

History of anthropology

Where does begin with a history of anthropology and when?

1- Before the Renaissance

The comparative point of view of anthropology rest on recognition that there are physical and cultural differences among human populations which must be taken in account in any attempt to generalize about mankind. It is anthropology's recognition of the scientific importance of such importance which chiefly distinguishes it from other disciplines concerned with human behaviour. The history of this idea is therefore particularly important of the history of anthropology;

In a way, the anthropological tradition of interest in differences among men had its beginning in the Italian Renaissance of the 14th and 15th centuries. The first differences which were recognised as significant to a general understanding of mankind were the cultural and linguistic differences between classical antiquity and what was then the present. It was only after the beginnings of an archaeological perspective had been established that the interest in differences was extended to contemporary contrasts.

Renaissance studies of classical antiquity not only stimulated a general interest in differences among men, they also provided models for describing such differences.

In order to demonstrate to some extent the Renaissance origin of the comparative point of view of anthropology, it is necessary to show first that there was no continuous anthropological tradition of comparative studies stretching back through the Middle Ages to Classical Antiquity, and second that the interest in differences of custom and language and in local antiquities, characteristic of some writers of the period of the voyages of discovery, was related to a fundamental change in men's attitude toward Classical antiquity which was the essence of the Italian Renaissance.

It is a fact that there was no continuous anthropological tradition of comparative studies in Classical antiquity and the Middle age. There were, however, a number of individual writers in both periods who displayed some interest in cultural differences. Such ancient writings of anthropological nature as still survived were discovered with great enthusiasm by Renaissance writers and only then began to influence effectively the development of anthropology.

The essence of the anthropological point of view is that in order to understand ourselves we need to study others. In contrast, the ancient Greeks for the most part held that the way to understand ourselves is to study ourselves, while what others do is irrelevant. This was the view taken by such thinkers as Socrates. It was congenial to Greek ethnocentrism and contributed to the lack of any sustained interest in the customs and languages of the barbarians. The Romans acknowledge the natural superiority which the Greeks liked to claim and therefore endeavoured to identify themselves with the Greeks as far as possible. Instead of studying the differences between the Greeks and themselves, a procedure which would have implied an acceptance of their barbarian status, the Romans traced their ancestry to the heroes of Greek legend, identified their Gods with the Greek ones, and imitated Greek manners.

In this context, the few writers from Antiquity who took an interest in anthropological comparison are significant exceptions. The earliest and most important of such writers was Herodotus.

According to many scholars, Herodotus first formulated some of the persisting problems of anthropology. Herodotus wrote his history around the 5th century B.C. Herodotus displays as much interest in the customs of the Egyptians, Scythians, and other barbarian peoples as he does in Greek and Persian political history, and it has been said the father of anthropology and history. How did

Herodotus happen to develop an interest so foreign to the main current of Greek thought? Herodotus has access to Persian sources as he was born in Halicarnassus and was a Persian subject. Halicarnassus was a cosmopolitan city from Asia Minor. In his youth he travelled extensively in the western provinces of the Persian Empire, collecting data and information which he later used in his history. Some traditions were incorporated into History and were evidently derived from sources of the nobility. The Persians had no less national pride than the Greeks did, but they managed to combine it with a respect for the customs and languages of others which was unique in the ancient world. Herodotus illustrates the Persian attitude in several examples. Darius the Great has his deeds recorded in Old Persian, Babylonian, and Elamite, the three languages understood by educated travellers in this area. The Jews who benefited greatly from the Persian policy of tolerance are also a good example illustrated in the Book of Esther written in the 2nd B.C. But almost the whole of Old Persian literature perished after the conquest by Alexander the Great in the 4th century B.C. The History of Herodotus is perhaps the only surviving document.

No tradition of comparative cultural study developed apart Herodotus. However, Herodotus was attacked time and again as a liar, and it was his statements about the unfamiliar customs of the barbarians which his Greek and Roman readers found particularly difficult to believe. Herodotus' credit for veracity was not restored until 1566. The only lasting effect in Classical Antiquity from Herodotus' work and "ethnography" was that inspired an increasing interest among philosophers in the fact that cultures and customs are different in different areas. As a consequence, but as a very minor part of his work, Aristotle made a collection of examples of odd customs.

The closest approach to an anthropological study in Greek after Herodotus appears to have been the description of India and its people by Megasthenes written in the 3rd century B.C. Megasthenes as an ambassador of the Greek ruler of western Asia at the court of Chandragupta has excellent opportunities to study Indian customs and he provided substantial data on these customs and beliefs. But Megasthenes as a naïve anthropologist was not able to distinguish the narratives of Hindu mythology from factual areas of areas he has not visited himself.

In Latin literature the only work of Classical antiquity which resembles to an ethnographic report is a treatise written by Tacitus on the origins, location, customs and people of the Germans called *Germania*. Tacitus was a Roman lawyer and civil servant, and it is not at all certain that he was in Germany. But he took advantage in his book of the opportunity to read his fellow citizens a moral lesson by praising the Germans for maintaining certain values which Tacitus identified as a part of the old Roman tradition and which he felt his contemporaries were neglecting. This text failed to influence Trajan's foreign policy. But it was hailed as a golden book and it had a considerable influence on pioneer ethnographic writings. Geographers such as Strabo or encyclopaedists as Pliny have introduced references to foreign customs in their volumes. But the complete lack of anthropological insight is particularly striking in Pliny's *Natural History*.

However, the relation between modern anthropology and classic thinking is well established since the 19th century. It had begun as a trial marriage in such foundational works as Maine's *Ancient Law* and Fustel de Coulanges' *La Cité Antique*. Frazer was typically a Hellenistic anthropologist. Moses Finley's *The World of Odysseus* published in 1956 has attempted to illuminate Homer from the writings of the Kula-ring of Marcel Mauss. This masterpiece can be seen as the seed of the present flowering of anthropologically related studies of ancient Greek culture and society. The work of Finley has been decisive for the anthropological turn in Anglo-American Classical scholarship.

During the middle Ages some Arabic writers showed more interest in cultural differences, but their work failed to influence European scholars. No significant Muslim influence shaping cultural particularities can be traced until Leo the African who completed his Italian description of Africa.

The intellectual climate of Medieval Europe was favourable to comparative studies. But European Christians were much concerned about religious differences but only for the purpose of suppressing them. Other cultural differences were assigned little importance. It was differences in character and morality among individuals which were considered significant.

In the 13th century, however, the Europeans had their attention forcibly attracted to the Mongols. Genghis Khan defeated the European in so many places. The most informative of the European envoys

to the Mongol court was the Franciscan friar Giovanni del Pian del Carpini, who travelled in Asia from 1245 to 1247. Pian del Carpini's *History of the Mongols* filled some seventy pages translated in English, a quarter devoted to ethnography of the Mongols' customs.

A few years later (1275-1292) Marco Polo spent 17 years at the service of Kublai Khan as an official of his imperial administration. Then his history was written by a fellow prisoner at a time he was in jail in Genoa. Marco Polo's interest was different from the previous author. In sense of propaganda of Kublai Khan whom Marco served loyally and admired but reflects a personal interest in cultural differences which Marco says he learnt from the Great Khan himself. However, the information in his story is not very precise and accurate. It is intermingled with much fabulous material on the wonders of the east which reflect a characteristically Medieval attitude. But Marco Polo's picturesque narrative was widely read.

Roger Bacon, who lived from about 1214 to about 1292, was one of the most original thinkers of the time. He had a vision of a comprehensive science in the service of religion which he expounded to Pope Clement IV in his *Opus Maius*. A part of the treatise takes account of the travels of Pian del Carpini and Rubroek, another friar. Here we might expect to find the birth of comparative anthropology. Bacon does, indeed, stress the fact that customs and men are different in different regions, but he goes on to explain that these differences are determined by the astrological influence on the planets, so that the way to study them is to determine the latitude and longitude of each particular place. There is no suggestion that direct observation of human behaviour might be useful. Bacon derived this theory of astrological determination from the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise: *Secret of secrets*.

In the Middle Ages Europeans recognised no significant differences between themselves and the Ancients. There were a lot of reasons for that: the fact that the Classical tradition has remained unchanged during the medieval period, even books were very scarce. Some ancient writers continued to be read. This distinction was a creation of the Renaissance.

2- The theory of the Renaissance foundations of anthropology

In the 13th century there was a progressive abandonment of the Classical tradition in philosophy, architecture and art with the Scholastics. In the 14th century, the Renaissance began as a reaction against the 13th century and the founders turn back to Classical references so that the cultural contrast between antiquity and the present should now be recognised.

One of the most influential poets was Petrarch. He collected the works of Latin poets, imitated their style. Petrarch thought that Antiquity represented an ideal of perfection. He admired Virgil and Cicero's prose. He studied Greek and Plato. Boccaccio wrote treatises on ancient mythology. There was a huge movement in Italy to acquire Greek and Latin manuscripts. The great part of the Classical literature we have now was known towards 1430 in Italy. The rediscovery of the Classical tradition has occupied the intellectuals of the Renaissance until the middle of the 15th century. Then when these resources were available, the foundations of modern scholarship have taken place: Ciriaco de Pizziccoli founded the discipline of archaeology. He devoted a part of his life in studying old monuments in the field. He considered the two kinds of evidence, one from archaeology and the other from the Classical literature as complementary. Lorenzo Valla was the founder of the Renaissance tradition on linguistics. Valla stimulated the interest on cultural differences by his translations of Herodotus in Latin.

The Renaissance scholars have treated antiquity as a different world from the one they knew, remote but accessible to all through its literature and artefacts. The Renaissance education of their time spread the view that the ancients were both different and worthy of study. They were better prepared than their predecessors to observe and record contemporary cultural differences when the opportunity presented itself. The importance of the Renaissance point of view in making men sensitive to cultural differences is clearly seen in the records of early Portuguese and Spanish in the exploration of the Atlantic and Africa.

Number of Renaissance scholars considered the travel of Columbus in 1492 as the most important event of the period. Pietro Martire, one of them took a specific interest in ethnographic and linguistic information about the natives of Hispaniola, the newly discovered lands of America. Martire ethnographic information is abundant.

The significance of the Renaissance to the history of anthropology is that it created perspective distance at which antiquity or any more recent culture might be seen whole and observed with a respect that would make it an acceptable object of study. It is paradoxical in a sense that Renaissance admiration for classical Antiquity should have made men more ready to study linguistic and cultural differences in the world around them.

