

Social/Cultural Anthropology

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Ever since it was created in 1941 as the Viking Fund, the Wenner-Gren Foundation has served anthropology with intelligence and discretion. Its policy has been consistent: find out what anthropologists need to explore common interests and to forward new research and provide this wherever possible. In its twentieth year, Sir Raymond Firth assessed its impact upon the anthropological community, mentioning as special virtues its international scope, its willingness to fund small projects as well as large, and its "keen interest in the exploration of new ideas and in pushing out the frontiers of knowledge." Thirty years later, the Foundation retains the respect and affection of anthropologists throughout the world, who expect to receive from it a sympathetic and informed response even though the number of anthropologists has increased dramatically, specialization has fragmented the discipline, and academic centers are widely dispersed.

The Challenge of Numbers. Growth can be divisive, and the Wenner-Gren Foundation has worked hard to maintain the integrity of anthropology as a unified field while at the same time catering to the diversity of interests increasingly evident.

The American Anthropological Association alone had more than ten thousand members in 1990, a great many of whom are women. In 1941 it had fewer than a thousand members, who were predominantly male, and the majority were not employed as anthropologists. Those who attended the annual meeting of 1941 found only a single set of parallel sessions and were expected to have sufficient common background to follow papers in ethnography, archaeology, physical anthropology, linguistics, and folklore. They did have much in common. Those who held Ph.D.s, if granted by an American university, had been trained in one of only five university departments (Columbia, Harvard, Berkeley, Chicago, or Yale), since these were the only departments that gave Ph.D.s in anthropology. They had been allowed to specialize only after a grounding in general anthropology, and many of them thought of themselves as generalists. They had a literature in common. Most had engaged in research relating to Native Americans, which gave them a regional focus whatever their particular subdiscipline. While American archaeologists, physical anthropologists and linguists also had their own separate professional organizations by 1942, the cultural anthropologists did not.

None of these statements would now hold true. The 1991 directory published by the Association lists over a hundred American universities as sources of the Ph.D.s held by those in academic positions within the United States, and other degrees were granted in Latin America, the British Commonwealth, Europe, and Asia. Of the ten thousand members of the Association, perhaps the majority identify themselves as cultural or social anthropologists although they may see themselves as having little in common. Their ethnographic research may have been carried out anywhere in the world, and the lack of a regional concentration reinforces divergences based on differences in training and intellectual interests. They belong to various narrowly focused professional associations and read in very different literatures. At the annual meetings they want specialized sessions that cater to their very specific interests.

By 1941, a separate field of social anthropology had already emerged in Britain, but its membership was minuscule. When the British Association of Social Anthropologists (now the Association of Social Anthropologists of the Commonwealth) was founded in 1946, it had less than a score of members, who were from Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Greece, and Austria as well as from Britain itself. They lacked a single regional focus such as then gave some unity to their American colleagues, but all, with the exception of Radcliffe-Brown, had studied under either Malinowski or Radcliffe-Brown or both, and shared a common textual canon. By 1990, the Association had more than five hundred members who represented a diversity of schools and approaches. Of the three hundred or so who listed in the Association directory the university from which they had obtained the Ph.D., their degrees were from fifty-four different universities spread around the world.

In 1941, anthropology in Europe was largely a wartime casualty, and elsewhere, with the exception of Latin America, it had few practitioners. Since then it has been reestablished in Europe, strengthened in Latin America, and established in many countries where anthropologists once ventured only as aliens. In Brazil alone, the annual meetings of the national association draw over two thousand participants. Adam Kuper, editor of *Current Anthropology*, who has attended meetings of regional associations in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, reports an esprit de corps supported by their common research regions and a belief that anthropology contributes to national debates about appropriate goals and policies. Their meetings replicate the kind of anthropological communities that existed in Western Europe and North America before the postwar growth in numbers and increasing specialization created barriers difficult to cross.

