Address
Weaver-Tremblay Award 2009

Engaging Engagement: Critical Reflections on a Canadian Tradition

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Abstract: In this revised address for the 2009 Weaver-Tremblay Award, I critically examine the notion of "engaged" anthropology as it has emerged, especially in the United States, and I argue that engagement has been a long-standing feature of Canadian anthropology which predates this contemporary development. I do so by briefly reviewing some of the major initiatives in Canadian anthropology, and especially applied anthropology during the 1970s and 1980s, and suggest that in Canada we did not experience the divisive debate over theoretical versus applied anthropology that characterized the U.S. and rendered applied anthropology a weaker sub-discipline in the eyes of many. I conclude by arguing for a need to celebrate how Canadian anthropology has been on the leading edge of engaged anthropology for decades.

Keywords: engaged anthropology, applied anthropology, Aboriginal peoples, ethics, Canada, U.S.

Résumé : Dans cette allocution de remerciement pour le prix Weaver-Tremblay 2009, révisée, je soumets à un examen critique la notion d'anthropologie « engagée » telle qu'elle a émergé, spécialement aux États-Unis, et j'amène l'argument que l'engagement a été une caractéristique de longue date de l'anthropologie canadienne, antérieure à cette évolution contemporaine. Pour ce faire, je passe brièvement en revue certaines des initiatives principales de l'anthropologie canadienne, et spécialement l'anthropologie appliquée pendant les années 1970 et 1980, et je suggère qu'au Canada, nous n'avons pas connu le débat antagonisant entre anthropologies théorique et appliquée qui a été marquant aux États-Unis, et qui a affaibli la discipline de l'anthropologie appliquée aux yeux de plusieurs. En conclusion, j'allègue que nous avons besoin de célébrer combien l'anthropologie canadienne a été à l'avant-garde de l'anthropologie engagée pendant des décennies.

Mots-clés : anthropologie engagée, anthropologie appliquée, peuples autochtones, éthique, Canada, États-Unis

Introduction

In Canada, we have a long standing tradition of "engaged anthropology." This tradition is best reflected in work with Aboriginal peoples but is by no means exclusive to this work, or work in Canada for that matter. Engaged anthropology is so embedded within Canadian anthropology that it rarely attracts commentary. John Bennett has argued with respect to anthropology in the U.S. (2005:1), that "in order for cultural anthropology to reorient itself toward the historical present and the changing status of former tribal people, it had to create a separate discipline called applied anthropology," which it did starting in the 1940s. I argue that anthropologists in Canada, while flirting with the idea of applied anthropology, never really embraced it as a separate sub-discipline as it has been in the U.S. Rather, I suggest that what is today referred to as "engaged" anthropology is, for Canada, nothing new, and remains a part of the Canadian anthropological canon.[1]

Foundations of Engagement

For me, the hey-day for applied anthropology in Canada was in the 1970s and 1980s, and this laid the foundation for the kind of engaged anthropology that I consider in this paper. First at the University of Waterloo as an undergraduate, and then as a graduate student at the University of Manitoba in the mid- to late 1970s, my mentors, Sally Weaver, John Matthiasson and Skip Koolage, argued that, in order to be a good applied anthropologist, one first had to be a good anthropologist, an idea shared at that time with many influential anthropologists south of the border.[2] They saw applied anthropology as an advanced credential, an elite sub-field that required both a theoretical and a methodological sophistication in combination with sensibilities of ethics and accountability, all wrapped up in a blanket of humility. Indeed, this was part of the anthropological Zeitgeist of that era, and others, such as Milton Freeman and Richard Salisbury and, in

the U.S., John Bennett, were making the same argument that applied anthropology should spring out of serious scholarship, not be divorced from it. And why not, given that some of the earliest proponents of the field included luminaries such as Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson (Bennett 2005). I was reminded by Sally, John and Skip that the currency of applied anthropology was real people and real lives, and not theoretical arguments debated among scholars, and so we had damn well better know what we are doing before we engage with those lives in an effort to make things better. I took these lessons to heart, and I took them with me into my Ph.D. program.