3-A Byzantine point of view

Many past studies of the history of anthropological inquiries have committed a double fallacy: first they have assumed intellectual discontinuity between ancient Greco-Roman and Renaissance traditions; second they have confined themselves to Western Europe. Since Classical times, however, out of which general anthropological inquiry emerges was not confined to Western Europe but was related to the entire Mediterranean world. To demonstrate such a discontinuity, it should be necessary to operate it on the entire Mediterranean world.

J.S Slotkin maintains that if we consider social anthropology to be the comparative study of cultures, it does not begin until the sixteenth century, when a substantial body of travels became available. Pre-Renaissance anthropological inquiry was dismissed by Slotkin, because during the previous centuries, social phenomena were considered to be supernaturally caused.

It's quite clear that historians have placed emphasis on Italian revival of Classical knowledge in the fifteenth century. Although this revival is not a matter of discussion, the nature and source of its origin are actually ignored. At that time a large number of Greek scholars migrate from Constantinople to the West after the fall of the last bastion of Byzantino-Roman civilisation to the Turks around 1450. Aside from this, there is a general silence on the role played by the Byzantine learning in the preservation of the Greco-Roman heritage. As a matter of fact Western historians have ignored the fact that the eastern part of the Roman Empire has survived for another millennium after Rome collapsed. The eastern Roman world has shaped significantly the Western medieval culture history. Thus, in terms of its folk model, Byzantium behaved as if it were a continuation of the old Roman Empire. Urban life which was the backbone of the Classical period did not disappear in the East. Hellenistic Greek learning was much firmly rooted in this area and unlike the West was able to coexist with Christianity and survive. The tradition of secular learning and scholarship persisted in the East.

The most important historian of the 4th century in the East was Marcellinus. He was born of noble Greek lineage in Antioch. He undertook the extension of Tacitus histories and described the barbarians of Tacitus more accurately. Priscus appears the most informative on the customs of the Huns. The sixth century was a period of prosperity in the Eastern Empire reflected in the increased volume of literature. The most prominent historian of the period was Procopius of Cesarea in Palestine, who dealt with the reign of Justinian. Most ethnographic information he recorded can be found in the History in Eight books. John of Ephesus was a true manual of cultural history. In addition, some travellers provided abundant notes on geography and ethnography of Non-Roman peoples during the Justinian period. Cosmas published an account of his travels in India and China, a long time before Marco Polo. In the tenth century Constantine Porphyrogenitus might be credit with the revival of analytic history. Following Constantine occurred a long succession of imperial historians who have dealt with the civilised barbarians that the Empire has to encounter more frequently. This fact suggests that history and ethnography were intermixed according to the state policy and needs.

The fifteenth century saw the collapse of Byzantium and the fall of Constantinople. However, for almost a century prior to the fall, Byzantine learning, science and art found increasingly fertile ground for growth in Italy. What the West took from Byzantium were these elements of its culture that preserved the old traditions of antiquity manuscripts were purchased from there, even it is true that the West has also used the Arabic sources for information on classical times.

In surveying Byzantine history, there is evidence that the medieval gap of the West was here not accurate. We can consider that sophisticated ethnographies were no more common or uncommon in the Renaissance than in the Antiquity. By this way, Herodotus work cannot be disqualified.

4-On the origins of modern theoretical Anthropology:

It is a common idea that all the central, conflicting themes of modern anthropology were conceived at the time of the French Enlightenment and Revolution. The West European Enlightenment, which had its antecedents in the Renaissance and the Reformation, is assumed as the axial age of modern consciousness. It has initiated a period of a materialistic, secular, and technical world order, of which corporate capitalism has emerged. The philosophy of the Enlightenment was split by a paradox. On the one hand, the possibility of a continued evolutionary thrust into the future, an empirically derived, rational and logical periodisation of the laws of nature and society, and the revelation of a new man, freed from all past superstitions, announced by most of the Encyclopaedists. This view was reinforced by the new techniques that seemed to be at hand for the control of nature and was rooted, also, in the possibility of a new science already conceived by Locke, Newton, Bacon the English forerunners.

On the other hand, the nascent modern realities that were being spawned by the revolutionary bourgeoisie, the new urbanism, the early manufactories, had already begun to exert their alienating effect on several eminent figures such as Rousseau. Even before the French Revolution occurred, intellectual doubts had been expressed about the state to which the contemporary world was tending. Unlike the emergent masses, intellectuals were bored by the new realities.

Modern anthropology built itself on the horns of this modern dilemma. The contradiction between the progressive evolutionary view, and the holistic natural view was generated by the Enlightenment. Consequently, some of the writers became increasingly curious about the contrasting character of native peoples who had begun to be reported on in the immediately preceding great Age of discovery, and this gave modern anthropology both its orientation in field work and asset of attitudes. Thus, the theoretical anthropological discipline has inherited the materialist, evolutionist, secular, scientific and less melioristic spirit of the Enlightenment (Tylor), along with a Rousseauan distrust of civilisation and the subsequent search for a more deeply expressive, primitive, permanent, human nature and cultural structure. True Anthropologists are not necessarily confined to either one of their two conflicting but related, that is, ambivalent intellectual traditions, and most somehow manage to combine both in their work and attitudes.

4-1 An example: Voltaire as an anthropologist

There exist at least two motives for the anthropologist of today to remember the essence and the origins of the enlighteners. Of these enlighteners, Condorcet, more than any others, influenced the nineteenth century. But Condorcet's anthropological theories are largely based on ideas of Voltaire, which actually no one before Condorcet had incorporated in a system. Thus, being interested in knowing the eighteenth century anthropology, we will do best by considering Voltaire. The latter was a moralist and politician, dealing with and participating in all events of the day, rather than an abstract theoretician.

In connection with the medieval crusades and the discovery of new countries three questions arose which gave rise to an attempt to classify human beings and to explain their origins:

- 1) How can the non Christian people are incorporated in the Biblical conception of the world, and to what extent can their way of life be tolerated?
- 2) To what degree may topography and other geographical factors, even the special character of the landscape, have caused differences as to social structures and ways of life?
- 3) Does there exist a relationship between recently known languages and those mentioned in the Bible or by writers of the Greek-Roman antiquity?

These problems came to the French enlighteners mostly in the three following ways:

- a) The domination of Jesuit thinking and concepts which facilitate the forgiving of sins, ultimate salvation, and especially assimilation of many customs of formerly non- catholic peoples in the recently discovered countries with Catholicism.

- b) The official French Catholicism of that epoch, opposing the Pope's interference in French affairs and the thinking of the Jesuits. It affiliated itself occasionally to the Jansenists but emphasized the distance separating them from Calvinism. That required the elaboration of a complete system using the Bible, Greek philosophy, medieval sources, Cartesian philosophy, and the theory of law of nature and original social contract, report from missionaries. The bishop Bossuet is the most influential who has developed a philosophical system asserting to include the whole world history.
- c) The English empirical deism represented by Locke and as based on earlier precursors such as medieval Franciscans, indirectly even Arabic philosophers was flourishing in England at that time.

Voltaire was a pupil of the Jesuits; he knew Bossuet and he accepted the deistic philosophy.

Indeed, he was far to agree the anthropological ideas of these three groups.

As to sources, Voltaire was obliged to use reports written by travellers as well as his precursors of whatever kind they were. Originally somewhat an optimist, he became relatively soon a cynic and required critical examination of the reports as his historically contemporary Montesquieu. But in opposition to him, he attributed not a great importance to physical and geographical factors, especially climate and landscape. He was during his whole life interested in social and spiritual life, especially in the objective of the elimination of intolerance. Indeed, there are aims to which the nature tends, in a theological sense, but on the other hand, there are evils in the world such as injustice and selfishness of groups and individuals. These evils are moderated only to some extent by an existing ethical feeling and inclination to live in society, which idea Voltaire accepts as well did the Jesuits or the Deists. But unlike most of them, he remained cynical even disdainful of the majority of men. Consequently the so-called great men are supposed by Voltaire to determine the destiny of the human groups. Among these groups, the nation is supposed to be important and the cultural superiority of some nation is taught, for instance that of his own French nation which is supposed to have played a most important part in human history.

4-2 History of pristine ethnological theories

The first interpretation of primitive mentality that can lay claim to any degree of completeness was advanced by Tylor in his two famous books *Research into Early history of mankind and primitive culture*. It goes without saying that no theory promulgated in England between 1860 and 1880 could possibly be other than evolutionistic and so we find in Tylor the study of cultures of primitive people subordinated to the larger issue of their bearing on the history of mankind in general and of modern civilizations in particular. His interest laid in the determination of the nature of the basic cultural foundations from which the higher civilizations of Europe and Asia have developed. For that reason his treat as fully, if not more so, the beliefs, customs, and superstitions of the illiterate peoples of Europe and Asia as those of so-called primitive people.

For Europe he postulated first, a period in which magical rites, superstitious observances, and meaningless customs were still functioning, then one where all these elements still persisted but functioned only partially and were at least a small minority had progressed far beyond them, and finally modern Europe since the Renaissance. To him the history of Europe was but a special example of a very general cultural phenomenon. What happened there he argued must have taken place in other regions as well: Asia Minor, Egypt, China, and India.

For Tylor and his school, primitive peoples represented the earliest period in a long series of cultural stages and they were studied from a definitely evolutionary orientation. Tylor and his school began with an axiom that represented a heritage from the eighteenth century philosophy of enlightenment, with its romantic postulation of human equality the world over.

Why certain people had stopped at a certain period in its development was never adequately explained. Yet the very fact that there were so many gradations, that scholars could speak of a period of savagery, and barbarism, and that every people had attained a little eminence along some particular direction, all this seemed to confirm the hypothesis of similarity in mental processes.

One of the consequences of this standpoint was perhaps somewhat curious, for it entailed the assumption of subsidiary hypothesis, namely the multiple origin of culture.

Another principle of interpretation can be added to the previous and above ones, the significance of cultural survivals, a principle destined to be almost more of a bane than a benefit to the study of ethnology and history. At its worst it meant that petrified customs, bearing a similarity varying from practical identity to the most tenuous of external resemblances, were massed together and then quite uncritically treated as a unified whole representative of a past cultural stage.

