

Keywords : a vocabulary of culture and □  
society / Raymond Williams; London: □  
Fontana Press, 1983 (38-40 p.)

## ANTHROPOLOGY

**Anthropology** came into English in IC16. The first recorded use, from R. Harvey in 1593, has a modern ring: 'Genealogy or issue which they had, Artes which they studied, Actes which they did. This part of History is named Anthropology.' Yet a different sense was to become predominant, for the next three centuries. *Anthropologos*, Gk – discourse and study of man, with the implied substantive form *anthropologia*, had been used by Aristotle, and was revived in 1594–5 by Casmann: *Psychologica Anthropologica, sive Animae Humanae Doctrina* and *Anthropologia: II, hoc est de fabrica Humani Corporis*. The modern terms for the two parts of Casmann's work would be **PSYCHOLOGY** (q.v.) and *physiology*, but of course the point was the linkage, in a sense that was still active in a standard C18 definition: 'Anthropology includes the consideration both of the human body and soul, with the laws of their union, and the effects thereof, as sensation, motion, etc.' What then came through was a specialization of physical studies, either (i) in relation to the senses – 'the analysis of our senses in the commonest books of anthropology' (Coleridge, 1810) – or (ii) in application to problems of human physical diversity (cf. **RACIAL**.) and of human **EVOLUTION**

(q.v.). Thus until the later C19, the predominant meaning was in the branch of study we now distinguish as '**physical anthropology**'.

The emergence (or perhaps, remembering Harvey, the re-emergence) of a more general sense, for what we would now distinguish as 'social' or 'cultural' **anthropology**, is a C19 development closely associated with the development of the ideas of **CIVILIZATION** (q.v.) and especially **CULTURE** (q.v.). Indeed Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (1870) is commonly taken, in the English-speaking world, as a founding text of the new science. This runs back, in one line, to Herder's IC18 distinction of plural *cultures* – distinct ways of life, which need to be studied as wholes, rather than as stages of **DEVELOPMENT** (q.v.) towards European *civilization*. It runs back also, in another line, to concepts derived from this very notion (common in the thinkers of the C18 Enlightenment) of 'stages' of *development*, and notably to G. F. Klemm's *Allgemeine Kulturgeschichte der Menschheit* – 'General Cultural History of Mankind' (1843–52) and *Allgemeine Kulturwissenschaft* – 'General Science of Culture' (1854–5). Klemm distinguished three stages of human development as savagery, domestication and freedom. In 1871 the American Lewis Morgan, a pioneer in linguistic studies of kinship, influentially defined three stages in his *Ancient Society; or Researches in the Line of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization*. Through Engels this had a major influence on early Marxism. But the significance of this line for the idea of **anthropology** was its emphasis on 'primitive' (or 'savage') cultures, whether or not in a perspective of 'development'. In the period of European imperialism and colonialism, and in the related period of American relations with the conquered Indian tribes, there was abundant material both for scientific study and for more general concerns. (Some of the latter were later systematized as 'practical' or 'applied' **anthropology**, bringing scientific knowledge to bear on governmental and administrative policies.) Yet the most important effect was the relative specialization of **anthropology** to 'primitive' cultures, though this work, when done, both provided models of studies of 'whole and distinct ways of life', with effects on the study of 'human structures', generalized in one tendency as **STRUCTURALISM** (q.v.) in the closely related linguistics and **anthropology**; in another tendency as *functionalism*, in which social institutions are (variable) cultural responses to basic human needs; and, in its assembly of wide

comparative evidence, encouraging more generally the idea of *alternative* cultures and lines of human development, in sharp distinction from the idea of regular stages in a unilinear process towards *civilization*.

Thus, in mC20, there were still the longstanding physical **anthropology**; the rich and extending **anthropology** of 'primitive' peoples; and, in an uncertain area beyond both, the sense of **anthropology** as a mode of study and a source of evidence for more general including modern human ways of life. Of course by this period SOCIOLOGY (q.v.) had become established, in different forms, as the discipline in which modern societies (and, in some schools, modern *cultures*) were studied, and there were then difficult overlaps with what were now called (mainly to distinguish them from *physical anthropology*) 'social' or 'cultural' **anthropology** ('social' has been more common in Britain; 'cultural' in USA; though *cultural anthropology*, in USA, often indicates the study of material artefacts).

The major intellectual issues involved in this complex of terms and disciplines are sometimes revealed, perhaps more often obscured, by the complex history of the words. It is interesting that a new grouping of these closely related and often overlapping concerns and disciplines is increasingly known, from mC20, as 'the *human sciences*' (especially in France '*les sciences humaines*'), which is in effect starting again, in a modern language, and in the plural, with what had been the literal but then variously specialized meaning of **anthropology**.

See CIVILIZATION, CULTURE, DEVELOPMENT, EVOLUTION, PSYCHOLOGY, RACIAL, SOCIOLOGY, STRUCTURAL