As a graduate student at the University of Connecticut in the early 1980s, I had the opportunity to learn a great deal about emerging trends in U.S. applied and applied medical anthropology from my advisor, Bert Pelto, and from Steve Schensul and Jay Schensul, who were already fixtures on the U.S. applied anthropology scene. For my term paper in Jay Schensul's graduate seminar in applied anthropology, I decided to write on the Canadian applied anthropology tradition. Since there was relatively little written on this at that time, and much was grey literature and difficult to access in that era in the U.S., I took the step of writing to all of those names that by now were so familiar to me, including Sally Weaver and Marc-Adélard (Adé) Tremblay. First, you will be pleased to know that virtually everyone I wrote to replied—and remember, this was the era before personal computers and email! Second, I was taken aback by their collective characterization of the field in Canada which contrasted with trends emerging in the U.S. There was one quote in particular that I still recall that seemed to capture the Canadian perspective, and which has guided me all these years, that Canadian applied anthropology represented "a sustained critique of society." What a revelation! And what a difference from the approach in my Connecticut applied anthropology courses. Steve Schensul and Jay Schensul were, by this time, promoting their "tool-kit" approach to applied anthropology which, along with Bert Pelto's drive to make all his graduate students skilled in quantitative methods and statistics, and master "rapid ethnographic assessment," was emphasizing a methodological sophistication that was somewhat unparalleled in the field. But none of this jibed with the critical and inherently theoretical subtext of my Canadian quote, nor with the detailed policy analysis for which Sally Weaver and Adé Tremblay were famous. I realized then that we had a very different anthropology tradition in Canada.

Anthropological Engagement: New Name, Old Approach

"Applied," " activist," "advocacy" and even "engaged" anthropology have a longstanding presence in Canada. But these have generally been done in a curiously Canadian way: legally, respectfully, often quietly, almost apologetically. In my chapter in the book Noel Dyck and I edited on *Anthropology, Public Policy, and Native Peoples in Canada* (Waldram 1993), I argued that those engaged in advocacy must never lose sight of the fact that the resolution of any issues in which we involve ourselves on behalf of others will necessarily affect us differently. Those of us whose research has taken us beyond our home communities can and will return to our own backyards, our own lives, relatively unscathed by the experience; those with whom we work will live their future in the context of what we were able to help them accomplish, or the damage, inadvertent for the most part, related to that involvement. Canadian anthropologists have generally avoided the kind of affective transference that characterizes the so-called "militant" anthropologist; we eschew the notion of universal social and ethical responsibility, remain committed in varying degrees to forms of cultural relativism, and recognize that community issues are *their* issues, not ours, to be resolved by them, not us. In Canada we seem less likely to meaningfully "speak truth to power" because we recognize the risks, that we can create a great deal more problems for those on whose behalf we claim to be speaking or acting, while we return to the safe comforts of our homes and jobs.

"Engaged anthropology" is all the rage in the U.S. today. As Louise Lamphere recently suggested, anthropology in the U.S. needs to do three things "as we *become* increasingly engaged with the world" (2003:153, emphasis added): improve anthropology's public image, continue to change anthropology's relations with communities "by viewing them as equal partners," and do research on critical social issues. She published this observation in 2003. In the American Anthropologist in 2006, Barbara Rylko-Bauer, Merrill Singer, and John Van Willigen—all established U.S.-based applied anthropologists—likewise argued that "over the past decade, there has been *increasing awareness within anthropology in general* about the need for a more engaged role in both academia and the public arena ... [and] a sizable number of anthropologists have been turning their gaze toward pressing social issues" (2006:178, emphasis added). They further argue "for the repositioning of applied anthropology, by suggesting that it serve as one of the frameworks for the discipline's goal of pragmatic engagement." Although they

