, agencies of the Departments of Defense and State, and were (wittingly and unwittingly) gathering data useful to the counterinsurgency programs of the United States and the Royal Thai government. They were allegedly gathering data on tribal villages that would be used to help ensure that the villages would remain loyal to the Thai government in the face of Communist incursions. These data would either be used to "aid" or "develop" these villages so that they would not want to join the insurgents, or they would be used to police or annihilate disloyal villages (Chis et al. 1970). Moreover, it was alleged that some of these data were secret, and not subject to freedom of publication and peer examination.

The essence of the defense in this situation was that the anthropologists were certainly not consciously aiding governmental counterinsurgency policies and practices; on the contrary, they claimed to have been using their expertise in a conscious effort to educate the government agencies to ensure that agency activities would be helpful rather than damaging to the Thai villages. It thus appears that many of the anthropologists were aware of the counterinsurgency activities, and felt that their best recourse was to remain associated with the agencies in an effort to "put them straight" or make them "see the light," so to speak (Beals 1970; Moerman 1971:9-11; Davenport et al. 1971:2). They also claimed that none of their research or contracts were secret. They did, however, continue for a time to receive research support from these agencies--especially the Agency for International Development, the Academic Advisory Council on Thailand, and the Southeast Asia Development Advisory Group (Beals 1970; Davenport et al. 1971:2).

The result of the initial charges made by the two members of the COE (and later by all but two of its members) was that the AAA Executive Board reprimanded the two accusing members, and the COE as a whole, for irresponsibly going beyond its mandated duties. The Board said that the charges were premature, unfair, and unjustified. While it agreed that if clandestine research were going on, such research was unethical, it also slapped the wrists of the accusers and instructed the COE "to limit itself to its specific charge, narrowly interpreted, namely to present to the Board recommendations on its future role and functions, and to fulfill this charge without further collection of case materials or by any quasi-investigative activities" (AAA 1969, reprinted in Weaver 1973:54 /2/).

The COE objected (Committee on Ethics 1970a), but did carry on with its assigned duties. it proceeded to develop its revised code of ethics called the Principles of Professional Responsibility, as well as a document called Role and Function of the Committee on Ethics (Committee on Ethics 1970b). Both were adopted by the Council of the Association (formerly the Council of Fellows) in 1971, and later distributed to all members of the Association.

Nonetheless, there was heated debate, and two factions developed within the AAA: (1) those who believed the activities in Thailand to be unethical and punishable, and (2) those who did not agree. The latter were accused by the former of engaging in a "cover-up" in order to protect anthropological harmony and maintain the good reputation of the Association (Weaver 1973:53; Isaacs 1971). Each faction was calling the other unethical!

As a result, in November 1970 the Executive Board established a three-member ad hoc committee headed by Margaret Mead to investigate the entire affair (AAA 1971b). This committee gathered and analyzed 6,000 pages of documents. It concluded that it was "very likely that secret and clandestine intelligence work among Thai people has been conducted at the instigation of special U.S. military and government intelligence units," but that it could find no conclusive evidence of it (Davenport et al. 1971:3). It also said, among other things, that the controversy was "conspiratorial," and that the accusations against the Thai specialists were not warranted by the data. It concluded that "no civilian members of the American Anthropological Association had contravened the principles laid down in the 1967 Statement on Problems of Anthropological Research and Ethics in his or her work in Thailand" (Davenport et al. 1971:4). The committee report (commonly known as "The Mead Report") also maintained that some members of the COE had behaved unethically in making unfair and unsubstantiated charges, and in not allowing the accused the benefit of due process (Davenport et al. 1971:4).

The Committee's report was presented at the Association's annual meeting in New York in 1971, where it was emotionally and overwhelmingly rejected by the membership as a whitewash of the Association. Many still believe this today. The controversy did not end; it did, however, lead to the adoption by the Association in April 1973 of a clear-cut set of grievance procedures, so that the concerns of "due process" could be met in future cases of alleged unethical behavior.

The Thailand issue, and the entire issue of secret and clandestine research, passed (temporarily?) into history by 1972, essentially with the ending of the Vietnam War. Since

that time, the cases and inquiries presented to the COE have been quite different and varied. The Committee receives roughly three to six cases per year, the most common of which involve grievances concerning collegial relationships. The most frequent of these have concerned plagiarism, followed distantly by a variety of cases involving faculty-student relations (including faculty exploitation of graduate students). These kinds of grievances, between and among individuals, are increasingly the most common ones lodged with the COE.

Next in frequency, after cases of collegial relationships, have been cases and queries involving alleged unfairness in promotion and tenure decisions; these appear to be increasing in number.