Given all this, anthropologists are anything but an endangered species or a species confined to a few academic niches. They have proliferated, dispersed, and differentiated. If the Wenner-Gren Foundation has been implicated in these developments through its grants to individuals and institutions, it has also played a major role in attempting to keep communication channels open and to ensure that intellectual differences are aired and if possible transcended. This has not been easy, for the years between 1941 and 1991 have put in question much that social/cultural anthropologists once took for granted.

Wilson Wallis said in 1941, "anthropologists, like everyone else, are culturally conditioned and subject to their own compulsives – which fact, like every one else in similar circumstances, they would deny." But they are also products of their milieu and change as this changes. Social/cultural anthropologists, in particular, have had to adjust to a transformation of the conditions under which they carry out their ethnographic studies and at the same time cope with the shifting intellectual and emotional currents of the milieus in which they teach or otherwise function as professionals. The successive engagement with the thought of Durkheim, Freud, Weber, Marx, Derrida, Gramsci and Foucault are evidence of how deeply engaged anthropology is with other streams of social thought.

The Continuous Reinvention of Social/Cultural Anthropology. Now, as in 1941, anthropologists who call themselves social/cultural anthropologists are distinguished by their dependence on ethnographic data derived from fieldwork, their own and others', for subject matter. This they continue to have in common however much else has

changed, although in the last several decades more effort has sometimes gone into deconstructing than constructing ethnographic descriptions. The emergence of the clumsy social/cultural rubric reflects the primary cleavage along which the battle was joined from the 1930s into the 1940s, when some claimed they studied cultures and followed Boas while others claimed they studied society and followed Durkheim. The joining of the two terms into one is an admission that that particular cleavage has been transcended as other issues have become crucial identifying markers.

Predictably, rapid population growth and geographical dispersal have been associated with the emergence of a multitude of intellectual schools, each of which stresses both its own uniqueness and superiority and the need for the whole of the social/cultural anthropological community to accept its leadership. This never happens and even the most successful formula rarely predominates for more than a decade: at the moment when it appears to triumph, it becomes redefined as an outmoded orthodoxy by younger anthropologists who are attempting to stamp their own mark upon the profession. This has the therapeutic effect of outmoding most of the existing literature, by now too vast to be absorbed by any newcomer, while at the same time old ideas continue to be advanced under new rubrics. The history of anthropology is a splendid example of what John Barnes once called structural amnesia, the creation of convenient myths that eliminate most details and celebrate a minimal number of ancestral figures. Selective forgetting, however, obscures the continuity of ideas that in fact continue to guide much of what is done.

At any one point in time, therefore, social/cultural anthropology appears to be a chaotic flux of newly minted competing theoretical positions, rival groups within each generation predictably staking out territories marked off by appropriate technical jargon. This masks both how much they continue to have in common at any one time and the very real progress that has been made over the past fifty years. In 1991 social/cultural anthropologists do much better than their predecessors of 1941 in defining problems for research; they turn questions their ancestors could not or would not tackle into research agendas; they have better methodologies, and film, tape recorder, and videocassette extend powers of observation and recording. The whole discipline rests upon an accumulated body of ethnographic knowledge that covers the world and extends over decades, and it has a much more sophisticated understanding of how people create and interact with culture and the extent to which this takes place within an international system that impinges upon them through many channels.

This is not to deny that major shifts in interest have taken place, reflecting the impact of world events upon both anthropologists and those among whom they do ethnography. In 1941, anthropologists agreed that ethnographic inquiry was legitimate. They probably also agreed that progress is associated with the expansion of knowledge, a belief now seen as the essence of modernism. The primary argument was about whether the objective of ethnographic work is primarily historical (to record disappearing traditions) or scientific (to discover functional relationships among institutions or between institutions and personality formation). There were also arguments about whether anthropologists, as anthropologists, should be concerned only with the advancement of knowledge or whether they should attempt to apply that knowledge in what was sometimes called social engineering. The querying of economic and political institutions, associated with the great depression and the political unrest of the 1930s, provided some

legitimacy to those who urged that anthropology needed to be applied as well as practised.