don't acknowledge it, they are really speaking for anthropology in the U.S., and not beyond where other national traditions may well differ. Here in Canada there has been very little parallel discussion. Here, it seems, there is no need to argue for a repositioning. Further, these authors argue "that if anthropology is truly committed to more than just engaged rhetoric, then praxis and application must play a more central role within the discipline." Yet these authors fail to note an important article on anthropological praxis by Wayne Warry of McMaster University, published back in 1992 in *Human Organization*, the journal of the Society for Applied Anthropology. Warry chastised the central figures in applied anthropology for their lack of reference to praxis theory. He went considerably beyond what these other authors viewed as "engaged anthropology," by reconfirming the link between theory and practice and, as importantly, advocating that research participants be brought into the research as theory-builders and not just sources of data. In calling for "enlightened advocacy," Warry argued that "a praxis approach recognizes that the method of applied anthropology must resonate with its theoretical subject matter" (1992:161). A full decade before Lamphere wrote her piece, and some 15 years before Rylko-Bauer and colleagues wrote theirs, Warry argued that "theory ... must be created from communicative action that involves participants as equal partners in research ... A praxis approach would involve study participants as equal partners in open discussion of theoretical assumptions that underpin the search for pragmatic solutions to everyday problems" (1992:156).

I would suggest that this link between theory and practice, of which Warry writes, has remained central to Canadian anthropological engagement since its early days. The idea of communities as partners, for instance, emerged formerly in the early 1980s here, with the concept of community-based research and then participatory-action research, and strategic grant initiatives funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). But even these initiatives built upon long-standing practices in our field. It is telling that these developments were spearheaded by anthropologists working with Canadian Aboriginal communities. At the same time in the U.S., research with American Indian communities had fallen out of vogue, in favour of off-shore, more theoretically focused research. Back in Canada, anthropologists working with Aboriginal peoples could not as easily escape the issues of poverty that dogged their participants' lives. Simply put, our Aboriginal research participants started showing up in our classes, critiquing our work, getting elected to political office, and taking control of the research process. Anthropology in Canada *had* to be engaged to remain viable. And it was.

Although the expression "engagement" has a fairly specific contemporary meaning, the fundamental idea behind it has been a feature of Canadian anthropology for decades and, in some ways, more than a century. Franz Boas, for instance, was involved in the work of a special committee of the British Association for the Advancement of Science designed to explore the living conditions of Aboriginal people in British Columbia in the late 1880s (Hedican 1995:15). The role of Boas in the emergence of Canadian anthropology has been well-documented by Regna Darnell (Darnell 2001), among others, although the applied side of his work, strictly speaking, has perhaps been overshadowed by his larger role in the formation of the Americanist tradition. Subsequent anthropological research designed to assist in policy development, particularly for Aboriginal peoples, in many ways became the impetus for the development of Canadian applied anthropology. Anthropologists more generally played an important role in policy formation, with Diamond Jenness' involvement in Indian and Inuit policy in the 1940s through 1960s perhaps leading the way. Jenness argued that Aboriginal people should be involved in policy development that affected them—a radical idea at the time—and he along with his staff, including Marius Barbeau, emerged as advocates for Aboriginal people, and engaged in protests against the banning of the potlatch and other ceremonies. In 1939 a group of anthropologists and historians came together in Toronto to discuss the current Indian situation, and one product of this meeting was advocating for the development of a federal Indian policy (Hedican 1995). In the 1950s and 1960s, community studies undertaken by anthropologists, especially in the developing north, were focused on policy recommendations regarding administration and economic development (Dyck and Waldram 1993:9).