Such were the basic psychological assumptions of the evolutionary school. It was the contention of the adherents of this method that the two ends of the historical chain were known, the first being the culture of living primitive peoples and the second, the higher civilizations of Europe, Africa and Asia. Nowadays, the reaction against Tylor's or Frazer's works is very strong. However, despite all the mischief caused by the uncritical application of evolutionary theory to the history of civilization, the early English anthropologists by their interpretations and intuitions, laid the foundations not only for ethnology of our own time but for the more mature ethnology of the future.

The evolutionary ethnologists can be said to have left a definite heritage of concepts, first the theory of multiple origin for culture, technology... secondly the assumption that ethnology was a science, and thirdly that primitive people are to be equated with the illiterate and backward people among ourselves.

In Europe, at the same moment, Durkheim, Levy-Bruhl, Bastian gave more psychological depth to their analysis. Bastian, a German ethnographer, as an example, represents the first of a fairly large number of ethnologists who definitively subordinated the fact to theories. In all domains of human culture, he thinks, there exists a definitely restricted number of ideas which have recurred again and again, and upon these ideas and concepts a particular form and characterization have been imposed by geographical and economic conditions. These latter are identical with the geographical provinces postulated by the geographer Ratzel from whom Bastian borrowed the concept. Thus, with Tylor he really accepted the prevailing view of the nineteenth century that no inherent difference exists between the mentality of primitive and civilized man.

But Bastian considerations about elementary ideas of primitive societies were quite different from those of the English evolutionism proponents. They were expressions of certain psychic activities inherent to human mind and largely of an unconscious character. In short his theory was quite uninfluenced by either the evolutionary philosophy or by the historical method of his German contemporaries.

In USA, from the very beginning, the trend was definitively anti-evolutionistic and anti-historical; the only exception was of course Lewis-Morgan. But he had little influence in America.

What can be called the second period in American ethnological theory was ushered by Franz Boas. He developed a rigorous methodology in the study of American natives. He, too, accepted as axiomatic the theory of multiple origins, and in obedience to this theory he insisted upon describing each culture in terms of its great achievement. The existence of such cultural peaks in every cultural area was then interpreted as proof that every people had, unaided, succeed in developing themselves along certain characteristics lines. Historical considerations were on the whole excluded.

Boas method was naively unhistorical.

The second of the heritages taken over from the evolutionary period was the idea that ethnology is essentially a biological science. Survivals were treated as though they were fossils and purely biological concepts, such as convergence, were freely bandied about. It was likewise, because of this underlying assumption, that the ideas of fixity and unchangeable ness of primitive peoples took such firm roots.

The study of intangible factors that exist in all cultures or the application of a dynamic point of view was as foreign to them as was biological chemistry to the majority of the older generation of evolutionists. Most baneful in its influence in the study of primitive peoples has, of course, been the concept of fixity as used by practically all the anthropological theorists.

The third inheritance is of a more insidious type and consists of the whole sale equation of the mentality and the culture of the illiterate peoples among ourselves with that of primitive peoples. This equation has a necessary corollary for the theory of evolutionary stages and seemed quite plausible enough when the resemblance in beliefs and customs between the two was the dominant interest.

The sociological school that flourished in France toward the end the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries under the recognized leadership of Durkheim has its roots in the philosophy of August Comte and the sociology of Herbert Spencer. From Comte Durkheim inherited his concept of

society, his mania for rules, from Spencer, his interest on comparative methods. As we develop in other courses the fundamental tenet of Durkheim is that the study of the individual will never disclose the laws governing the society. To do that we must determine and what he called the *representations collectives*.

The school of Durkheim has given us new characterization of primitive mentality specifically. What it sought to do was to explain, in terms of society, why it is that cultures, all over the world, take on certain forms and crystallize along certain lines. What Bastian ascribed to psychic necessity they ascribe social necessity.

We must turn to an essentially different theory, although it emanated from Durkheim influences, that of Levy-Bruhl in *Les fonctions mentales dans les societies inferieures*. Here for the first time we meet with an interpretation of primitive culture, which one might expected the English evolutionists to have developed, namely that primitive mentality is different in kind from our own. The work in which he embodied these views is certainly one of the most brilliant in the whole range of ethnological literature and his lucid presentation of his two main contentions: the prelogic mind and *the participation mystique* of primitive peoples. The manner in which Levy-Bruhl uses his facts is open to serious criticisms. They are, first of all, equivalent to the collective representations of Durkheim; and secondly, they are accepted without the slightest attempt to evaluate them. This is the comparative method at its worst and is difficult to agree with someone who has set out to present certain facts in a hitherto novel way, a way which implies an entirely new psychological orientation. This total lack of criticism upon his sources is Levy-Bruhl's cardinal weakness. Yet however negative be the attitude we must recognize that Levy-Bruhl had the merit of having envisaged the ethnological problems customarily dealt with, in a way that is more likely to lead to a penetrative analysis of primitive mentality than did previous attempts. For Levy-Bruhl the fundamental trait of the mental activity of primitive people is its lack of differentiation. It is so little differentiated, he insists, that a native is not capable of separating ideas or images of objects from the sentiments, emotions and passions that call forth these ideas and images or which are endangered by them. This interpenetration of the representation with emotional and motor elements takes the thought of primitive man out of the sphere of the properly-cognitive activities. The form of mental activity of the primitive, Levy-Bruhl called it mystical. Mysticism, here, is not to be taken in the religious sense, but signifies a belief in forces, influences and activities that are real although imperceptible to our senses. The reality of primitives is a mystical one. It is the mystical property of things and not attributes which possess reality.

From the above flow two postulates emerge, first the law of participation implying a participation between the individuals and objects bound together in a collective representation, and secondly the pre logical nature of their thought. Now this very capacity of an individual to think logically and prelogically seems to suggest that we are dealing with a certain general psychical trait and that is *a priori* unlikely that primitive man should therefore be completely devoid of the logical faculty, unless indeed we assume that pre logical mentality represents a period antedating the appearance of logical thinking, an inference that Levy-Bruhl energetically refuses. If we examine those moments when we are prone to pre logical lapses and attitudes, there are to be seen as moments of indifference or complete absorption in a particular trend of thought. In both instances the logical function is not exercised. If Levy-Bruhl had contented that this attitude of indifference was the dominant among primitive people, or that primitive people were prevented from exercising their will toward logical functioning most of the time, and then pure logical thinking was relatively rare among them, he would have been measurably nearer the truth, but it's not indeed the case.

The psychological insights into ethnology suffer from practically the same defects pointed out in Levy-Bruhl's works. For so keen a thinker, as Freud, his *Totem and Taboo* lacks ethnological objectivity. Freud and his school have shown most interest in primitive mythology and its relations to dreams, a field that is bound to become of the utmost importance in the future. The interpretation of dream symbolism is still, however, in such an inchoate condition and the psycho-analysts' use of ethnographic data is so unintelligent that all the inferences they have far made are of comparatively little value.

It is the application of the psycho-analytic theories of Jung that is most likely to have the most profound influence upon ethnology. He accepts principles of Freud and Adler and has added his own. Consequently he should so readily have accepted the Levy-Bruhl's concept of *participation mystique* and his prelogically mentality. Jung's viewpoint naturally falls into two compartments, the study of

nature of the psychic content and its functions and the carrier of this content, the individual. The most significant part of the psychic content is what he terms the archaic. Archaic, for example, is the relation of identity with the object (participation mystique), concretism of thought and feeling, the fusion of thinking and feeling. Connected with these archaic elements we find collective representations. We are thus brought face to face with Jung's concept of unconscious. The unconscious, according to Jung, are those contents and processes not related only to ego. He differentiates personal unconscious which embraces all the personal acquisitions of the existence and the collective unconscious. The latter represents those personal acquisitions which originate in the inherited possibility of psychic functioning in general, viz, in the inherited brain structure. These are the mythological associations; these motifs and images which can spring anew in every age and clime; without historical tradition or migration. To Jung, practically all primitive thought is, at bottom, conditioned by unconscious motivation or more specifically by the collective unconscious. It is because he regards will as a sum of psychic energy, disposable to consciousness, that he assumes it to be lacking in primitive mentality.

According to Jung, primitive thinking and feeling are exclusively concretistic; they are always related to sensation. The thought of the primitive has no detached independence but clings to the material phenomenon. The most he can do is to raise it to the level of analogy. Per example, the magical influence of the fetich is not experienced as a subjective state of feeling, but sensed as a magical effect. That is the concretism of feeling. Concretism represents a sort of mixing-up of thought with feeling and sensation. This coalescence prevents a differentiation of thought and feeling, anchoring the both into the sphere of sensation. Accordingly they cannot merge in pure functions. These have been formulated in the work entitled *Psychological types*. As a matter of fact, Jung does predicate a definite series of stages in the psychical evolution of mankind and quite definitely equates the psychic evolution of the individual with that of mankind. He had influence on the problems that ethnological theorists wrestled with throughout the nineteenth century.

As we glance back over the types of ethnological interpretation that developed at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, it is quite evident that the historical-psychological approach has become dominant and has supplanted the biological.

4-3 Ethnographic Salvage and the shaping of anthropology

Much of what passes for anthropology prior to the nineteenth century falls within along-standing tradition of collecting and compiling. This tradition is deeply rooted in Western intellectual history, and it provides with most early accounts of exotic peoples. Both collection and compilation had a pre-scientific character in that they were neither analytic nor theoretical or explanatory. The stimulus for such collections and information's was practical; such as the ethnological observations of Friar John de Piano Carpini or Marco Polo. Their descriptions were not motivated by scientific curiosity, but by intelligence reports or interest of traders. The Jesuit relations were reports designed to stimulate interest and support back home for the missionising activities of the priests.

By the eighteenth century, these collected data, came to be used either to explain man's nature or to reveal his history. This gave way to the use of data for the illustration of general system or comprehensive statements as to the nature of man.

During the nineteenth century people began to sense the urgency of collection for the sake of preserving data whose extinction was feared. In this awareness the tradition of salvage begins and from this derives its force. The tradition and concepts and methodology that flowed from it imbued anthropology with much of its early character. The effects of this tradition are still significant for anthropology. Whatever his conclusions for the future alteration of anthropology, Levi-Strauss has seen the urgency in the continuing disappearance of societies as he had seen that the threat of the extinction of cultures, poses particular problems of identification for the field of anthropology itself.