Such grievances seem to be tied in frequency with disputes over the ownership, confidentiality, public accessibility, and rights of publication of data derived in connection with contract research. These cases often involve ethical problems encountered by anthropologists working for or consulting with government and private corporations, where the ownership of data may be unclear; or, more commonly, they arise where the data are owned by an agency which has control over the accessibility and dissemination of the information, and may keep it secret or use it in unethical ways (whether the anthropologist, the researcher's informants, or the peoples studied like it or not).

Following these in frequency have been cases involving the relationships between anthropologists and their informants or host groups. These ethical problems have involved such things as protection of human subjects, informed consent, anonymity of informants and communities, payment of informants, exploitation of informants, and the failure to foresee the repercussions of one's research on the peoples being studied.

Other kinds of cases and queries since 1972 include discrimination of one sort or another in various contexts, misleading advertising in jobs, misleading public statements by anthropologists, misrepresentation by anthropologists (of themselves and others), illegal traffic in prehistoric artifacts, the desecration of Indian graves, and so forth. (A complete listing is neither possible nor desirable here.)

The point is, the kinds of cases and queries have changed since the Vietnam War. This appears to have been caused by four things: (1) the termination of that unpopular war; (2) the increasing number of anthropologists and the variety of contexts in which they work, especially in applied areas; (3) the inevitable increase in economic and political involvement by anthropologists; and (4) the increased competition for jobs and security of employment, and the competition for contract funds.

The old issues have not gone away entirely, however, and perhaps never will; the problems posed by clandestine research, for example, are still with us, in connection with anthropological research in Third World countries in general, and more specifically in connection with the current U.S. military and CIA involvement in Central America (see, for example, AAA 1983:4). There is also increasing debate over whether or not anthropological consultants/contractors to private firms should engage in confidential research that is not for public view.

Overall, however, there has been a clear shift in emphasis within the COE since 1972, from cases dealing primarily with general ethical issues (such as the ethics involved in accepting government funding) to an emphasis on interpersonal and intergroup disputes--i.e., grievance cases.

But what, specifically, are the difficulties facing the COE today? First, with regard to grievance cases it is clear that the Committee is largely ineffectual. Frequently it cannot deal with cases submitted because not all parties to the cases are members of the AAA, and thus are in no sense under AAA "jurisdiction." Moreover, when the Committee does accept cases, either the COE or the Board of Directors (to which it makes recommendations on cases) operate so slowly that the cases "pass into history" before effective AAA action can be taken; the parties usually settle (or not) their own grievances in one way or another.

This delay is caused by, among other things, a complicated, cumbersome and time-consuming set of case review and investigation procedures, and by the fact that there is a turnover of 40% in the memberships of both the COE and Board of Directors each year. The latter creates continuity and communication problems, making it difficult to coordinate action on cases either within the COE or between the COE and the Board of Directors. The delays are exacerbated by the fact that roughly one-third to one-half of the Committee work is done by mail and/or telephone, both of which can be awkward and slow. There are also delays caused by parties to the grievances.

Such delay in action suggests that the COE is itself being unethical (or at least unfair) in misleading the membership into thinking that it can resolve their grievances (i.e., dispense some form of justice).

A related problem is that the COE and Board of Directors have no "teeth." The AAA does not license its members or have quality control over them; hence it lacks the authority to punish members for unethical conduct, even if it had the investigative resources to prove allegations of such conduct (which it usually does not). Furthermore, it is clear historically that both the COE and Board of Directors are loath to disrupt collegiality by publicly denouncing the activities of colleagues; they would also be risking lawsuits by said colleagues. Thus, no teeth, no bite. The only definitive AAA sanction of a member I am aware of was in 1919 when Franz Boas was censured, stripped of his membership in the Association's governing Council, and threatened with expulsion from the AAA (because of his publication in *The Nation* of a statement alleging that he had proof that some anthropologists were acting as spies for the U.S. government in foreign countries) (Boas 1919; Stocking 1968:273 passim).

Most cases are simply terminated somewhere along the line. At least one anthropologist has suggested that the COE was actually originated as a convenient device for ensuring that serious cases of unethical behavior would be dumped before they could reach public attention and create problems for the reputation of the Association (Anonymous, personal communication). While this is unlikely, it is certainly true that the complex sets of procedures by which cases must be handled serve to prevent timely action.

Another major problem is that the Association's Principles of Professional Responsibility (our current code of ethics) grew out of the climate of a very unpopular war, and it is directed more to the ethical problems of that era than to those of today. While it is adequate for some purposes, it is woefully inadequate for dealing with the many diverse ethical problems that confront anthropologists working in the wide variety of nonacademic contexts they do today. I doubt that any single code can address all these "special context" problems.