By late 1941 the great majority had opted for putting themselves and their discipline at the service of their governments as World War II engrossed their attention. For the next four years they were involved in one way or another in work associated with the war, using such skills as they had in many different capacities, both at home and overseas. Not all of them returned immediately to academia at the war's end – that happened only with the rapid expansion of university departments in the 1950s. Those who returned to teaching in 1945 and 1946 faced a generation of students also largely formed by their wartime experiences. They looked to anthropology to help make sense of their encounters with the peoples of the Pacific, the Middle East, and other war zones. They, and the government agencies that sponsored research in the immediate postwar years, gave priority to the study of organizational arrangements. These years, therefore, were the heyday in both Europe and North America of social anthropology, whose theoretical approach was primarily that of structural functionalism. Ethnography increasingly dealt with examining how social units are defined, boundaries created, order maintained, land allocated, goods and services produced and exchanged, and rituals used to maintain belief in continuity. Technology and art were usually neglected. Kinship, which provided the idiom through which many populations managed their affairs, received such attention that social anthropology bid fair to become defined as the study of kinship systems. So much attention, in fact, was directed to it that for once a paradigm became exhausted: nothing more was likely to be learned from additional study couched in the same terms.

By the early 1950s, a reaction had already set in. Questions were raised about the validity of trying to isolate some small geographically defined local unit as the focus for study, whether one called this a society or a culture, since increasing personal mobility and the speed of change demonstrated how rapidly apparently established orders can be jettisoned as new values and new associations come to prevail. One response in the 1950s was to concentrate upon processes of interaction that recognized divergence, conflict, and continuous adjustment. What became known as the Manchester School, for instance, developed descriptive models based on the use of methods that stressed social networks, social fields, arenas, social dramas, situations. Goffman and his followers looked rather at symbolic interaction and the emotional responses associated with face-to-face engagements. Others moved in quite different directions. Evans-Pritchard proclaimed that anthropology is history or it is nothing; Lévi-Strauss called for the decipherment of codes inherent in myth and art, using analytic methods derived from linguistics and the Hegelian dialectic; Murdock urged the development of the cross-cultural method in association with the creation of the Human Relations Area Files; Goodenough and others experimented with componential analysis; and Julian Steward urged the importance of ecological variables and along with Leslie White produced new models of cultural evolution.

In the 1950s, therefore, social/cultural anthropologists disagreed about theory and method. They did agree about the intellectual legitimacy of anthropology, including ethnographic fieldwork, and the majority agreed about the legitimacy of using its findings to inform policy. This agreement vanished in the 1960s, challenged first by decolonization (which included the brutalities of wars in Algeria and Viet Nam) and then

by student revolts in the late 1960s. The civil rights movement and the women's movement also contributed critiques that queried the right of white males to set intellectual agendas that largely ignored the experience of those who belong to other categories but presume to encompass that experience. From the perspective of each, it was possible to say both "you've got it wrong" and "you've missed much of the action."

The challenge to white male hegemony affected all of social science. But in the newly independent countries of Africa and Asia, anthropology bore the brunt of the reaction because it stood largely alone. The other social sciences remained innocent because of their absence. Anthropology by its practice brought some of the abuse upon itself. It offended with its insult to self-respect when it defined itself as the study of primitive people, illustrated ethnographies with photographs that emphasized nudity, and ignored the presence of rising elites and the political aspirations that challenged the colonial order. Adding injury to insult, colonial regimes had sponsored anthropological research and therefore it was assumed that anthropological research must have supported such regimes. As the Cold War came to be fought out largely in the Third World, American anthropologists also carried the further burden of being suspect as intelligence agents.

