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## **ROUSSEAU REDUX, Or Historical Reflections on the Ambivalence of Anthropology to the Idea of Progress\***

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The occasion for this essay was an invitation in 1990 from Bruce Mazlish and Leo Marx, two historians at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, to participate in a conference on «Progress: An Idea and Belief in Crisis». The conference was envisioned in two parts: the «theory» part would reexamine the «origins» of the idea; the «assessment» part would reevaluate its «validity» in terms of its «actual historical results». My job was to contribute to the theory section a paper on «The Idea of Progress from the Perspective of Anthropology». Had the invitation come a decade earlier, I might have refused. But with *Victorian Anthropology* five years in print, and *After Tylor* well along, such a focused panoramic perspective seemed more easily within my grasp, and, given also the chance to visit three of my grandchildren who lived in a Boston suburb, I accepted.

Although the conference agenda was open-ended, it was not without tendency: on the one hand «Salvationist», on the other, «resurrectionist». Mazlish was obviously concerned with salvaging progress, in a skeptical «premillennial moment», in the face of postmodernism, deconstructionism, environmental worries, globalization, and the erosion of faith in Marxism after the «recent events in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union». Looking with a certain nostalgia more to the past than the present, Marx focused on the «deformations» of progress in post-Jeffersonian America and on the possibility of its «redefinition» by uncoupling it from the «ideal of incremental accumulation» (pers. corr.). The conference papers (treating progress in relation to science, history, gender, religion, medicine, economics, and the environment, as well as anthropology) ranged from quite traditional defenses of both belief and fact, to balances of gains and losses, to critiques and redefinitions. Although the *Boston Globe* (12/8/91) managed to collapse all of them into a four-word story caption («Conferees Declare Progress Passé»), the conference «synopsis» later circulated to the participants maintained that they had validated «the need for some version of the idea of progress, suitably adjusted to the realities of social, economic, technological and intellectual change».

Having undergone my own disillusion with Marxism back in 1956, and having since then vacillated between reluctant relativism and residual progressivism, I envisioned my role as straightforwardly representational. But given that personal perspective, it is not surprising that I found a similar tension in the anthropological tradition – in contrast to the «espousal of postmodern relativism» subsequently attributed by the organizers to the «recent work of anthropologists» (Mazlish & Marx 1998: 4). As the preconference deadline for circulation of papers approached, however, I had only an outline and a set of «notes and quotes» from which I subsequently spoke informally at the conference sessions in December 1991. Doubtful that a symposium volume would eventuate, I did not turn again to the essay until the fall of 1994, when I added the last six paragraphs of the present text. By that time, additional authors had been found to offer papers on topics unrealized at the original symposium: the politics of progress, cultural relativism in the Third World, and Judeo-Christian universalism and Western ethnocentrism. And by that time, the contextualizing rhetoric of the preface had shifted in the winds of fin de siècle interpretive fashion, with references now to

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«the Enlightenment project», the postmodernist critique of «foundationalist» ideas, and the «shift away from the hitherto Eurocentric white male viewpoint» (Mazlish & Marx 1998: 2).

Granted that there has recently been such a move also in anthropology, and that the world that once was called simply «modern» underwent radical changes in the last decades of the twentieth century, and acknowledging the power of «postmodernism», both as critique and cultural force, the «Enlightenment project» seems to me still to have a certain potency. From that point of view, this essay attempts, albeit in a «notes and quotes» fashion, to see the tension between relativism and progressivism as a warp thread in the *longue durée* of anthropology\*\*.



HILE beginnings in intellectual history are never so simple, it might still be argued that the discourse of anthropology and the cultural ideology of progress are approximately coeval. Genealogies of anthropology commonly find their apical ancestors in the same mid-eighteenth-century period when the idea of progress is said to have achieved explicit articulation. Rousseau's second essay «on the origin of human inequality» was at one and the same time a contribution to the debate on progress and, in the often quoted tenth footnote, a call for an empirically based science of mankind (Rousseau 1755: 203-13). The same discursive overlap may be found among the Scottish moral philosophers who are sometimes claimed as forefathers of the Anglo-American anthropological tradition. Thus, the major topic headings of Lord Kames's *Sketches of the History of Man* included «the progress of men as individuals», «the progress of men in society» and «the progress of the sciences».

To say, however, that these writers were simultaneously contributing to both discursive realms may be misleading, should it imply a clear distinction, within the work of a single author, between two different bodies of textual material, written in different voices, to different audiences. The discourse which we retroactively constitute as «anthropological» could not, in the eighteenth century, be sharply marked off from that which we retrospectively reconstruct as that of «progress». To write about questions that we would now deem «anthropological» was, willy-nilly, to write about «the progress of mankind» – which, in retrospect, may be seen as the central problem of eighteenth-century anthropological discourse. It is in discussions of this problem that one finds the proximate source of what came to be called the «comparative method». When Adam Ferguson

suggested that it was «in the present condition» of Native Americans that we may «behold, as in a mirror, the features of our own progenitors» (in Meek 1976: 151), he was in effect suggesting the «comparative method» for the reconstruction of history (or development, or evolution) in the absence of the kind of evidence by which it is normally reconstituted – a method which has since been elaborated, debated, questioned, even abandoned, but which still today is sometimes employed, implicitly or even explicitly, in anthropological discourse (Stocking 1987: 415, 1995: 542).