Back in 1977, Elliott Leyton was already able to characterize Canadian anthropology precisely in terms of engagement with marginalized groups seeking to impact the wider society. University of British Columbia anthropologist Harry Hawthorn's monumental study of Canadian Indian policy, referred to colloquially as the "Hawthorn report," had been published in two volumes in 1966 and 1967, and included co-authors and pioneers of Canadian engaged anthropology, Adé Tremblay and Joan Ryan. Sally Weaver's own 1981 analysis of *Making Canadian Indian Policy* proved to be a landmark study in anthropological engagement with policy. The "golden era" of Canadian applied anthropology is clearly centred in the 1970s through 1980s, when anthropologists played central

roles in major national issues involving Aboriginal peoples, lands and resources. Anthropological involvement in the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry and hydro-electric projects in Quebec, my own work in Manitoba, extending through the travails of the Lubicon Lake First Nation of Alberta, and the efforts of Innu of Labrador to protect their rights in the face of development, firmly reminded us that Canadian anthropology could not detach from complex political issues. Admittedly, some of the "Canadian" anthropologists involved were actually foreign trained, and often immigrants to Canada, and the connection between the social activism emerging out of the Vietnam War and these very activist anthropological adventures is clear. But what these anthropologists did was engage with the idea of Canada and with the Canadian anthropological tradition, and, in so doing, became largely indistinguishable from it.

The Canadian Tradition of Engagement

To establish the nature of the Canadian tradition and to position some of our current debates over ethics, accountability, and engagement, I turn to a volume which, today, is unfortunately little known. For its time, however, it was seminal, and still represents an important document in the history of the Canadian anthropology tradition. I am referring to *Applied Anthropology in Canada*, published in 1977 and edited by Jim Freedman. This construction paper bound and stapled volume was published by the Canadian Ethnology Society (CESCE, the forerunner of CASCA), and consisted of papers as well as transcribed conversations among participants from a special CESCE symposium organized by Sally Weaver. Many of Canada's pioneering thinkers in anthropology were involved, including Richard Salisbury, Milton Freeman, Joan Ryan, Elliott Leyton and Adé Tremblay. The sentiments expressed therein very much reflected the state of Canadian anthropology at the time.

The nature of Canadian anthropology's engagement with social and political issues and the emerging debate over the relationship between theory and practice were central themes in this volume. The question of the very existence of applied anthropology as a sub-field was raised. Elliott Leyton wrote: "I would guess that many of us would say there is no such thing as Applied Anthropology—any more than, as Harry Hawthorn used to say, there is no such thing as Applied Latin." "Indeed," he continued, "a division of our discipline into 'pure' and 'applied' sections is not only artificial but a destructive distinction." Leyton described a "style of anthropology which is distinctively Canadian: distinctive not in its methods or its concepts, but in the kinds of problems it accepts as legitimate academic concerns, and in its understanding that some form of advocacy may be necessary to supplement the conventional academic analysis" (1977:168). "The striking characteristic of anthropology in Canada," he concluded, "is its concern with problems generated outside the narrow confines of an academic discipline" (1977:168). Policy analysis and its links to advocacy were, therefore, very much central to Canadian engaged anthropology at the time.

That applied anthropology could deteriorate into a purely technical field uninformed by theory was recognized as a problem in both Canada and the U.S. Gordon Inglis (1977) prophetically warned in this volume that "there is a danger that the anthropologist may become a general-purpose social engineer, applying bits and pieces of theory and technique from anywhere and everywhere, his or her major asset being a nodding acquaintance with a variety of concepts and methods." Perhaps this warning was heeded, as the trend of which he cautioned was much less prominent in Canada than in the U.S. For this we must thank the strong tradition, to which Elliot Leyton refers, of "uncompromising academic anthropologists who have been willing to address practical problems" (1977:181). As Inglis concluded, "we must become *engaged* in our society and, while we must not let our moral concerns lead us into doing bad science, we must equally not let our concern for scientific objectivity lead us into being bad citizens ... It is a far cry from the hustling professionalism that [Edward] Spicer and [Ted] Downing forecast for U.S. anthropology" (1977:185-186).