In any event, the rulers of the post-independence period thought of anthropology as useless or detrimental. They considered themselves the experts on their own people, and thought that anthropologists had nothing to teach them in this respect. They disliked ethnographic work that privileged ethnic units and distinctive local institutions, since they were trying to forge new national identities that would override ethnic rivalries. On these grounds, anthropology was seen as divisive, whereas sociology and political science, despite their concern with class and political interest, were originally associated with the task of nation building. These too were the years when governments of newly independent countries were committed to rapid economic development and to the reform and homogenization of political, legal, and economic institutions. This they expected to bring about through education on a Western model, backed up by the discreet exercise of authority. The euphoria of independence encouraged their citizens to believe that such a transformation was both desirable and possible. Anthropological models based upon assumptions of continuity, equilibrium, integrated feed-back systems, and the controlling power of categorical assumptions took a beating.

For at least a decade, anthropologists who found positions in the new universities were hired as sociologists, and if the students they trained did ethnography they reported it under some other title and presented it as serving the national interest. Anthropology became permissible again only when the colonial era had receded into the past and anthropologists were writing in terms more palatable to local readers.

By then they had also discovered that an author does not control how a text is read – ethnographic conventions have to be understood in order to be respected. The demise of the colonial system highlighted the degree to which ethnographic writing depends upon assumptions about what need not be described because it is already common knowledge among potential readers. That knowledge rarely continues to be common over any period of time, and this leaves much that once rang true hanging in the air. The writing of ethnography had become problematic in a new fashion. What must one put in and what can be excluded?

Malinowski and his successors centered ethnography upon the contemporary moment

under observation by the fieldworker, but implicit in the approach was the assumption that what is observed today is a close approximation of what might have been observed yesterday and will again be visible tomorrow. Such assumptions, however, are no longer tenable. Developments within anthropology itself put them out of court. Return visits to field sites became feasible and frequent with the new ease of travel after World War II. The increasing number of anthropologists made it inevitable that various observers were going to visit the same region at different times and compare findings. Archival records became more readily available and provided new testimony to the peculiar circumstances of each period, which the temporary fieldworker had taken as typical. They also showed the degree to which local events have been impinged upon by much larger politico/economic systems of international scope. Ignoring such considerations leads to a falsification of the data, but to incorporate them complicates enormously the descriptive task and puts the anthropologist in direct competition with other disciplines.

Competition from other social scientists and humanists was very real by the early 1960s, since by then an increasing number of them were doing research in the newly independent countries and on subjects previously monopolized by anthropologists. Historians had discovered that others besides those of European descent had histories; political scientists no longer encouraged to study political elites and political parties discovered local politics; lawyers examined systems of land tenure and the work of courts; and so it went. They did what anthropologists had once done and claimed to do it better, often enough adopting the anthropological vocabulary. What was there left for the anthropologist to do even if he or she contested the terrain now being preempted by others?

These same queries faced the anthropologists who opted to work in Europe and North America, as an increasing number did from the early 1960s on. Here they found it impossible to isolate their field of observation from the much larger systems within which it was incorporated. Nor could they avoid the historical records that grounded it in the past, nor the work of the many scholars who had written about the region.

Anthropology, therefore, was facing an identity crisis of no mean dimensions when it was hit by the general intellectual revolt of the late 1960s. One response was to reemphasize culture as an autonomous domain of thought, where myth, ritual, art, spatial organization, and much else could be searched to discover the symbolic patterns that transmit covert messages that make the whole meaningful to participants. The structuralism of Lévi-Strauss had already pointed in this direction. In treating culture as a language with a deep structure that needs to be decoded, it also drew upon an earlier interest in Freudian and Jungian analyses that described cultural phenomena as metaphorical systems created to deal with the clash between human drives based in biology and the imperatives associated with membership in social groups. Where structural functionalism had emphasized action systems, structuralism emphasized culture, dealt with received texts and repetitive performances rather than individuals exercising judgment in mundane daily action, and privileged the past as against the present as the exemplar of the truly human. Structuralism also made for new alliances between anthropologists and those in other disciplines. Structural functionalists found their colleagues in sociology, political science, economics and law. Structuralists found theirs within the humanities and in the emerging field of cognitive studies. When interest in structuralism waned in the late 1960s, in part because once again a paradigm seemed

exhausted and little more could be done by pushing further with its methods, what survived was a lively interest in exploring systems of thought linked to a querying of the universality of such categories as time, space, and person, which Kantians had held basic to all human thinking.

