

ANTHROPOLOGY the Equitable Approach?

By

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The complaint is often voiced that when the layman hears the term "anthropology," he thinks only of the activities of the archaeologist. It is quite possible that even this unhappy viewpoint may be overly optimistic. Based on personal observation, it would appear that when one identifies himself to a member of society at large as an anthropologist, he often receives a response indicating that the person being addressed has not the remotest idea of what this involves. The announcement may well be met by a reaction which includes a murmured generalization indicating that the sound of the term has generated a certain amount of awe, a failure of the individual to meet the eyes of the informer directly, and then an awkward silence followed by indications of relief as the conversation turns to other and more familiar subjects. The reaction can be similar to the one received when a person has never heard of your home town or the university you attended, but doesn't want to embarrass either you or himself by saying so.

If this is not an overstatement, and if there is, in fact, a widespread lack of familiarity with the discipline, it is then appropriate to ponder why such a state of affairs exists. The fields of medicine, electronics, and physics, among others, have a core of arcane and highly specialized knowledge, but this has not kept the public from a general awareness of what they encompass.

One valid answer to our question is that anthropology has been a subject rarely encountered below the university level. Not only has the subject itself been absent, but also, until very recently, most information of the type anthropologists develop has also been missing. There is increasing evidence to indicate a belated recognition that teaching minority groups in urban society's details of their ethnic and cultural inheritance is both important and necessary. Moreover, the historical accomplishments of such groups generally reach a high enough level that their revelation also furnishes enlightenment to those with a less than favorable attitude toward the particular peoples involved.

Another factor to be taken into account is the obvious lack of apparent evidence of the anthropologist's handiwork surrounding the average citizen. While hedge trimmers, decongestants, and the like serve as constant reminders that other specialists are at work, few such monuments to the anthropologist exist in everyday life.

So far we have touched upon issues over which it may be legitimately said that the anthropologist has little control. Are there, however, contributing factors at work which have been encouraged, either

deliberately or inadvertently, by the anthropologists themselves? There appears to be an aversion to "becoming involved" among numerous members of the discipline. The keystone of this attitude is the concept that involvement undermines objectivity. While such a position can be viewed as an admirable attempt to avoid intellectual contamination, it can also furnish a convenient excuse for circumventing the criticism which accompanies error. If one does not become a part of the dynamic issues of the day, he is quite safe from the problems that arise when contributions misfire or concepts founder in practice.

The wary eye for the critic is an understandable part of the anthropological personality. Even within the limited framework in which many anthropologists would like to operate, there is enough criticism to make one marvel at the resilience of both the discipline and its members. Much of it develops from the scope of the field itself. A respected Protestant minister, for example, would not normally suffer a decline in esteem if he were unfamiliar with the innermost facets of Brahmanism. The student or informed layman, however, often expects the anthropologist to field questions on such subjects as a matter of routine. The victim must then harken back to a remote graduate seminar on Religions of the World and hope that memory doesn't fail him. Any mistaken pronouncement or admission of ignorance will be taken as an indication that the individual who made it is not at the proper skill level. In addition to religion, the areas of human and nonhuman physical characteristics, evolution, animal behavior, prehistory, linguistics, psychology, and human cultural development are all subjects upon which the anthropologist is expected to furnish instant erudition. If he points out that his field of interest is divorced from a particular area of inquiry, he often fails to experience the relief from suspicion that other specialists enjoy. Such pressures make it understandable that the anthropologist does not always seek the spotlight, though they have the favorable side effect of furnishing incentives to preserve a high level of general competence.