5-Nineteenth Century Social evolutionism

5-1-Basic Premises:

In the early years of anthropology, the prevailing view was that culture generally develops or evolves in a uniform and progressive manner. It was thought that most societies pass through the same series of stages, to arrive ultimately at a common end. The sources of culture change were generally assumed to be embedded within the culture from the beginning, and therefore the ultimate course of development was internally determined.

This notion of evolutionary progress of society was widely accepted as far back as the Enlightenment. Both French and Scottish social and moral philosophers were using evolutionary schemes during the 18th century; among them Montesquieu (see next chapter). The division proposed by Montesquieu in different stages became very popular among social theorists, Tylor and Morgan.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the cycle of European exploration, conquest, and colonization had yielded vast possessions with a variety of people culturally alien to European existence, and thus politically and scientifically problematic. The discipline of anthropology, beginning with these early social theories arose largely in response to this encounter between cultures. Cultural evolution – anthropology's first systematic ethnological theory- was intended to help at explaining this diversity among the peoples of the world.

Darwin's work has profoundly influenced these social theorists. These theorists developed rival schemes of overall social and cultural development, as well as the origins of different specific institutions such as religion, marriage and the family.

Edward B. Tylor disagreed with the contention of some early-nineteenth-century French writers, led by Joseph de Maistre, that such groups as Amerindians were examples of degenerated peoples. However, Tylor maintained that culture evolves from the simple to the complex, and that all societies passed through the three basic stages of development suggested by Montesquieu from savagery to civilization. Progress was therefore possible for all.

To account for cultural variation, Tylor and other evolutionists postulated that different contemporary societies were at different stages of evolution. According to this view, the simpler peoples of the day had not yet reached higher stages. Thus, simpler contemporary societies were thought to resemble ancient societies. The more advanced societies, on the other hand, testified to cultural evolution by exhibiting what Tylor called survivals. Per example, the making of a pottery is a type of survival.

Tylor believed that there was a kind of psychic unity among all peoples that explained parallel evolutionary sequences in different cultural traditions. In other words, because of the basic similarities common to all peoples, different societies often find the same solutions to the same problems independently. But Tylor also noted that cultural traits may spread from one society to another by simple diffusion-the borrowing by one culture of a trait belonging to another as the result of contact between the two.

Another proponent of uniform and progressive cultural evolution was Levis Henry Morgan. As a lawyer, Morgan became interested in the local Iroquois Indians and defended their reservation in a land grant case. In gratitude, the Iroquois adopted Morgan, who regarded them as noble savages.

In Ancient society, Morgan divided the evolution of the human culture into the same three basic stages Tylor had suggested. However savagery was subdivided into upper, middle, and lower segments, providing contemporary examples of each of these three stages. Each stage was distinguished by technological development and had a correlate in patterns of subsistence, marriage, family and political organization. In Ancient society, Morgan commented: "As it is undeniable that portions of the human family have existed in a state of savagery, other portions in a state of barbarism, and still others in a state of civilization, it seems equally so that these three distinct conditions are connected with each other in a natural as well as necessary sequence of progress". Each stage of development had its identifying benchmarks. Middle savagery was marked by the acquisition of a fish diet and the discovery of fire; upper savagery bow and arrow, middle barbarism by animal domestication and irrigated agriculture and so on.

Morgan postulated that the stages of technological development were associated with a sequence of different cultural patterns. For example, he speculated that the family evolved through six stages, from the horde living in promiscuity to group marriage and present monogamous family. Morgan believed that family units became progressively smaller and more self contained as human society developed (see next section).

Different from Morgan, Tylor and Frazer focusing on the evolution of religion, viewed the progress of society or culture from the viewpoint of the evolution of mental systems (see Cultural Anthropology)

5-2-Historical reactions to evolutionism

Karl Marx was struck by the parallels between Morgan's evolutionism and his own theory of history. Marx and Engels devised a theory in which the institutions of monogamy, private property, and the state were assumed to be chiefly responsible for the exploitation of the working classes in modern industrialized societies.

The beginning of the twentieth century brought the end of evolutionism's reign in cultural anthropology. Its leading opponent was Franz Boas, whose main disagreement with the evolutionists involved their assumption that universal laws governed all human culture. Boas pointed out that these nineteenth century individuals lack sufficient data to formulate useful generalizations. Thus historicism and later functionalism were reactions to nineteenth century.

5-3-What is wrong with social evolution?

The concept of human social evolution is an interesting one. It is not only one of those concepts which are permanently present and discussed in social science and in anthropology for more than a century (Darwin, Mayr, Sahlins, Ingold, Kuper, Rowlands) , but also a concept which seemed to be well known , well understood . Not only anthropologists but almost everyone thinks he knows perfectly well what social evolution means. This means that there exist natural laws of human social development, a law human beings cannot control. As there is a natural law in the development of species, so there is a natural law in the field of human social development. And it means –more or less- a possible design of the future.

However, this possible and optimistic design, which in the nineteenth century has become the common sense, also has its flaws. These were criticized not only from the side of non-evolutionist in social science, but also from the side of natural scientists. Both argue that something is wrong with the concept of human social evolution. The problem of the basic principles of evolution has been put to question. Does evolution guaranty which progress? Does evolution have the status of natural law in social development? Does, in the field of history, a kind of natural law exist at all? Does evolution have the logic declared by Darwin?

To find, at least, some answers to these questions, the discussion about the concept of social evolution must be pushed into the time when the concept, in its modern form and meaning, was elaborated.

5-3-1 A preliminary historical remark

In European scientific tradition the concept of human evolution was not discovered just once. Darwin himself had contemporaries who also discovered the concept, which eventually Darwin to publish *The origin of Species* in 1854. But one should however bear in mind that in the European scientific tradition the concept was used even much earlier. The period of Enlightenment is of basic importance (see history of anthropology). Montesquieu, Miller, Condorcet and others in the eighteenth century have discussed the question of historical laws. These discussions resulted in a series of evolutionistic models which proposed the very same course of historical development.

Firstly, history develops **unilinearly**. All societies are supposed to take the very same course of historical development.

Secondly, history develops in stages even there is neither common agreement on the number of stages nor on the very essence of them (savagery, barbarism, civilization for Montesquieu; hunting, pastoralism, farming for Turgot). In all these proposals history is discontinued continuity, there are

basic and qualitative differences between the stages, which influence not only the institutions, typical for each stage, but also the mental profile, a kind of rationality of people living in such stages. According to the principles of unilinearity of socio-cultural evolution, also these stages are unilinear, according to the law of evolution every concrete society and culture is forced to follow the very same succession of stages. No society and no culture can modify this arrangement.

A kind of combination of both the above mentioned principles leads to the third basic principle of socio-cultural evolution, the principle of **universality**. The model of socio-cultural evolution is a universal model, for neither multilinearity nor variation in succession of the stage is possible. The possible universality of the socio-cultural evolution is also the cause for the statement that the societies and cultures on lower stages are Europe's own history; and vice versa, Europe is the kind of incarnation of the universal future for all non-European societies and cultures.

It can be clearly seen that one of the results of unilinearity, universality and stages in socio-cultural evolution is the very special kind of understanding of the differences between societies and cultures. These differences are understood as the differences in the tempo of history; more societies are slower in historical tempo and some of them are quicker. This is understood as a basic reason, cause for the fact that empirically the societies and cultures differ quite regularly and basically.

As the fifth characteristic of the Enlightenment understandings of socio-cultural evolution, the relation between evolution and progress is to be mentioned. By all means evolution namely leads directly into progress. Even more: the socio-cultural evolution is by itself the law of progress. One basic result of such expectations is also the conclusion that the societies which are slower are less progressive ones.

This convenient design of the history has another dimension for this period, namely, **predictability**. Since history is governed by natural laws, it is possible to predict the future. For Europe it is clear, that her future is an optimistic period: more progress, more equality.

However, the Enlightenment anthropological position with its basic naturalization of human phenomena and its logic of understanding human history as a part of natural law has to do with modern understanding of social evolution.

The evolution in Enlightenment point of view was a historical, social and cultural evolution, insofar not a biological one. It was the discovery of a non biological evolution which occupied the best minds of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries. During the last decades of the 19th, the social evolution hypothesis was overtaken by biology and reinterpreted by cultural evolutionism. This reinterpretation has produced common sense attitude toward the course of human evolution, which is still accepted today.

The most important step in this reinterpretation was made by Morgan in *Ancient Society* (1877).

Morgan adopted the three stages model of development of the society proposed by Montesquieu.

He adopted too, that social evolution is unilinear. He also agreed the Enlightenment idea of the strong relationship between evolution and progress, the law of predictability and the hierarchical evaluation of differences between stages of historical evolution.

In that sense, Morgan has no differences with the strict Enlightenment period but he added precise descriptions for each sub phase of social evolution from savagery to civilization on economy, family type and kinship, terminology, political organization, etc.

There is one basic point which Morgan's social evolution differs; the point of progress. As Darwin insists that evolution is not the same process as progress, Morgan insists on the opposite: social evolution is always brought about by technological, economical and social progress.

5-3-2 An evolutionistic critique:

The evolutionistic critique starts at the point where Kuper puts its question: "All Darwinian now?" The question includes a doubt, which is by no means, incidental. The problem is that there is a very basic difference between evolution in Darwin's sense and Morgan's sense, between biological and social evolution, as we quoted above. As Kuper said, the main difficulty with Darwin theory presented was his idea that evolution did not imply direction or progress, that it did not follow any plan. Darwin has criticized Lamarck, who had overtaken the Enlightenment's confounding the evolution with the progress. He repudiated Lamarck faith in progressive improvement, insisting that history had no such convenient design, and that local populations and even whole species did indeed sometimes become extinct.

Darwin had written in the *Origin of Species* that he does not believe in fixed laws of development. Christian intellectuals attacked his theory as too materialistic, in particular his views that history is contingent, unplanned, without a goal, the product simply of random mutation and natural selection. If evolution does not follow any particular plan, it is also not possible to predict the future. Darwin argued that natural selection upon more or less random individual variations. And while environmental changes were of decisive importance, they were unpredictable. Natural selection was an ineluctable process, but particular adaptations were the product of hazard. One could accordingly trace the history of a species backwards in time, but there was no way of predicting its future path. It was also difficult, if not impossible to assess progress.

