

STANFORD UNIVERSITY



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January 28, 2016

[REDACTED]
External Advisory Board
HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory
Professor [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED],

We are writing to you in your position as Chair of the External Advisory Board of HAU to express our serious concerns about the actions of Giovanni da Col, the Editor-in-Chief of HAU, and the threat to the editorial integrity of the journal. In what follows, we recount the sequence of events that led to our concerns.

On Sept. 11, 2015, [REDACTED], our department chair, received a proposal from [REDACTED], Associate Editor of HAU, to join HAU-N.E.T., which was described as a network of departments of anthropology and research institutions who contribute to and support the HAU Society for Ethnographic Theory. The proposal requested funding of between \$1,000 and \$3,000 per year for membership in HAU-N.E.T. and mentioned several benefits that our department would receive in exchange. These included, among others, potential financial return, as HAU would employ our department as institutional referent to apply for financial support in our country, for which we would receive 10% overhead of all successful grants awarded to HAU. In addition, we would be able to propose a special issue of the journal, edit a small peer-review section of the journal, edit a book symposia section, or edit a debate/correspondence section.

On the same day, [REDACTED], received an email from Giovanni Da Col, Editor-in-Chief and Founder of HAU Journal and HAU Books, following up on [REDACTED]' request for financial support. She responded and informed Da Col and [REDACTED] that she would present their proposal to the department faculty. She did this at the department's first faculty meeting of the year on September 26, 2015. In discussing the proposal, the faculty expressed strong reservations about a business model in which a financial contribution enables a department to influence the editorial content of a scholarly journal. Concern was also expressed about the offer to receive 10% overhead of successful grants awarded to HAU in exchange for permission to be

cited as an institutional referent in applications for financial support in our country.

On November 2, 2015, [REDACTED] emailed Da Col and [REDACTED] informing them that the faculty in the Anthropology department had decided against providing department funds to the journal.

On November 11, 2015, [REDACTED] received a message from Da Col informing him that HAU had decided to cancel the symposium on his book, [REDACTED], "due to the need of managing carefully our finances." This book symposium was initially proposed to [REDACTED] in an email from Da Col on March 25, 2015. Da Col wrote that he would solicit reviews of the book by the end of October 2015, and then publish them along with [REDACTED]'s response in HAU's Christmas 2015 issue. [REDACTED] responded on March 28, 2015, agreeing to participate in the symposium, and between that date and May 22, 2015, a series of emails was exchanged between him and Da Col about contributors to the symposium.

On September 4, 2015, [REDACTED] emailed Da Col that he had heard from one of the contributors to the symposium that the latter had never received a message from Da Col about the details of the symposium. On September 22, 2015, Da Col responded, apologizing and explaining that he had been "very unwell over the summer and could only deal with some urgent priorities." He added that he would "sort out everything about your symposium tomorrow." No further emails from Da Col to [REDACTED] were sent, however, until November 11, 2015, when Da Col informed him that the symposium had been cancelled. In that email, Da Col wrote "In any case, no contribution was submitted to the journal for the initial deadline set for October 15th (as stated in my message dated May 2nd) and we didn't waste any effort. Actually, I have been informed only a few days that our Associate Editor [REDACTED] completed his piece but he's very happy to submit it to a different venue."

It should be noted that submissions had not been received by October 15, 2015, since Da Col apparently did not invite any of participants (other than [REDACTED]) whom he agreed to contact in May. Nor did Da Col, as he assured [REDACTED] he would, convey information about the format and length of the commentary to those whom [REDACTED] had contacted.

We found the above sequence of events very troubling as it appears to imply a quid pro quo in which publication of the symposium on [REDACTED]'s book depended on financial contribution by our department. We noted that in his initial email to [REDACTED] on Sept. 11, 2015, Da Col wrote "We also published several manuscripts by Stanford anthropologists and organised Symposia around monographs by Stanford faculty members (we are currently working on a Symposium on [REDACTED]'s Morgan Lecture, part of our collaboration with the University of Rochester)."

In a later email in November, Da Col confirmed the link between financial contribution and publication of the symposium on [REDACTED]'s book. He wrote that HAU could not invest its limited funds on scholars from institutions who refuse to support it, adding that [REDACTED] could have responded by offering his research funds to subsidize publications but did not.

We have recounted the above communications in detail to make clear the basis of our concerns

about the actions of Giovanni da Col. We ask that the External Advisory Board and other officers of the journal look into this matter and take appropriate action to ensure the editorial integrity and ethical commitment of the journal.

If there is any additional information we can provide that would be helpful to the Board, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Professor [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Professor of Anthropology

[REDACTED]

Professor of Anthropology

[REDACTED]

Professor of Anthropology