

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY

Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to fulfil it.

George Santayana [1863-1952],
from *The Life of Reason* (1905-6), vol. I, ch. xii

We think it appropriate to end the year 1999 (and Volume 10 of *JASHM*) by sketching the origins of social anthropology in Britain and cultural anthropology in the United States. The turn of the nineteenth century saw the beginnings of the subject as an academic discipline in Britain when Sir James Frazer was appointed professor of the subject at Liverpool University in 1907,¹ although Tylor was teaching courses in the subject at Oxford long before then. Franz Boas taught the first courses in anthropology at Clark University (Worcester, Massachusetts) between 1889-1892. His courses were taught under the aegis of the Psychology Department, but resulted in the first Ph.D. granted in the subject in the United States.² On both sides of the Atlantic, the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries marks (roughly) the 100th anniversary of the subject as an academic discipline.³

The year 2000 celebrates the twentieth year of the existence of an anthropology of human movement studies from its beginnings at New York University: an event also marked by the proposed publication of the second edition of Drid Williams's book, *Ten Lectures on Theories of the Dance* (Scarecrow Press, 1991), newly entitled *Sociocultural Anthropology and the Dance: Ten Lectures*. This volume begins with "a comprehensive survey of early anthropological analyses of the dance [i.e. Tylor, Frazer, Evans-Pritchard, Radcliffe-Brown, Malinowski and Boas]" (Reed 1998: 504).⁴ It leads to chapters on 'Modern Theories of Human Movement' and 'Human Behavior', recapitulating Edwin Ardener's criticisms of modern usages of the word 'behavior' (1989[1973]) that deeply informed the beginnings of semasiology. Susan Reed's essay in the *Annual Review of Anthropology* opens with relevant comments:

It has been 20 years since Adrienne Kaeppler's review of anthropology and dance in this series (Kaeppler 1978).⁵ At that time, given the marginal status of dance, Kaeppler wondered about the propriety of devoting an *Annual Review* article to such an "esoteric aspect" of anthropology. But in the intervening decades, the anthropology of dance has gained greater legitimacy as a field of inquiry, even as it is being reconfigured within the broader framework of an anthropology of human movement . . . As Lewis (1995)⁶ has argued, this shift to "movement," motivated by a critique of "dance" as a universally applicable category of analysis, parallels developments in other fields of expressive culture such as music and theatre (Reed 1998: 503-4).

Following Reed's contribution, another essay appeared in the *Annual Review* the following year that

describes a paradigmatic shift in anthropological studies of human movement, from an observationist view of behavior to a conception of body movement as dynamically embodied action. After outlining the scope of such study, historical and cultural reasons for the relative neglect of body movement in anthropological enquiry are examined critically and placed in the wider context of recent social and cultural theorizing about the body and the problem of dynamic embodiment. A historical overview situates earlier approaches, such as kinesics and proxemics, in relation to more recent developments in theory and method, such as those offered by semasiology and the concept of the "action sign." Overlapping interests with linguistic and cognitive anthropology are described. The emergence of a holistic "anthropology of human movement" has raised new research questions that require new resources (Farnell 1999(28): 341).⁷

The old year ends and a new year begins. The year 1999 marks the end of Volume 10 of *JASHM*. Volume 11 begins in 2000. At the same time, professional sociocultural anthropology embarks on its second century of existence. How did these two inter-related disciplines, social/cultural anthropology, begin?

This issue of *JASHM* begins with an essay about Edward Tylor written by Godfrey Lienhardt for a series in *New Society* in 1963. Along with nineteen other essays,⁸ the *New Society* series was published by Penguin Books as *The Founding Fathers of Social Science* (Ed. Timothy Raison, 1969). We would like to acknowledge the co-operation of Penguin Books Ltd. (London) for their generous permission to reprint six of the essays from *The Founding Fathers* for the benefit of modern students of anthropology who bring powerful interests in some form of structured systems of human action with them. The six essays were chosen because of their relevance to the anthropology of human movement, including dances, sign languages, martial arts, rituals and ceremonies and 'everyday' movement.

Four of the six "Founding Fathers" (E. B. Tylor, Bronislaw Malinowski, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Herbert Spencer), are discussed by Williams in some detail in *Ten Lectures*, with regard to what they said about dancing (in Tylor's case, about dancing and deaf signing).⁹ Auguste Comte's philosophy is discussed in *Ten Lectures* because of his strong influence on Frazer's concepts of magic, religion and science and because he is widely considered to have fathered the philosophy of positivism, although there are some (including Durkheim) who saw Saint-Simon, rather than Comte as the founder of positivism and, indeed, of sociology. Émile Durkheim's work is often invoked in *Ten Lectures* with reference to his concept of 'social facts' and his lifelong concern with the relationship between individual and society. Although he did not write specifically about dances or human movement systems, his work on 'society' had enormous influence on many aspects of social anthropological theory during the first half of the twentieth century.