Since evolution does not follow any plan, with the environment having a crucial importance in evolutionary process, it is not unilinear. Groups with the same origin would develop in different ways if they were isolated in different environments.

On the contrary, on Morgan's assertions, there is in social evolution a precise plan, governed by laws of technical and economical progress. Morgan social evolution has very little in common with Darwin's biological evolution. For if we want to have the Darwinian kind of evolution in the field of social processes, we should have the which is coincidental, which can lead into progress, but which also leads into degeneration which cannot be controlled, and in connection with which we are not to have any ambition of predicting future results, the process, which is basically open to very different solutions.

So, what we do have here is a rather strange alternative: the Darwinian social evolution or the social evolution.

Now the question what is wrong with the process of human social evolution from the point of view of Darwinian evolutionists can be answered. The answer is clear: the Darwinian social evolution is the solution which does not exist.

5-3-3 Co evolutionistic critiques:

The evolutionistic critique of the concept of social evolution is, in its very essence, the critique of the non-evolutionistic character of social evolution. Co-evolutionists took one step further; they criticized the very concept of evolution itself. For them there has been no evolution.

Co evolutionistic critique starts with the remark; the modern theory of evolution is called justly Darwinian theory, neither because Darwin has invented it, nor his concept of natural selection which should be the only force of evolution. Rather, Darwin realized that the process of evolution change of living organism is radically different from any other known historical process and because of its formulation was a radical epistemological break with past theories. Before Darwin, theories of historical change were all transformational. In contrast, Darwin proposed a variational principle those individual members of the ensemble differ from each other in some properties, and that the system evolves by chances in the proportions of the different types. There is a sorting-out process in which some variant types persist while other disappear, so the nature of the ensemble as a whole change without any successive changes in the individual members. Moreover, Darwin stated that a direct material force drawn by nature can select among variations to produce more fit types and create a mechanism of evolution.

The mechanism is contained in three principles:

-individuals within a species vary in physiology, morphology and behaviour: the principle of variation.
-on an average offspring resemble their parents more than they resemble unrelated individuals: the principle of heredity

-different variants leave different numbers of offspring: the principle of natural selection.

From these principles it follows mechanically that evolution will occur.

But, even if Darwin's epistemological break is undoubtedly of basic importance, co evolutionists pointed out that the theory of selection among variations is in itself incomplete as an explanation of evolution. Firstly, it does not deal with the origin of the variation, which turned out to be an embarrassing problem for Darwin. Secondly, even if there had been a mechanism for the origin of the variation, Darwin established no mechanism for its inheritance. Thirdly, the theory of selection among variations can explain the slow transformation of a single species in time, but it cannot in itself, explain the splitting of a species into diverse lines.

In fact, in Darwin's theory the organism is the object of evolutionary forces, not the subject. Only here, co-evolutionistic critique starts really. Thus classical Darwinism places the organism at the nexus of internal and external forces, each of which has its own laws, independent of each other and of the organism that is their creation. In a curious way the organism, the object of these forces, becomes irrelevant for the evolutionist, because the evolution of organisms is only a transformation of the evolution of the environment. The result is the escape from organisms. From the side of the co-evolutionists a more suitable understanding of relation of organism and environment is proposed; it includes an active side of an organism: a complex dialectical relationship of the elements in the triad of gene, environment, and organism.

Thus an organism is in a double relation with its own environment; it is its product, as well as being its active constituent. Such a position of an organism makes it as object and subject of evolutionary forces.

This active intervention of organism into the environment is composed at least five accounts:

- Organisms determine what is relevant.
- Organisms alter the external world as they interact with.
- Organisms transducer the physical signals that reach them from the outside world.
- Organisms transform the statistical pattern of environmental variation in the external world.
- The organism-environmental relationship defines the traits selected.

These facts hold for all organisms, not only the human ones. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that organisms construct every aspect of their environment themselves. The metaphor of adaptation has to be replaced by one of construction, a metaphor that has implications for the form of evolutionary theory.

The first implication is the change of model. Instead of having the Darwinian dyadic model "gene-environment", co-evolutionists introduced the four factors model; i.e. genes, environment, hazard and organism, as a whole where all are participating.

The second implication is the obvious fact that there has never existed such a law of development as evolution. What did exist and what does exist now is, from the point of view of co-evolutionists, the law of co-evolution.

All the co-evolutionist conclusions also have a direct importance also for the understanding of social evolution. Not only that the co-evolutionists have in principle a negative attitude toward the explanations which overestimate the importance of biological factors in the social life, but they also insist on a much more complex explanation of social history and social life than the one offered by evolutionism .

In the first place, there are many properties of social organization that are allocational and that cannot be altered by changing the composition of the population. In the second place, historical changes in social structure have taken place with such rapidity that no alteration in proportion of different genotypes in the population can possibly explain them. In the third place, individual human constraints do not appear at the level of social organization. At the same time, society is obviously made up of individuals. Moreover society is not itself an organism, a metaphor that has persisted in various forms during many centuries.

Now, also the co-evolutionist answer to the question what is wrong with the concept of human evolution is possible.

At least two things are wrong. The first is that the development of species has not followed the law of evolution, but the law of co-evolution. The second is that societies are not the entities of the kind which are the subject of evolution or co-evolution. Societies are not biological entities.

5-4 Relevance of Henry Summer Maine ethnological theories for modern anthropology

Although the social, political, and legal theories of Henry Summer Maine were often of great importance in the particular insights they conveyed, they were not put forward as a unified system comparable to Spencer and Durkheim. Maine had a substantive approach and thus had a profound influence on modern anthropology.

Isolable individuals, existing prior to the social group, were not, according to Maine, the basic units of social life. He held that the very concept of the individual was unrecognized in primitive society.

He pointed out that in primitive society law was corporate law. Society institutions were framed as to be adjusted to a system of small independent corporations. All morality is corporate morality; as a corporation is immortal, so are its crimes and its liabilities to punishment.

As for private property, the individuals own nothing, the group everything. The death of the individual is of little importance for society at large, for he exists only as a representative of a family.

Particular rights and duties as a modern society defines them may often be acquired independently of one another. Power over land may be acquired separately from power over children or spouses.

But in ancient society, Maine believed, the individual rights and duties were not defined vis-à-vis society; only those of his family were so defined. Hence he did not inherit or otherwise acquire separate rights and duties. Succession was *universal*, in the sense that the individual acquired a *universality of rights*, i.e., a group of rights and obligations that are classified together solely because they adhere in a person.

Maine's theory contemplates man as naturally social. He thought that although no society, past or present, is entirely without contract, man in primitive times required no conscious agreement, no explicit regulations to bind him into the group. Archaic groups are held together not by express rules, but by sentiment or instinct. Society was firstly a kin group.

If we want to understand the emergence of the modern nation-State, Maine said, we must see it, not as a compact among individuals, but as the product of the gradual replacement of the kin-based group by society based upon a territorial tie. When this group owns land, its character undergoes gradual alteration; the land begins to be the basis of society in place of kinship. The Joint undivided family springs out from the patriarchal family. Then in order to evolution, the house community and the village community will take place (India and Russia), where there is a group of separate houses holding arable land individually but wasteland is in common. The belief in common ancestry or a tradition of brotherhood persists, and along with it the community maintains the right to regulate agriculture methods and land transfers. Finally we have the conversion of the village community in the feudal fief, where the tie to the land becomes the exclusive bond among men. It was this principle that feudalism bequeathed to the modern State.

In outlining this process by which he believed families joined together to make larger societies, Maine again denied the element of conscious agreement. Societies have known a gradual process of expansion by fission and segmentation, starting with the family, budding out to form larger units, but maintaining the idea of common kinship. Moreover, under the pressure for subsistence ancient societies have integrated foreign individuals and new groups into the on-going community with a legal fiction. These foreigners should feign themselves to be descended from the same stock as the people on whom they have engrafted.

According to Maine, this was the process that allowed for the expansion of the group until the relations of society to its environment changed and population increase was not advantageous. At the beginnings of feudalism, outsiders ceased to be welcomed as kin but rather were assigned a status approximating that of praedial slaves.

6-British social anthropology

It was by means of the synchronic functionalist framework that the British social anthropologists hoped to preserve the heritage of the nineteenth century scientism while ridding themselves of the accumulated liabilities of the search for diachronic, evolutionary regularities. By the late 1930's this group had gained unchallenged control of the discipline throughout the British Empire.

6-1 Durkheim and structural functionalism:

The fundamental theoretical premises of social anthropology are based upon Emile Durkheim's influence and his notion of social solidarity. The influence is especially basic for an understanding of the rise of the structural-functionalists. Radcliff-Brown is very clear on Durkheim's role. On the one hand he hailed Durkheim's definition of function as the first systematic formulation of the concept

applying to the strictly scientific study of society. On the other hand, he explicitly rejected definitions of function which did not relate to social structure, a concept which can be shown to derive its main inspiration from the same notion of social solidarity. The combination of function with social structure gave rise to the structural-functional theory. Radcliff-Brown placed great emphasis upon distinguishing structural functions from functions that Bronislaw Malinowski and others associated with the biopsychological needs of individuals. For Radcliff-Brown the only acceptable definition of function was the contribution an institution makes to the maintenance of social structure.

The structural functionalist's basic assumption is that social systems maintain themselves for significant intervals of time in a steady state during which a high degree of cohesion and solidarity characterizes the relationships among its members. The only difference between Durkheim and Radcliff-Brown in this regard is that the latter substitutes the term unity, harmony or consistency for the previous' solidarity.

6-2 Colonialism and the hypothesis of functional unity:

It is an error to portray the structural-functionalists as Pollyanna's, innocent of the occurrence of internal conflict and dissension. Although Radcliff-Brown disapproved this effort to identify the structural analogues of disease, neither he nor his students were unaware of the existence of sharp and unresolved conflict. Assumptions concerning functional unity are, according to him, merely hypotheses which it seems worthwhile to test by systematic examination of the facts.

One might argue that the concept of functional unity is a necessary heuristic assumption, equivalent to the belief that the system under observation is a phenomenon which lasts long enough to warrant abstraction from the stream of the history. Between 1930 and 1955 the overwhelming bulk of the contributions of the structural functionalist school were based upon fieldwork in African tribal societies located in European, especially colonized territories.