Even more devastating than the external chiding is the intensity of abuse to which the anthropologist is subjected within his own discipline. It is altogether proper that any scholar operating at either the theoretical or applied level should expect his ideas or actions to receive the careful scrutiny of his peers. The thoughtful individual anticipates and, ideally, welcomes such criticism, finding in it the opportunity to test and reevaluate the validity of his concepts. It is probably also true that anyone whose work exhibits a sufficiently sparse degree of quality should expect to be dealt with rather harshly. It must be noted, however, that such criticism can, and in anthropology often does, reach a level of intensity which adds little to scholarship. Kroeber's (1947) dignified critique of Bacon's (1946) redefinition and discussion of Asian culture areas, for example, contrasts most favorably with other approaches currently in vogue. One often gets the impression that, not only is the critic questioning the concepts of a particular individual, but the

legitimacy of his kinship ties and his mental health as well. Recently, this writer was directed to evaluate a theoretical treatise on religion which had been translated from the original German. It was found, after reading the work, that some concepts were agreeable, while others induced certain reservations. The scholarly level of the book, however, was both high and constant throughout. In order to get the reactions of others, a contemporary anthropological journal was consulted which features critiques of individual published works by a number of anthropologists, with the author then being given the opportunity to reply. The attempt to profit from the criticism was so lacking in value that it was abandoned. Aside from their vitriolic nature, many of the reviews conflicted to such an extent that a constant check had to be made to insure that no pages had been skipped which would result in one reading about an entirely different book. The content of the critiques could not be relied upon to rule out this possibility. The tone of many offerings was so uncompromising and authoritarian that one felt the particular reviewer would have sent his original copy down from Mount Sinai on stone tablets if the opportunity had presented itself. Replies by the author to the various remarks indicated that he was often as puzzled about the nature of particular points in contention as was this reader.

Steady academic emphasis on the personal bibliography undoubtedly fosters, as a by-product, the publication of ideas which merited additional formulation by the authors, or articles which are something less than definitive. Understandably, these offerings seldom receive favorable attention. It is also true that fame does not necessarily equate with capability any more than relative obscurity rules against it. It would seem, however, that scholarly ethics apply to critic as well as theoretician, and that the requirement for a competent and calm approach should weigh heavily on both.

Some anthropological critics lose little of their zeal when they leave the current scene and judge prominent figures of the past. Their task is made immeasurably easier by dealing with such individuals as contemporaries, an application of the "ethnographic present" which is often difficult to understand. The racial ideas of nineteenth century anthropologists, such as Tylor and Morgan, are not in harmony with the concepts of today. The interpretation of their views runs into some semantic difficulty with regard to their use of such words as "race" and "inferior," and the consistency with which these terms were applied. Nevertheless, it appears obvious that they were in error when viewed from mid-twentieth century perspectives, and such errors should be duly noted. It is also equally obvious that they were more enlightened than most others of the period, and were probing for different factors which might explain cultural advancement. Thus, one wonders if there is much value at this time in applying to such individuals the term "racist," with all of its current malevolent overtones, and then holding forth on the matter through a number of pages in order to insure that the label sticks. If certain recent publications are taken into account, it would appear that some anthropologists tend to think so.

Another pattern often observable in criticism is the tendency to take an observation to the outer limit is of applicability, limits for which it may not have been intended, and then to attack it from that "all-or-nothing" position. While Wissler's application of the culture area concept (1914; 1938:447-505), for example, is far from a totally accurate and effective tool for the explanation of culture development, it is not without methodological value, and many aspects of it would not seem to deserve the "overkill," in the form of Volkswagens and soft drink bottles, that has been rained down by critics who insist upon dealing with Wissler's ideas as if they had been applied in a modern technological context.