I estimate that since its inception in 1969, the COE has spent at least half of its time developing and continually revising the Principles of Professional Responsibility, the Role and Function of the Committee on Ethics, and the Rules and Procedures under which the committee operates. This appears to be a never-ending process, as it probably should be.

This, as well as the matters discussed earlier, raises the serious question of what the COE's role and function should be (if anything). Should it handle grievance cases at all, or should it confine itself to activities and publications designed to educate anthropologists on matters of ethics?

There is, however, another more fundamental question: who does or should the COE represent and serve? Should it serve only members of the Association as at present, or all anthropologists (many or most of whom are not members of the Association)? For that matter, who should the Association itself serve? Peter Hammond raised this issue eloquently in the October 1980 *Anthropology Newsletter* (Hammond 1980).

With regard to the COE (and AAA) my own recommendation is that they should represent and serve all anthropologists, in whatever specific professions they happen to be; if they don't, the COE and AAA may shrivel away of their own accord. I think, in this light, that the AAA should develop a new, very general, code of ethics that is relevant to all professional anthropologists; it should set general guidelines for anthropological ethics, and not get bogged down in attempting to deal with the ever-increasing myriad of special context problems. It seems appropriate that these latter problems be addressed in more specialized codes of ethics that may be adopted by more specialized anthropological organizations to suit their specific needs. I think this is a recognition of reality.

I also believe that the COE should continue to receive grievance cases; however, it should not do so with the intent or understanding that it will in any way resolve the issue(s) involved. It should be made clear to all that neither the COE nor the Board of Directors can effectively pretend to be judicial bodies, nor can they impose discipline on anyone (cf. Colson 1985).

Then why receive cases? One important reason is that when cases go before the COE, peer pressure is presumably exerted on the parties involved, and this may be very useful in helping them to resolve the issue(s) in contention. Such pressure might be exerted, at least minimally, by simply notifying all relevant parties that the COE is discussing the case internally in order to gain increased understanding of current issues in anthropological ethics, and that the parties are encouraged to send the COE their viewpoints on the issue(s). (COE publication of such cases might be politically and/or legally impossible in the short

run, but could be done after the passage of an appropriate amount of time if sufficiently disguised with regard to names, dates, places, and so on).

A second reason for reviewing grievance cases is that anthropologists, like everyone else, often have need of a forum in which to air their grievances; this is a psychological need that the AAA should not ignore. Those who consider themselves first and foremost as anthropologists may strongly desire such a national forum, even though they will usually have other forums in which to vent their grievances as well. In short, it seems to me that the AAA has a responsibility to at least listen to those who consider themselves to be anthropologists, whether they are members of the AAA or not.

A third reason for considering cases is that it may, under some circumstances, be possible for the COE to give either formal or informal advice to the parties involved. While in many cases the giving of advice on ethics could incur lawsuits against the AAA, this is not always the case; there are at least a few cases in which advice is all that is wanted or needed. Requests for advice will presumably come to the COE prior to whatever action is taken by the person requesting the advice, and therefore giving such advice can be very helpful (as was the case in an inquiry to the COE in 1981).

The giving of advice could be a major and important function of the COE (or its individual members) if ways can be worked out to protect the AAA from lawsuit; this is because anthropologists often do not know where to turn for reasonable advice and discussion on ethical matters, and they would like to be able to turn to a respected body that has some experience in such matters. Surely it should be legally safe to provide advice that is clearly labeled as "informal, nonauthoritative, and without suggestion that it should necessarily be taken." Advice given a priori may often prevent the occurrence of ethical problems arising a posteriori.

A fourth, and very important reason that the COE should receive cases, is that this is a good way for the AAA to gather information and keep abreast of the current state of ethical issues in anthropology. This information can be used by the COE to help raise the awareness of all anthropologists about the kinds of ethical dilemmas they may sometimes expect to encounter, and to offer advice on how the dilemmas might be avoided or resolved.

This educational function of the COE is almost certainly its most important task (see Colson 1985). Moreover, the feasibility of performing this task has already been demonstrated, in part, by the regularly published "Ethical Dilemmas" column in the *Anthropology Newsletter.* Other kinds of contributions can be made in the educational arena as well.

Notes

Acknowledgments. I gratefully acknowledge the members of the Committee on Ethics with whom I served in 1980-81 for their contributions of ideas, references, and editorial suggestions: Asen Balikci, Judith T. Irvine, Sue-Ellen Jacobs, Larissa Lomnitz, June

Macklin, Benjamin D. Paul, Louise M. Robbins, and James W. VanStone. I also received helpful information and suggestions from several previous COE members: David F. Aberle, Gerald D. Berreman, David M. Schneider, Louise E. Sweet, and Eric R. Wolfe. Other significant contributors were Joan Cassell and June Helm. I am especially grateful to Michael Moerrnan for giving me material and insights regarding the Thailand controversy.