Under such circumstances it is impossible not to draw a connection between the proposals to study social systems as if they are were solider and timeless, with sponsorship, employment, and indirect association of the members of the British school by and with a now defunct colonial project. There is something to be said for portrayal of functionalism as a new kind of dismal science whose function it was to provide a scientific rationalization of the status quo, especially in reference to the British policy of indirect rule.

6-3 Meaning of social structure

What is this social structure which lies at the hearth of the structural functionalist movement? In the context of the research achieved by Radcliff- Brown and his followers, a pragmatic definition might be offered: the study of groups, especially those organized along territorial, kinship, and political lines and the interrelationships among these constitute the core of social structure phenomena. In a slightly different sense, all differentiated social positions of statuses derived from a consideration of membership in social groupings constitute part of social structure.

It is of the greatest importance to specify how this notion of social structure is related to the other parts of a sociocultural system. According to Radcliff-Brown, there are three heuristically separable adaptational aspects of the total social system. Social structure, the arrangements by which an orderly social life is maintained is one of these three aspects. The other two are the ecological, or the way the system is adapted to the physical environment; and the cultural, or the mechanisms by which an individual acquires habits and mental characteristics that fit him for participation in social life.

6-4 The priority of social structure:

What is the relationship between ecological-economic adaptation and social-structural adaptation? Is it the function of the economic and ecological adaptations to sustain the social structure, or is it rather the function of the social structure which always deserves priority of analysis. In Radcliff-Brown 's theory and practice, it is only legitimate to ask how the economic system results from , or contributes to the maintenance of a particular social structure, never , how this social structure results from, and serves to maintain , a given set of techno-economic adaptations. The economic machinery of a society,

however, appears in quite a new light if it is studied in relation to social structure. The exchange of goods and services is dependent upon, is the result of, and at the same time is a means of maintaining a certain structure, a network of relations between persons and collections of persons.

6-5 The antifunctionalist bogey

During the late 1920's and early 1930's when the Boasians first began to take cognizance of the structural functionalist program, there seems to have been little comprehension of the highly specific meaning which Radcliff-Brown was given to the concept of function. They understood function as the concept defined in mathematics as a relation between conditions and expressions of these conditions. The functional relation of any delimited aspect of culture must be such as to explain the nature and character of the delimited aspect under defined conditions. This view was quite far from the assumption of Radcliff-Brown. In a sense, the Boasians were certainly guilty of failing to grasp the significance of Radcliff-Brown's Durkheimian heritage. In addition all the Boasians operated with an implicit model of total sociocultural systems; even Boas was himself a functionalist.

We learned from these authors that there was a contrast between different kinds of sociocultural theories and this contrast was not built around the question of whether sociocultural systems have parts which are integrated with or effected by other parts, but rather which parts, and how often and with what kind of effect and for how long? In this sense the functionalism of Radcliff-Brown is different from the functionalism of Boas or even Marx. But what we want to know, and we must know, from Radcliff-brown is why he emphasizes certain set of variables rather than others.

6-6 Structural functional laws

This brings us back to the question of why the structural functionalists insist that social structure provides the central set of variables for orienting social anthropology. Ostensibly, the answer lies in the claim that by concentrating on social structure anthropology could be cured on the explanatory impotence which had followed upon the demise of evolutionary schemes.

The pretension to superior understanding is an explicit figure of Radcliff-Brown program, and it was opposed to the Boasian conclusion that the search for sociocultural laws was futile.

Responding to his American critics, who insisted that there, were no significant laws such British functionalists are seeking, Radcliff-Brown assumed the defence of Social Sciences as a whole.

Generalizations, he suggested, about any sort of subject matter are of two kinds: the generalization of common opinion, and generalizations that have been verified or demonstrated by a systematic examination of evidence, afforded by precise observations systematically made. Generalizations of the latter kind are called scientific laws.

The structural-functionalist school thus came forward to be judged on the basis of adequacy of its explanations of sociocultural differences and similarities according to the common standards of science. The tests of adequacy were to be the ability to generate lawful statements in terms of which explanations of sociocultural phenomena could be achieved that were superior in accuracy, generality, and economy to rival theories.

On another hand the British trends towards specialization has had a stimulating effect on ethnographic research. In this vein, the structural-functionalist have repeatedly expressed their antipathy to the concept of culture as employed by Malinowski and the Boasians, arguing that it is too vast and shapeless a notion to be of much use for the individual researcher. As Fortes pointed out: Boasian point of view has serious limitations as it treats everything in social life as of equal weight, all aspects of equal significance. Anyone who has tried to understand African religious beliefs and practices in the fields, he said, know that he cannot go very far without a thorough knowledge of kinship and political organization. One can conclude that social structure is to be regarded as the foundation of the whole social life of any continuing society because by so doing one achieves superior understandings or explanations of sociocultural phenomena and the way to return anthropology to social science.

But there remains the nagging question of why the path back to science was to be paved with social structure. It is important to point out that there is no theoretical justification for this strategy. It might be possible to justify such a theoretical assumption only by appeal to the pragmatic results of

numerous ethnographies obtained in terms of lawful generalizations. But the tragedy of Radcliff-Brown's contribution to theory is that the laws which he produced were distinguished by their weakness and their low capacity of prediction.

6-7 History, Origins, Evolution

This failure to formulate significant sociocultural laws is not the simple consequence of the structural functionalist pursuit of Durkheim's grail. The deliberate subordination of techno-economic parameters would of course constitute a serious flaw in any program concerned with discovering the causes of sociocultural differences and similarities.

Radcliff-Brown set himself the task of discovering sociocultural laws under the rigid and unprecedented handicap of restricting anthropology to the data collected from a single time level, namely the mid twentieth century.

Uncharitable critics have turned this feature around to mean that the structural functionalists were opposed to the study of history. According to these critics, their work was not history, but pseudo history to which they objected that in primitive societies that are studied by social anthropologists there are no historical records. We have no knowledge of the development of social institutions in these societies.

Moreover, like Boas, Radcliff-Brown was scornful of the evolutionary schemes which his nineteenth century predecessors had elaborated. Again, like Boas, this did not mean that he was an anti-evolutionist in the sense of being opposed to the Darwinian sense of evolution. Radcliff-Brown even declared himself to be a social evolutionist, defined as one who is interested in studying the process of diversification by which new and different forms of societies are produced. According to Radcliff-Brown, the trouble with evolutionists was that they got lost in the search of origins when they should have been doing was looking for laws.

The search for origins could not be carried out by means of evolutionary models. Here Boas and Radcliff-Brown concur. But a fundamental difference in strategy separates the two schools. For the Boasians, the remedy for false evolutionary reconstruction is specific historical inquiries; for Radcliff-Brown, the remedy is more drastic: avoid all historical inquiry for which historical documents are not available. Up until the 1950's, this restriction results in a de facto separation of synchronic structural-functional studies from diachronic inquiry.

6-8 Structural functionalism and the organismic analogy

The theoretical case for Radcliff-Brown's synchronic laws depends on the validity of the biological organismic model upon which he explicitly based his exposition of the principles of structural functional analysis. The aspect of the model to which attention is directed is the set of relations among an organism's parts which constitutes its morphology or physiology. This analogy goes back to Hobbes and receives its highest elaboration in Spencer developments.

In using the terms morphology and physiology, Radcliff-Brown is returning to the conception of medieval philosophers.

So, for him there is a real and significant analogy between organic structure and social structure.

To accept the appropriateness of this analogy is not to concede the possibility of a synchronic science, from which statements similar to those describing life-sustaining functions of the pancreas or the kidney, or some others physiological relationship concerning the parts of delimited categories of organisms can be expected. At the core of the matter there lies an unanswered problem in epistemology concerning the nature of cultural things. Individual biological organisms enjoy an epistemological status which is radically different from that of sociocultural organisms. It is part of a species given biopsychological gestalt, a product of man's adaptive phylogeny, that boundaries of individual organisms are delimited by unequivocal intersubjective criteria. We see whole bio-organisms. We do not see whole sociocultural organisms. These, and all their parts, including social structure, must be constructed through a process of logico-empirical abstraction out of the material furnished by the observation of the behaviour of specific human beings.

6-9 Mother's brother again

The classic attempt by Radcliff-brown to offer a synchronic explanation of a structural feature is that of the relationship between the mother's brother and sister's son among the Bathonga of Mozambique. This relationship, an asymmetrical joking relationship, was characterized by the extraordinary liberties which sister's son took with his maternal uncle's property and wives. In his uncle's absence, sister son's would enter his hut, steal his favourite spear, carry on a lewd conversation with his wife, demand to be fed, and in many ways comport himself in an utterly disrespectful manner, all without fear of retaliation or remonstrance. In marked contrast to this behaviour was the great respect which the same would be obliged to display in all of his dealings with his father's brother. Junod, for the Thonga system, in a quite similar situation, made an evolutionist interpretation: in former and very remote times, this society had passed through a matriarchal phase. Radcliff-Brown proposed another explanation which would require no reference to history. According to him, among the patrilineal Thonga, there is a tendency to extend to all the members of ego's father patrilineage, the kind of behaviour and attitudes which characterize ego's relations with his father. Since mother is a warm and indulgent figure, so will be her brothers and sisters; since father is a stern patriarch, so will be his brothers and sisters. Generally speaking, Radcliff-brown said, the greatest degree of familiarity is possible only between people of the same sex. If mother and mother's sisters are indulgent, then mother's brother (*malume* or male mother) will be even more so. If father demands respect, father's sister should be even more aloof, since she is called by a kinship term (*manami* or female father). The structural functional significance of the Thonga joking relationship, he said, is the contribution which it made to the maintenance of patrilineage.

6-10 A cultural- materialist alternative

Granting Radcliff-Brown's ingenuity in drawing attention to a set of variables which are ignored by Junod, how do we know that there are not other functional relationships which are equally relevant or more so? Other alternatives to Radcliff- Brown can be suggested.

Ego takes advantage of mother's brother because he has an economic claim on that man's wife and children, a claim which by virtue of the corporate nature of the lineage involves everyone in it to some extent. The claim arises because mother's brother has married his bride directly, or indirectly, with the bride piece furnished by ego's patrilineage to mother's patrilineage. When ego steals mother's brother's spear, and runs off with his grave goods, this all functions to remind the members of mother's patrilineage that sister's husband's patrilineage gave them the cattle to which they owe so much of their welfare.

