

Meeting Minutes: STM Interest Group, Saturday 1 December 2007

Introductions

-Following introductions of those in attendance, Joao Biehl described the group's beginnings at last year's AAA meeting in San Jose, and spoke briefly about the double panel sponsored by the STM and invited by the SMA at this year's meetings, entitled "Bodies and Economies: Ethnographies of Value in Biomedicine and Global Health" that had an initial attendance of over 200 people. The panel was organized by Joao Biehl, Adriana Petryna, and Harris Solomon, and was a follow-on to a 4S panel organized by Duana Fullwiley, Liz Roberts, and Harris Solomon.

Merger of Pharmaceutical Studies and the STM Interest Groups

-Members of the Pharmaceutical Studies Interest Group attended the STM meeting, prompting a discussion of the possible merging of the Pharma Studies Group and the STM. Joe Dumit explained that the range of interests within the Pharma Studies Group extends beyond pharmaceuticals to other topics including biologicals, and that those in attendance at the Pharma Studies Group's meeting felt it might make sense to merge with the STM given the STM's broader umbrella of interests. It was also noted that five of the eight papers on the "Bodies and Economies" panel engaged issues of pharmaceuticals, so the interest in pharmaceuticals and biologicals is highly relevant to STM-sponsored activities.

-Marcia Inhorn noted that the SMA has a formal process for merging of interest groups, and explained how this has happened recently with the merger of two interests groups that formed the Critical Anthropology of Global Health group. The advantage of the merger is that creates a strength in numbers that can increase visibility of issues of concern, and also mobilize participation in group activities. Marcia explained that any merger of interest groups should be recorded formally in order to be tracked in the history of the SMA.

-In recounting a brief history of the Pharma Studies Group, Joe Dumit observed that four years ago, there was a felt need for a special interest group pertaining to pharmaceutical studies, and that the group provided important opportunities for networking and sharing of ideas. During the last several years, however, a growing body of scholarship around pharmaceuticals in anthropology has emerged, and the connections between its researchers strengthened, allowing for a strong presence within a broader group such as the STM.

-Joao organized a vote of hands for the merger of the Pharma Studies Group with the STM. All in attendance voted unanimously for a merger.

-It was noted that the Mission Statement of the STM should be slightly edited to include reference to interests of the Pharma Studies Group. Action: Janice Graham and Joao Biehl will review the current STM Mission Statement.

Summary of Interest Group Business

-Harris Solomon attended the meeting for chairs of the Special Interest Groups of the SMA at the AAA meeting on Thursday. Harris explained that the meeting was lead by Vinay Kamat, who is the liaison between the interest groups and the SMA. Each interest group representative presented a list of accomplishments in the past year. Harris submitted the following on behalf of the STM as accomplishments since the group's inaugural meeting in 2006 in San Jose:

- 1) Formalization of the interest group
- 2) Formulation of Mission Statement
- 3) Circulation of Mission Statement and Finalization of Statement
- 4) Formation of group listserv
- 5) Crafting of panels for the 4S meeting and AAA meeting
- 6) Achievement of invited status by the SMA for the AAA panel

-Harris noted that materials produced by SMA interest groups such as mission statements, policy statements, and syllabi are centrally located on the SMA's Web site (www.medanthro.net). However, the link to the STM on the interest group page is not yet live. Thus it was suggested that the mission statement, when revised, should be posted. Vinay also requested that each interest group post a short synopsis of its scope of interests and activities on the SMA site. Action: Joao Biehl and Harris Solomon will craft this summary and send it to Vinay Kamat.

-It was also suggested that syllabi from courses relevant to the anthropology of science and biomedicine be collected and posted on the STM-specific page on the SMA site. Action: Betsey Brada and Joe Dumit will contact the relevant professors and collect syllabi, and will send them to the SMA webmaster.

STM-sponsored Panels at Meetings

-Next year's annual meeting of the Society for the Social Study of Science (4S) will take place from August 20-23 in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Several in attendance at the meeting expressed interest in attending and in having an STM-sponsored panel at the 4S. Action: Lara Braff, Alex Choby, and Betsey Brada will compose a call for papers, circulate it through the STM listserv, and submit the proposed panel online to 4S.