This paper was originally written in 1980 when I was a member of the Committee on Ethics; it was written for, and at the request of, the COE, and was delivered at the 79th Annual Meeting of the AAA (December 1980) but not published. This revised version, while somewhat updated, has not been changed dramatically. I have attempted to provide a brief historical outline rather than a thorough scholarly history of the COE.

/1/ Deitchman (1976) and Wax (1978) deny that Project Camelot involved secret research, and claim that all research documents were in the public domain.

/2/ See especially Section 1: "The Social Responsibility of the Anthropologist," edited by Gerald D. Berreman, pp. 5-62, in *To See Ourselves: Anthropology and Modern Social Issues*, edited by Thomas Weaver (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1973).

References Cited

Aberle, David F., and David M. Schneider
1969 Report of the Ethics Committee. *Newsletter of the American Anthropological Association* 10(4):3-6.

American Anthropological Association
1969 Statement of the Executive Board of the AAA. *Bulletins of the AAA: Annual Report.* Reprinted in *To See Ourselves: Anthropology and Modern Social Issues.* Thomas Weaver, ed. P. 54. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1973.
1971a Association Affairs: Wallace Voted President-Elect. *Newsletter of the American Anthropological Association* 12(1): 1.
1971b Membership of Ad Hoc Committee on the Thailand Controversy. *Newsletter of the American Anthropological Association* 12(4): 1.
1983 Council Meets Late into Night. *Anthropology Newsletter* 24(l):1, 4-6.

Beals, Ralph L., and the Executive Board
1967 Background Information on Problems of Anthropological Research and Ethics. *American Anthropological Association Fellow Newsletter* 8(l):1-13. 1970 Letter to the President of the American Anthropological Association, George Foster, May 1, 1970. (Unpublished, in the possession of Michael Moerman, UCLA)

Boas, Franz
1919 Correspondence: Scientists as Spies. *The Nation* 109. Reprinted in *To See Ourselves: Anthropology and Modern Social Issues.* Thomas Weaver, ed. Pp. 51-52. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1973.

Chis, Alex, Barbara Chis, Rich Feigenberg, Paul Glover, Allen Myers, Carla Riehle, and Tommye Wiese
1970 Counterinsurgency Research on Campus Exposed. *The Student Mobilizer* 3(4). Washington, D.C.: Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam.

Colson, Elizabeth
1985 Ethics and Codes of Ethics. *Anthropology Newsletter* 26(3):20, 13.

Committee on Ethics
1970a Letter to the Executive Board. *Newsletter of the American Anthropological Association* 11(9). Reprinted in *To See Ourselves: Anthropology and Modern Social Issues.* Thomas Weaver, ed. Pp. 54-55. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1973.
1970b Principles of Professional Responsibility and Role and Function of the Committee on Ethics. *Newsletter of the American Anthropological Association* 11(9).

Davenport, William, David Olmsted, Margaret Mead, and Ruth Freed
1971 Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to Evaluate the Controversy concerning Anthropological Activities in Relation to Thailand, to the Executive Board of the American Anthropological Association, September 27, 1971.

Deitchman, Seymour T.
1976 *The Best-Laid Schemes: A Tale of Social Research and Bureaucracy.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

Hammond, Peter B.
1980 Correspondence: Reinventing the AAA? *Anthropology Newsletter* 21(8):2.

Horowitz, Irving L., ed.
1967 *The Rise and Fall of Project Camelot: Studies in the Relationship Between Social Science and Practical Politics.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

Isaacs, Stephen
1971 Anthropologists Battle Over Role in Thailand. *Los Angeles Times,* November 25, 1971. Part I-A.

Leeds, Anthony
1969 Ethics Report Criticized. *Newsletter of the American Anthropological Association* 10(6). Reprinted in *To See Ourselves: Anthropology and Modern Social Issues.* Thomas Weaver, ed. Pp. 49-50. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1973.

Moerman, Michael
1971 Clarification in the Thailand Case. *Newsletter of the American Anthropological Association* 12(l):9-11.

Stocking, George
1968 *Race, Culture and Evolution.* Glencoe: The Free Press.

Wax, Murray L.
1978 Review of The Best Laid Schemes, by S. J. Dietchman. *Human Organization* 37(4):400-408.

Weaver, Thomas, ed.
1973 *To See Ourselves: Anthropology and Modern Social Issues.* Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.

CHAPTER 3

Cases and Solutions

Sue-Ellen Jacobs

The first 12 cases are presented in a format that asks the reader to solve each dilemma. The solutions used by the anthropologists will follow. Some readers disagreed with the "solution" presented by given fieldworkers. Their comments are also included.

