

PROSPECTUS FOR A ROBERT B. TEXTOR AND FAMILY PRIZE FOR EXCELLENCE IN ANTICIPATORY ANTHROPOLOGY

Updated to December 1999

This Prospectus proposes a "Robert B. Textor and Family Prize for Excellence in Anticipatory Anthropology," to be created by the American Anthropological Association in 1998, and administered by the AAA Executive Board thereafter on a permanent basis. The Textor family offers to finance this Prize as a consequence of Prof. Textor's commitment to the development of an Anticipatory Anthropology since 1976, and as a token of the entire family's love for the subject matter of anthropology.

ORGANIZATIONAL GUIDELINES

If the AAA Executive Board approves this Prize, it will be administered consistent with the "Guidelines for the Establishment of Restricted Prize Funds," as approved by the Executive Board on April 26, 1992.

If the Executive Board or other AAA leadership has input for the improvement of this Prospectus, it would be welcome.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Prize is to encourage and reward excellent contributions in "Anticipatory Anthropology," that is, in the use of anthropological perspectives, theories, models, and methods in an anticipatory manner -- so that citizens, leaders, and governments will be better able to make informed policy choices, and thereby improve their society's or community's chances for realizing preferred futures and avoiding unwanted ones. The time frame for such anticipation will normally be the middle-range future (5-15 years) or perhaps somewhat longer.

Anthropologists have much to offer such anticipatory fields as Technological Forecasting, Social and Educational Planning, Regional and City Planning, Environmental Impact Assessment, and Land Use Planning, as well as the broad field of Futures Studies. (Those anthropologists desiring a compact, critical review of the history, structure and logic of Futures Studies are referred to the seminal 1997 work by Wendell Bell of Yale University, *Foundations of Futures Studies*, New Brunswick NJ, Transaction Press.) Despite these potential practical applications, anthropologists often fail to contribute as much to informed anticipation as they could, because in studying a sociocultural system many of them tend to focus primarily on the past, the ethnographic present, or the actual present of that system. They are less likely to focus on the future, and even when they do, they often have too little to say that is explicit, concrete or practically useful about how that sociocultural system could or should deal with its future.

Please note that this Prospectus does not conceptualize "Anticipatory Anthropology" as a separate subfield, but simply as a mode of inquiry that might be practiced by anthropologists in any of several subfields. The essential point is that the anthropologist devotes serious attention to anticipating what a future version of an extant sociocultural system (local, regional, national or global) could or should be like, as of some rough date in the middle-range future. In doing Anticipatory Anthropology, the anthropologist focuses on what a particular human group (which might or might not include the anthropologist) visualizes as a possible, probable, or preferable future for that group.

This leads to the crucial point that, while of course one cannot study the future as such because there are no future facts, there are facts that are clearly relevant to the future, including:

- facts about the visions, expectations, and preferences held by members of a given human group. By interviewing or other means, such facts can be obtained, analyzed, and interpreted.
- facts derived from data bases about such phenomena as a human group's demography, technology, economy or value systems.

From such facts the anthropologist can contribute much information and analysis needed for intelligent decision making by citizens, activists, leaders and governments of a given society, community or organization, especially if the anthropologist gives serious attention to the means that could be used to achieve preferable futures and avoid undesired ones.

THE URGENT NEED FOR COMPETENT ANTICIPATION

Homo sapiens is by nature an anticipating animal. Much of the content of any good ethnography will deal with how the people under study anticipate their future by one means or another, from divination to prayer, from gathering food to planting crops, from politics to communication. Ethnographers are likely to find much to admire in the wisdom of the people they study, concerning how they handle their future. The problem, though, is that such received wisdom is situated in a given ecological, economic, and sociocultural context. Once that context is violated -- as it often is by powerful external economic or political forces -- received wisdom is often inadequate, sometimes disastrously so. The inadequacy of received wisdom is, of course, hardly a problem found only in less modernized societies. It exists as well in highly industrialized and politically powerful nations. For example, in 1996 and early 1997 the most respected financial analysts in the advanced industrial nations almost totally failed to anticipate or project the economic disasters that befell a number of nations in East and Southeast Asia, or the contagious global implications thereof.

The urgent need for competent anticipation is also evident at the global level. The world as a whole now faces new problems without parallel in human history. It confronts a "world problematique" of unprecedented proportions, with total world population growing each year by the equivalent of the entire population of present-day Germany, with deforestation extinguishing thousands of species a year, with finite non-renewable resources being used at ruinous rates and often spewing perilous pollution as well.