In summing up the papers and associated conversations, Inglis (1977:178), concluded that "whether or not we want to call it 'applied anthropology,' *something* is alive out there," and "that something is pretty vigorous." Although eventually purveyors of that "something" did begin to call it "applied anthropology," I believe, in retrospect, that that "something" was engaged anthropology as understood today. What happened subsequently is rather telling of the nature of the Canadian tradition.

The Short Life and Quiet Demise of SAAC

The Society of Applied Anthropology in Canada (SAAC) had a short and fitful life as an association. Formed in the early 1980s, SAAC's membership fluctuated for many years, occasionally exceeding 100 members, but experienced steadily declining interest and eventually fizzled out altogether in the mid-1990s. SAAC was formed in an era in which academic opportunities for anthropologists were evaporating and some scholars, such as Salisbury, were beginning to argue that applied anthropology was "the growth point of the discipline" (1977:192). This may

explain the initial surge in membership. But the numbers were not sustainable. When I was president of CASCA a few years back, I received a short note from a Canadian government office declaring that, as SAAC had failed to make an annual report for several years, it was no longer a legal entity. I had no one to whom to send this note, as there were no officers of record. SAAC disappeared, and no one noticed. What went wrong?

It was a source of constant frustration for those of us involved that so few of our colleagues who did applied anthropology were willing to sustain their membership, or even admit formally that they did applied anthropology. Perhaps if we had used the term *engaged* anthropology right from the start, the label would have been more palatable, because relative to our current understanding of "engagement," this is what we were doing. Over the years I have come to realize that it was the fact that so many seemed to be engaged anthropologists that made the association redundant. But I think that it is also the case that the broader trends within the field of anthropology, more generally, and applied anthropology specifically, were having an impact. The tension between theory and application was growing palpable, with theory ultimately carrying the day in terms of publication and research grant success. Post-structural and postmodern theories gained a foothold in the discipline in Canada as elsewhere, and while these theories made some advances in explaining human suffering, this body of theory did not easily cross over into application. Post-structural and postmodern anthropologists began to openly mock applied anthropology as a weaker, unintellectual branch. In return, applied anthropologists began to openly mock the supposed irrelevance and incomprehensibility of these theoretical approaches. It became apparent to me that neither was reading the work of the other.

Over the years, attending both CASCA meetings and meetings of various U.S.-based anthropological associations, I (and others) have noticed a clear divergence in national trends. Just as many participants in the 1977 CESCE volume warned, the applied community in the U.S. became more technically oriented. Meetings of the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA), which have grown exponentially in attendance since their CASCA-like informality of the 1980s, started to be dominated by empirical presentations, often by non-anthropologists who had accessed the methodological "tool-kit" and assumed that research with any "other" person was, by definition, anthropological. A victim of its own success, perhaps the SfAA made applied anthropology *too* accessible, in part by de-emphasizing theory and promoting empiricism.[3] Applied anthropology transitioned from a field involving the theoretical elite of the discipline, to a field openly attractive to those who sought to eschew theoretical rigour. To some critics, applied anthropology in the U.S. seemed to spiral downward into generic, methods-oriented social science, losing sight of the importance of theories of human behaviour while attempting, curiously, to impact positively on that behaviour. One of my colleagues is fond of referring to many of the typical SfAA conference presentations as "culturally sensitive social work."