The popularity of structuralism made it highly visible and therefore vulnerable to attack during the revolutionary thrust of the late 1960s, when many students and other intellectuals repudiated both past and present in favor of an only dimly envisaged future. It smacked of the ivory tower and academia at a time of intense political controversy both on the campuses and in the world at large. In that milieu Marx seemed more relevant than Lévi-Strauss.

For a decade or more, the study of political power became a major concern within anthropology. This reflected the political realities faced by fieldworkers as well as the intellectual climate in universities. Political mobilization and struggles over political power formed the stuff of life wherever anthropologists were involved in fieldwork, and nowhere during these years was politics defined as local politics. The struggle was to gain control over national centers of power and then use their resources to transform material life and gain advantages formerly reserved for the few. People therefore looked outward, both to national and international arenas and to the future when the transformation would take place: they gave priority to values linked to the struggle and to change. Their discontents with what they had, of course, invalidated any description based on anthropological premises that people necessarily value their cultural traditions. Something other than satisfaction had underwritten the continuity previously taken for granted by short-term observers. Given the bonding that usually takes place between anthropologists and their mentors in fieldwork, the political enthusiasm was contagious.

Disillusionment set in when the popular leaders of the 1960s became the entrenched bureaucrats of the 1970s and 1980s, enjoying elite Western standards of living even when the majority found themselves struggling to stay alive. "Modernization," apparently so easy and so desirable in the 1950s and 1960s, became suspect as one more means of continued exploitation, especially when agents of various international development agencies, including voluntary agencies, became highly visible in country after country and obviously prospered.

Marx, rather than Weber or Durkheim, provided the terms for describing the penetration of international capital and its effects. Dependency theory, developed to describe the impoverishment of Latin America, was appropriated by social scientists and their students throughout the Third World before they realized that it stressed a passive victimization rather than any creative response. French anthropologists experimented with other Marxist approaches and found their disciples in Britain and North America. Political and economic anthropologists acquired a Marxist vocabulary and wrote of relationships of production, appropriation, alienation, and ideology where an earlier generation had written of land holding, division of labor, exchange, ritual, and myth. The new vocabulary attached local conditions to a world system: it targeted the social differentiation now rapidly proceeding as new elites entrenched themselves in power; it called attention to contradictions between experience and the myths that masked inequality; and it pointed to conflict as the source of change.

Marxism as a theoretical system, however, became suspect as the foundation myth of Communist regimes that were increasingly seen as both inept and savage. Those

forced to live under such regimes were signaling their disillusionment with both systems and doctrines and the adequacy of Marx as an interpreter of history. In Paris, it was said that now even Marx is dead.

One response was the rise of solipsism, which seemed to some of the younger anthropologists the only tenable position left. It was congenial to an era when devotion to the social revolution gave way to narcissism and a drive for personal gratification and success. Ethnographies became accounts of personal encounters with the alien, with the ethnographer as hero. Fieldwork was redefined as an exploration of the self, although few provided any adequate rationale for why such exploration was of interest to others or was worthy of funding. Lost in this development was a number of concerns that had earlier united anthropologists: a belief that knowledge is cumulative, that anthropology is a generalizing discipline, that it relies upon a comparative methodology in testing hypotheses whether these refer to culture or society, and that fieldwork (ethnography) in the long run is important because it provides data for comparative work.