During the time that Sue-Ellen Jacobs was editing the "Ethical Dilemmas" column in the *Anthropology Newsletter,* a number of people wrote to her (and some called her) regarding specific problems they had encountered that raised general ethical issues. Each issue was officially addressed by the American Anthropological Association, through the Principles of Professional Responsibility or by resolutions passed by the Association during the preceding 15 years. Nevertheless, it appeared that it was often difficult for individuals to readily resolve problems in the field or in other circumstances that involved colleagues. Cases 10, 11, and 12 deal with problems between anthropologists; as such, they represent classic ethical issues faced by anthropologists during the past 50 years.

The cases in Chapter 4 raise questions concerning possible courses of behavior. Comments by anthropologists and ethicists recruited by Joan Cassell for publication in *Anthropology Newsletter* follow each case.

The names of the anthropologists in each dilemma have been changed and identifying details have been altered or omitted.

Case 1: To Medicate or Not to Medicate

Case 2: Who Owns the Field Notes?

Case 3: Witness to Murder

Case 4: Hiding a Suspect

Case 5: Anonymity Declined

Case 6: Anonymity Revisited

Case 7: Robbers, Rogues, or Revolutionaries: Handling Armed Intimidation

Case 8: The Case of the Missing Artifact

Case 9: "Hot" Gifts

Case 10: Professor Purloins Student's Work: Her Recourse?

Case 11: The Case of the Falsified Data

Case 12: Possible Conflict of Interest

CHAPTER 4

Cases and Comments

Joan Cassell

Case 13: The Suspect Questionnaire

Case 14: The Hazardous Consent Forms

Case 15: The Case of the Egyptian Travel Agent

Case 16: What's in That Bottle? What's in That Pipe?

Case 17: The Case of the Damaged Baby

Case 18: "A Little Thing Like Plagiarism"

Case 19: Backstage Maneuvers

Case 20: Power to the People

Case 21: Ethical Dilemmas and Moral Responsibilities

Case 22: Forbidden Knowledge

Case 23: Slow Code

Case 24: Site Unseen

Case 25: The Runaway Wife

CHAPTER 5

Some Experiences in Teaching Ethics in Fieldwork Classes

Sue-Ellen Jacobs

One of the best ways to encourage students to question research motives and procedures--their own and those of the anthropologists whose works they study--is to embed this learning in the fieldwork experience.

Since 1968, 1 have taught at least one experiential field course each academic year, designed to involve students in the life of at least one other person for a specific period: during this time, students question that person about their life, family, experiences, beliefs, and feelings. The purpose of these person-to-person exercises is to augment, in a dramatic way, the reading and lecture materials covered in class, and to emphasize to students, through their own personal experience, the value of the subject matter and the importance of ethical issues.

Elsewhere, I have described long-term, goal-oriented projects where students worked under the supervision of community and faculty (Jacobs 1979, 1974a, 1974b); because those research experiences were tied to concrete action projects, students were involved in ethical issues concerning research and practice throughout the course of their participation in the field projects. I concentrate here on two shorter field projects, assigned in courses taught at the University of Washington.

Requirements for Research Involving Human Subjects at the University of Washington

In common with other institutions receiving federal funds, the University of Washington has specific guidelines that must be followed when conducting research involving human beings (subjects). When fieldwork projects designed by individual students vary, each must be approved on an individual basis. When a course with a specific fieldwork requirement is offered, however, students in that course are covered by the course application as approved by the Human Subjects Research Committee (HSRC). In the Department of Anthropology, each application is reviewed by a subcommittee; this applies to the field projects of individual students and to projects designed by professors as a course requirement. If the subcommittee members are confident that protective measures meet the requirements of the University of Washington Human Subjects Review Committee, they will approve the application; if not, they forward the application to the all-university committee. It takes a few weeks to several months for the HSRC to process an application.

Ethical Issues Addressed in a Basic Kinship Course

/1/

For several years I taught a kinship course that required graduate and advanced undergraduate students to conduct a field project involving the collection of kinship data from someone whose first language was not English. Students found the individuals with whom they worked either among fellow students, or in the community.

On the second day of class, after a brief discussion of the assigned readings in the kinship texts, I talked about general ethical issues discussed within the American Anthropological Association and other professional environments, passed out the AAA Principles of Professional Responsibility, described the research requirements of the University of Washington, and distributed the application forms for the HSRC. Although the class project had been approved in advance, I wanted the students to think about how to answer each question on the form, to gain experience in filling out such forms and to write a draft consent form. To do this, students had to think about practical issues involved in talking with someone whose first language is not English in a way that would provide them with basic knowledge of the kinship systems used by that person. At the next class meeting, we agreed on the answers to the questions and together wrote a final consent form; then we discussed the reasons for choosing specific answers to the questions.