It could be argued that without overt theory, so-called "applied anthropology" is tantamount to the technical application of a skill-set that is hardly unique to and often ironically uninformed by anthropology. "Cross-cultural" does not mean "anthropological." "Community-based" does not mean "anthropological." "Participatory action" does not mean "anthropological." Employing "culture" as a variable in quantitative research most certainly does not make it anthropological. And simply being trained in anthropology does not make one's work "anthropological." The disengagement of theory from practice in U.S. anthropology may best be seen in the development of specific graduate programs in the U.S. to "train" applied anthropologists (and I find the use of the term "training" to be insightful). Unlike in the U.S., today in Canada we do not have any graduate programs built solely around applied anthropology "training," although I would add here that we *do* have programs in engaged anthropology, including—of course—at the University of Waterloo, and given Sally Weaver's legacy I cannot think of a better place for it. In Canada, applied anthropology remains very much a part of generalist, four-field education, and many graduate programs do not even have courses on it. The fact that applied anthropology in Canada has never been recognized as a "fifth" field, as has been the case with the American Anthropological Association, is perhaps telling.

When SAAC finally disappeared, it happened at a meeting with only four of us in attendance. There were many applied-oriented papers at the CASCA meetings that year, and many of the icons of Canadian applied anthropology were there, but they did not show up for the annual SAAC meeting. An association to promote applied anthropology was simply not needed. Shortly after my election to President of CASCA was announced, one avowedly applied anthropologist confronted me with the demand, "what are you going to do for applied anthropology?" My response, near as I can recall, was "keep CASCA going." There has always been space within CASCA for applied anthropology—and other sub-fields as well—without, it seems, a strong desire to have separate, targetted efforts (witness the short life of the Canadian Association for Medical Anthropology). This is part of our

tradition here. It has taken a while for me to realize this fact.

One legacy of SAAC does remain, however, one which is particularly significant to me here today. When SAAC folded I was able to negotiate the transfer of the Weaver-Tremblay Award to CASCA under Peter Stephenson's presidency, where it now thrives as the only award we make to our professional colleagues.

The Ethics of Engagement

Engagement brings forth somewhat different ethical issues than straightforward research, and a uniquely Canadian way of dealing with ethics has emerged. I again take as my departure point anthropology in the U.S., where a certain degree of consternation over ethics has been evident. Over the years the American Anthropological Association (AAA) has debated the responsibility of anthropologists to participate in public policy matters, and has included varying statements to this effect in a series of ethics codes (Sanford 2008; Rylko-Bauer et al. 2006). In Canada, it seems we do not need ethics codes to direct us to engage in public policy issues—we just do it as part of our canon. The recent efforts by the AAA to amend its ethics statements to preclude "militant" anthropology and to "ensure" no harm to research participants underscores a fundamental difference between the anthropological traditions in the two countries. In the U.S., competing ethical sensibilities create great controversies and sometimes volatile annual meetings. Here in Canada, while CASCA has a social issues protocol, which I shepherded while President, I do not think it has ever been used. CASCA does not even have a code of ethics! Certainly there have been calls, from time to time, for such. And yet, none has been produced. I do not see this as the product of scholarly inertia. While allowing, in effect, the government to develop ethical guidelines for research and impose them is, in many ways, a rather Canadian approach—even if their understanding of ethnography is frustrating to many of us—I think there is more to it than this, for these Tri-Council efforts are still relatively recent. Thankfully, Canadian anthropology is, so far, free of some of the more pernicious episodes that other national anthropologies have weathered, such as the Yanomami controversy and human terrain system research in the U.S.

Self-described "militant" anthropology represents a different class of engagement entirely. Only in the U.S. could a "militant" anthropology arise, in which the anthropologist undertakes covert activity to expose injustice. I cannot imagine such a thing in Canadian anthropology. Perhaps the many years of efforts to develop constructive relationships with Aboriginal communities and to redress stereotypical, and largely inaccurate, folklore about anthropological thievery has encouraged us to practice our discipline in more open and transparent ways. Once people get wind that it is now "ethical" to deliberately mislead our research participants as to our aims and identities, our anthropology as we know it will no longer be viable. I could never have accomplished the research I did with prison inmates if not for my ability to establish trust, to prove my identity and to make my work transparent. Like that of certain militant anthropologists, my research participants are criminals too, but we accomplish much more in helping to make our society safe by working with them as opposed to trying to trick them into disclosing secret activities so they can be charged yet again. In some ways it is our non-threatening impartiality—our sheer powerlessness—that allows us to gain the confidence of research participants. All of this is destroyed when we lie about our identities and motives and we seek for ourselves the power to make change happen. The "primacy of the ethical" (Scheper-Hughes 1995) defines an anthropology that moves beyond the usual ethical sensibilities of the populace, and positions the anthropologist as judge, jury and sometimes executioner on what is appropriate for others to say and do and how violators should be punished. To suggest we, as anthropologists, are in any way above or more ethical than others—ethical superheroes—is dangerous for our discipline.