Solipsism in anthropology can be, and is, justified by reference to philosophical arguments for the untranslatability of culture: since people categorized their experience in terms specific to themselves that do not equate with those used elsewhere, how then is it possible to enter into their experience and explain their constructions of reality using another language? This was already much discussed in anthropology, but what had been seen as a challenge to the fieldworker was now said to form an insurmountable obstacle that invalidates the whole enterprise. The morality of writing about "the other" had already been queried as one more instance of Western exploitation of the powerless. It was now also intellectually indefensible: valid ethnography could be written only by the native and only in the native language. If this were true, then anthropology too was dead.

It survived, but incorporated elements of the critique. Solipsist arguments raised questions about the limits of participant observation that some might have preferred to avoid. No ethnography can be treated as definitive: it is only the best that can be done at this moment in time by this person. But this is true of every scholarly or scientific endeavor. The discipline gained from having to consider the biases that affect the choice of research questions and sites and that limit observation. It also gained from having to consider the extent to which ethnographic data are a product of an interactive relationship to which the anthropologist sometimes contributes as much as informants do. Even those anthropologists who find themselves uninteresting in comparison with those among whom they do fieldwork have learned from the debate to be more sensitive to the peculiar nature of the ethnographic encounter.

Solipsism, however, was only one solution to the dilemmas faced by anthropology in the late twentieth century. Some opted for deconstruction, finding anthropological texts as vulnerable as literary classics to its techniques. The development of a branch of intellectual history devoted to anthropology also encouraged a close reading of earlier anthropological texts and a recognition of how styles held to be appropriate for the presentation of information have changed over time. Format, it seemed, need have no inherent relationship to content. Why then should any particular format be adopted? Why not experiment and play with language? Anthropologists with a strong aesthetic bent found the opportunities irresistible and explored the potential of using forms derived from the novel, poetry, and pageant to say what other anthropologists continued to say

through the monograph or the learned article.

Others, more engaged with social issues, followed Gramsci and Foucault in exploring how form constrains thought as street layouts control traffic patterns and clocks order the experience of time, and how impressions are continually reinforced as they are bombarded by images transmitted through many different institutional settings. This transmission is currently known as "discourse," perhaps the most pervasive of the academic catchwords associated with the politically correct "post-modern." The flip side of discourse is impression management and its relationship to hegemony and political power.

Fascination with discourse reflects the impact of television, with its emphasis upon images that engage the attention and compel belief. When public relations techniques reign and expenditure on television playlets wins elections, the medium is the message. Television, videocassettes and film increasingly compete with the written text as the chosen medium through which ethnographic and other information provided with appropriate commentary is conveyed. The anthropological interest in spectacle, drama, oratory, and rhetorical devices and the reducing of all action (whether verbally or visually conveyed) to discourse reflect the general fascination with style. Like television, moreover, it focuses upon the colorful exotic and the rare event rather than the humdrum daily routines that maintain life and provide the subject matter that still concerns a good many anthropologists, especially those who look at the economic impact of various interventions. Television, however, is transforming more than definitions of anthropology: as television spreads and sets multiply, it also invades the conceptual worlds of an increasing portion of the world's population. Both anthropologists and their subjects are being formed by the same discourse.

But "discourse" is only one of the influences that make for continuing development within anthropology. From the 1970s on, more and more young anthropologists have found no place in academia, and they have learned from working in other niches that they must acquire new skills, a new vocabulary, and new formats for presenting their findings if they are to have credibility. They are very actively engaged with phenomena that they cannot treat as spectacle or performance or sum up as discourse. Anthropology is also having to respond to the interests of the increasing number of non-Western anthropologists who are gaining confidence in the relevance of their own vision of what is important. A further intellectual influence is the rapidly changing social milieu.

Anthropologists based in North America and Britain find their careers and private lives affected by an economic crisis increasingly reminiscent of the crisis of the 1930s, and they are not immune to what is happening elsewhere. Economic and political crises have created massive population displacements, sending refugees and other migrants across international boundaries. Eastern Europe faces economic collapse and the Soviet Union has disintegrated. Ethnic hostilities, thought long suppressed, are reemerging, and racism is a growing threat. The very concept of the nation-state is under challenge. A very different kind of world order is emerging. In some respects anthropologists find themselves facing conditions of uncertainty that bear a close resemblance to those associated with the early days of the Wenner-Gren Foundation.