Another new and revolutionary global factor is the power of electronic global telecommunication. While of course international trade has long existed, the current post-Cold War progressive globalization of commerce made possible by high-technology telecommunications inexorably impacts people everywhere more quickly and deeply than ever before. A similar phenomenon is occurring through the mass media. Thus, an economic crisis in Indonesia can now cause unemployment in Illinois, and reduce gasoline prices in Italy. And media heroes or heroines in Britain can motivate culturally deviant behavior among the youth of Mozambique. We have entered the Era of Globalization, which multiplies enormously the possibility of unanticipated change. Moreover, the worldwide pace of these technological, ecological, economic, political, and sociocultural changes is becoming ever more rapid. Ordinary people around the world have less and less time to prepare for change -- far less than they had a generation ago, or even a decade ago. And the changes they must prepare for are becoming ever more complex.

For such reasons, all social scientists who seek to truly serve broad social policy in order to enhance quality of life must, as never before, take an anticipatory stance. The Prize for Excellence in Anticipatory Anthropology thus seeks to recognize and reward anthropologists who include the anticipatory mode in their research, and who take leadership in developing grounded yet imaginative visions as to what could or should happen to a given human group as a consequence of this or that driving force -- technological, economic, political or sociocultural -- especially where those forces impinge upon the group from outside sources in sudden and dramatic ways.

In asserting anticipatory leadership, anthropologists possess a valuable natural advantage: their tradition of emphasizing holism and context. Anthropologists are generally better at holistic analysis and contextual interpretation than are most other types of social scientists -- who tend to focus just on demographic statistics, just on economic rational-choice studies, just on legal analysis, etc. -- and that gives to anthropology the opportunity of making a distinctive contribution to the general field of Futures Studies. Anthropologists should find it natural to visualize changes in whole systems over periods of time long enough to be meaningful -- i.e., long enough to afford opportunity for "turning around" a dangerous societal trend, or for taking advantage of a new societal opportunity -- through changes in public policy and resource allocation, through education, or through spontaneous or guided culture change, for example.

Another natural advantage possessed by anthropologists inheres in their historical preference for studying the world's less wealthy and less powerful peoples. These peoples are typically those who are today most vulnerable to unanticipated change initiated from the outside, and least likely to be understood by members of other social science disciplines.

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO ANTICIPATORY ANTHROPOLOGY

Seen from the perspective of 1998, the following are just a few examples of how anthropologists might usefully build an anticipatory approach into their field or library/electronic research. The anthropologist might:

- Work with governmental or civic leaders to visualize alternative demographic futures, assessing the main sociocultural and humanwell-being

implications of each, and formulating reasonable policy recommendations. Given the enormous demographic momentum throughout much of the world today, and especially in its poorest and often ecologically most fragile areas, this is an absolutely basic problem area.

- Assess the probable effects on a given human group of the Information Revolution, including its potential for bringing about broad cultural change. Such research might, for example, take the form of a fieldwork-based technological forecast as to the impact of the Internet on a given community or culture, with recommendations as to public policy needed to insure democratic access, personal privacy, etc.
- Assess the probable effects of the Biotechnical Revolution on local peoples. This Revolution provides the scientific and technical basis for previously undreamt-of medical treatments; for the design of new food plants that can grow in forbidding climates and inhospitable soils; for ecologically sound means of pest control -- and a multitude of other such innovations. At the same time, this Revolution carries profound ethical implications in such areas as human cloning, organ transplants, great extension of the human life-span, or fair distribution of the economic benefits of innovation.
- Assess the potential, for a given society, of the Materials Science Revolution, which makes available totally new materials not found in nature, that will have the particular properties needed to solve a given problem, thus relieving pressure on raw materials which are non-renewable or which would be better used for purposes of greater social value. Of particular promise is the possible emergence of efficient, cost-effective "superconductor" materials.
- Do a cultural-ecological analysis and projection of resource use and renewal for a given region, with appropriate policy recommendations.
- Assess the readiness of a given community for a new type of productive tool, technique, or techno-educational input, while also assessing possible adverse consequences for local people.
- Work with land use and transportation planners to develop culturally grounded solutions to problems of urban crowding and congestion.
- Use field and library/ electronic research to assess the probable effects of the emerging global economy on local productivity, employment, and cultural continuity.
- Use a modified ethnographic interviewing approach with local people to elicit their broad scenarios (optimistic, pessimistic, and most probable, etc.) for the overall middle-range sociocultural future of their community or nation.