Such attitudes become even more suspect when they are based upon the interpretations of others concerning individuals or points under consideration. Bohannan (1963:322) notes the latter tendency in the treatment accorded the ideas of Levy-Bruhl, for whom this writer feels a certain affection as one who has been formulated into a left-handed anthropological equivalent of Maxwell's Demon (Ehrenberg 1967:103-10). Levy-Bruhl noted that primitives had no inherent incapacity with regard to reason and rational reflection (1966:-29-30). This general capability, he felt, was warped by ideas based on sensory perception and group concepts rooted in mysticism (431-32).. While this position is not as inherently evil as most interpretations have suggested, it is subject to serious challenge from a modern and more informed viewpoint. It can be noted in passing, however, that many contemporary concepts which deal with the culturally defined "value," the possibly quite reasonable basis of which is either glossed over or disregarded, and the idea of limitless human plasticity, suggest a closer parallel with Levy-Bruhl than the authors might like to admit. This writer had a similar personal experience with the writings of Melville Herskovits. In the early part of his training he formed a strong negative reaction to the cultural relativism doctrine, based almost entirely on the criticisms leveled against it by dissenters of high stature within the discipline. Belatedly, he got around to reading the ideas of Herskovits for himself. What he found was a point of view which, in general, suggests objective study of cultural groups and mutual respect between peoples, questions the desirability of imposing alien cultural systems, and notes that the rights of the individual within the society to be disruptive to the majority must be limited in the interests of social safety (1955:348-66). one does not have to accept the entire doctrine or overlook the occasionally blurred line between morals and methodology in order to realize that tolerance for the police state and Nazism is no more implicit in it than is total cultural isolation, both of which have been suggested. It is primarily an argument against the application of preconceived ideas by an outside observer and, while it may be subject to dispute, it is mainly by overextension of reasonably, mild initial contentions that one can develop something about which to become truly incensed.

One of the central problems in formulating theory is that the individual is often attempting to develop laws relating to broad areas of human activity or interest, generally in the proverbial "twenty

five words or less." Two stumbling blocks arise in this undertaking. One is the attempt to isolate all needed facts bearing on the subject. This obviously depends on the state of the art relating to the particular problem involved. A n historical interdisciplinary examination of theoretical activity reveals that knowledge gaps consistently are present which one has to bypass, assuming he even knows they exist. The result, almost inevitable in wide scale undertakings, is that theory has to be modified, or perhaps even discarded, as more evidence is uncovered, even though it may have had useful applicability at previous levels of analysis. Ptolmey's concept of the earth centered universe was overhauled by Copernicus to give the sun a central position around which rotating planets moved in a circular pattern, and was further modified by Kepler and others to allow for elliptical planetary orbits (Gillispie 1960:16-53). Newton's "dated" corpuscular theory of light was replaced in the nineteenth century by the wave concept, only to be given new validity, by quantum and relativity investigations (Darrow 1952:48-50). In anthropology, concepts of cultural evolution, diffusionism, and various forms of determinism have undergone steady revision as new data became available.

The second stumbling block is the way in which phenomena and events tend to defy the simplistic explanation despite a general scientific predisposition to think in terms of basic or central principles. This is especially true in the broad areas of human endeavor dealt with by the anthropologist. When one attempts to develop ideas which deal with even the known contingencies, he is eventually confronted by data indicating that somewhere, in some group, "things aren't done that way." The anthropologist's vast fund of knowledge concerning exceptions to the rule has often made him the bane of his academic fellows, especially other members of interdisciplinary teams (Luski 1958:54-9).

Theory, then, is as hard to come by as it is necessary. While the explanations themselves, as originally formulated, have often tended to be temporary or threshold positions, the paper upon which they are written is uncomfortably permanent, and does not disappear along with the validity of the particular concept. As the individual bibliography mounts, the inconsistency element is also introduced. With this comes the opportunity for the diligent critic to find isolated sentences here and there which can be used as justification for the claim that the particular person was contradictory in his approach.

Some members of the field handle these problems by avoiding the arena. They speak of anthropology as a "young" discipline, implying that it is too early for generalizations. While one can scarcely fault Boas for such a n attitude under then existing circumstances, the position becomes more tenuous as vast amounts of unknown, unassimilated, and forgotten data continue to pile up from fieldwork experiences.

Another outcome of the currently existing situation is that anthropologists have become among the most skit-led of academic

counterpunchers. Presumably aware that few avenues of graceful retreat are available once they have committed themselves to a position, many become adept reinterpreters of the "exception" data accumulated by their brother investigators. Then the unfortunate polarizing can take place in which the critic contends that the exception invalidates an entire idea, while the theorist undertakes to hammer each point into his conceptual mold. Differences in the relative polemic skills of the individuals involved can cause an essentially sound idea to be obscured or, conversely, a questionable one either to take hold or to exist beyond its utilitarian life span.

Clearly refuting the attitudes of those who belabor the "young discipline" approach has been the increasing need for specialization in the anthropological subdivisions, with the concomitant requirement for a certain amount of neglect by the individual of subjects outside his area of interest. The benefits of this condition are apparent in that concentration on the smaller area affords opportunities for a more rapid accumulation of knowledge relating to it. However, it has equally obvious debilitating side effects. It promotes the human tendency for one to view his own area as the only one which really matters. The specialist may then dismiss or be unaware of work in other sub disciplines that has a bearing on his own research. The situation also gives rise to capsule comments of summation for the various branches of anthropological study. This becomes dangerous when one notes that current students develop many of their attitudes from an increasing amount of commentary and written synopses by others, rather than on their own contact with original material. Considering the amount of data at hand, this is unavoidable, but the problems involved are clear. It is also questionable if any anthropological specialty has, at this time, developed answers which are so totally valid and highly definitive that they completely undermine the value of other current avenues of investigation, though such a statement will undoubtedly evoke unfavorable reactions from those who have given total commitment to particular areas of inquiry or developmental schemes. One may hear that the search for origins, which can be a relative undertaking, is a waste of time due to the impossibility of finding initial incidence. An investigator of historical bent might then react by saying that such an attitude is typical of the social anthropologist who looks at everything with a synchronic myopia, the erroneous implication being that all social anthropologists retain a lack of appreciation for anything outside the "in-being" situation, or that the synchronic approach is consistently without value.

The area of psychological anthropology has received its full measure of criticism from other members of the profession. Much of it is based on the opinion that those involved are doing something that members of other disciplines can do better, a comment that could be applied to most branches of anthropology if the field is reduced to small enough segments and the inherent synthesizing function is ignored. A great deal of attention in psychological anthropology is given to culturally defined patterns of child rearing. Part of the feeling against this specialty is engendered by the suspicion that attempts

are made to explain too much of the adult personality in terms of early childhood experiences. It is also questioned whether people conform to cultural patterns because of a strongly conditioned psychological orientation toward local standards of behavioral propriety, or because, in a homogeneous group, it may be the "only game in town." Thus, practical as well as psychological discomfort can accompany pronounced deviance. Those taking a position at either extreme would seem to oversimplify an essentially complex area of inquiry. The psychological anthropologist has also been criticized for a tendency to use borrowed or dated concepts and culture bound testing tools.

The psychological investigators are beset by severe and not easily soluble methodological problems. The isolated human mind is a difficult instrument with which to deal. When one attempts to establish generalizations concerning the behavior of a large group, one which contains wide ranges of individual variability, the undertaking becomes infinitely more complicated. It is much easier to criticize the culture-bound nature of testing devices, an observation that is not exactly a bulletin to many psychological anthropologists, than it is to devise testing procedures free from cultural influences. Those involved in culture and personality studies do not present as united a front as some might suppose, and there is enough internal debate to insure that the methodological pot will continue to boil (See Cohen 1966).

The most significant fact promoting longevity for, the psychological anthropologist is that one can scarcely divorce the human mind, perhaps individually and certainly collectively, from the development of culture. This remains true despite what one may think of a particular culture and personality approach. Even those who voice highly critical opinions of the area often, themselves, analyze cultural tendencies and reactions in psychological terms. Perhaps many critics have hoped for more from this field than the members have been able to produce. Spiro (1961) has pointed out the inadvisability of becoming overly oriented toward factors which develop the individual personality, and has suggested increased emphasis on psychological mechanisms related to cultural system maintenance and to the social change process. Researchers such as Aberle (1963, 1967) and Gardner (1966) have given effective examples of how informative studies can be when psychological factors are integrated into cultural analyses.

Similar prejudices to the ones noted above have existed with regard to those from many branches of anthropology working in cross-cultural investigations of the type reflected in the Human Relations Area Files studies. While part of this may be a reaction to what might be termed "cybernetic" anthropology, a more basic evaluative error seems to be the tendency to confuse methodology with machinery. One then feels that because the computer is a modern and complex instrument, those using the instrument will possess an equal level of sophistication in their initial efforts. Just as this has not been true in other anthropological areas, it is not accurate when applied to the

statistical approach either. Identification of significant areas to which a method can be applied, evaluation of information for both appropriateness and quality, and discovery of unknown built-in hazards are problems which face all anthropologists, and ones from which none have escaped unscarred. There are, however, problems peculiar to the field, such as the difficulties involved in transferring abstract and variable attitudes into discrete marks on a punch card or statistical chart, and the obstacles encountered when moving from the gross category to detailed specifics. Articles by Ford (1967) and Moore (1961) again point out that those involved with the area are clearly aware of the hazards and the continuous need for refinement of techniques. Swanson, in his work on primitive religion (1964:1 79-82), openly acknowledges the possibility of misinterpretation and the failure of many groups to fit into designated categories, indicating that qualitative improvement in all phases of the approach must receive continuing emphasis. Such candor is unusual and refreshing in any anthropological area, and is especially impressive in those of a statistical orientation, who are much maligned for a supposed blind allegiance to figures.

Responsibility for many of the errors in some surveys has to be shouldered to some degree by traditional ethnographers upon whose data the particular investigator may have relied. Individual misunderstanding of cultural characteristics, even if minor, can assume significant proportions in an analysis encompassing a large number of groups. Also, such conventional studies often show that excessive selectivity and oversimplification of information are not lapses confined to the statistical researcher alone. It would appear that, despite possible limitations in application, the statistical method is a valuable cross-cultural tool that can be applied to a wide range of problems in which the scope of the inquiry and the fund of information available renders individual assimilation of data either impractical or impossible.

Linguistics is another anthropological sub discipline in which strong feelings can be evoked. Since inception it has been a difficult area with which to come to grips. From a structural aspect the increments and symbolism are as complicated as the social anthropologist's kinship chart is wearying. Attempts to find an "easy read" print-out of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis bear little fruit. Thus, linguistics contains many features which might inspire one to avoid it if possible, and to "entertain the perverse hope that it is a blind alley. One hears comments of veiled optimism from nonpractitioners stating that perhaps glottochronology isn't working out too well. They may also note that Sapir's remarks concerning the "tyrannical hold" language has on orientation (1931:578) do not seem totally applicable, and that the less theoretically disturbing ideas regarding general expandability of all languages to encompass any concept (Boas 1964:19) may hold sway.

It seems certain, however, that linguistics will remain too scientifically valid an area of inquiry to be ignored by other branches of anthropology. Its intrinsic value and applicability to other sub disciplines can be seen from the example of the language situation in Nigeria, as reflected in the fieldwork documentation of Wolff (1959). The possibility is suggested that intergroup linguistic communication becomes involved with prestige, status, and self view in such a way that ability to learn certain new languages, even when closely related to the individual's mother tongue, can be blocked, perhaps below the conscious level. Linguistic problems, the answers to which would be of great assistance to anthropologists, are varied. Works by Conklin, (1955), Good enough (1957), and others reflect increasing evidence of the correlation between language and culture, as well as the importance of putting appropriate linguistic information in terms that do not require the background of the specialist for understanding.

Applied anthropology, this writer's primary field of interest, is also capable of invoking mild discomfiture among certain members of the discipline, though feelings probably run no higher than those inspired in the Sioux by a cavalry uniform. Exposure to such attitudes is not necessarily pleasant, but conservative positions on this subject can be well understood. If one makes the assumption that there are certain regularities relating to culture and behavior which induce a factor of predictability, he must still, in honesty, admit that many of them remain mysterious. It must also be acknowledged that courses of action in change projects, once chosen, can have repercussions unforeseen by the most thoughtful of planners. Further, it is a valid observation that mistakes are made and that, in spite of numerous lists of rules to follow, none guarantee future protection from error. In fact, it is a likely prospect. Then there is the possibility that if applied endeavor is encouraged, anthropology might develop an overzealous and misguided arm which could, by activity and error, lower the stature of the discipline. This attitude cannot be dismissed as simple stodginess, as the forgotten sage who noted that "ignorance in action is terrifying," voiced one of the world's great truths. In view of such formidable obstacles, it seems proper to question the soundness of any idea relating to the increased development of applied anthropology.

It was fashionable and probably even justifiable at one time, to question the right of the anthropologist, or anyone else, to "interfere" in the lives of peoples in other cultural settings. It was noted that even the most primitive groups had generally worked out an accommodation with their environment and, as they understood it, lived full lives. While the overt humanitarian may have recoiled from the deprivation present in terms of his own cultural conditioning, the anthropologist was aware of the relativity factor which could allow the scientifically limited aborigine to live thirty-five rich and meaningful years, while his more "fortunate" would-be benefactors represented cultures in which individuals could spend seventy empty ones. The anthropologist also realized that one would have to possess

a peculiar perspective indeed to believe that aboriginal peoples had elicited a profit from contacts with outsiders.

While this "hands-off" attitude may have been appropriate at one time, it no longer seems applicable today. It must be obvious by now that primitive and traditional cultures are not destined to be allowed to exist free from outside interference, the government official, military man, or technician is everywhere. Whether by direct intervention of governments, or by the indirect influence of a processing plant built on a nearby island, traditional groups are consistently swept into culture change situations in which relatively little attention is given to their welfare. It seems accurate to assume that the anthropologist, by virtue of his interests and training, is generally more capable of helping these people adjust to and profit from such situations than government, business, or military representatives. Neither lack of perfection nor the total ability to insure acceptance of his advice by either outside or host groups should be a valid excuse for ignoring the existing situation. It must also be noted that the anthropologist is often full of retrospective ideas, and quite loudly and comfortably takes the official or technician to task after mistakes have been made. If such strong feelings exist, then interest in helping to avert the errors he criticizes should seemingly be present in equal measure.

If the disinclination by outsiders to leave primitives alone is accepted, and if the anthropologist can furnish assistance to those groups adversely affected by such contacts, it is interesting to ponder a moral issue other than the right of anyone, even with altruistic motives, to "bother the natives.'" This is the issue raised when one wonders how long ago the irreversible trend of encroachment by aliens into traditional areas was, or should have been, apparent to members of the discipline. It is possible that their applied interests should have developed even earlier and more strongly. The anthropologist has gotten a lot of mileage out of primitive and traditional peoples. He has generally been well received by such groups, and has often been treated as an honored guest. This is all the more significant when one takes cognizance of the annoying nature of his constantly probing activities. He comes away from his field work with enlightenment for himself and his fellows, the acquired aura of the specialist, and a vast potential publication list. When groups of the type from which the anthropologist has profited so much are in a position to use-assistance from the application of the knowledge gained at their expense, perhaps there is some type of obligation present, one which will not destroy the intellectual objectivity required for effective study. It also seems assured that such experiences are a valuable source of data for colleagues in other areas.

Applied endeavors often require the anthropologist to operate within the framework of a larger organization, many of whose members are motivated by purposes and concerns other than

his own. This is a circumstance he tends to find undesirable. Anthropologists were long a part of British and Dutch colonial administrations (Linton 1945:15). This was probably a factor motivating the idea that the anthropologist should not be involved in the administrative decision-making process, thus avoiding responsibility for the uses to which his information is put, though such avoidance has been justified on the grounds that communication with officials is a hopeless task and policy involvement undermines scholarship (Evans-Pritchard 1964:119-20). Barnett (1956:72-35), however, has clearly pointed out that professional ethics do not permit such an easy escape from moral consequences.

The above discussion must not be taken to imply that anthropology should become totally applied in nature. The problems with which it deals are too broad. Extensive and full-time pursuit of theory and pressure-free investigation by a large segment of the discipline is necessary in order to prevent erosion of the professional foundation and to insure that the anthropologist does not become an academic "fossil man," using dated concepts and narrow-scope techniques resulting from an extended active life. Neither does it mean that applied anthropologists should become the "mechanics" of the field. Green (1961:9), based on experiences with culture change programs in Pakistan, has graphically illustrated how any specialist whose talent rests solely at the practical level will eventually find his capabilities outstripped by the requirements of an effective assistance effort.

The archaeologist, the best known of cultural anthropologists, remains in many ways a mysterious member of the group of his colleagues. Part of the mystery results from the highly specialized nature of his work. Candor would compel many anthropologists to admit that one hand axe or potsherd looks much like another to them. Then, too, while the discovery of an artifact after hours of labor requiring the endurance of a sandhog and the delicacy of an artist can be most rewarding to those at the scene, the event often loses much in the retelling. Through no fault of the archaeologist, the basic notes of the ethnographer just happen to make better reading than the average site report.

Like the rest of the anthropological fraternity, the archaeologists have not remained untouched by criticism. Some of it, such as that by Taylor (1943), himself a practitioner, takes them to task for past inclinations to become lost in typology and method while failing to use their findings to formulate significant theory concerning cultural development. The limited capability of the archaeologist to speculate about prehistoric child rearing techniques and inheritance patterns is obvious, but recent publications by Gabel (1967) and Willey (1966) indicate that many contemporary archaeologists have increasingly fulfilled their speculative obligations within the limits imposed by the data at their disposal.

The archaeologist has things other than theory from which his anthropological brethren can profit. One is his emphasis on precision. Another is his enthusiasm for field work, which generally seems to stay at a higher and more sustained level throughout his career than in any other branch of anthropology. While undoubted contributing factors are his tendency to work with a group and his less intimate involvement with social interaction problems, much of his zeal obviously comes from the feeling that what he is doing is both enjoyable and important. While ethnologists may also share this attitude, it often appears that many look upon field work as a chore which, fortunately, does not have to be repeated too often.

There is much evidence to support the contention that anthropologists, in spite of themselves, feel they are slated for bigger things. There is the strong emphasis on the Ph.D. degree as a requirement for necessary competence, a demand which seems more reasonable as one's involvement with the field increases. Though their road is made constantly more difficult by the increased academic commitment required, the exotic aspects of anthropology still tend to attract the dilettante. While much scholarly work has been done by dedicated individuals with, or pursuing, a Master's degree, there is still more last minute test preparation and weekend term papers at the lower graduate level than is comfortable to admit. The increasingly vast scope of the field causes even the diligent majority to arrive at the Master's plateau far more conscious of what they don't yet know than of what they have been able to learn.

Another favorable sign is the tendency of universities to realize that pressing students too rapidly toward specialization can produce individuals with severely restricted perspectives* This seems balanced by the growing awareness that a steady pace must be maintained to avoid a high percentage of "professional students." In the broad field of anthropology there is always another area to be investigated, another course to be taken, or another research project in which to become involved. Such incentive is laudable, but it is possible to reach a point at which the new information the student is receiving does not compensate for the seepage of aging and unapplied knowledge from his mind. When such a situation exists, it is perhaps the elders rather than the students who are primarily at fault. Under the pressures of course loads, publication, and administrative duties, guidance often appears to be the most expendable burden the professor carries and the one which will engender the least backlash through neglect. Thus, the counseling program can take on a studied fuzziness. Here again, one sees attempts to make this aspect of academia increasingly dynamic, though a totally satisfactory situation is still difficult to find.

Problem centered field work, an approach in wide practice today, seems to be another effective methodological development. It is especially fruitful when the field worker undertakes to develop data needed to fill in current gaps or to answer specific questions, while not allowing himself the luxury of neglecting more conventional

ethnological information. One then has an expansion rather than a restriction of method.

In anthropology, as in other organized endeavors, an "establishment" exists and one of its duties is to serve as a focal point for dissatisfaction. It is sometimes heard that survival in this or that university depends upon unqualified acceptance by the student of a particular scheme of cultural development expounded by the department involved. Again, one is told that certain schools undermine a humanistic approach to anthropology, and that traces of it in a dissertation will result in certain rejection by the departments of such institutions. Cases are cited in which dissertations were rewritten by candidates simply to satisfy committee requirements, resulting in material which the particular author held to be substandard or invalid, but which he submitted simply to conform and receive his degree. Such charges are not always leveled by young dissidents. To this writer's knowledge, at least one experienced and respected anthropologist, who had been on the staff of a major eastern university, left the field entirely and gave as the reason an increased lack of humanism and emphasis on conformity which rendered it ineffective for any work of future value. If such charges are true, they are not only lamentable but grim in a discipline in which individual perspective is both vital and, unavoidably, slowly formed on the basis of an assimilation of knowledge and experience,

That such institution as those described above exist is quite probably true. That they are present in large numbers is more questionable. Few departments 'have the budgets to marshal a squad of experts for each of the many sub disciplines and areas one finds in anthropology. Necessarily, certain phases of the subject are neglected by most schools. One often hears criticism of curriculum by graduate students, accompanied by suggestions that particular study areas be introduced or expanded. This process is sometimes difficult and generally depends on the approval of offices outside the department. Departmental personnel have often engineered the establishment of such courses, only to find themselves explaining at a later date why, in spite of previously expressed enthusiasm, just one or two students seemed able to work them into their schedules.

The writer has been fortunate in attending schools in which he was free, exercising reasonable decorum, to dispute ideas presented to him so long as he could back up his position with facts. It was primarily lack of this factual foundation that would bring reactions of pointed disapproval. In this regard, it is also felt that "humanism" is a quality that can somehow get pushed out of shape and become something not altogether desirable. The doctrine is too often used by those who run out of verifiable data and retreat into the supposedly safe haven of vague humanistic generalities, only to find that they provoke a response other than the one desired. While feelings and intuition are an important part of anthropology, they are not the sole stuff of which any discipline is constituted. If anthropology does, as it should, make any humanistic contributions, they will have to be based

on solid evidence and not on generalized and unsubstantiated ideas concerning how things "should be."

The comments contained herein should not be taken to imply that anthropology is in an advanced state of dereliction and disarray. Such a claim would be invalidated by the number of competent professionals the field continues to develop. Neither should it be interpreted to suggest that anthropology should function as a giant interdisciplinary vacuum cleaner, drawing every area of study into its own bailiwick any more than it should continuously segment like some academic earthworm into small compartmentalized pieces which go their separate ways. The study of man is unwieldy by its very nature, and this condition will probably continue to be reflected in the structure of anthropology. There may well be a need for some pruning of the disciplinary tree. If anthropology does converge into a field of more limited scope, the movement will have to be a cautious one. Only by exhibiting great care can it avoid the constant vacillation of the past with regard to what is or is not important and meaningful.

A thoughtful approach to the subject requires a constant vigil to insure that excessive polarization is avoided. Overzealous and personalized criticism can be as damaging to the anthropological fabric as the passive acceptance of empty concepts, and promotes answers in kind. Commitment to a totally applied approach is as unhealthy as complete isolation in theory. The most discouraging aspect of such polarization is that it promotes an intellectual absenteeism in which excessive time is given to both self and area justification. Further, it is disquieting to hear overdrawn anthropological positions being voiced, often by those whom you suspect of less violent actual attitudes, and then later justified on the grounds that they counterbalanced ones of equal extremity in another direction, or were motivated by a dangerous drift of focus in others that was unacceptable to the speaker. Thus, scholarship takes on the appearance of jaded political negotiations in which initially extreme overstatements supposedly lead, in the final analysis, to some type of equity. Such attitudes clearly attack the spirit of anthropology and, one would hope, the letter of it as well.

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