Given the way in which anthropology has reflected its larger environment over the past fifty years, the one thing certain is that it will continue to redefine itself through the 1990s. Some indicators are the formation by anthropologists of a Refugee Studies

Programme at Oxford University and a Center for the Study of Involuntary Migration at the University of Florida, and the various task forces created by the American Anthropological Association (with the assistance of the Wenner-Gren Foundation) to inquire into anthropology's role in the contemporary world.

The Role of the Wenner-Gren Foundation. The Wenner-Gren Foundation fostered much of the experimentation that has made the past fifty years such a lively period for anthropology. It has done this while holding to a very prepost-modern faith in the possibility of progress. Experimentation, submitted to the check of intellectual examination, is expected over the long run to lead to more effective ways of understanding what it means to be human. The Foundation has therefore encouraged the development of many different approaches, refusing to settle for the status quo or to accept any national tradition as dominant. Its support of new centers of anthropology and of new approaches has been accompanied by a concern to overcome parochialism: gains made are pulled back into the growing pool of anthropological expertise and knowledge. Fortunately, the Foundation has had the flexibility to shift its resources as it has seen new opportunity and new need.

At the end of World War II, priority was given to the rebuilding of European anthropology and to the strengthening of anthropology throughout Latin America and in other areas where new centers were emerging. Wenner-Gren support was a godsend to anthropologists in these countries, who looked to it for research grants, for books and journals otherwise unattainable, and for funds that made it possible for them to travel and participate in professional meetings.

For some years, the Foundation was less important to the anthropologists of North America and Western Europe, who had other resources. In the United States, the Office of Naval Research funded work in American-occupied and/or -administered islands in the Pacific, while the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the Ford Foundation, and the Social Science Research Council funded graduate training and field research almost anywhere. Britain greatly increased support to the Colonial Development and Research Council, which provided training fellowships to those preparing to work in its colonial territories, founded new institutes for social research in East and West Africa and in the West Indies, and gave the grants that allowed the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute to expand its research in Central Africa. Research funds were also made available for those who proposed to work in newly independent India and Pakistan, with awards made to Americans as well as British subjects. France and Belgium funded research in their colonies through both social science institutes and grants to individuals. Between 1945 and about 1973, therefore, anthropological research was very well supported in North America and Western Europe.

What anthropologists in these countries needed, however, was a means of pooling intellectual concerns, and this the Foundation provided by developing into a clearing house of anthropological ideas. It financed travel to international meetings, funded conferences organized by others, and created occasions for meetings that would bring together members of different subdisciplines and those with conflicting theoretical ideas. An early device was the supper conferences held regularly at the Foundation's headquarters in New York from 1945 to about 1970 and sporadically thereafter. These provided a forum primarily for those within easy commuting distance of New York.

Topics chosen for discussion at any one meeting might be narrowly focused on an ethnographic area, a methodological approach, or a theoretical issue, but over time the participants ranged widely across the whole field of anthropology.

Early in the 1950s, a more ambitious program was initiated when it was decided that a general guide to the current state of anthropology was needed. The 1952 symposium, "Anthropology Today," held in Chicago, was an international undertaking even though the large majority of those who attended were from the United States. The conference papers were recruited to provide an "encyclopedic inventory" of anthropology as it existed in the 1950s, and the resulting volume became the handbook of the next generation (A. L. Kroeber, ed., 1953). It was supplemented by The International Directory of Anthropological Institutions, also published in 1953. This provided a country-by-country appraisal of the state of anthropology and a directory of anthropological departments, institutes, museums, and working anthropologists. Initially, these volumes were to be supplemented by a series of yearbooks, one of which did appear in 1955, but this project was abandoned in favor of a journal, *Current Anthropology*. First appearing in 1963, the journal provided an international forum which any anthropologist might enter and contribute to. Papers accepted for publication were sent out to scholars in many countries, who were asked to submit critiques to be published with the article and a response by the author. Peer review, therefore, took place in public. Special rates and free copies made the journal available to anthropologists wherever they might be located.