In this connection, it should also be mentioned that the most important respect relationship which exist among the Bathonga is that between a man and his wife's brother's wife, i.e., between ego's father and ego's maternal uncle's wife, a relationship the Thonga explain in terms of the temptation a man feels to sleep with a woman who has been bought with his cattle. It's not ego alone therefore who enjoys the jokes on mother's brother's, but all the members of the patrilineage who must maintain proper decorum with their in law and his wife.

Which of these explanations is correct?

It might seem preferable to link the ideology of the lineage to the economic domain through the emphasis on cattle in this case. Bathonga lineages, as suggest Radcliff-Brown, are not the be-all and end-all of the Bathonga life. The lineages arise from and reflect the adaptation of the Bathonga population to a mixed pastoral economy deeply involved in cattle breeding and gardening

6-11 Other weakness of the structural approaches

The treatment of lineages members as a unit, the kinship terminologies associated with, the differential treatment of alternate and adjacent generations, etc... by the Radcliff-Brown followers were gradually formulated as structural principles and presented as satisfying the quest for sociological laws.

Eggan refers to two of these principles: the lineage principle and the principle of the unity and solidarity of the sibling group as the most important concepts guiding the analysis of social structure.

Tax, at the University of Chicago, proposed twelve such principles or rules which are listed here: the rule of uniform descent, uniform reciprocals, uniform siblings, uniform mates, uniform ascent, equivalence, terminological correlation, reciprocal behaviour, and equivalence of siblings, sex differentiation, generation principle, and the sex principle. These principles were considered by Radcliff-Brown as useful for the analysis of both kinship terminologies and social structure. The connection with ethno semantics is instructive because it highlights the heavy psychological component in the generalizations produced by the structural-functionalists.

Functionalism was associated with the interpretation of institutions in terms of the values and purposes of individuals. Even Radcliff- Brown was an exception, as he shared Durkheim's doctrinal opposition to psychological reductionism, but neither he nor the whole French School from Durkheim to Levy-Strauss has found a way to avoid dependence upon psychological universals as one of their main explanatory devices.

The theoretical penalty of this form of reductionism is always the same: since all men are equipped with the same psychobiological tendencies, all sociocultural systems should be the same.

There were also structural functional principles which were less conspicuously psychological. Thus Radcliff-Brown named three sociological laws and he stated: "If we could define any universal condition to which a social system would have to conform, we would thereby have a sociological law. One such law or necessary condition of continued existence is that of a certain degree of functional consistency amongst the constituent parts of the social systems. To this law we may add a second, rights and duties need to be defined in such a way that conflict of rights can be resolved without destroying the structure. Another sociological law is the necessity not merely for stability, definiteness, and consistency in the social structure, but also for continuity."

But the best that can be expected from the application of all such universals, in the explanation of particular concrete varieties of sociocultural arrangements is a weak form of interpretation.

It must be said that Radcliff-Brown from the outset was probably quite well aware of the limitations which the synchronic approach imposed upon the predictive and retrodictive powers of the laws he intended to discover. But Radcliff-Brown could not resist the temptation to assimilate psychosocial interpretation to the standards of genuine scientific explanations, and hence make the mistake of referring to a universal sociological law though it is not yet possible to formulate its scope, namely that in certain specific conditions a society has need to provide itself with a segmentary organization (clan).

6-12 The new dismal science

It is an undeniable consequence of both the Malinowskian and Radcliff-Brownian versions of functionalism that every sort of institution, from witchcraft to war, receives its due as a functional contribution to the welfare and maintenance of the social system. An objective appraisal of the contribution of the structural-functionalists requires acknowledging of the streak of intellectual know-nothingism which flourished in their work despite the ostensible emphasis upon scientism and orderliness.

This know-nothingism is a scientific rather an ethical problem. It is an affliction which leads the functionalists to ignore the amount of order that human history exhibits. Its most serious intellectual consequence is that it fails to come to grips with the fact that the evolutionary careers of both bioforms and sociocultural systems consist of an array of eminently functional structures, all doomed to extinction. Without recourse to diachronic data, the whole question of degrees of functional adaptiveness is shut out, and yet surely there is no subject of more vital concern to social science than the prospects for survival of our own way of life and of the ways of life of our contemporaries.

The treatment accorded the subject of political organization was perhaps the most serious victim of the synchronic approach. In *African Political Systems* of Meyer-Fortes and Evans Pritchard, the fact that direct European political control went back only about one century at the time of their essay, does not mean that in the epoch of Stanley and Livingstone days a pristine ethnography should have existed in Africa. For as surely as the slave-run plantation system sounded the death of aboriginal civilizations in

America, Africa was affected too with large upheavals of human populations. In such a situation, restriction to an ethnographic present of the 1930's is quite unscientific.

Moreover, distortions introduced by means of the synchronic focus in *African Political Systems* threatened to reduce our understanding of state formation to a shambles. Apparently oblivious of, or uninterested in, the fact for every other continent a close correspondence between state systems and high population density had been established beyond a doubt, Fortes and Evans-Pritchard reached the conclusion that it would be incorrect to suppose that governmental institutions are found in those societies with greatest densities. The opposite seemed to be equally represented as they quoted from their own data: Nuer, Tallensi, Logoli and Zulu. Stevenson showed how Zulu territory and population were influenced by the compression of the Bantu frontier under the shock of British and Boer penetration. On the other hand, the Nuer paradox of acephalous polity combined with high density also turns out to be illusory. The Logoli, who have a population of 391 per square mile, but allegedly no state system, probably had a nineteenth-century density closer to 70 per square mile. They were surrounded on all sides by state-organized societies and, in addition to possessing a number of state-like features, were partially under the control of their neighbours. The most startling case is that of the Tallensi, who have come to serve as the classic instance of an acephalous society due to Fortes' elaborate descriptions of their kinship ideology.

Fortes' insistence on the acephalous nature of Tallensi society stems from his failure to consider that these people had been defeated and dispersed by the British at the turn of the nineteenth century and had probably lost a great deal of their organization. Far from being acephalous, the Tallensi inhabited an area which had been controlled before the advent of the British by the Manprusi kingdom.

At any rate, Radcliff-brown's assertion that we cannot have a history of African institutions can no longer be taken seriously and as anything more than a rationalization for avoiding a confrontation with the past.

6-13 The collapse of synchronism

The work of Fred Eggan represents, after the sojourn of Radcliff-Brown at Chicago, the synthesis of British functionalism with its synchronic perspective and principles, and the Americans anthropologists concerns on historical documents. Using what he called the method of controlled comparison, Eggan has attempted to explain variations in Crow kinship terminology among the Choctaw, Creek and Cherokees, American tribes which have been exposed to a similar set of acculturative pressures. Eggan demonstrated that length of time and degree of exposure matched the amount of departure in the terminological systems from a matrilineal Crow type to something more closely resembling a patrilineal Omaha type.

In 1954, Eggan was still predicting that the social anthropologists would eventually become more interested in diachronic studies. Rejecting Murdock's characterization of social anthropology as not interested in history, Raymond Firth cites a number of cases in which anthropologists made serious attempts to concern themselves with social change (Evans-Pritchard). Firth emphasized the importance of cultural contact studies a theme coincident with the formalization of acculturation by the American school as one of the sources of diachronic comparisons. (Malinowski, Gluckmann). But it must also be emphasized, however, that this return to a certain form of diachronic interest has not as yet contributed to a revival of a diachronic theory.

Leach himself is responsible for one of the most effective critiques of the structural-functional model. In his *Political Systems of Highland Burma* he was obliged to analyze a region-wide process involving slow but drastic changes of democratic dispersed hill people (*gumlao* type) to democratic in theory intermediate types (*gumsa*), to stratified lowland irrigation rice kingdoms (*Shan*). Leach refused to see this situation in terms of a static model: "We can no longer be satisfied with attempting to set up a typology of fixed systems. We must recognize that few if any of the societies which a modern field worker can study show any marked tendency towards stability. Leach's treatment of evolving political modalities in Burma leaned heavily on an ecological analysis, since the extreme types, *Shan and gumlao*, were obviously dependant upon contrasting forms of cultivation and occupied different habitats. The promise of greater attention to such matters has not been fulfilled. Instead, Leach's fancy has been captured by Levy-Strauss.

Among those who have also been dissatisfied with the synchronic limitations of structural functionalist theory, the name of Raymond Firth is outstanding. Through his concept of social organization, Firth hoped to achieve a closer approximation to actual behaviour stream events, especially the variations which are ignored in the static formulations of social structure and he hoped too to be able to discover the processes by which fundamental structures changed. According to him, neglect of such variations was responsible for the fact that structural analysis alone cannot interpret social change. But he admitted in 1954, that anthropologists were far to be able to provide any general dynamic theory of social change. Firth went so far as to base most of his discussion of dynamic theory upon a reconsideration of the contributions of Marx to social thinking. Although scarcely prepared to embrace a Marxist derived variety of historical determinism, Firth has recently made it clear that he believes no approach to a theory of change can be attempted which does not seriously reconsider Marx's proposals concerning the importance of the material conditions of production.

With the collapse of the structural-functionalist program, the waning of influence of Radcliff-Brown and the intensification of historical research has resulted in complete disillusion with the entire scientist pretension. In this regard, Evans-Pritchard is the most outspoken heretic. For him, the end of Radcliff-Brown's reign has meant a return to the dichotomy between history and science proposed by the German School of Philosophy and by Karl Popper.

The resemblance to Kroeber is striking in his declarations: "Social anthropology has more in common with history than with natural science, as it studies societies as moral or symbolic systems and not as natural systems and it interprets rather than it explains."

Fortes warn that Evans-Pritchard contrived to throw out the baby of functionalist theory with the bath water of evolutionary speculation. To save the baby, Fortes recommends that we return to a view of the man which places him in the midst of nature and which invokes a remembrance of his origin in the processes of organic evolution. With Frazer, Malinowski and Radcliff-Brown he share the idea that are regularities in societies independent of period and place in social organization and culture, and that the main aim of social anthropology is to investigate the general tendencies or laws manifested in them. There is no room to doubt that what is meant here are the uniformities which occur in social life despite the lack of regularity in history, rather than the uniformities which result because of historical regularity. It is perhaps superfluous to add that this view does not imply a belief in mechanical determinism in human life or a denigration of man's intellectual and spiritual qualities.