-Next year's AAA meeting will be in San Francisco from November 19-23. Many in attendance plan to attend, and proposed that another double panel sponsored by the STM be submitted. In particular, this panel will be submitted for invited status. Chris Furlow noted that it may be strategic to co-sponsor this double panel with CASTAC, which is part of the General Anthropology Division, because of the opportunity afforded by invited panel slots in the GAD. Joao also commented that invited status by the SMA may be more difficult next year because invited status was already given to this year's panel. Action: Joao Biehl, Harris Solomon, Angela Garcia, Alex Choby, and Chris Furlow will compose a call for papers, circulate it through the STM listserv, and submit the proposed panel online to AAA.

-Ideas/terms for possible panels include: materiality | risk | therapeutics | care | vaccines | moral economies | giving and receiving | collaboration among anthropologists and clinicians | collaboration between anthropologists and students of medicine, science, and engineering | translational research | "bringing science to the bedside" | translational care | shifting lines of care and experimentality |

Summary of Actions

- 1) Janice Graham and Joao Biehl will edit the STM Mission Statement.
- 2) Joao Biehl and Harris Solomon will craft a summary of the STM and send it to Vinay Kamat for posting on the SMA Web page.
- 3) Betsey Brada and Joe Dumit will collect syllabi relevant to STM interests, and will send them to the SMA webmaster.

- 4) Lara Braff, Alex Choby, and Betsey Brada will compose a call for papers for next year's 4S meeting, circulate it through the STM listserv, and submit the proposed panel online to 4S.
- 5) Joao Biehl, Harris Solomon, Angela Garcia, Alex Choby, and Chris Furlow will compose a call for papers for next year's AAA meeting, circulate it through the STM listserv, and submit the proposed panel online to AAA.

In attendance

- 1) Thurka Sangaramoorthy (thurka@berkeley.edu)
- 2) Lauren Fordyce (lfordyce@ufl.edu)
- 3) Gayatri Moorthi (moorthi@uiuc.edu)
- 4) Helen Chapple (helenchapple@creighon.edu)
- 5) Chris Furlow (furlow@ufl.edu)
- 6) Caitlin Bertsch (cbertsch@gwu.edu)
- 7) Carla Blauvelt (carlapb@gwu.edu)
- 8) Claire Somerville (csomerv@tcd.ie)
- 9) Alex Choby (admchoby@aol.com)
- 10) Liz Roberts (lsfrob@umich.edu)
- 11) Jessica Busch Sipos (jessicasipos@yahoo.com)
- 12) Claire Wendland (cwendland@wisc.edu)
- 13) Lara Braff (lbraff@uchicago.edu)
- 14) Shana Hughes (shughes@mail.usf.edu)
- 15) Joao Biehl (jbiehl@princeton.edu)
- 16) Harris Solomon (harris_solomon@brown.edu)
- 17) Betsey Brada (bbbrada@uchicago.edu)
- 18) Janice Graham (Janice.graham@dal.ca)
- 19) Joe Dumit (dumit@ucdavis.edu)
- 20) Angela Garcia (agarcia2@ucla.edu)
- 21) Michael J. Oldani (oldanim@uww.edu)
- 22) Chris Dole (cdole@amherst.edu)
- 23) Sharon Batt (Sharon.batt@dal.ca)
- 24) S. Lochlann Jain (lochjain@stanford.edu)
- 25) Kelly McKinney (kamckinn@mindspring.com)
- 26) Eugene Raikhel (Eugene.raikhel@mail.mcgill.ca)
- 27) Doug Feldman (dafeldman@brockport.edu)
- 28) Michael Nathan (mnathan1@partners.org)
- 29) Deborah Gordon (dgordon7@comcast.net)
- 30) Megan Crowley-Matoka (mcm29@pitt.edu)
- 31) Clara Han (clarahan@jhu.edu)

-Submitted on 10 December 2007 by Harris Solomon