Students were often disturbed by the process of writing the consent form, filling in the application, and by the ethical issues involved in conducting the research described on the

forms. They started discussing among themselves the ethical implications of collecting, what one student called "esoteric things like kinship labels." Initially, students often found the procedures to be an annoyance, asking why they should have do this for something so "nonthreatening as kinship terms." At the beginning of the term, during this period of HSRC application preparation, it was initially difficult for students to understand that kinship research may cause the people studied to experience stress. At this stage in their careers, graduate and upper division students have not yet teamed that collecting kinship terms can lead a researcher well beyond bits of linguistic and cognitive data into sensitive details about family matters. Nevertheless, they went through the exercise and then began to search for someone they could work with. They were required to find their collaborator by the end of the second week of classes at the latest (the University of Washington quarter system has ten weeks per term) The consent form contains so much information about the possible harmful and other aspects of the project that on occasion people who are going to work with a student become intimidated by it. Despite this, over the course of four years, only two people changed their minds about working with a student after reading the consent form.

Students used a standard format for eliciting kinship terms in their informant's native language (later, they asked for the English words for these terms, as a means of cross-checking their understanding of the non-English terms). Meeting regularly with their consultants for these discussions, the students began to develop a sense of closeness to them. By midterm, they had to give a progress report to the class. At this time, they began to talk about the ethical dilemmas they were encountering. Some of the students wanted to stop their consultants from talking about their families, because all the student was "supposed to get is kinship information." At this point, a deep appreciation of kinship studies begins to develop: they now understand, in an experiential way, that kinship is about families. They begin to understand the contextual value of kinship studies, the ethical issues such research involves, and possible ways to solve certain ethical dilemmas.

The students were graded on a paper based on the field project. By the end of the quarter, they could always present a good description of the individual and that person's place within the family, as well as data on how residence units are customarily formed, the organization of the extended family, and many other standard kinship questions. Genealogical and terminological charts were attached. Often students were given personal information that they did not use because, although they believed it might increase understanding of the person's kinship organization, they felt inclusion of this information might be harmful to their informant/friend. Students were learning in a classroom situation that making judgments about the use of information is part of being an ethically responsible anthropologist. They also learned that the least threatening field project or subject may create stress for informants . . . and even some devastating complications, in terms of individual family structure or individual sense of self, when research inadvertently calls forth unhappy memories from one's informants.

Ethical Issues in Life History Research

Students who take this course typically expect to learn intimate details about a particular person. The course grows directly from the three year Washington Women's Heritage Project, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. That project was designed to document, through oral history interviews and collection of secondary sources, women's contributions to Washington State. The students (whose ranks range from second year undergraduate to advanced graduate students) are told on the first day of class that their work will be a major contribution to a growing state archive. They are informed that by staying in the course they agree to assume responsibility for conducting an accurate and complete in-depth interview of one of the women listed in the Heritage Project file. Although students may choose to interview someone who is not listed in these files, they are discouraged from interviewing a close friend or relative for their first experience doing life history research.

The students are then given copies of the HSRC application and approved consent form to read and are informed about various codes of professional conduct that apply to research with human beings (subjects). Their first reading assignment includes chapters in several course texts that discuss professional ethics in life history research. They are instructed to read from the sources in the following order: (1) pp. 143-155 in L. L. Langness and Gelya Frank, *Lives: An Anthropological Approach to Biography* (Novato, CA: Chandler and Sharp, 198 1); (2) the entire handbook by Sue-Ellen Jacobs, Susan Armitage, and Katherine Anderson, *A Handbook for Life History Research* (University of Washington: Washington Women's Heritage Project, 1982); (3) chapter 2 on "Interviewing" in Edward D. Ives, *The Tape-Recorded Interview: A Manual for Field Workers in Folklore and Oral History* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1974); (4) then, "Ethical and Moral Concerns" (pp. 117-143) in Langness and Frank. They are also required to study the interview schedule they will be using. /2/

In contrast to the kinship course, the focus in the life history course is to get as much personal information as possible from the person who is interviewed. We are specifically interested in the women, their experiences, their impressions, their feelings, their life stories. An open-ended interview format is used to elicit these. When the students have understood that they are going to make a "real" contribution to women's history sources, they become thoroughly engaged in discussing the ethical problems they might face when they are working with their informants. Their concerns range from "touching on taboo subjects, like abortion back then" to "what if I don't get the whole story right?"

Each student is required to conduct a minimum of three one-hour interviews in the person's home. More often than not, students wind up with five hours of taped interview. They must then properly identify, prepare an index for, and summarize each tape. They also must prepare a brief (10- to 20-page) life history of their person, presenting a copy of this to their subject and to me. The life history summary, along with all the materials collected by the student and a release form signed by the interviewee, goes into the University of Washington Manuscripts and Archives division of the graduate library.