Leach has been no less outspoken than Evans-Pritchard concerning his dislike of comparative method as proposed by Radcliff-Brown. Instead of circling back to the historical particularistic position, which is implicit in the reaction of Firth and Evans-Pritchard, and even Fortes when he invokes evolution, Leach has extended himself along the lines which have made of Levy-Strauss a French national treasure. As an intellectual, Leach believes that the butterfly-collecting followers of Radcliff-Brown have got to start rethinking the really basic issues, such as the difference between incorporation (as into a lineage) versus alliance (as through marriage). Previous models of this duality have been overly ethnocentric. A correct formulation requires a mathematical approach, a topological one, because topology is nonnumeric, thus confirming to the criteria of Levy-Strauss mechanical models. Leach contribution to the typology of the varieties of cross-cousin marriage will endure as a solid achievement.

The path along which Leach has followed Levy-Strauss leads in a remarkably parallel fashion to the swamp of linguistic analysis, where a search for systems of contrastive meaning is now being carried out by some of the best brains elsewhere. Leach undoubtedly deplores the vision of the world which serves its scholars a steady diet of algorithmic analyses for varieties of rice in Hanunoo, types of firewood in Chiapas. But with, the discovery that synchronic structural functional models were of little use for the analysis of the Kachin, with the realization that after fifty years of polemic concerning the meaning of descent and marriage, no one yet could define them to his liking, Leach indeed had a lot of rethinking to carry out. Instead of rethinking his way to non operational, intuitive, synchronic form of dialectic, he might well have pondered why he so devoutly believes; "Now whether or not evolutionary is true, it is certainly quite irrelevant for the understanding of present human societies."

The publicly announced bankruptcy of the structural-functional school provides us with a fresh perspective on one of the most animated controversies in the history of anthropological theory, that between Radcliff-Brown and Malinowski.

“Malinowski has explained that he is the inventor of functionalism, to which he gave its name. His definition of it is clear: it is the theory or doctrine that every feature of culture of any people past or present is to be explained by reference to seven biological needs of individual human beings. As a consistent opponent of Malinowski’s functionalism I may be called an anti-functionalism I reject the Malinowskian theory of culture and secondly, the quite impossible view that all customs and institutions of any society are right and good.”

To the outsider, this fuss about being identified as a Malinowskian functionalist seems rather like a tempest in a teapot. Both brands of functionalism arose in opposition to the diachronic schools of diffusionism and evolutionism. Both devoted their major efforts to intensive fields’ studies, and both employed an organismic analogy as their main analytical framework. Malinowski’s ethnographic works were unexcelled. His Trobriand Islanders monographs still constitute the greatest ethnographic description ever achieved. Although Malinowski’s concept of function developed along his own trajectory, which removed further and further from Radcliff-brown formulation, there initially was a very strong resemblance between them.

7-1 Early Malinowski

Malinowski’s earliest publication was about the family in Australia. It contained a defence of the universality of the nuclear family. Even he paid attention to Durkheim concept of social function of social institutions. For him these functions have to be compared with the functions of the individual family which was his major concern. Radcliff- Brown commenting this publication declared that it was by far the best example of scientific method in dealing with the descriptions of the customs and institutions of a savage people He went on to argue that Malinowski treatment of kinship was the least successful in the book. According to him, the Australian notions relating to kinship cannot be studied without reference to what Malinowski calls group relationships, i.e., the clans, the classes, etc... Malinowski could not see a descent system existing save as an extension of relationships within the elementary family.

Malinowski’s interest in the family provided a major focus for his work up until the ill-fated switch to problems of Colonial acculturation. It led him quite logically to a confrontation with the theories of Freud, which he put to the test, during his Trobriand fieldwork. The matrilineal inclinations of this group provided the world with the first field examination of Freud’s theories concerning the universality of the Oedipus complex, as well of many other Freudian notions such as racial conscience and infant sexuality. From field observation, it was certain at least that relations between father and son in a matrilineal and avunculocal descent system were radically different from what Freud had been able to observe in his Viennese patriarchy.

The influence of Malinowski’s work on sex and the family earned for him a reputation outside of anthropology which was in no way matched by Radcliff-Brown’s arid discussions of the lineage principle. He had a predilection for juicy titles such as *The Sexual Life of Savages* and his flamboyant treatment of the Trobriand as a Rousseau sexual paradise is properly emphasized in Leach attempt to explain Malinowski’s public success.

7-2 Malinowski’s scheme:

Malinowski’s explanation of the universality of nuclear family incest prohibition is not at variance with a structural-functional approach. Indeed, his appeal to individual biopsychological givens is a necessary part of any structural-functional explanation. Malinowski’s interpretation of all incest prohibition is that they originate within the family and thus the rest of social organization. As he said, in any type of civilization in which customs, morals, and law would allow incest, the family could not continue to exist. At maturity we would witness the breaking up of the family, hence complete social chaos and an impossibility of continuing cultural tradition. Incest would mean the upsetting of age distinctions, the mixing up of generations, and the disorganization of sentiments and a violent exchange of roles at a time when the family is the most important educational medium. No society could exist under such conditions.

There can be no basis other than scholastic snobbism for setting this interpretation in opposition to a more sociological approach which would start with extra familial group incest prohibition and extend these to the nuclear family. Indeed, many of Radcliff-Brown's structural principles assume the existence of the nuclear family; in both the approaches it is not the survival of the individual which is at stake but that of the social organization and culture.

With the gradual formalization of Malinowski's theory of culture during the 1930's the opposition with Radcliff-Brown school took shape. Malinowski came up with a list of seven basic individual biopsychological needs for the satisfaction of which the social organism or culture was a vast instrumental reality. The latter was made effective by a series of direct and indirect, primary and secondary collective needs and instrumentalities in the form of institutions and symbolic projections, presentations and defences.

The scheme presented by Malinowski was so vast that everything had its place. Thus, the set of instrumental needs is very close to the Durkheimian notion of social structure.

Basic Needs	Direct Responses	Instrumental needs
Nutrition	Commissariat	Renewal of cultural apparatus
Reproduction	Marriage and family	
Bodily comforts	Domicile and dress	Charter of behaviour and other sanctions
Safety	Protection and defence	
Relaxation	System of play and repose	Renewal of personnel
Movement	Activities and system of communication	Organization of force and competition
Growth	Training and apprenticeship	
Responses to Instrumental Needs		
	Symbolic and Integrative Needs	Responses to Symbolic and Integrative Needs
Economics		Knowledge
Social control		Magic and religion
Education		
Political organization		

But Malinowski insisted that everything rested on the individual needs and that therefore an unbridgeable gap had opened between on the one hand pure functionalism and on the other hyphenated functionalism. For Malinowski, Functionalism differs from other sociological theories in its conception and definition of the individual than in any other respect. The functionalist includes in his analysis not merely the emotional as well as intellectual side of mental processes, but also insists

that man in his full biological reality has to be drawn into our analysis of culture. The bodily needs and environmental influences, and the cultural relation to them, have to be studied side by side.

The list of needs pointed out by Malinowski is maybe not ad hoc and the logic connecting the various instrumentalities to their biopsychological base is never more than arbitrary. Nonetheless, the hyphenates cannot convert the virtue of Malinowski's vivid concern with the full amplitude of individual and social functions into a vice. On the other hand, Radcliff-Brown's definition is as broad as obviously one can find an accommodation with Malinowski's ideas ("Function may be defined as the total set of relations that a single social activity or usage or belief has to the total social system")

Radcliff-Brown accepted a sociological type of evolutionism, of which he considered Spencer to be an early representative. In Malinowski's case, there is an even more positive relationship to evolutionary doctrines like his conception of the diachronic and synchronic universality of the family. Moreover, the influence of James Frazer on Malinowski's background was profound. Frazer has conceived an evolutionary view of magic as a pragmatic instrumentality, the forerunner of science and it was a constant theme in Malinowski's ethnography. As Malinowski put it: the functional view does not dispose of even a limited evolutionary conception of culture, though it discourages any hope of giving an exact reconstruction of human development.

But the central animus of Malinowski's attacks on evolution concerns the use of survivals to reconstruct past evolutionary phases. Like Radcliff-Brown, Malinowski repeatedly substituted functional interpretations for diffusionist or evolutionist reconstructions. So the fact does not remain that, despite their acceptance of more or less well-defined evolutionary stages, Malinowski nor can Radcliff-brown be credited with contributing to the development of evolutionary theory.

7-3 Malinowski's approach to cultural change

Between 1929 and 1943 Malinowski published several articles on cultural change. His theory was that Europeans and third world countries are involved in a give and take which must balance out through the development of common measures or compromises in tasks of common interest. But the theory of Malinowski failed as he was able to distinguish between the Native as a primitive and the native as an actor-type in the colonial order.

For Max Gluckmann, it is in a large measure because Malinowski could not shake loose from the functionalist emphasis upon equilibrium that his theory never gets off the ground. His system of cultural instrumentalities can only explain how tensions and conflicts are reduced or eliminated, never why or how they originate or why or they intensify. Thus instead of producing of change, all he succeeded in doing was a theory of no-change. Malinowski cannot admit conflict into his frame of integrated institutions. Conflict is considered as pathology. But the ironical rub in this criticism is that Gluckmann ability to handle conflict is not so much better than Malinowski's. Gluckmann has expended his main theoretical development in attempting to show how conflicts are a normal part of healthy social life which can contribute to the maintenance of the social order.

7-4 Malinowski and cultural materialism

Only by considering Malinowski's treatment of techno-economic factors in connection with the etic/emic distinction can we appreciate the extent to which his theories participated in and a contributed to the downgrading or obstruction of techno-environmental and techno-economic options. The Kula, that splendid example of commerce inscrutable in its risk of life on long sea voyages all for the sake of a few spondylus shells, is to the functionalists what potlatch was to the Boasians. But economic analysis is a matter of a system of production and distribution: of energy, of time and labour inputs, of the transformation, transportation... interplays between a population and their habitat and of the distribution of the products of this interaction in terms of energy, and all the biological apparatus which all these processes depend. Malinowski treats us instead to a vastly account of the ritual aspects of the preparations for open sea expeditions in which the subjective motivations of the actors in terms of prestige and magical aspirations dominate every aspect of the ethnography. The result of Malinowski's option is to submerge the entire issue of the significance of the techno-economic subsystem in an irrelevant and obscurantist context.