In Canada, I think we recognize how untenable such a position is. "Militant" anthropology did not develop here for a reason. Canadian anthropologists, in my view, are rather nervous about adopting a Foucauldian activism to "speak truth to power." We anthropologists have access to truth? Is anyone here willing to stand before their peers and announce that they have the absolute "truth" about anything? One time, in northern Manitoba, a Cree elder taught me a lesson. "Jim," he asked, "what do you know ... *for sure*?" Needless to say, I had no response. And I am quite comfortable with that.

The Costs of Engagement

Of course engaged anthropology puts us in the middle of controversies and, by definition, makes us targets. We must never turn a blind eye to this fact: there are always costs to engaged anthropology, and I have had my share of problems. For instance, in the 1980s, Manitoba Hydro employees falsely reported to First Nations officials in northern Manitoba that I was working undercover for them, feeding them information, which precipitated a crisis meeting where I was forced to defend myself from being tossed out of the community. Of course I was also a little tickled that Manitoba Hydro thought I was such a

threat, which in turn convinced me that they probably did have something to hide! Then Manitoba Hydro officials turned around and, quoting selective passages from my book, *As Long as the Rivers Run* (Waldram 1988), stated in public venues that I believed hydro-electric development to have actually been beneficial for the Cree, contrary to my real conclusions. This is what happens to engaged anthropologists sometimes: if we choose to engage we take sides, and we create opponents, even enemies.

Subversive tactics by large energy corporations should not be surprising, I suppose. But engaged anthropologists should not necessarily expect a better reaction from their colleagues. In an effort to make my ethnography, *The Way of the Pipe* (1997), more accessible to the prison inmates and Aboriginal elders who participated in my research, as well as to corrections officials, I wrote it in a style that itself was accessible. I knew that a theoretically dense book would have no policy impact (and this is not to say the book was actually a-theoretical). In a scholarly review of the book, however, one U.S. anthropologist declared to scholars that "this book is not pitched for you. This book is not appropriately assessed with an academic yardstick; it must, instead, be understood as a work of *applied* anthropology" (O'Nell 1998:518, emphasis added). Ouch! A victim of the theory–applied rift, I suppose. More recently, my work on Aboriginal health and traditional healing, which has focused on efforts to explicate and validate traditional healing knowledge, has lead to charges against me of "malpractice." Ouch again. The source of the allegation, a horrible tome by Francis Widdowson and Albert Howard (2008), at least slagged some of my colleagues as well,[4] such as my co-authors Ann Herring and Kue Young, and put me in an index with Claude Levi-Strauss, Sting and John Lennon, so I am in good company. But on a more serious note, Widdowson and Howard make several disturbing allegations about anthropology, "the most significant perpetrator of distorted research" (2008:40). They claim that advocacy anthropology is the antithesis of social science, brings "havoc" to the Canadian legal system, and that one cannot be both an advocate and a scientist. Gordon Inglis, as I quoted earlier, would certainly disagree, as would Penny Van Esterik, the 2006 Weaver-Tremblay award winner, who noted in her address that "the best anthropological theory has clear specifiable relations to everyday life," and who advocated that, through theory, anthropologists could "take a more informed role as social critics, and ensure that justice issues pervade the discipline" (2007:5). But, as Widdowson and Howard's work suggests, perhaps we still have work to do both within and outside our discipline to articulate the nature of our engaged anthropology. Working now in Belize, where through my research I am assisting a group of Q'eqchi Maya healers to establish a healing clinic, I can say without question that the costs of engagement are worth it.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I have tried to convince of several things in this presentation. First, there is nothing new—at least in Canada—in the idea of an "engaged" anthropology, as we have been engaging engagement for a very long time, even if sometimes we called it other things. Second, we not only stew, but we do. We refuse to let reflexive critique paralyze us in responding to, and working with, communities and groups to effect change, voice concerns and redress duress. Third, we have not lost sight of the importance of theory and its relationship to the practice of our discipline. In these, I feel strongly that Canadian anthropology has been at the forefront. But, just as we are reluctant to admit readily to engagement, and definitely not to "applied" work, we have also failed to admit to being on the leading edge. This results from the quiet, Canadian demeanour, I suppose, mildly confident, definitely not cocky, and most definitely not willing to make our ideas a cause célèbre. While other national traditions have embraced the term "engagement" and have begun to promote a "new" way of doing anthropology, it seems in Canada we just motor along. As Alexander Leighton wrote in *Applied Anthropology in Canada* way back in 1977, "*not* to apply anthropology is unethical" (1977:204, emphasis added). Anthropologists in Canada have typically embraced this. It is okay to celebrate it too.