Students give progress reports on their work with their interviewee at least every other week. They discuss problems in obtaining the kinds of information they "need," mistakes they have made during the interviews, concerns they have about public access to the information contained on their tapes, and ways to "protect" their (now) friends from harm that might come from unconscious or unwitting misuse of the taped interviews. Soon after they begin taping the interviews, most students realize that harm may come to the person they are studying if the collected information is not handled with care. In class discussions their comments begin to reflect a concern for research that makes others vulnerable, and they note that this vulnerability can exist in all phases of research: data collection, analysis, storage, and reporting. By the end of the quarter, it is not uncommon for students to have erased portions of tapes--usually, but not always, after having discussed this possibility with their interviewees--because they fear that in some way these sections might cause later embarrassment to "their" person.

By the end of the quarter, it is always true that the hardest task they accomplish is writing the life history summary. Knowing that the person they have interviewed must pass on this summary before it can be presented in class, they work very hard to present a "true but positive" condensation of perhaps 80 years of another's life story. Every time I have taught this course (seven times as of 1986) at least one student has declared, "If only I could use the materials she told me off tape and in confidence, then I could explain better why [or howl that part of her life was like it was! Without that information you can't really understand her!" When this is stated with exasperation by one student, most of the others nod or otherwise indicate their support and understanding for the frustration caused by adherence to the confidentiality demanded by both the human subjects research consent form and by their own concern for the welfare of the person they studied.

Conclusion

I conclude by noting that Cassell and I are emphatic about our belief that one of the most effective ways to teach ethics is in the context of practice. In this way, students are faced with the ethical dilemmas associated with research and actively seek the guidance provided by the course materials, their classmates, and their teachers. Although courses devoted entirely to ethical issues in social science can be brilliant, stimulating, and useful, there is always the disturbing possibility that these will appeal most to the students who least need them. This is why we both believe that faculty would do well to impart ethics as an integral part of anthropological methods.

Notes

/1/ An earlier version of this, and the previous part of chapter 5 of this handbook, were read at the 40th Annual Meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology in March 1980. The paper was entitled "The Human Subjects Review Committee Experience for Students."

/2/ A copy of the most current syllabus for this course is available to those who request it.

References Cited

Jacobs, Sue-Ellen
1974a Action and Advocacy Anthropology. *Human Organization* 33:209-215.
1974b Doing it Our Way and Mostly For Our Own. *Human Organization* 33:380-382.
1979 En Gracias de la Raza: An Approach to Educational Training. In *Culture and the Bilingual Classroom.* Henry Toffes-Trueba, ed. College Park, MD: Newberry House.

CHAPTER 6

How to Hold a Workshop on Ethical Problems in Fieldwork

Joan Cassell

One way to encourage reflection on the variety of ethical and moral issues that can develop in anthropological research is to hold a workshop on ethical problems in fieldwork. For purposes of definition, in this chapter, we broadly define fieldwork as research which utilizes the following methods: ethnographic fieldwork, community study, participant observation, unstructured face-to-face interviewing, and nonobtrusive observation.

Personnel

Organizers. The workshop can be planned and carried out by students, faculty, and/or anthropological, sociological, educational, and other researchers with interest and experience in addressing questions of fieldwork ethics.

Panelists. Panelists should be fieldworkers with at least one year's experience in conducting fieldwork, more if possible.

Invite five to seven panelists to present case studies and to raise critical ethical issues. Some panelists might present case studies and position papers, or they might present cases and questions for the audience to respond to. It is helpful if one or two of the panelists are particularly knowledgeable about ethics: you might recruit a philosopher, theologian, rabbi, priest, minister, or other ethicist who can comment on the presentations from the viewpoint of ethics rather than fieldwork. A thoughtful and articulate ethics consultant will add a valuable extra dimension to the proceedings. Try to arrange matters so that the strongest, liveliest--and perhaps most controversial--speakers are scheduled to say the most.

Moderator. It is important to recruit a strong moderator, someone who is able to encourage members of the audience to share opinions and fieldwork experiences--and equally able to discourage hostile, irrelevant, and long-winded comments. The moderator can also present a case study; presenters can also comment on someone else's case study.

Audience. The audience should include some researchers who have conducted fieldwork; their questions, comments, and ideas make for a lively and thought provoking session.

Locations and Publicity

The workshop can be scheduled for national, regional, or local meetings of professional societies. It can be held at a college or university, medical center, or other research/teaching facility as part of scheduled classes, in-service education, or as an extracurricular activity.

If the workshop is scheduled as part of a regular class session, make sure to put up some notices so that interested outsiders can attend. An ethics workshop can be successful when scheduled as part of a larger event. Still, it is best to post notices beforehand, or send announcements to local newspapers or journals. Publicize the workshop and the names of panelists as far in advance as possible and make it clear that audience participation is welcome.