Of the six writers, it is, perhaps, Comte who has the strongest, most pervasive influence on human movement studies. Discussion of dances, signing, or any structured system of human action is impossible in a positivistic universe of discourse, unless one accepts the reduced status of meaning and human values concerning the linguistically-tied, semantically-laden nature of human actions. Suzanne Langer, in *Philosophy in a New Key* (1942) called herself a 'heretic' for offering what were then new, non-positivistic ways of looking at gesture, music and the arts. Her contribution was invaluable because it broke the deadlock that existed in the United States with regard to talking and writing about the arts. It would not be an exaggeration to say that dances can *only* be studied in a positivistic frame of reference as biological, kinesiological or anatomical phenomena; as "complex joint motor activities," to use Alan Lomax's phrase, because in the end, if positivism is carried to its logical conclusion, one can only talk about the physical *body* – not about signifying human *acts* or actions. It is fitting, then, to include a brief summary:

Positivism (Logical). [Sometimes referred to simply as *positivism* or *logical empiricism* or *scientific empiricism*.] Positivists accept the verifiability principle which is a criterion for determining that a statement has cognitive meaning. The cognitive meaning of a statement (in contrast to its emotive or other levels of meaning) is dependent upon its being verified. In other words, a statement is meaningful if-and-only-if it is (at least in principle) empirically verifiable. That is to say that some "rock-bottom sense experience" (considered to be positive knowledge) must be reached before a statement can have cognitive meaning.

Positivists consider all statements in mathematics and formal logic as 'analytic' and true by definition. Their concepts are not verified (discovered by examining reality) but are definitional conventions applied to reality. In an extreme version of positivism, statements about the existence of the external world, and of external minds independent of our own minds, are considered meaningless because there are no empirical ways of verifying them. Statements of value are problematical to positivists because 'values' are not objects in the world. They cannot be found by experimentation, testing, or experiencing them as we experience or verify the existence of objects. Values are statements, but not *empirical* statements, thus 'Killing is evil', 'Abortion is wrong (or right)', 'Thou shalt not steal' or 'That sculpture (dance, painting etc.) is beautiful' are statements that have no empirical or descriptive content at all (after Peter Angeles, 1981, *Dictionary of Philosophy*).¹⁰

Nowadays, positivism in any form is in disrepute in educated circles, but it was strongly connected with another, equally damaging notion for human movement studies – that of 'subjectivity' and 'objectivity'. In fact, Charles Varela asserts: "*The problem of objectivity, then, is the problem of the positivist view of objectivity.* That view is now rejected as inadequate and a new view of objectivity is required. Polanyi and Kuhn rejected what has now come to be called 'objectivism'; the positivist notion that objectivity stems from a bias-free or value free mind."¹¹

A closely related point is aptly made by Santayana (epigraph), which we would paraphrase thus: those who cannot remember (or who do not know) the ideas they inherit from the past are condemned to repeat them. Too often,

in our attempts to be "objective," we forget that the *sources* of whatever knowledge we possess in the sciences and the social sciences are human beings. At the close of this millenium, we want to celebrate the human sources of modern anthropological knowledge. In a forthcoming issue in the year 2000, we will publish a similar set of essays on the 'Fathers' of American cultural anthropology, beginning with an essay by Regna Darnell entitled 'Daniel Brinton and the Professionalization of American Anthropology,'¹² followed by contributions from Margot Liberty, Alan Beals and A. Irving Hallowell.

The Authors of the Essays

Godfrey Lienhardt [E. B. Tylor] became a Lecturer in African Sociology at the Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Oxford in 1949. He was sometimes a Visiting Professor at the College of Arts and Sciences in Baghdad, and at the University of Ghana. He was an editor (with E. E. Evans-Pritchard and W. H. Whiteley) of *The Oxford Library of African Literature*. His two most important books are *Divinity and Experience: the Religion of the Dinka* (1961) and *Social Anthropology* (1964).

Audrey Richards [Bronislaw Malinowski] lectured at the London School of Economics between 1931 and 1950 and the University of Witwatersrand between 1938 and 1941 between spells of fieldwork in Zambia and the northern Transvaal. She was Director of the East African Institute of Social Research at Makerere University College, Uganda, between 1950 and 1956, where she did fieldwork in Buganda. She was President of the Royal Anthropological Institute (1959-61) and The African Studies Association (1964-66). She wrote many books and essays on the Bemba (North Zambia) and the Ganda (Uganda).