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Notes

1 As an undergraduate student at the University of Waterloo in the 1970s, I had an opportunity to audit a course with Sally Weaver, on "Canadian Communities and Planned Change." Sally believed that anthropology in Canada could and should be useful, and her energy and passion for this idea was the spark I needed. Moving on to the University of Manitoba, I continued to study Canadian applied anthropology, and it was there where I began to learn about the seminal work being done in Quebec under the guidance of Marc-Adélard—Adé—Tremblay. As my own career developed, the work of both Sally and Adé grew in stature and remained very influential. So, when I decided that the now defunct Society for Applied Anthropology in Canada (SAAC) needed an award, it seemed logical to me that it should, in true Canadian spirit, reflect both the Anglo and

Franco traditions in its name. When I raised the matter with Sally and Adé, they were both gracious in agreeing to lend their names to the award, although Sally protested "But I am not dead yet!" Sadly, prophetically, Sally passed away just before the spring CASCA meeting where the first Weaver-Tremblay Award was presented to her friend, the late Joan Ryan. In accepting this award I honour the memory of both Sally and Joan.

I want to extend my gratitude to those individuals who nominated me for this award, and who believed me deserving, which in many ways is award enough: Janice Graham, Peter Stephenson, Regna Darnell, Julia Harrison, Ron Laliberte, Joe Gone and Sylvia Abonyi, in particular. I want to thank the members of the Weaver-Tremblay Award selection committee for agreeing with my nominators, and for the hard work that goes into selecting one among many outstanding candidates. Thanks to all of those who attended the 2009 Weaver-Tremblay lecture, continuing our celebration of Canadian anthropology as unique and engaged. Finally, for all her support, I want to thank Pamela Downe, who many years ago snatched me from the seductive jaws of generic social science by reminding me that theoretical anthropology and its practice are not mutually exclusive.

2 For instance, John Bennett, an American anthropologist who undertook influential research in Canada, continued to argue that "applied anthropology ... is simply good anthropology" (2005:2) well into the 21st century.

3 I should point out that, as a Fellow of the SfAA, I remain committed to the field and its potential and remain a strong supporter of the organization.

4 In my opinion, the book lacks the necessary scholarly rigour to be considered a "critique," and appears more like a form of attack journalism. For instance, I am an anthropologist, not a medical practitioner, and hence the accusation that I have engaged in "malpractice" seems—and I am putting this politely—rather hyperbolic. I remain puzzled that the book was issued by a scholarly publisher.

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