From the beginning, «progress» as both cultural ideology and anthropological concept was entangled in various ways with a number of other ideas. There were, by long tradition, ideas about the dynamics of history: notions of degeneration from the biblical garden of Eden or some less specifically Judeo-Christian golden age; ideas about the contrastive pattern and movement of sacred and secular history; conceptions of the repetitive cyclical movement of time and cultural process. There were ideas about human nature and its cultural differentiation, whether by movement in space or in time. There were ideas about the categories of human otherness («savagery», «barbarism»). There were ideas as well about the physical differentiation of mankind – although the elaboration of the ideas of race and of biological evolution still lay in the future. But perhaps the most closely intertwined of these mutually implicated notions were two others articulated at roughly the same mid-eighteenth-century moment: the idea of Europe and the idea of civilization. From that time forward the three notions were linked – sometimes in a single phrase, sometimes in unstated equation – with each other and with the idea of progress, so that any one of the three might imply the other two. Posed as problem rather than as assertion, this conceptual triad, «the progress of European civilization», was

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\*\* Many relevant issues are either untouched, underelaborated, or oversimplified – or referred to in such a condensed way as to remain obscure to a reader not already somewhat familiar with the particular topic. Similarly, the relevant literature is very large, and for the most part I have limited documentation to works specifically quoted or mentioned. As a (frankly egocentric) starting point for those interested in pursuing any topic further, I have cited a number of my own works and mention here also the variously thematic volumes of essays I have edited in the series *History of Anthropology*, as well as the *History of Anthropology Newsletter*.

one of the foundational issues of anthropological discourse (Stocking 1987: 9-45).

As the ambiguity of Rousseau's «supposed primitivism» suggests (Lovejoy 1948), and as the preoccupation of Kames and other Scottish progressivists with the pseudo-Ossianic epics confirms, the progress of European civilization was from the beginning a focus of profound attitudinal ambivalence (above, 98-99). There was a widespread sense of loss as well as gain (the martial virtues versus the habits of industry), of a progress of corruption paralleling that of knowledge – and there was a long tradition of «soft» as well as «hard» primitivism, realized in the eighteenth-century vision of the «noble savage» and of «nature's simple plan» (Lovejoy & Boas 1935). There were always doubters and critics, at times and in places more numerous and articulate, whose voices, sometimes admonitory, sometimes yearning, for the next two centuries chanted a romantic counterpoint to the progressivist paean of European cultural self-confidence (Stocking 1988b).

Early progressivist thought on the processes of civilization achieved a characteristic articulation in the «Considerations on the Various Methods To Follow in the Observation of Savage Peoples», prepared by Joseph Degerando for the Société des Observateurs de l'Homme established in Paris in the later years of the French Revolution. There the implications of the «comparative method» were further specified. Since for whatever «mysterious reason» different human groups had not advanced at the same rate, it was possible to construct «an exact scale of the various degrees of civilization and to assign to each its characteristic properties,» and thus to reconstruct «the first periods of our own history». The «philosophical traveller, sailing to the ends of the earth is in fact travelling in time»; «every step he makes is the passage of an age»; «unknown islands that he reaches are for him the cradle of human society». There also, the link was asserted between the study of past progress and the guarantee of its future – by inspiring among «barbarous people» a «curiosity to know our ways and a desire to imitate them, ... perhaps laying [thereby] the foundations of a new Europe» (Degerando 1800: 63,102; Stocking 1964).

In the early nineteenth century, anthropological thought about the progress of European civilization was complicated by the reaction against the French Revolution, by the reassertion of traditional Christian views of world historical process, and, as Europeans came into increasing contact with and violently dispossessed the varieties of humankind at «the ends of the earth», by the elaboration of biologically oriented racial explanations of human cultural difference. The

peoples stigmatized as «savages» were now less likely to be seen as representatives of the original human condition and more as products of cultural (and even physical) degeneration accompanying the migration of mankind outward from Babel. In the words of the American ethnologist Henry Rowe Schoolcraft: «man was created, not a savage, a hunter, or a warrior, but a horticulturist and a raiser of grain, and a keeper of cattle – a smith, a musician – a worshipper, not of the sun, moon and stars, but of God»; «the savage condition is a declension from this high type...» (1857: 27). The progressive development of civilization in Europe was still a commonplace of anthropological assumption, but it was increasingly conceived in racial terms – most strikingly in the case of polygenetic writers, who by mid-century were arguing that the races of mankind were in fact distinct species, whose differences in cultural status were the direct reflection of their unequal capacity. Although advocates of human unity were not inclined to interpret this contrast in terms of fundamental distinctions of racial capacity, even leading monogenists, like James Cowles Prichard, drew the contrast between «the splendid cities of Europe» and the «solitary dens of the Bushman, where the lean and hungry savage crouches in silence, like a bird of prey» (in Stocking 1973: 1xxxii).