John Beattie [A.R. Radcliffe-Brown] taught Social Anthropology at the Institute of Social Anthropology at Oxford University from 1953. He carried out extensive fieldwork study in Uganda and is the author of *Bunyoro: An African Kingdom* (1960) and *Other Cultures* (1964). His prolific output of essays mostly concerned Bunyoro. His first degree was in philosophy.

John Rex [Émile Durkheim] was born in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. He was a Lecturer at Leeds University (1949-62), and at Birmingham University (1962-64). He then became Professor of Social Theory and Institutions at Durham University. He is author of *Key Problems of Sociological Theory* (1961) and (with R. Moore) of *Race, Community and Conflict* (1967).

John Goldthorpe [Herbert Spencer] taught Sociology at the University of Leicester from 1957 to 1960 and from then onwards at Cambridge University. He was a Lecturer in Sociology and Fellow of King's College. He wrote many papers on industrial sociology and social stratification and (with David Lockwood and others) of *The Affluent Worker* series of studies.

Julius Gould [Auguste Comte] was Reader in Social Institutions at the London School of Economics from 1957 to 1964. In 1958, he was Visiting Professor at the University of California, Berkeley. In 1960-61, he was the Rockefeller Fellow at Harvard. From 1964, he was Professor of Sociology at the University of Nottingham. He edited the *Penguin Social Science Surveys* and was joint editor for the *Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, as well as contributing to many journals in England and abroad.

The Editors

Endnotes:

¹ He did not remain at Liverpool long, returning to Cambridge after one session, where he remained for the rest of his life.

² The candidate who received his Master's and Doctoral degree from Clark University was a Canadian, Alexander F. Chamberlain. His dissertation, entitled *The Language of the Mississauga Indians of Skúgog: A Contribution to the Algonkian Tribes of Canada*, was the first of three granted by that university. Chamberlain became a professor in a separate Department of Anthropology at Clark University which existed between 1904-1914, dissolving when Chamberlain died in 1914. Boas left Massachusetts in 1892. He joined Columbia University as a Lecturer between 1896-99, becoming Professor in 1899. He was there until 1937 (personal communication (with many thanks), to Will Mott, Archivist, Clark University, January, 2000).

³ Regna Darnell (1976) makes a useful distinction between the *tradition* of anthropology in contrast to the *profession* of anthropology, which will become clear when we reprint her essay in Volume 11, Number 2 of *JASHM*. The relevance of the distinction to this issue pertains to the 'beginnings' of sociocultural anthropology in terms of its professionalization. The (very interesting) history of the subject as a *tradition* is much longer, of course, on both sides of the Atlantic, but it is to the *profession* of anthropology that modern students of the anthropology of human movement bring their actual and potential contributions.

⁴ Reed, Susan. 1998. 'The Politics and Poetics of Dance'. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 27: 503-32.

⁵ Kaeppler, Adrienne 1978. 'The Dance in Anthropological Perspective'. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 7: 31-39.

⁶ Lewis, J.L. 1995. Genre and Embodiment: from Brazilian Capoeira to the Ethnology of Human Movement. *Cultural Anthropology* 10(2): 221-43).

⁷ Farnell, Brenda 1999. 'Moving Bodies, Acting Selves'. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 28: 341-73.

⁸ Other essays are about Adam *Ferguson*, Claude Henri de Rouvroy *Saint-Simon* (Comte de), John *Stuart Mill*, Frédéric *Le Play*, Karl *Marx*, Friedrich *Engels*, Charles *Booth*, Georges *Sorel*, Vilfredo *Pareto*, Thorstein *Veblen*, Georg *Simmel*, Beatrice and Sidney *Webb*, L. T. *Hobhouse*, Robert E. *Park*, Max *Weber*, Pitirim *Sorokin*, Karl *Mannheim*, and Talcott *Parsons*.

⁹ The reference here is to *Ten Lectures on Theories of the Dance* (Scarecrow Press, 1991) forthcoming in a second edition as *Sociocultural Anthropology and the Dance: Ten Lectures*. (Scarecrow Press, 2000).

¹⁰ Angeles, Peter 1981. *Dictionary of Philosophy*. New York: Harper & Row.

¹¹ Varela, Charles 1994. 'Pocock, Williams, Gouldner: Initial Reactions of Three Social Scientists to the Problem of Objectivity'. *JASHM* 8(10): 43-64.

¹² Darnell, Regna 1976. 'Daniel Brinton and the Professionalization of American Anthropology'. IN *American Anthropology: The Early Years* (Ed. Robert F. Spencer, AES). St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Company (1976). [This book consists of the 1974 Proceedings of the American Ethnological Society].