ELIGIBILITY

All members of the AAA in good standing, including student and new members, are eligible to receive the Prize. There are no gender, status, nationality or age restrictions, though the Awards Committee is urged not

to overlook younger and less well known members. Professor Textor and members of his immediate family are not eligible to receive the Prize.

NOMINATIONS

Any member of the AAA may nominate any member for the Prize. A member may nominate him/herself without prejudice. If the Awards Committee judges that the number or variety of nominations is inadequate, it may take the initiative of inviting nominations from particular members of the AAA, or from people who do not belong to the AAA.

Nominations should be in the form of one or more letters succinctly explaining the importance of a candidate's contribution, and would normally be accompanied by a specified number of copies of the publication, or other evidence, demonstrating the excellence of the candidate's contribution to Anticipatory Anthropology.

It is recommended that the Awards Committee take full advantage of electronic means of communication. For example, when a candidate submits a publication in support of his/her candidacy, the Awards Committee would do well to encourage him/her to submit it electronically. This will permit each member of the Awards Committee or its Anticipatory Anthropology Advisory Panel to receive the publication at her/his home location at the same time, thus speeding up the review process and obviating or minimizing the need to meet face to face in making its decisions. This in turn will minimize administration costs.

SELECTION PROCEDURE

The selection procedure will be under the general control of the Executive Board, which will formally designate the awardee each year, upon the recommendation of the Awards Committee. The Awards Committee will appoint an Anticipatory Anthropology Advisory Panel of AAA members possessing acknowledged expertise in Anticipatory Anthropology, to seek nominations, review the records of those nominated, rank order the candidates, and forward the two top candidates with their recommendations to the Awards Committee. The Awards Committee will then choose one of the two candidates and forward that person's name to the Executive Board for formal designation.

After the first few years, it is anticipated that members of the Advisory Panel will normally be persons who themselves have been awarded this Prize in previous years. It is reasonable to assume that such individuals, having already been recognized as leaders in Anticipatory Anthropology, will be both motivated and qualified to do a thorough job of examining evidence of excellence in Anticipatory Anthropology among subsequent candidates.

The above arrangement will help insure that the Prize is carefully awarded. This is important, because experience has demonstrated that an

otherwise sensible award can lose much of its intended value if administered carelessly or inconsistently. To make this arrangement work, it is recommended that the AAA Executive Board or its designee, in notifying a given awardee of her/his selection for the Prize in a given year, should obtain from that person a written statement of willingness to accept appointment to the Advisory Panel from time to time, subject to the Panel's needs and the awardee's personal convenience and commitments.

GUIDELINES FOR SELECTION

If in a particular year there is no candidate whom the Awards Committee finds genuinely worthy, the Prize should not be awarded that year. This provision is intended to prevent an erosion of the value of the Prize.

It might sometimes occur that an excellent contribution to Anticipatory Anthropology is made by a team of two or more contributors, perhaps of different nationalities. In such a case, the Awards Committee is free to recommend awarding the Prize to the team, provided that at least one member thereof is a member of the AAA. Each member of the team will normally share equally in the Stipend, and each will receive a certificate of award.

However, there should be only one award per year. The Awards Committee should not divide the Prize between two or more separate projects, for this would diminish the value of the Prize.

Each awarding of the Prize should be entirely independent, with each candidate being treated equally. In the interest of this totally open selection process, it shall be understood that the selection made for a given year carries with it absolutely no commitment on the part of any Awards Committee member, or any Advisory Panel member, as to who the selectee shall be in any subsequent year.

To help insure fairness, it is recommended that the Awards Committee retain the nomination files of all candidates who do not win the Prize in a given year, to be considered during a reasonable number of subsequent years -- perhaps five years.

No person shall be eligible to receive the Prize, or any portion of it, more than once.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Criteria to be used in selecting the awardee will include the following.

1. Evidence of excellence in Anticipatory Anthropology. This might take the form of a book, an article, a government document, a document of a non-government organization, a computer program, a film, a multimedia presentation, a physical model, a scientific invention, or any other suitable form of evidence that exists now or is developed in the future.