As that passage suggests, by the time of the Crystal Palace Exhibition, the first of the great international celebrations of the progress of European civilization, there was already in place an image of savage bestiality as its antithesis – whether as degenerative offshoot, absolute racial alternative, or developmental starting point. The Crystal Palace helped to stimulate a more systematic speculation about human progress, including notably the work of Henry Maine, in which the contrast was sharply drawn between the progressive societies of Europe and the stationary societies of Asia. But the terms of anthropological discussion were to be dramatically altered after 1858, when the archeological revolution opened up an immense abyss of time beneath the progress of European civilization, and the Darwinian revolution gave a very different significance to the metaphor of savage bestiality (Stocking 1987: 110-85).

Since the ideological aspect of evolutionary debate seems in retrospect only too striking (Stocking 1987: 186-237), it is perhaps worth noting that the issue of human progress presented itself to the generation of «classical evolutionists» also as a problem of data, method, and theory. What seemed to be required of those who would claim the sociocultural realm for positive science was to fill the

vast expanse of prehistory with sequences of development that would explain the emergence of human culture by purely naturalistic means. That social evolutionism had this character of a collective scientific project is evidenced in a letter that John McLennan – a major contributor to evolutionary schemes concerning the development of human marriage out of «primitive promiscuity» toward monogamy – wrote to Sir John Lubbock, the leading Darwinist prehistorian, in October 1867:

*I have been employed for the last three days on the paper which I shd be most anxious to bring out through yr society [the Ethnological Society of London], viz: «A Tentative View of Human Progress». ... perhaps you will be good enough to consider whether between yourself & Huxley in the south and Professor Aufrecht (an excellent philologist) & myself in Edinburgh, a tentative scheme might be adjusted which might serve for some years to come as a guide for enquiry in regard to the history of the race – at the same time that it would mark for the time the results of such enquiry as has been made. ... I am aiming at the formation of a table with a classification of stages of progress depending on the grouping – the table exhibiting all the stages of progress in the Arts & Sciences, etc. that have been found concurring with each phase of the development of social organization (In Stocking 1981: 6).*

The attempt to correlate sociocultural phenomena in the definition of stages, although clearly conditioned by ethnocentric preconceptions, was, in the minds of its practitioners, a stage in an empirical (and itself progressive) anthropological inquiry.

The most systematically articulated such scheme was perhaps that of the American anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan, in the first chapters of *Ancient Society, or Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization*. In his own latter-day adaptation of the «four-stage» scheme of the Scottish moral philosophers (Meek 1976), Morgan defined seven «ethnical periods» or «statuses», each characteristically marked off by a new invention and/or mode of subsistence: middle savagery by the use of fire and fish subsistence, upper barbarism by the smelting of iron, civilization by the invention of the phonetic alphabet. Although himself reluctant to place his sociocultural evolutionary schema explicitly in a Darwinian context, Morgan nevertheless saw human progress in Lamarckian terms as an interactive process of cultural and biological change: «with the production of inventions and discoveries, and with the growth of institutions, the human mind necessarily

grew and expanded; and we are led to recognize a gradual enlargement of the brain itself». The «inferiority of savage man in the mental and moral scale» was «substantially demonstrated by the remains of ancient art in flint stone and bone implements, ... by his osteological remains [and] by the present condition of tribes of savages in a low state of development». It was only the Aryans and Semites who had in fact ascended to the seventh (and undivided) heaven of «civilization», in which the leading role «has been gradually assumed by the Aryan family alone» (1877: 36, 41, 39; see also Trautman 1987).

Although the linkage of race and progress was more strongly asserted by biologically oriented writers in the tradition we retrospectively label Social Darwinist, anthropologists who dealt primarily with sociocultural evolution also tended to take for granted a certain causal correlation of culture and color – as was implicitly suggested in the British anthropologist E. B. Tylor's comment that «on the definite basis of compared facts, ethnographers are able to set up at least a rough scale of civilization»: «Few would dispute that the following races are arranged rightly in order of culture: – Australian, Tahitian, Aztec, Chinese, Italian». Positive science and ethnocentric assumption thus mutually reinforced the century-old triple equation (1871: I, 24). Tylor was by no means a systematic denigrator of savage peoples: «it may be admitted that some rude tribes lead a life to be envied by some barbarous races, and even by the outcasts of higher nations». However, defining civilization «from the ideal point of view» as the «general improvement of mankind by higher organization of the individual and of society, to the end of promoting at once man's goodness, power, and happiness», he nevertheless felt that «the general tenour of the evidence goes far to justify the view that on the whole the civilized man is not only wiser and more capable than the savage, but also better and happier, and that the barbarian stands between» (I, 28). Although a scion of the middleclass reforming groups that in his lifetime had helped to reshape English economic life and politics, Tylor was not totally uncritical of the civilization which European progress had produced, nor naively optimistic about its future. But in the peroration of *Primitive Culture* he worried that the oft-closed gates of inquiry might close again, he did so in defending anthropology as a «reformer's science», dedicated to the furtherance of progress by rooting out «survivals» of savage or barbarous culture (II, 410).

Granting that the «classical evolutionists» did not think of human progress in simple «unilinear» terms (Carneiro 1973), and acknowledging the recent

literature on degeneration or «the dark side of progress» in the later nineteenth century (Pick 1989), it may nevertheless be said that this evolutionary and racial vision of human progress provided the dominant paradigm for the pre-academic generation of anthropological writers who are usually thought of today as the proximate lineal ancestors of the modern sociocultural anthropology in the Anglo-American tradition. In both Britain and the United States, however, the fin de siècle and early-twentieth-century years witnessed a reaction against progressivist evolutionism. In Britain, the life of nineteenth-century evolutionary progressivism was prolonged in the work of Tylor's disciple James Frazer, who managed to sustain a certain confidence in the progress of magic/religion/science even in the face of his anxiety about the persistence of superstition in the «volcano underneath» the class-riven civilization of pre-World War I England (Stocking 1995: 124-78). It was in the United States, in the work of the Jewish-German immigrant anthropologist Franz Boas, that the critique was first and more systematically developed, especially in its relation to evolutionary assumptions about racial differences and the «mind of primitive man» (Stocking 1968a: 133-234).

Predisposed to skepticism of a unitary «civilization» by both his own cultural marginality and his ties to the German romantic tradition (Bunzl 1996; Cole 1999), Boas nevertheless shared many of the values of evolutionary progressivism, and in the beginning acknowledged a certain cultural presumption in favor of its racialist implications. It was no wonder, he suggested in the opening lines of his first antievolutionist salvo in 1894, that «civilized man», who had «conquered the forces of nature and compelled them to serve him», should pity people who «hear with trembling the roar of the wild animals and see the products of their toils destroyed by them», and conclude that «the white race represents a higher type than all others» (1894: 221-22). To get behind a «contrast» that presented itself so obviously «to the observer» was the work of a critique Boas elaborated over the next seventeen years and drew together in *The Mind of Primitive Man*. Calling fundamentally into question the prevailing ethnocentric equation of presumed racial capacity and cultural achievement in a single evolutionary framework, Boas' critique provided the basis for the modern pluralistic and relativistic conception of culture. It is worth noting, however, that just as the perorations of Tylor and Morgan left a space for cultural doubt, so did Boas' last lines leave a space for the idea of progress:

[The] *data of anthropology teach us a greater tolerance of forms of civilization different from our*

*own, and that we should learn to look upon foreign races with greater sympathy, and with the conviction, that, as all races have contributed in the past to cultural progress in one way or another, so they will be capable of advancing the interests of mankind, if we are only willing to give them a fair opportunity* (Boas 1911b: 278).

Despite the disillusioning impact of World War I, a residual faith in progress was still evident in Boas' popular anthropological writings of the 1920s. Insisting on the difficulty of defining a standard in the face of the «conflict of ideals» in modern life. Boas was nevertheless willing to «recognize progress in a definite direction in the development of invention and knowledge». Although «he denied that there was any «evolution of moral ideas», he nevertheless argued that there was «progress in ethical conduct, based on the recognition of larger groups which participate in the rights enjoyed by members of the closed society, and on an increasing social control». And «while it was still more difficult to discern universally valid progress in social organization», he nevertheless felt that «in the sense of loss of fixity of status the freedom of the individual has been increasing». Translated into positive science, human fellowship, and individual freedom, these were of course still central values of nineteenth-century liberal progressivism – which Tylor and Morgan would surely have found congenial (Boas 1928: 217, 227, 231; Stocking 1979a).

That compatibility notwithstanding, it is nevertheless the case that anthropology had undergone profound changes in the period between the 1890s and the 1920s, changes which even in England amounted to the «revolution in social anthropology» that Bronislaw Malinowski had called for in 1916. There were of course differences in pace and in outcome: in England, the critique of race and the separation of biological and cultural discourse were not such central issues; in the United States, it was cultural psychology rather than functionalist sociology that emerged as the dominant anthropological viewpoint. But in both countries, anthropology was being academicized, ethnographicized, dehistoricized, and specialized. From either point of view, professional anthropologists (of the subspecies that came to be called social or cultural) were people with academic training who carried out ethnographic fieldwork among non-European peoples in order to document and to understand their cultural or social modes in «the ethnographic present», rather than reconstructing their development in time (whether conceived in evolutionary or shorter-range historical terms). Such

an orientation implied, as a methodological precondition, a relativistic stance toward the cultural values and modes of behavior of the groups being studied, and as a theoretical consequence, the backgrounding if not the exclusion of the problem of progress from the agenda of sociocultural anthropology. Evolutionary or developmental questions might be addressed in other fields which, within the Anglo-American sphere, were still included under the umbrella of a general «anthropology» – notably in archeology and biological anthropology. But it was not until after World War II that they were again to be seriously addressed by sociocultural anthropologists (Stocking 1976, 1992b, 1995).

One aspect of the «revolution in anthropology» was an important shift in its motivational dynamic. Although cultural exoticism has been a continuing theme in European history, and an obviously discernable motivation even among evolutionary anthropologists, it seems fair to say that a necromantic current of «soft» primitivism ran increasingly strong within the ethnographic sensibility of the first cohorts of academic anthropologists. One has only to read the early writings of Lewis Henry Morgan or Frank Hamilton Cushing's accounts of his initiation into the Zuni bow priesthood to realize that evolutionary progressivists could identify strongly with those who in other discursive contexts they stigmatized as «savages» (Green 1979). But the primitivist impulse was much stronger among those who, questioning the verities of Victorian civilization, lived through the world war that progress had made possible. Furthermore, the methodological redefinition of anthropology in terms of the initiatory experience of ethnographic fieldwork incorporated this impulse into the methodological, conceptual, and institutional structure of the discipline (Stocking 1983, 1988b).

The locus classicus of the alienated anthropological romanticism that helped to motivate the ethnographic enterprise of anthropologists then (and since) was a passage on the «cultural fallacy of industrialism» by the American linguistic anthropologist Edward Sapir, the poetic confidant of Ruth Benedict and, briefly, lover of Margaret Mead:

*The telephone girl who lends her capacities, during the greater part of the living day, to the manipulation of a technical routine that has an eventually high efficiency value but that answers to no spiritual needs of her own is an appalling sacrifice to civilization. ... The American Indian who solves the economic problem with salmon-spear and rabbit-snare operates on a relatively low level of civilization, but he represents an incomparably higher solution than our telephone girl of the questions that culture has to ask of economics. There is here no question of... any sentimentalizing regrets as to the passing*

*of the «natural man». The Indian's salmon-spearing is a culturally higher type of activity than that of the telephone girl or mill hand ... because it works in naturally with all the rest of the Indian's activities instead of standing out as a desert patch of merely economic effort in the whole of life. A genuine culture cannot be denned as a sum of abstractly desirable ends, as a mechanism. It must be looked upon as a sturdy plant growth, each remotest leaf and twig of which is organically fed by the sap at the core (Sapir 1924: 316).*

Responding to the «free love» that Margaret Mead had found in Samoa after rejecting his proposal of marriage, Sapir was by the end of the 1920s writing essays on «the discipline of sex» (Sapir 1930). But it was his own earlier response to «the cultural fallacy of industrialism» – and perhaps also Mead's restatement of the long tradition of Polynesian exoticism – that archetypified the dominant motivational dynamic of the modern ethnographic enterprise (Stocking 1988b).

And yet, just as one can find exoticism among evolutionary anthropologists, so can one find evolutionary traces among the ethnographic anthropologists – especially, perhaps, when they were speaking to a larger public. Responding to the urging of her publisher, Mead recast her report on her Samoan research as a «Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilization», justifying the anthropological project in the residually evolutionary terms of the ethnographic «laboratory»: «In this choice of primitive peoples like the Eskimo, the Australian, the South Sea islander, or the Pueblo Indian, the anthropologist is guided by the knowledge that the analysis of a simpler civilisation is more possible of attainment» (1928: 7). «Civilization» was no longer exclusively «European»; but the simplicity of the primitive was a long way from the civilization of Europe.

A similar ambivalent ambiguity was manifest in what came to be regarded as the classic statement of cultural relativism – which, needless to say, is centrally at issue in any consideration of the idea of progress in anthropology, insofar as any measure or judgment of progress implies some universally valid standards (Tylor's wisdom, goodness, happiness; Boas' knowledge, fellowship, freedom). Benedict's *Patterns of Culture* opens with an attack on the uniqueness of Western civilization and an insistence on the «great arc» of cultural possibilities from which each culture selects different segments to exploit. However, Benedict (who liked her cultures «scandalous») was nevertheless preoccupied with the psychopathology of particular traditions, especially her own, and was still able to speak of «civilization» as setting «higher and possibly more worth-while goals» – the most important of which

would be the tolerance of individual and cultural variability (1934: 24, 277). In that sense, cultural relativity may be said to have implied its own standard for the evaluation of progress, and for its continuing possibility. In the aftermath of World War II, however, the issues of cultural relativism and human progress were to present themselves with a greatly heightened salience (cf. Hatch 1983).

In contrast to the first World War, which encouraged anthropologists to call into question the verities of a «botched civilization,» the second led them to search for hope amid the ashes of Hiroshima and the Holocaust. Already before the war had begun, some anthropologists had become involved in applying their «science» to the social issues of the Depression years; during the war, a majority of professional anthropologists were involved in war-related activity. The progressivist spirit was clearly evident in a symposium volume on *The Science of Man in the World Crisis* dedicated, early in 1945, «to all who have applied the techniques of science to the solving of human problems» (Linton 1945).

Some months later, after the «immense leap in the preposterous acceleration of man's technology» embodied in the atomic bomb had created a threat «greater than all other threats, to man's existence», Robert Redfield was able to speak not only of «the new world, with its fear», but in the same phrase of «the hope that grows large out of the very bigness of the fear» (in Stocking 1979b: 30, cf. 1976).

On the whole, it was the hope more than the fear that conditioned anthropological interest in matters relating to human progress in the decade or so after the war. Several anthropologists who in the 1920s had helped to define the necromantic primitivism of the «ethnographic present» had by now turned to problems of social change within a progressivist context. The tone might be elegiac: thus Redfield, returning to a Mayan folk community he had studied in the early 1930s, wrote of the «Village That Chose Progress» as having now «no choice but to go forward with technology, with a declining religious faith and moral conviction, into a dangerous world» (1950: 178). Or the tone might be inspirational: thus Mead, revisiting an early field site (construed now as a laboratory not of cultural determinism, but of social change), wrote of the Manus people, witnesses of thousands of American troops who «knocked down mountains» to make airstrips with «their marvelous "engines"», as skipping «over thousands of years of history» to move «from darkest savagery to the twentieth century» in just twenty-five years (1956: 168, 8).

As Mead's case suggests, the more obvious examples of progressivist discourse were perhaps more likely – as indeed they had been since the 1920s

– to appear in works oriented toward audiences outside the discipline of anthropology. An unsystematic examination of textbooks in the postwar period suggests that «progress» was not normally a category in media of disciplinary enculturation. One notable exception was the *Anthropology* of A. L. Kroeber, Boas' first student and after his death the doyen of American anthropologists, who in the first edition of 1923 had suggested ironically that «we like to call the process "Progress"» what is «crushing the breath out of ancient and exotic cultures» (1923: 292). The revised edition of 1948, although treating «the idea of progress» as a Western cultural category, nevertheless included an attempt to define «at least a partial standard» by which «the progress of civilization» might be evaluated: «In summary, the quantitative expansion of the content of total human culture; the atrophy of magic based on psychopathology; the decline of infantile obsession with the outstanding physiological events of human life; and the persistent tendency of technology and science to grow accumulatively – these are the ways in which progress may legitimately be considered as a property or an attribute of culture» (1948: 23).

The problem of finding any universal standpoint of cultural evaluation was of course central to the discussion of cultural relativism, which achieved its classic formulation in another textbook of the postwar period: *Man and His Works*. There Melville Herskovits argued that «with the possible exception of technological aspects of life, the proposition that one way of thought or action is better than another is exceedingly difficult to establish on the grounds of any universally acceptable criteria» (1949: 70; cf. Fernandez 1990).

Most anthropologists would have agreed with Herskovits that cultural relativism, as a methodological assumption, was a necessary condition of ethnographic inquiry. But in the aftermath of the Holocaust, some found more than a bit disturbing the suggestion that all evaluations were «relative to the cultural background out of which they arise» (Herskovits 1949: 63). In their inventory compendium *Culture: A Review of Concepts and Definitions*, published in 1952, Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn insisted that «to say that certain aspects of Nazism were morally wrong» (or, in a professionally self-protective footnote «at very least, integratively and historically destructive») was not «parochial arrogance»; it was rather an assertion that was, «or can be», based upon «cross-cultural evidence as to the universalities in human needs, potentialities and fulfillments» (1952: 178). Kluckhohn, particularly, devoted several essays in the 1950s to the consideration of «Ethical Relativity – Sic et Non» (1955); and the Harvard study he directed on «Values in Five Cultures» may be regarded as an attempt to

approach the problem empirically (1956). So also, from a slightly different standpoint, Redfield's comparative study of civilizations project at the University of Chicago may be seen as an attempt, in the context of a threat to its very continuance to turn anthropology toward a consideration of what might be universal or differentiating features of the idea of «civilization» (1962: I, 364-414).

During the same period, Leslie White, the focal figure in an emerging neoevolutionary movement, was defending the Victorian progressivists against misinterpretation by Boasian antievolutionists and attacking what to him seemed a systematic (if inconsistent) Boasian antiprogressivism. Arguing that «progress in culture change is something that can be defined in objective terms and measured by an objective standard, or standards», White insisted that «cultures can be evaluated and graded in terms of "higher", "more advanced" etc.» – the «best single index» being the «amount of energy harnessed per capita per year» (1947: 59, 76).

Aside from explicit neoevolutionary approaches in the work of students of Leslie White or Julian Steward (proponent of a more flexible, ecologically oriented «multilinear» evolutionism [1955]), the 1950s were the period in which anthropologists, encouraged by American overseas policy and supported by major foundation grants, turned to problems of «development» and «modernization». The early Indonesian research of Clifford Geertz was undertaken in this context (1960: ix). As late as 1963, in discussing the «quest for modernity» in the «new nations» of Asia and Africa, Geertz discussed «the integrative revolution» in terms of «primordial attachments» of «blood, speech, custom and so on» which in the early stages of «political modernization» tended to be «quickened» rather than reduced to «civil order» (1963: 109).

That same year, Eric Wolf, attempting to characterize the recent development of the discipline for a conference on trends in humanistic scholarship, suggested that anthropology in the postwar period had witnessed «the repression of the romantic motif», a shift in focus from unlimited cultural flexibility to the enduring features of human nature, an increasing interest in the development of civilization as opposed to the «cultures of primitives», and a shift from «cultural relativity» toward the problem of cultural universals and the application of anthropological knowledge to the problems of society. Wolf saw the process as the emergence of a «new American evolutionism» in which problems «long abandoned» were being «revived with new approaches and new techniques» (1964: 15, 22-23, 31, 51). Three decades farther on, however, it is clear that Wolfs picture of contemporary anthropology, however apt in characterizing the developments of the postwar

decade, was somewhat less than prescient as prognostication. Within several years after his book was published, the discipline was entering what some at the time and since have called «the crisis of anthropology» (Hoebel et al. 1982; Stocking 1982).

The end of traditional colonialism (marked by the independence of two dozen African «new nations» in the first four years of the 1960s [Grimal 1978]); the overseas involvements of the United States in the cold war against international communism (marked by the exposure of the South American counterinsurgency Project Camelot in 1965 [Horowitz 1967]); the American descent into the morass of postcolonial warfare in Southeast Asia (marked by the rise of the anti-Vietnam War movement); the countercultural and political resistance of young people in advanced capitalist countries (marked by the urban conflicts of 1968 and after [Gitlin 1993]) – all these «external» historical forces were reflected within the discipline in anxious and sometimes angry discussion of the history, the method, the ethics, the theory, the politics, and the future of anthropological research (Asad 1973; Fluehr-Lobban 1991; Huizer & Mannheim 1979; Wakin 1992). The long-implicit definition of anthropology as the study of «savage», «primitive», or «preliterate» peoples doomed to disappearance by the worldwide «progress» of European «civilization» seemed ever more problematic, as such groups (now more difficult of access for political rather than geographical reasons) were increasingly transformed by, implicated in, and conscious of their place in the processes of the larger world. And much the same could be said of anthropology itself. By 1970 «the end of anthropology» seemed to some a real possibility (Worsley 1970); to others, what was called for was its radical «reinvention».

Although at the time of its publication the volume *Reinventing Anthropology* (Hymes 1972) received at best mixed reviews by anthropologists in professional and other journals (Leach 1974), in retrospect many of the issues it raised foreshadowed disciplinary developments of the next quarter century: the impact of various currents of Marxist thought and the concern with issues of power and domination; the study of resistance movements and the awareness of world ecological crisis; the refocusing of anthropology on various minority groups (and other social and political issues) in contemporary Euro-American societies; the continued critical reflection on the ethnographic process and on the history of the discipline itself, with emphasis on its implication in the ideologies and practices of European colonial domination. With the notable exception of the feminist issues that in 1972 were just pushing to the foreground of anthropological concern (and that had their own somewhat ambiguous implications for the

anthropological perspective on the idea of «progress»), these topics suggest a more prescient perspective on the future of the discipline than did Wolf's overview a mere eight years earlier.

Wolf, however, was a contributor to *Reinventing Anthropology*, and in 1982 his own *Europe and the People without History* was an important landmark in the growing anthropological interest in the reintegration of «so-called primitives» into the world historical processes of European expansion (1982: 4). The following year an influential critical theoretical work, *Time and the Other*, attacked the «persistent and problematic tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse» (Fabian 1983: 31). In this context, it was not only the equation of contemporary peoples with prior evolutionary stages that was called into question, but also the attempt in any given case to reconstruct an ostensibly pristine precontact cultural form, or the associated methodological fiction of the «ethnographic present». The same reintegrative historicizing trend has been manifest in arguments that cultural features or particular groups previously presumed representative of prior evolutionary phases (e. g., the !Kung Bushmen as archetypal hunter-gatherers) were in fact the product of long-term histories of interaction with European or other culturally dominant societies (Gordon 1992) – a tendency that might be called «neodegenerationist», with the qualification that such peoples are no longer seen as having fallen from a higher cultural state, but rather as having been «victims» of (so-called) «progress» (Bodley 1982).

Aside from resurgent doubts, heightened by ecological concern, about the «progress of European civilization», recent decades have been marked by powerfully influential critiques of what has long been thought to be its underlying dynamic: the pursuit of scientific knowledge. Doubts about the cultural consequences of scientific progress, or assertions of the legitimacy of alternative modes of knowing the world, were of course nothing new: witness, in anthropology, Sapir's «Culture, Genuine and Spurious» (1924) or Boas' defense of cosmographic against natural scientific method in «The Study of Geography» (1887a). But Thomas Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), along with subsequent developments in the sociology of science and poststructuralist critiques of the discourses of modernity, made problematic the very notion of scientific progress itself, and of the exemption of scientific knowledge from the relativity of cultural determinism. In anthropology – which had experienced a stronger reaction against the «positivism» of the 1950s than had some other social science disciplines – a resurgent relativism called into question the categories (kinship), the methods

(fieldwork), the products (ethnographies), and the purposes (disinterested knowledge) of anthropological inquiry (Geertz 1984; Schneider 1984; Sanjek 1990; Clifford & Marcus 1986; Marcus & Fischer 1986).

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that the late-twentieth-century critique of the «Enlightenment project» has purged anthropology entirely of progressivist or evolutionary assumption. Despite the widespread critical response to sociobiology in the 1970s and 1980s, evolutionary issues still have a place on the anthropological agenda, as witnessed by the recent founding of a journal entitled *Evolutionary Anthropology*; and the cultural artifacts or practices of present (or recently) existing populations are still sometimes used to elucidate temporally distant phenomena. More generally, there are signs (although perhaps to some extent age-linked) of a reaction against what some have called «science-bashing» (*Anthropology Newsletter* 1997). It might even be argued, in a manner analogous to some criticisms of relativism, that the various critiques of anthropology imply a belief in the possible progress of anthropological knowledge (Borovsky 1994; Harrison 1991; Di Leonardo 1991; Stocking 1992c: 362-74).

Reflecting the continuing transformation of the world outside, the traditional subject matter of anthropological inquiry occupies an ever-smaller place in the program of the American Anthropological Association's annual meetings – where a recent session on «The Global in the Local: Transnational Fast Food Industries in East Asia» consisted of papers on the impact of McDonald's in five different East Asian countries. But if «premodern» (like «primitive» before it) seems now Eurocentric, and «modernity» an early-twentieth-century ideology rather than the achievement of cultural progress, the idea of the «postmodern» is by no means unproblematic. The studied indeterminacy of its prefix does not entirely obscure occasional echos of a yearning that A. O. Lovejoy might have called «soft primitivist»; so also the implicit teleology of the oft-associated notion of «late capitalism» hints at the possible resumption of the «progress of [hu]mankind». And the continuing critique of racism, classism, sexism suggests that, although relativism may affirm the legitimacy (and the possibility) of alternative cultural forms, universal human values are still powerful motivators of cultural critique and of aspiration (if not movement) toward goals which even Rousseau (averting his gaze from postcolonial or postcommunist ethnic strife, or impending global environmental disaster), might regard as progressive.

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## **Джордж Стокинз**

### **Назад к Руссо, или исторические рефлексии об амбивалентности антропологии в отношении идеи прогресса**

В 1990 году Джордж Стокинз, классик современной науки, изучающей историю антропологии, был приглашен в Массачусетский технологический институт на конференцию «Прогресс: идея и вера в состоянии кризиса», одной из задач которой было развенчать «устаревший» концепт прогресса. В работе, написанной по данному случаю, автор дает, может быть, лучший из всех имеющихся на сегодняшний день, очерков развития антропологии как науки.

Начала интеллектуальной истории антропологии – идеи прогресса европейской цивилизации, примитивизма (первобытности) иных обществ и операциональной необходимости компаративного (сравнительного) метода – приходится на труды Руссо и шотландских философов-моралистов XVIII в. (Фергюсон и др.). Великая Французская революция была центральным моментом их эпохи. Как ненаучное науке противостоял им концепт дегенерации (вырождения) т.н. примитивных народов, восходящий к иудео-христианской картине мира. Реакция против революции начала XIX в. обострила спор. В этой атмосфере в англосаксонском мире и во Франции сражались дарвинисты и последователи Ламарка, писали отцы-основатели антропологии (Тайлор, Мак-Леннан, Мэн и др.). Идеи прогресса приобрели наибольший блеск в позднем творчестве американца Моргана. В то время как еще первые этнографы-полевики, такие как Скулкрафт, могли выступать их оппонентами.

Но в Германии руссоизму противостояла собственная романтическая традиция, прежде всего отвергающая единство европейской цивилизации. Воспитанный в этой традиции, хотя и не чужд идее прогресса, иммигрант Боас и его последователи развернули в Северной Америке настоящую борьбу против однолинейных эволюционных построений и сравнительного подхода, равно как и против расизма, к числу аргументов которого теперь прибавились построения полигенистов. Боас склонен был также критиковать естественнонаучный подход, и проводил различие между ним и, как он называл, космографическим методом, который в применении к антропологии казался ему предпочтительнее.

Первая мировая война внесла смятение в ряды сторонников прогресса, но одновременно стимулировала их поиски. Она явилась рубежом, пройдя который антропология оформилась в академическую дисциплину. В Англии, где благодаря Фрззеру, ученику Тайлора, разрыв с предшествующей традицией протекал дольше, доминирующую точку зрения, после Малиновского, представляла функционалистская социология. Тогда как в Америке главным дискурсом по-прежнему оставалось разделение биологического и культурного, а также критика расизма. Идея превосходства европейской цивилизации ушла – цивилизаций и культур стало множество. Но «мягкая» форма признания особого, отличного от цивилизации примитивного, с привкусом эскапизма, направленного против индустриального развития, начала снова ощущаться в работах антропологов (Сэпир, Мид, Бенедикт).

После ударов, нанесенных Второй мировой войной, релятивизм (Херскович) вытеснил верящих в прогресс на обочину. И по иронии судьбы, дольше других, но с иных, чем у эволюционистов позиций, на нем продолжал настаивать только Крёбер – первый ученик Боаса. Ностальгия по англосаксонскому эволюционизму Викторианской эпохи выглядела уже больше, как нонсенс (Уайт).

Мощный напор антиколониализма (Асад и др.) сделал больше невозможным старое примитивистское отношение к неевропейцам. Интересы антропологов, стремящихся полностью стереть грань между Западом и третьим миром, сфокусировались на проблемах модернизации последнего (Вулф, Фабиан). Но одновременно, стали говорить о том, что народы, по которым прежде судили о классической первобытности, могли возникать, как результат колониального воздействия, т.е. новой дегенерации (Гордон, Бодли). Критика европоцентризма коснулась не только судьбы колониальных народов, но и западных ценностей таких, как доминирующий техногенный подход и вера в прогресс науки (Кун). В антропологии такая критика значила бы вернуться к призыву Боаса использовать космографический метод. Фактически же антропологи, обладающие традицией реакции на «позитивизм» 1950-х более сильной, чем представители других общественных наук, начали переосмысление категорий (системы родства), методов (полевая работа), результатов (этнографические описания) и целей (знание, теряющее интерес) (Гирц, Клиффорд, Маркус, Фишер и др.). Данное поколение, в отличие от классических школ начала XX в., т.е. модерна, стало идентифицировать себя с постмодерном. (Премодерн в этой схеме призван был заместить концепт примитивного.) В продолжающейся же критике колониализма (расизма), классицизма (например, марксизма), сексизма (старого подхода, не учитывающего феминистский фокус), которая в значительной степени основана на общечеловеческих ценностях, вдруг неожиданно наметился возврат к идеям, которые даже Руссо признал бы прогрессивными.

(И. В. Кузнецов)