Presentations

Ask four or five of the fieldworkers to be ready to present an ethical dilemma from their own personal fieldwork experience or that of someone they know. The dilemma can involve the conduct of fieldwork, relations with students conducting fieldwork, relations with other researchers and other colleagues in the field, problems in submitting or publishing research results, and relations with those studied before, during, and after research. Presenters should feel free to conceal or disguise identifying information if they wish to do so.

Panelists should be asked to present their case studies simply, in story fashion, taking 10 to 15 minutes. Another panelist should be asked to deliver a five to ten minute commentary on the first person's case study. It is useful if the commentator has read or heard about the case study before it is presented at the workshop, but, since this is often difficult to arrange, it is not absolutely necessary if the invited participants and panelists are lively, intelligent, and verbal. One caution: *as organizer, do your very best to learn in advance what &lemmas your panelists plan to present.* You will find that some of the panelists may have chosen boring or inappropriate cases (for example, those dealing with research which cannot be categorized as fieldwork, or with dilemmas which cannot be classified as ethical in nature). Try to encourage people to change their projected presentation if you deem them inappropriate for the workshop. In lieu of this, it would be wise to be safe and ask for more case studies than you will probably need: ask four or five people to be ready to present; you will probably only need three or four of these.

Sometimes an interesting dilemma can be found in the anthropological literature. This can be presented by a panelist as briefly or elaborately as necessary. Panelists and audience can then be asked how they might solve the dilemma. Then the author's solution, or lack of solution, can be presented and discussed. if the workshop organizers have difficulty finding enough experienced fieldworkers with dilemmas to present, there are two fine books of case studies they can use: *Ethical Dilemmas in Anthropological Inquiry: A Case Book* by

G. N. Appell (African, Studies Association, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA: Crossroads Press, 1978); and *Ethics and Anthropology: Dilemmas in Fieldwork* by M. A. Rynkiewich and J. P. Spradley (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1976). It is much more effective, however, to have fieldworkers present their own personal experiences. These have an interest and immediacy that is lacking in relating the experiences of others. Also, audiences often ask for additional information on the dilemma or problems presented which can be given only when panelists speak from personal experience.

Format

Schedule the workshop to last about one and a half to three hours. Again, letus emphasize how important it is to have a strong moderator who can involve the audience without slowing the pace. Cassell has found that the workshops are most effective when everyone, panel and audience, is seated in a rough circle. This seems to encourage participation from the audience rather than having them merely watch the panelists perform. (Don't try a circle if you have more than about 35 people in the audience, however; a circle can be unwieldy with a much larger group.) To repeat an earlier point, try to have a few more case studies available than you think you will need, just in case you find your audience has little to say.

At the beginning of the workshop the moderator should introduce the panelists, briefly outlining their research experience, and then ask the first panelist to present a case study. The order of presentation and who comments on whose cases can be arranged before the session by the moderator; complex and formal arrangements are unnecessary. After each case study is presented, a commentator should briefly discuss the issues raised by this particular case. The audience should then be encouraged to discuss the case and the issues.

During the general discussion, led by the moderator, panel members should also discuss and comment on the case. If you have chosen a good ethics consultant, you will find that she or he often has something of interest and value to say about each presentation. When the discussion lags, or gets rambling and repetitive, the moderator should invite the next panelist to present the second dilemma, with a comment by another panelist.

When members of the audience have had extensive fieldwork experience, the moderator should allow the presentations to act primarily as eliciting devices to encourage the audience to share fieldwork ideas and experiences. Some of the most interesting and provocative material can come from the audience. Sometimes a small audience can be very lively and involved and want to discuss the issues as long as possible. At other times, even a large audience may grow lethargic and find little of interest to offer. This is when a stronger moderator is essential: the moderator must cut off discussion when it grows unproductive and, if necessary, end a workshop early if it seems to have lost all life. Another strategy for a workshop that has lost its impetus is for the moderator to arrange in advance for a panelist to present a short lecture or summary to end the session when and if proceedings seem to be lagging. This might be done by the ethics consultant or a particularly verbal and experienced fieldworker. The final point, then, is *try to end the workshop a little bit before both the audience antipanelists have decided that the whole thing is over, so that interest and enthusiasm are still high.*

CONTRIBUTORS

Joan Cassell is Research Fellow at the Research Institute for the Study of Man in New York City.

James N. Hill is Professor and Chair of the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Los Angeles, California.

Sue-Ellen Jacobs is Associate Professor in the Department of Women Studies and Adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Washington, Seattle, Washington.

Murray L. Wax is Professor in the Department of Sociology at Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri