History and Anthropology: The State of Play

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This paper is an exploration of two models, “Anthropologyland” and “Historyland,” which exist in the practices and minds of anthropologists and historians. It is about how particular forms of knowledge are created, written and spoken about. It is about what historians and anthropologists do and say they do.

There has grown up in the last thirty years an extensive body of literature about the intellectual and social relations between historians and anthropologists, two academic communities which seem to me to share a great deal at the epistemological level. Historians and anthropologists have a common subject matter, “otherness;” one field constructs and studies “otherness” in space, the other in time. Both fields have a concern with text and context. Both aim, whatever else they do, at explicating the meaning of actions of people rooted in one time and place, to persons in another. Both forms of knowledge entail the act of translation. The goals of the accounts practitioners develop are understanding and explanation, rather than the construction of social laws and prediction, the goals of the more formally constituted social sciences of economics and sociology. Both are dependent
upon reporting their results in a literary form. Historians and anthropologists have struggled unsuccessfully to develop conceptual frameworks for comparison in the nineteenth-century natural history mode, so that they might arrive at generalizations about society and culture. Both have as central to their projects the study of change, but neither has been successful in developing theories of explanation which account for anything other than the status quo. We may have learned a great deal about how societies and cultures work, but we know little about how they are transformed.

ANTHROPOLOGYLAND

The anthropologist posits a place where the natives are authentic, untouched and aboriginal, and strives to deny the central historical fact that the people he or she studies are constituted in the historically significant colonial situation, affirming instead that they are somehow out of time and history. This timelessness is reflected in the anthropologist’s basic model of change, what I would term the “missionary in the row boat” model. In this model, the missionary, the trader, the labor recruiter or the government official arrives with the bible, the mumu, tobacco, steel axes or other items of Western domination on an island whose society and culture are rocking along in the never never land of structural-functionalism, and with the onslaught of the new, the social structure, values and lifeways of the “happy” natives crumble. The anthropologist follows in the wake of the impacts caused by the Western agents of change, and then tries to recover what might have been. The anthropologist searches for the elders with the richest memories of days gone by, assiduously records their ethnographic texts, and then puts together between the covers of their monographs a picture of the lives of the natives of Anthropologyland. The peoples of Anthropologyland, like all God’s children got shoes, got structure. In an older mode of anthropological praxis, this structure was social: roles, rights and duties, positions in systems which persons moved through or, better yet, rotated through. These structures the anthropologist finds have always been there, unbeknownst to their passive carriers, functioning to keep the natives in their timeless spaceless paradise.

Events in Anthropologyland are converted into “cases,” a word of many evocations in English, not the least of which are wooden boxes, or the way lawyers and doctors organize the flow of individual instances by the application of some predetermined criteria by which they make meaningful to themselves incident and event. Action cannot be taken by lawyers or doctors until they have a “case,” a box into which to cram the events. The anthropologist’s analysis cannot proceed until the events are converted into “cases,” extended or otherwise.

In the last twenty years another structure has been brought to Anthropologyland, a symbolic one. Here even the ebb and flow of life, especially the
expressive aspects of cultures—ritual, myth, religion and art—are seen as surface features beyond which the anthropologist must penetrate to see the underlying or deep structure. The analyst of the culturally-symbolically constituted Anthropologyland takes a privileged position as the arbiter of the deep structure, as the inhabitants of Anthropologyland, it turns out, are somewhat confused and do not know that they are guided by binary oppositions, master symbols, and the systematicness of the underlying cultural logic, let alone that there is an "order of orders" behind their exuberant proliferations of motifs, designs and classificatory systems. The symbolic structuralists share with their social structuralist cross-cousins an even more timeless spaceless view of the natives of Anthropologyland.

Crossing both sets of structuralists are the vast army of reductionists, those who search for the 'really real' in Anthropologyland. Pigs are not to think, or even to constitute relationships with; they are protein. Marriage and the family are "really" about biology and the production of enough bodies to fill the circles and squares of the anthropologist’s genealogical charts. The natives are really closet utilitarians with everyone in Anthropologyland busily maximizing, either as sophisticated Marxists or crude bourgeois materialists. To the reductionists, ideology and culture are mystifications or expressions of false consciousness, or they are expressions of the working out of predetermined biological needs or post hoc rationalizations growing out of the "actual" behavior of the actors.

To study Anthropologyland, anthropologists have a sacred method: fieldwork. There comes that moment when, equipped with tape recorder, camera, and notebook, the practitioner is going to learn about what is "on the ground," what the natives are really like. No matter where on the current spectrum of structuralisms and reductionisms anthropologists locate themselves, they have to find the "out there" by entering the land of anthropological "dreaming," the field.

The anthropologists Philias Fillagap and Lucy Lacuna, who have dutifully designed their research project to fill a gap or lacuna in our existing ethnographic knowledge of Anthropologyland, enter Anthropologyland. If their fieldwork is successful, one more hole in the World Ethnographic survey will be filled, and Philias and Lucy will return from the field with "Their People" in their notebooks and on tape and film. They will have added to the growing record of the facts of life in Anthropologyland. Fillagap and Lacuna not only must add to the record, they must contribute to whatever debate is currently exercising some subsection of the profession on which they want to make their mark after they have passed through the sacred rite of passage of fieldwork.

In the good old days, fieldwork was truly a sacred rite. It was a mystery, which the individual had to learn on his own, like a Plains Indian sent on a vision quest. At best knowledge of the secret practice was passed on as
gossip or conjecture, or in a brief introduction to the monograph written by
the returned anthropologist. In recent years, though, fieldwork has been
demystified by the production of handbooks, a spate of articles and books
about "How I did fieldwork amongst the Gichi Gomi and survived." With
the advent of the tape recorder and the computer, the anthropologist
has once again returned to the verandah, which Malinowski instructed us
to step down from, as now the natives can be wheeled in to be interviewed
assiduously about all their "etics" and "ethnos" with Fillagap and Lacuna
carefully following the guides drawn up by their senior professors.

Today anthropology has well-defined field methods; in fact whole car-
eers are now open to methodologists, "ethno-" or otherwise. Most of the
new methods are based on an assumption of "objectivity," that "facts" can
be collected in a systematic and rigorous fashion. The modern day Lacuna
works from the top of a land rover, video taping the undisturbed natives
living in Anthropologyland, so that she may analyze their interactions.
Fillagap works intensively with one informant to ferret out through
exhaustive and exhausting questioning the limits of a particular linguistic
domain. Linguistic recordings and photographic records lend themselves
to "objective" analysis. These modern, objective forms of fieldwork are
based on the idea that there are "objective" social and cultural facts, and
that an anthropologist can "lay down a data base." The reason for laying
down this data base is that one can compare one society with another,
which in turn is based on the idea that there are classes of societies—e.g.,
hunters and gatherers or peasants—within and between which comparison
becomes meaningful.

This idea of comparison rests on the idea of human universals, which in
turn rests on assumed biological determinants of human culture and
society. The obsession with method can lead, and perhaps already has led
to a literally meaningless anthropology. It throws out, along with the
impressionistic, sloppy, subjective field methods of the past, the one central
fact that anthropology has discovered—people lead meaningful lives, and
that these meanings can only be discovered within the context of those lives,
it cannot be imputed to them on the basis of some previously established
ideas about the biological or psychological makeup of people. Fieldwork
gives the student of Anthropologyland the capital, ethnographic fact,
through which he or she can confound, contribute to, and find hopefully a
position in his or her own society, to transmit to the next generation the
facts of life in Anthropologyland.

NEW ANTHROPOLOGYLANDS
There has been a wide acceptance among historians in the Western world of
a common set of epistemological assumptions based on the idea that
history is a factual study of what happened in the past. This past could be
reconstructed, based upon original sources, through the hermeneutical method. Until the Second World War the subject matter of history focused on the nation state, its politics and economy. National schools of history were founded on a unity of subject matter, the history of their own past, so that English historians studied English history, German historians, German history. There was an acceptance of the idea that the study of history had a social utility in making citizens of particular countries aware of their national traditions. It was also seen as a practical subject for the training of future leaders, for history, as the study of past politics and the actions and ideas of great leaders was thought to provide a manual for future leadership.

National schools of anthropology as they were formulated in the early twentieth century differed in ethnographic base and theoretical orientation. Ethnographers followed the flag into their colonial empires. In the United States, largely under the influence of Franz Boas and his students, anthropology was dominated by the study of American Indians and by the idea that there was an anthropological “sacred bundle” of archeology, physical anthropology, linguistics, ethnography and ethnology. The association of these five fields of anthropology was based on the epistemological assumption that anthropology was really a form of “history.” The anthropological project was either the demonstration of the historical unity of mankind (Victorian evolutionism) or the history of the diversification of mankind (Boasian culture theory). Physical anthropology was the history of man as a biological entity, including the nature and spread of contemporary world populations. Archeology developed as the attempt to do history without documents through the study of physical remains of the past. These remains were studied vertically at a particular site, or horizontally as distributions of objects across sites. Meaning was constructed by archeologists in relation to the ideas and aims of Victorian evolutionism, the progress of the history of man through stages and the search for origins. Linguistics became part of the sacred bundle in the United States as part of the exploration of cultural diversity, and as a reaction to the hubris of Indo-Europeanists’ comparative philology and its dependence on European grammatical categories. Anthropological linguistics has established the “equality” of languages and the independence of the conceptual from the biological, the ecological and the social. It has also provided one of the bases for positing degrees of similarity and difference between cultures and therefore their historical relation. Ethnography—historically the description of “primitives”—is linked to ethnology, an attempt to classify globally the great variety of cultures. The major classifications of ethnographers and ethnologists—“hunters and gatherers,” “tribesmen,” “peasants,” “archaic societies,” and “modern societies”—entail a theory of history which is based on the idea of a chronological ordering of types of societies
interpretable as a sequence of cultural or biological evolution. Victorian
 evolutionists also bequeathed to the idea of the sacred bundle another kind
 of history, biography, in their idea that society is an organism having a
 "life." This organism has parts—kinship, religion, magic, economics, polit-
 ics, customs and manners—and these parts could be studied in a bounded
 social entity to see what they contributed to the maintenance of the life of
 the society, or they could be detached from the whole so that the kinship
 system of one society could be compared to that of another to discover
 underlying regularities of function and form.

The sociological and epistemological unity which marked American
 anthropology until the 1930s began to fragment through a growing con-
cern with the relevance of anthropology to our lives for the understanding
 of the American "others," the Indians; the beginnings of an ethnographic
 interest in the historic civilizations; the territorial penetration of the
 ethnographic base into the Pacific and Latin America; and growing ties
 with other national traditions of anthropological thought, especially with
 British social anthropology.

Under the inspiration of Victorian evolutionism, anthropology had
 devoted itself to the development of a universal historical scheme in which
 time itself, as a sequence of social and cultural orders, was the focus. The
 new emphasis on acculturation studies in the thirties shifted this focus from
 social and cultural orders per se to the individual. This shift occurred
 through the reconceptualization of culture, not as a set of social or econom-
ic elements, but as a "pattern" of psychological elements. Acculturation
 was the study of the transformation of "pattern." It was seen as changes in
 the knowledge, attitudes, habits and behavior of the individuals who
 composed the society. This conception of culture as pattern in accultur-
ation studies had a contradiction in it. If acculturation was the alteration of
 lifeways through the passive process of "diffusion" or "contact," then the
 elements of culture were accidentally assembled. Yet if culture is a
 bounded, integral unit, something must determine the uniqueness, distinc-
tiveness, and integrity of any one culture, and that was its ethos or
 dominating theme or themes. The contradiction in the idea of culture as
 pattern was mediated by the idea of the individual as culture-bearer, hence
 the concern with the relationship between culture and personality. What
 was authentically cultural was then psychological, rooted in personality;
 and means had to be developed to explore this personality: the use of
 psychoanalytic techniques and projective tests, the collection and study of
 biographies and autobiographies, and the study of the process whereby an
 infant becomes a Gichi Goomi, socialization.

One school of students of acculturation, writing later in the forties and
 fifties, preserved the earlier interest in universal history by conceiving space
 as time. The folk-urban continuum, a form of late nineteenth-century idea
that societies changed from those based on Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft, or from status to contract, was developed by Robert Redfield and his students in a series of studies done in Mexico. Redfield argued that existing social and cultural forms—an isolated Indian village, a mestizo community, a small town and a city—could be studied as a sequence of historical stages, with the Indian village representing the past and the city the present, the other locations being stages in the transformation from traditional to modern. This form of acculturation study did not decompose culture into elements and was less concerned with the individual and his changing behavior than with the transformation of moral orders.

Archaeology and Ethnography continued to be unified during the thirties through the concept of "culture area," which entails the idea of time depth and persistence of cultural traits in relation to "natural" or ecological zones. Forms of social organization were correlated with particular ecological niches, and it was a short step from correlating ecology with social forms to seeing the ecological as generative of these forms. What started as the archeologists' classifications could now be thought of as an explanation of cultural differences. What was needed to change classifications into a theory was the idea of function. If what existed within a social and cultural system was adaptive to the maintenance of the system, then the idea of needs derived from man's biological makeup could relate cultural differences to ecological conditions and enable the anthropologist to see through differences to the "real reason" for the presence of particular elements in a culture—namely, the function they served as the fulfillment of biologically derived needs. Kinship could be reduced to the need for reproducing members for a society and rituals could be seen as means for redistributing calories and protein to keep people healthy.

THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGY

Suddenly in 1942 Americans had to confront "the others" on an unprecedented scale, and the concept of culture was drafted to help the war effort. The enemy had to be understood, and for the first time anthropological concepts were applied to nation-states. Exotic languages had to be analyzed so that they could be rapidly taught to those who were to be governors and analysts of hitherto unknown places in the world. Millions of Americans found themselves face to face with the "others" in the Pacific, in India, the Middle East, North Africa and Europe. Populations at home and abroad had to be controlled and made to participate in the all-out effort. For the first time anthropology was seen to be a relevant social science in that anthropologists knew about the "exotics," and appeared to have methods to study them.

America's emergence as a world power immediately after World War II
had an immediate effect on the organization of academic activities, which was designed to increase and disseminate knowledge of those parts of the world in which the United States had continuing strategic, economic and political interests. Anthropologists quickly found themselves taking leading roles in the organization of "area programs" in which collectivities of various academic specialists were organized on the basis of knowledge about a particular part of the world. Anthropologists responded to this idea of areal knowledge by adapting their traditional method, fieldwork (which involves long term face-to-face study of the natives using the indigenous language) to the challenge of studying great civilizations.

Anthropologists of the fifties were still working with the idea of a culture as a bounded entity containing elements, and with the space-into-time model of the folk-urban continuum. It seemed logical to them to study the great civilizations through the study of "villages." To them the village seemed to be a bounded entity. Moreover, the village was set apart from cities, considered the site of diffusion of the modern. Hence, the village was thought to be the locus of the authentic indigenous culture, now defined as the "traditional." The interest in acculturation was now expanded and transformed to the study of modernization and industrialization, the anthropologist working as part of a team of specialists whose job was to delineate "the before" as the historical and ethnographic prelude to the introduction of land reform, the penetration of the centralized state, the building of roads, factories, or schools, or the introduction of new agricultural techniques. The village was not only the sight of "the before" in terms of its "backwardness," but the assumed locus of the traditional civilization, practices and beliefs. The sociologists, political scientists and historians working with the anthropologists in the areal mode looked to the anthropologist to provide an ideal type for "traditional" societies that would permit them to index local traits. In this ideal type, the family was believed to be the central unit of production and consumption; ownership or rights over people and objects were believed to be corporate rather than individual; the internal order of local societies was thought to be hierarchical and local communities to be linked in a hierarchical fashion to wider state structures; and age and tradition were said to maintain the local order, leading to nonrational choices made by members of these communities.

After the first wave of new fieldwork with the village as the object, a countertendency began to develop in Latin America and Asia which led the anthropologists to look at the village not as a bounded unit existing outside larger temporal and spatial orders, but as a part of the whole. Increasingly anthropologists recognized that the village and its members were part of larger systems, having relationships to governments, to national and world economies, and to religious and cultural institutions, and that a narrow empiricist methodology was inadequate to the task of understanding and
explaining questions about the constitution of these social, cultural and historical structures of which the village or local populations were a part.

Anthropologists increasingly turned away from structural-functional models and actor-centered theories of behavior to the major social theorists of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Marx, Durkheim and Weber, who posited in varying ways the existence of systems which were not based on the individual’s behavior but on superordinate structures of thought and symbol which determined and shaped the action of individuals. Anthropologists of the historical civilization were finally drawn back to studying the content of the systems of meaning and symbol which marked the particular civilization and became “ologists” of a different kind, Indologists, Sinologists, and Japanologists, for example. Those anthropologists who continued to be interested in the transformation of societies, either in the right wing mode of modernization or the left wing mode of revolution, discovered that they were studying “peasant societies,” and this enabled them to continue indexing features without worrying too much about the content and context of the civilizations they were studying.

The new Anthropologylands of the fifties and sixties emerged not only out of an expansion into the new scholarly niche of the historic civilizations. Work on the traditional “others” of anthropology, the “primitives,” expanded rapidly as well. Africa, New Guinea and the Amazon basin freshened anthropologists’ central commitment to tribal societies, reinforced by the Durkheimian idea that, by studying those furthest from modern man, we could better understand the meaning of being human. Not only did the concern for these areas mean a widening of the ethnographic base of American anthropology, but it deparochialized further the theoretical orientations of American anthropologists by exposing them to leading issues identified by English social anthropologists in Africa and increasingly to the agenda of French structuralists in the Amazon basin and New Guinea.

The sixties were a time of enormous confidence on the part of social scientists. Ever-increasing numbers of students were taking their courses and passing through the Ph.D. factories. Government at long last seemed to “need them” to set directions toward the “new frontiers” at home and abroad. Social scientists were becoming increasingly numerous and this seemed to promise the long-awaited entry into the greatest new land of all, Science.

Anthropology went through a demographic revolution in the sixties. Existing graduate departments doubled and tripled their faculties and graduate students, new departments kept developing, and many undergraduate colleges were hiring anthropologists for the first time. Training programs were funded for the application of anthropology to “health related” research and careers. The discovery of the dispossessed at home—
blacks, women, the urban poor—provided additional "others" for new anthropologies. The growing sense of American power as a beneficent force inherent in the Alliance for Progress, A.I.D. and Food for Peace programs drew more and more anthropologists into the conviction that what they did could matter in the achievement of a saner world order.

The new opportunities were irresistible, and it was a dim department of anthropology that couldn't develop the rationale to garner funds for more and more research and more and more graduate students and more and more appointments. What was needed to make the argument for anthropological involvement in public affairs cogent was the demonstration of a suitably versatile competence. If anthropologists were to study pimps, whores and street-corner gangs, then there needed to be urban anthropologists. If a department had a training grant for the production of health care specialists, then it would add several medical anthropologists. If, with the sudden emergence of Patagonia on the world scene, a department wanted to develop an expertise in Patagonia, it would establish an area program for Patagonian studies.

There was a corresponding expansion of demand for diversification apart from anthropology departments. If the agricultural school had a large contract for provision of technical information to African farmers, then there was a need for an anthropologist who could explain the social structure and values of Africans to extension agents. If the school of business had discovered the behavioral sciences, then they needed an economic anthropologist. If the school of public safety had a large contract to train the police in South Vietnam, then they needed an anthropologist to study the cultural patterns of the Vietnamese. If America's crusade for freedom was threatened by the possibilities of insurrection and revolutionary activity, then political anthropologists were needed to delineate the nature of leadership in third world countries. Moreover, the sacred bundle expanded to encompass not just the new specialties of the social/cultural anthropologists, but, since physical anthropologists and archeologists had discovered that newness was goodness, those of physical anthropology and archeology as well.

Much of the new Anthropologylands were premised on the idea that the long-awaited "cargo" of Science had now arrived. We had danced long enough entreating the dead anthropologists of the nineteenth century to rise and join us in the new land of a positivist science, or at the very least we had entered the land of Kuhnian paradigms. Now all we had to do was to find a way to dress up the great proliferation of activities, specialties and conflicting epistemologies as paradigms held by one or another subcommunities within Anthropologyland.

The idea of a paradigm, which is based on the idea of community consensus and its acceptance in anthropology, has only led to politics, not
to science. But paradigms in anthropology are in fact political rather than scientific. What are thought of as "schools" in American anthropology are in actuality mere reifications of networks of people trained together, who then try to colonize other departments with their epigones, adherents and acolytes, any coherence assumed in such departments then being based not on a paradigm but on a power play. To avoid this packing, other departments developed the Noah's Ark principle and tried to hire two of everything to cover some boundless anthropological checkerboard. Each new paradigm seems to call for yet another argument with the Dean to hire an "x," as it may be the up-and-coming field in anthropology. Whether the packing principle or the Noah's Ark principle was followed, the intellectual, philosophical and epistemological confusion of contemporary American anthropology was ignored and reduced to politics and the struggle for departmental survival.

HISTORYLAND

While the anthropologists are doing their fieldwork and have been creating new Anthropologylands, down the hall or across the campus the Philias Fillagaps and Lucy Lacunas of "Historyland" are working away with a radically different mode of production. The "out there" for the historian is not in the heads of the natives in the field, but in what purposely or accidentally the natives have put down on paper. This can then be bundled up, indexed and filed and stored away, hopefully in a well-organized archive. For work in Historyland, one must learn the craft by reading what other craftsmen have done. In the older mode of production the historian knew what was important, as history was linear and progressive, marching upward and onward, to liberal parliamentary democracy or toward the revolution which would bring the dictatorship of the proletariat. In order to record this "rise" or "fall" of something or to follow what I think of as the Bing Crosby and Bob Hope approach to history, the study of "the road to," historians need an underlying theory. But theory for the study of Historyland is not too easily come by because the craftsmen the historian reads eschews the compulsive arguing about theory that marks the student of Anthropologyland. The overwhelming number of historians in any society study their own past, defined by whatever accidents of national boundary making have occurred since the seventeenth century or established by the activities of the dominant European political powers in the rest of the world. The assumption of national histories is like the anthropologists' assumption of the "authentic," namely, that there is a well-defined field of study. Just as the idea of the authentic establishes a boundedness by which the anthropologist is able to tell one set of natives from another, so national histories—constituted by the way archives are organized—set boundaries around the historian’s object of study. Concen-
tration on national history by the natives of that nation encourages the historian to think of "theory" as being commonsense or to assume that societies and cultures are natural.

To discover the historian's theoretical assumptions one must study the language of the historian, the metaphors more or less unconsciously used. I can only illustrate by discussing a few of these metaphors. In the study of the colonial world, the seed and tree are perhaps the most pervasive. Indian history continues to be written as if the first English traders who set up stations in the seventeenth century in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras were actually planting seeds of trees. These little seeds contained within them everything that would miraculously grow into the first trading centers, then into small territorial holdings, and finally into a great empire whose limbs and leaves shaded a whole civilization. Historians write of the "sprouts" of capitalism, the "seedbeds" of war, the "growth" of empires. Another growth metaphor is the life cycle one, societies and their histories being perceived as a series of transitions from birth to childhood, maturity and finally physical decline, death and decay.

Historians learn a craft. Which craft they learn largely depends on the national school they belong to. American historians seem to be masons as Ph.D. dissertations are often referred to as building blocks, which have been hewn or shaped out of larger blocks which are the chronologically ordered stacks of records or other sources. A favorite term of approbation one historian uses for another is that he or she is "solid," as if the historian were building a wall or an outhouse. Historians of the contemporary United States display their data as electricians might, each period being color-coded by decades—brown, golden, or mauve—like a wiring diagram. I recently heard an Australian historian who, in speaking about his work, referred to the need to "clear the ground" and to begin to work with "pick and shovel," then to "sink shafts to mine historical information."

The Philias Fillagap and the Lucy Lacuna of Historyland chronologically label their contributions, beginning and ending dates appearing in either the title or subtitle of their books and monographs. In the old days it was the reign of kings or the sittings of parliament or a legislature. Now it is decades which bound their work.

Ten years seem to be a breath-taking sweep within the Ph.D. factories of the United States; twenty years, foolhardy adventurism. All decades or periods, it turns out, are "watersheds" or "turning points" in the history of something or other. The historian imposes importance on the gap he wishes to fill—the period of his study—by identifying it as a hitherto unknown turning point or watershed. Periods of study have to be short, as historians are demonically interested in controlling the sources. One of the highest compliments that can be paid by one historian to another is that he has "exhausted the sources."
The best things that have ever happened to the historian are the thirty- and fifty-year rules regulating his access to public and private documents, as the regular availability of new materials helps them avoid questions of significance. Almost every year that I have worked in the India Office Library I have seen historians lining up with something like the urgency and competitiveness that marked the start of the Oklahoma land rush, to get access to the groups of records which had just become publicly available. The equivalent of the anthropologist’s field rapport is the historian’s capacity to winkle papers out of a family’s hands. The real *dreamland* of the historian is described by Michael Holyrod, the biographer of Lytton Strachey, when he relates his experience of being led into a room which is stacked floor to ceiling with boxes and bundles of the private papers of Strachey. For almost one hundred years the practice of historical research was dominated by a simplistic positivist theory. There are or were historical facts, these facts were dateable. They could be verified through comparison of sources to find out what “really happened.” History was often a search for error. These errors could be errors of fact, but more frequently they were errors of interpretation. Revisionism, for the historian, was and still is the sure way to fame and fortune.

Revision stands in a dialectical relationship to the “big book.” A “big book” is considered by one generation as definitive. It is the product of assiduous work in the archives and a great capacity to synthesize large quantities of the work of others, as well as being a repository of facts and interpretations that are presented in a lucid and effective literary style. The big book should be richly textured, bristle with apt quotes from the sources, have at least fifty pages of recondite notes, and above all awe the reader with the encyclopedic knowledge the author has of a particular time or place. A big book lives and breathes. It is a monument to the author’s scholarship and literary dexterity and is considered unimpeachable truth for a generation. Then someone emerges as the Revisionist. He or she reads the sources differently, discovers the hidden or not-so hidden class and/or ideological bias which has motivated the work. Worse yet, the author of the big book is found to have played fast and loose with the sources, or, horror of horrors, has overlooked an obvious repository. Suddenly what was accepted historical wisdom is cast in doubt as the monument is knocked over and fragments, epigones flock in, debate flourishes, and the ground has been cleared.

If truly successful the revisionist founds an industry. The industries which historians found are obviously preindustrial because their locus is termed a “workshop.” A workshop consists of the revisionist or that discoverer of a “new problem” and of graduate-student workers. In the workshop a mother machine is built. The original “ground-breaking work,” the big book, is built with the aid of the workers, who are assigned
section parts as their workshop papers. Frequently critics are invited to the workshop to present papers, which are discussed and criticized to find out what the faults might be with the mother machine. When the mother machine is produced, the workshop now goes into another phase as the criticism stimulates countercriticisms and thereby the industry is kept working at a high level of production. The heads of the various kinds of workshop in the new industries frequently meet and form cartels to divide up new territories. Thus historians have founded the "new" histories of slavery, the family, the colonial village, social mobility, the factory town, and revolutions. Not only has the historian founded new subjects, but they have joined the twentieth century in becoming consumers of new theories and methods.

THE DISCOVERY OF NEW HISTORYLANDS

Like anthropologists, historians have created new lands to conquer, with the new lands of hyphenated histories. A generation back one could discuss current trends in historical research using a very simple classificatory grid. Time and place formed the basic axis. Biography and political, diplomatic, institutional, economic, and social (defined as history with the politics left out) history provided the main cross-cutting categories. In the United States this simple grid began to break down in the fifties, primarily under the impact of the discovery by historians of the "non-Western world" (a neat ethnocentrism which defines nine-tenths of the people of the world in a single negative term). As America became increasingly aware of its position as the world power, and was drawn into conflict with the Soviet Union and China, academics with financial encouragement from the foundations and federal government began to "attack" the problem of the non-Western world. This brought historians into close working relations with economists, sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, and language and literature specialists concerned with "exotic" (another ethnocentrism) languages.

Historians and social scientists in area programs quickly learned from each other. The social scientists found that the "exotics," at least those who were part of great civilizations, had histories, which, given the social scientists' concerns with development and political stability, had to be understood so that they could be transcended. Social scientists tended to rediscover the basic assumption of nineteenth-century social evolutionism, that there was a goal in history, this time identified as the creation of modern capitalism and liberal democracy. European history gave them a scale by which to understand the past and present of the non-Western world. Nineteenth-century evolutionists looked to the present of India, for example, as a means to understand the past of Europe. The Indian present was the European past, so that legal and economic structures and ideas,
particularly relating to the village community, could elucidate European history.

Social evolutionism and its twentieth-century version, modernization theory, are an explanation of and program for European domination of the world. These theories make the present of one civilization—India for example—the past of another, namely Western Europe. They locate the dominators and the dominated in one analytical system or scheme which is temporal. These theories say to Asians, Africans or Latin Americans: What you are today we have been in the past; you may become what we are today, but by that time we of course will be something else because we will have gone on. The modern developmental model as it was worked out by economists and political scientists in the fifties borrows this structure by trying to identify or scale aspects of third world societies in relation to the history of Europe. It assumes a lineality in European history—e.g., the movement from elite-based court politics to mass politics—that is both a prerequisite for modernization and an indicator of change. One can put eighteenth-century England and twentieth-century India into a common framework. The working of sociological, economic and political scientists’ models leads to a view of culture and society as aspects, indicators, bits and pieces of things, which can be scaled and ranked to build indices of modernization. In this effort to view cultures as composed of comparable traits so that scales of an “objective” kind can be created, meaning is ignored and the integrity of other societies becomes decomposed.

The idea of indexing “traits” or reducing complex sociocultural phenomena to “indicators” is tied to the idea of “data banks” and “cases.” If the bank is prerequisite for a capitalist economy, then the data bank is the prerequisite for a sociological history. What is put into a data bank are bits of information concerning voting behavior, strikes, price statistics—anything that is expected to yield comparative data over time. What the depositor in the bank thinks of as constant bits of coded behavior the borrower of the bank withdraws as correlations. The idea of the “case” is somewhat more complicated than that of the data bank. As was noted above, the case is a means of turning the unknown into the known, of bounding and making meaningful so-called “raw” data by the application of a priori criteria. As with older historical practice, where meaning was externally established by finding “watersheds” or “turning points” in relation to the “rise” or “fall” of this or that, the case is supposed to be a “sample” of a larger universe. To study a small town in early nineteenth-century New England is to study a sample of the process of industrialization. The idea behind the case is to turn the particular into the general.

The development of area programs in the United States may have been the impetus toward the wholesale hyphenization of history, but it was quickly overtaken by other sources of borrowing—in the first instance, the
great success models of postwar social science: that of economics; then soon after, that of sociology and political science. These fields quickly adapted the new technologies of the computer to the processing of their data. Several other factors have contributed to the increasing interest among historians in social science—among them, the rise to respectability of that soft porn of academic life, intellectual Marxism. The perceived changes which the Western world has gone through in the last twenty-five years also has been quickly reflected in the historians' problems and their adaptation of new methods. These include the rise in divorce rates and the reemergence of the perennial question of the "breakdown" of the family; also an apparent increase in the instability of the political order in Western Europe and the United States, signalled particularly in the student movement in France, the inauguration of new dictatorships in the sixties, and the antiwar and civil rights movements in the States. This has led to a renewed interest in the nature of solidarity and authority. The civil rights movement also led to the discovery of the depressed, the exploited and the "ethnic" in the United States.

The overall success models of sociology and economics, the new technology of the computer, promising a hitherto unimaginable degree of control of historical source materials, the availability of large-scale funding for "new" approaches, the mounting sense of change and dislocation in the sixties, combined with the continuing interest in modernization, led to the proliferation of the new or hyphenated histories. By the mid-sixties there was a growing body of exemplary monographs and works in progress—e.g., Peter Laslett's The World We Have Lost, Charles Tilly's The Vendée and Stephan Thernstrom's Poverty and Progress—which provided an agenda for the new histories and their growing body of adherents. A generation of intellectual entrepreneurs grew up who combined solid and innovative research with a messianic zeal for spreading a particular version of social-scientific history along with entrepreneurial skill in raising funds for conferences. Newsletters established constituencies for the many varieties of the new histories. Any new hyphenated history was legitimated through the establishment of a journal devoted to its subject matter, or the appearance of a collection of articles and textbooks to be used in courses devoted to that historical domain. The final mark of success was to break into the established checkerboard classification by which new positions are created in history departments. Historians are professors of something which is defined as regional, then temporal, the basic curriculum of a history department being broken down into a series of broad categories—ancient, medieval, early modern, modern. This scheme is, of course, a scheme of Western history only. A generation ago this ethnocentrism was eroded by a new awareness of the rest of the world, with Latin American, South Asian, Chinese and African histories claiming squares on the check-
erboard. Now the new histories have their places on the checkerboard. Historians are now recruited to new slots on the basis of their specialization in approach and subject matter as well; they are not only hired for their temporal and regional specializations. Today a balanced and broadened history department requires a quantitative historian, an urban historian, a woman’s historian or a psychohistorian.

PROCTOLOGICAL HISTORY

Each of the hyphenated histories is worthy of extended critical analysis, but for brevity’s sake I will discuss only one of these, what I call proctological history, the study of history from “the bottom up.” Proctological history is the study of the masses, the inarticulate, the deprived, the dispossessed, the exploited, those groups and categories in society seen by earlier and more elitist historians, not as protagonistic but as passive, and therefore not a proper historical focus. In the elitist historical tradition, the lower orders became the background figures who among liberal historians were seen as the benefactors of the march toward civilization and among conservative historians as the unruly and unwashed, who posed a continuing threat to a fragile and hard-won civilizing process. These groups, classes or categories—women, the lumpen proletariat, blacks, ethnics; in general, the dispossessed—are difficult in any society to study since the conventional organization of source materials, generally speaking, leave them out. In the last fifteen years, some of the most enduring and important works of historical scholarship have been motivated by an interest in the history of the excluded groups. The historians who study from the bottom up have demonstrated the possibility of a more complex and rounded history. When well done this work has been highly innovative and creative in the development of new sources, the use of oral traditions, the study of marginalia, the utilization of different kinds of records, to explore characteristics and life patterns of the inarticulate. The use of songs, folklore, public celebrations and rituals, as in the work of E. P. Thompson and Natalie Z. Davis, have all extended in stimulating and suggestive fashion the nature of historical studies.

These historians have also demonstrated the high utility of grounded Marxist theories. The proctological historians, in greatly expanding the subject matter of history, have done much to realize the Rankian dictum of history, that it should be the study of what actually was. By focusing on conflict, repression and deprivation, I think unwittingly the proctological historians are bringing back as the problematic of social history not just history from the bottom up, but history from the top down as well. Their conclusions have directed us to the study of the structures and meanings involved in the creation of systems of solidarity and authority and to what appear to be the unconscious systems of control which mark many modern
societies. The dispossessed have to be put into the same contextual and analytical framework as the elites and ruling groups who are engaged in the maintenance and representation of social orders. What would seem to be the defining feature of modern societies is the explicitness by which ruling groups are concerned with control of the internal and external “others” and the proliferation of institutions—the police, prisons, social welfare agencies, hospitals, schools and codes (sanitary, criminal, building and occupational)—directed toward civilizing the colonized and controlling the masses at home. All of modern society seems to have been designed to keep objects and persons in “their place.”

What started as a new kind of social history will bring us back to questions about the construction of culture, by which I mean systems of concepts, meanings and beliefs which are incorporated in and made manifest by symbols. By focusing on women, for example, historians have to deal with questions not only of role allocation, distribution of income, repression and discrimination, which I would argue are surface features, but also of underlying cultural formations concerned with how people classify and order and symbolize their worlds.

We cannot get around the study of the cultural order by dismissing it as attitudes, folk beliefs, mere ideological formations or false consciousness, or as merely the window dressing for the “practical realities” of social life, because the cultural order is the very basis of the institutional order. The true mystification as far as I am concerned is all those theories which try to reduce culture to the epiphenomenal or the dependent. There can be no practical realities without the symbolic coding of them as practical; the theory that the social is created out of action—the day-to-day decisions of myriads of people—truly obfuscates the nature of the social. People cannot act as maximizers—either out of self-interest or out of deep psychological conditionings (Freudian, Rankian or Rogerian)—without the preexistence of meaning in cultural terms.

Much of the praxis of the new proctological histories—family, women, urban, black—follows in form the older model of historical practice that I parodied earlier. With computers, historians can come closer to their old positivist ideal of total control of the sources. The true Rankian historians are those who think that by computerizing all the records of an English parish from the seventeenth century to the present, we will finally be able to write a “true” history. The vast efforts which have gone into developing record linkage systems by which individuals and families can be traced through successive censuses is an updating of the old idea that individuals make history.

Just as the nineteenth-century historians sought to collect every piece of paper relating to their past and put them between covers of books such as those monumental publication series of charters and saints’ lives, and just
as they developed modern archives, so do contemporary historians think that they can recover everything from the past by putting it into a computer. History from the bottom up sends the historian to smaller and smaller localities so that he or she may observe the lives of people in the round. The assumption behind the smallness of scale (temporal and/or spatial) of the research of contemporary historians is positivistic: that when we have studied the workers in enough industrializing English cities, we will have the building blocks for a new and scientific history. This is like the efforts of American historians of eighty years ago to study the constitutions of the thirteen American colonies, with the expectation that if there were enough monographs on specific political constitutions, we could then write the true history of American democracy.

There is a reification inherent in the new social history in its dependence on analytical categories like family, social mobility and industrialization to make local studies comparable. This ultimately evokes the crude social evolutionism of the nineteenth century. The new political history leads to objectification by positing voting as central to the understanding of the nature of the political order because it can be counted. It also leads to objectification by positing decision-making as an action. In substituting a theory of small group dynamics for an understanding of the macropolitical order we live in, it not only trivializes scholarship but denies the responsibility of scholars to make meaningful the political world in which they live.

**TOWARD AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL HISTORY**

I started this paper with the observation that anthropologists and historians do share a considerable amount at the epistemological level. I then went on to describe two different modes of practice, models and their transformation into an epistemological anarchy which the discovery of new lands has brought to both professions through the expansion and reformulation of their practices and subject matters over the last twenty-five years. I will conclude by exploring the possibility of a conjuncture between history and anthropology not just as another new speciality, not just as the means by which more hyphenated histories and anthropologies may be generated, but as the means by which an epistemology and subject matter common to the two disciplines might be reasserted. I am going to suggest that history can become more historical in becoming more anthropological, that anthropology can became more anthropological in becoming more historical.

I have argued that anthropologists work in space and historians work through time in their respective construction of accounts of "otherness." We know about otherness because both anthropologists and historians are comparativists. Anthropological comparison holds time and history constant and orders what is observed or read about in a spatial metaphor through the use of systems of classification. By using their classificatory
schemes, anthropologists can identify the actions or reports of actions of the natives as relating to institutions, modes of thought, or organization. At another level anthropologists are constantly involved in a kind of triangulation among what they are immediately studying, what they know of their own culture in a complex and reflective fashion, and what they know of the range of possibilities learned from the reading and study of ethnographies. No matter how much the anthropologist may be committed to the idea of studying from the natives' point of view, what he or she learns is always mediated by a subtle or not so subtle comparative method. This method, though, is atemporal, despite the fact that the cultures he studies are necessarily historical because they are constantly being constructed: people everywhere live lives which are constituted out of the past. Culture is continually being invented or modified, without being totally transformed. Men live in a world of intention and consequence. Intention and action are turned into culture by history.

Anthropology as it tends to be practiced takes what can be observed or drawn out of various performances and statements elicited or heard in the daily flow of activities and seeks to establish abstractions, relations, structures and meanings to organize the data he or she observes. But because his methodology is synchronic, what the anthropologist always tells us about Anthropologyland is a reification and an objectification. Studying in an historical mode would shift the anthropologist away from the objectification of social life to a study of its constitution and construction. All culture is constructed. It is the product of human thought. This product may over time become fixed ways of doing things. It may also be changed. Since culture is always being constituted and constructed, so it is also always being transformed. Cultures and societies are not natural objects. It is only through culture that we construct nature, not the other way around.

This process of construction of cultures can be studied through representations—those situations, to follow Durkheim, in which some members of society represent their theories and systems of classifications and constructs to themselves and others. By representations I mean, among other things, etiquette, codes of conduct, large-scale political/religious rituals, and the various forms of myths which underlie such representations. It is through the study of these phenomena, rather than by concentration on "organization" or "structure" as it is abstracted from what the anthropologist denominates behavior, that we can understand and ultimately compare systems of representation.

The study of cultural constructions are more accessible than many anthropologists and historians like to think they are. Anthropological "others" are part of the colonial world. In the historical situation of colonialism, both white rulers and indigenous peoples were constantly involved in representing to each other what they were doing. Whites
everywhere came into other peoples' worlds with models and logics, means of representation, forms of knowledge and action, with which they adapted to the construction of new environments, peopled by new "others." By the same token these "others" had to restructure their worlds to encompass the fact of white domination and their own powerlessness. Hence, one of the primary subject matters of an historical anthropology or an anthropological history is, to use Balandier's term, the colonial situation. This is not to be viewed as "impact," not as "culture contact," nor is it to be viewed through a methodology that seeks to sort what is introduced from what is indigenous. It is rather to be viewed as a situation in which the European colonialist and the indigene are united in one analytic field. I have already made the observation that the study of society from the bottom up necessarily leads to the study of ruling classes and the nature of control mechanisms and expropriations of various kinds. This is true of the study of the colonial situation as well. To study Australian aborigines, or American Indians, or Indian villagers without locating them in relation to the colonial structures which were or are the central social fact of their lives—without paying attention to the traders, the missionaries and administrators, and to the whole process by which the indigenous peoples become incorporated in various fashions into the capitalist and socialist economies—is to trivialize the experience of the natives.

The study of the construction, constitution and representations of culture is accessible not only for the study of the "others" but for the study of ourselves as well. We tend to overlook the facts that our cultures constantly undergo a process of construction and that the process of representation is just as much a part of our experience as it is a part of the experience of the colonial world. Even societies which claim great antiquity and continuity such as England provide many examples of the process about which I am writing. One need only think of the transformation of the English monarchy in recent years. The English, no less than Indian villagers or the faculty at The University of Chicago, act as if what was recently created and denominated a "tradition" is part of their ancient heritage.

The black boxes of anthropological history are the concepts of event, structure and transformation. We write of an event as being unique, something that happens only once; yet every culture has a means to convert the uniqueness into a general and transcendent meaningfulness through the language members of the society speak. To classify phenomena at a "commonsense" level is to recognize categories of events coded by the cultural system. An event becomes a marker within the cultural system. All societies have such markers, which can be public or private. The death of a ruler may be mourned by rituals which turn the biographical fact of a death into a public statement relating not only to a particular ruler but to rulership per se. In many societies ritual transforms uniqueness into structure.
Birth, marriage, the dissolution of a marriage or death are unique events which a sociologist turns into rates in order to make statements about change. He writes about fertility, mortality, the "breakdown of the family" as if the summation of series of events in an arithmetic or statistical form is both a statement about and an explanation of these events. Much of current social history is based on such assumptions. An anthropological history, while recognizing the utility of such summary statements, is concerned not with the rate itself, but with the underlying structure as a whole to which the summation of rates of parts relates.

Conventionally historians are interested in chronology, the idea that events can be ordered and dated according to a fixed criterion external to the event itself. Time in our cultural system is measurable and finite, and analytically we divide the flow of events into chronological periods. By period or age we imply some kind of wholeness and homogeneity—the "Age of Enlightenment," the "Age of Revolution"—in which parts fit together in some kind of coherent pattern. Yet neither a social or cultural system is totally integrated—subsystems may change or transform at different rates—and temporal unities do not therefore necessarily demarcate analytic entities. The period or duration of an anthropological history can only be determined in relation to the questions being asked and the subject being studied. Some events, some decisions are more crucial than others. They have structural consequences which are apparent only after they have happened. The reason an anthropologist studies history is that it is only in retrospect, after observing the structure and its transformations, that it is possible to know the nature of the structure.

In 1772, Warren Hastings, Governor of Bengal (which only recently had come under British control) decided as part of a plan for the governance of this territory that the East India Company's courts would administer Hindu law for Hindus and Muslim law for Muslims. This decision had ramifying consequences which eventually led to the notion that Indian civilization was founded on particular Sanskrit texts. By the middle of the nineteenth century these were conceived to be the very embodiment of an authentic India. The idea of the primacy of the Sanskrit component in Indian civilization then became the determinant of action, policy and structure, not only for the rulers but for many of the ruled. What had been fluid, complex, even unstructured, became fixed, objective and tangible.

The establishment of such a cultural construct has a duration and chronology of its own, related to but often independent of other constructs. What had been a decision taken at a particular time, for what the actors thought to be pragmatic reasons and which is therefore explicable in those terms, had a consequence which wholly transcended its origins. What had been a dependent variable—the result of an action through time—became an independent variable and the determinant of action. I think an anthro-
The diagnostic work place of the historians and anthropologists, the field and the archive, contrast with respect to the differing modes of comprehension each represents. In some respect the anthropologist creates texts he or she puts together out of the process of learning the language, observation, discussion, and interviews, accounts of events, and the persons and meanings he or she comes to have insight into. These are constantly being cross-referenced in the anthropologist's mind and notebook. Text and context are created simultaneously. The anthropologist may directly transcribe texts in the form of stories, myths, descriptions of rituals, biographies and genealogies. The analysis of these texts and the building of contexts is by induction, with reference to daily events and through the anthropologist's capacity to clarify and refine the models tentatively proposed throughout fieldwork by questioning informants further. The culture of the "others" is not only in the notebooks but in the memory of the anthropologist, who can recall a great deal about the specific or more
general context of the text; and the note, transcription or observation in the notebook can trigger the recovery of much more than is actually recorded.

The historian needs the direct experience of another culture through systematic fieldwork. It is not just the idea of the exotic, but the sense one gets that other systems work, that there are such things as cultural logics, that there is as much rationality in other societies as in our own, even though they flow from other principles. The experiences of having to use another language and seeing how meanings are contextualized are crucial to a true understanding of history.

Taking the anthropological experience into the archive or library enables the historian to better appreciate the significance of what would otherwise appear to be mere trivia, to understand how other cultures can be structured and constructed. The ideal is, of course, that there be some continuity between the foci of anthropological and historical research, but this is not always possible.

Archives are cultural artifacts which encompass the past and the present. The historian learns that filing systems are codes, and a considerable amount of time has to be spent in learning how the particular documents being used were produced. Documents must be collated and statements of various kinds tested for reliability. The texts found by the historian have to be read not only for “facts” or “indications” but for the meanings intended. This can only be done through understanding the shadings of language and the structure of the text, and through the development of sensitivity to changes in form through time.

The work of the historian proceeds outside the archive as well. The famous English economic historian Tawney argued that historians needed “fewer sources and stouter boots.” The past exists not only in records of the past, but survives in buildings, objects and landscapes of the present day, the observation of which assist the historian in constructing the context. The anthropological historian therefore should have the working experience of both the field and the archive. There are no shortcuts. No quick packaging of the skills, methods, insights and findings in handbooks can substitute for the act of doing an anthropological history.