Whatever the form of the evidence, it must be available to the public. The Awards Committee is free to award the Prize on the basis of a single item of evidence, or a series of items through time. Thus it will be possible for an anthropologist to win the Prize even though he/she might not be well known, and might be very junior in status -- provided only that the evidence of excellence is clear and compelling.

2. Preference will be given to contributions that are excellent in one or more of the following ways.

- The contribution focuses compellingly on protecting or enhancing quality of life or environment.
- It anticipates and deals with problems of true seriousness to substantial numbers of people.
- It is based on sound data, rigorously analyzed yet imaginatively interpreted.
- It makes sound use of the concepts of culture and sociocultural system.
- It opens new vistas, methodologically, theoretically or substantively.
- It recommends practical or plausible policies or procedures that a society, community or organization can use to deal effectively with projected opportunities or dangers.
- It communicates its anticipatory message effectively to both an anthropological audience and the concerned general public.

ANNUAL PROCESS

Subject to Executive Board determination, the annual process will be as follows.

- Each year the AAA Awards Committee will announce and publicize the competition for the following year.
- Nomination materials will be due in the AAA office by the following February 1.
- The formal awarding of the Prize will occur annually at the annual business meeting or on such other occasion as the Executive Board shall determine. At the presentation, the President or her/his designee will read aloud a brief citation prepared by the Awards Committee, summarizing the contribution made by the awardee. The Stipend check and an appropriate certificate or plaque will then be presented to the awardee.

The first such announcement will occur in 1998, with nomination materials due February 1, 1999. The first award will be presented at the annual business meeting in 1999.

It is felt that this timing is opportune. It will take advantage of the heightened "Turn of the Millennium" concern about futures throughout the world, and provide evidence that the anthropological profession shares this concern.

ENDOWMENT FUND AND STIPEND

To underscore the need for excellence in Anticipatory Anthropology, it is envisioned that the Prize will carry a Stipend of approximately \$1,000 in constant 1998 dollars. Assuming continued inflation, this means that by 2005 the Prize might need to be \$1,200, and so on. However, this amount may vary depending on circumstances and the decision of the Executive Board or its designee. It is more important to sustain the principal of the Endowment Fund at an acceptable level, than to adhere precisely to the \$1,000-equivalent concept. If economic circumstances in a given year pose the danger of unduly low gain

in principal, the Executive Board shall be empowered to suspend the Prize until the principal can adequately rebuild.

The corpus of the Endowment Fund will initially consist of \$ 20,000: \$ 10,000 from the Textor family, plus \$ 5,000 from Motorola, Inc., plus \$ 5,000 from the Motorola Foundation. This corpus may be augmented at any time by contributions from these or other sources.

The Motorola contributions were entirely unsolicited, though they do reflect Prof. Textor's having served as a consultant of Motorola almost full time since he took early retirement from Stanford University in 1999. Some of this consulting has been in the Anticipatory Anthropology mode. Motorola of course attaches absolutely no conditions to its gift.

MANAGEMENT OF THE ENDOWMENT FUND

The Endowment Fund will be managed by the AAA Executive Board or its designee. It is assumed that the principal of the Endowment Fund will normally yield sufficient interest so that 5% of its value, or \$1,000, will be available for the Stipend each year -- with sufficient additional interest income beyond 5% to serve as a hedge against inflation. For example, suppose that the AAA were to invest in the same conservative portfolio used by, say, TIAA in its investments. Suppose that it proves consistently to be possible, with relative safety, to earn around 9%. Suppose that the inflation rate is 3%. This would safely permit taking 5% for the Stipend, while redepositing the remaining 4% in the Fund. This redeposited money and interest on it can then be used to build the corpus of the Endowment Fund as a hedge against inflation in future years, by gradually increasing its dollar amount, thus preventing the Stipend from losing value through the years.

If there is deflation, a downward adjustment in the Stipend would also be possible. However if, in a given year, straitened financial circumstances were to threaten to reduce the principal of the Endowment Fund unduly, the Executive Board or its designee should be empowered to reduce the amount of the Stipend appropriately and temporarily, until such time as the Endowment Fund rebuilds sufficiently. Alternatively, the Executive Board might temporarily place the competition on an every-second-year basis as a means of recouping capital.

SUCCESSORSHIP

In the event that the governance structure of the AAA should change in the future, it is understood that the AAA Executive Board will designate an appropriate successor organization to continue awarding the Prize in the spirit of this Prospectus.