Chicago was also the site of two other influential conferences: "The Origin of Man," 1965 (P. L. DeVore, ed., 1965), and "Man the Hunter," 1966 (R. B. Lee and I. DeVore, eds., 1968). The latter provoked two decades of research and reappraisal and continues to be influential. Its arguments have informed the work of primatologists, paleoanthropologists, biological anthropologists, archaeologists, and social/cultural anthropologists. It led to a questioning of the theoretical biases underlying various methodological approaches, which encouraged anthropologists to pay attention to gender. The critique spurred a good deal of the feminist debate within anthropology in the 1960s and 1970s and forced a reappraisal of the role of women in production.

The Cold War, however, posed special problems for a foundation that defined itself as an organization for world anthropology, especially when it was based in the United States. In the late 1950s, therefore, the castle of Burg Wartenstein, set in the Austrian Alps, was acquired. This served as the anthropological conference center par excellence until it was sold in 1981. Each conference brought together anthropologists, and sometimes members of other disciplines, of several nationalities, many of whom met there for the first time and discovered their common interests. Burg Wartenstein was seen as neutral ground where anthropologists from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union could meet with anthropologists from the West and from the nonaligned nations of the Third World. The participation of Third World scholars not only brought them into the mainstream but also created the ties of collegiality that overcame some of the resentment of Western anthropologists as reminders of the colonial past.

By the time the castle was sold, invitations to Burg Wartenstein had become tantamount to recognition of one's professional establishment. Thereafter, conferences continued to be used by the Foundation as a strategic tool for focusing attention on new approaches, as well as for maintaining international intellectual exchanges. Most of the conferences resulted in books. A list of their titles maps the major areas of interest that

have engaged anthropological attentions from the 1950s to the present.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Burg Wartenstein symposia and other conferences sponsored by the Foundation also did much to maintain standards of academic excellence at a time when many younger anthropologists were repudiating their past. They were repelled by the idea of studying and thereby exploiting (so they thought) those they saw as the powerless other. They were also in revolt against the academic hierarchies that controlled teaching, tried to dictate appropriate research interests together with methodologies and presentation format, and acted as gatekeepers for professional advancement. Intellectual life within universities was subject to frequent disruption when campuses became battle grounds. Even when classes met, student rhetoric challenged standards and academic reputations. Meetings of professional associations offered no opportunity for collegial debate in a less heated atmosphere. For almost a decade such meetings were subject to intense political scrutiny. When the political ferment lessened in the 1970s and professional organizations again met without disruption, they found themselves transformed by the influx of students and young professionals whose sheer numbers turned annual meetings into unwieldy gatherings with multiple simultaneous sessions catering to specialized in-groups. The overall intellectual content of papers and the level of discussion dropped. Through all this, the Foundation continued to privilege intellectual interests over political correctness. At Burg Wartenstein and other conference sites, some twenty men and women came together by invitation to spend a week in intensive discussion on a topic chosen by an anthropologist who thought that the time was ripe to sum up a body of research or that attention needed to be focused on a new methodology, a new approach, or a new set of problems. The group brought together usually included at least some who could be expected to dissent or to bring a fresh appraisal based on expertise in another relevant discipline.

The conference program therefore has filled various needs of the anthropological community, providing an international forum, an intellectual haven in times of trouble, and a continuous monitoring of the current state of the discipline. In the 1960s and thereafter, however, the Foundation increasingly emphasized its role as a granting agency for the support of training and research. It was responding, as always, to its perception of the needs of the time.

The demise of colonial empires in the 1950s and 1960s left metropolitan governments with little interest in funding anthropologists to work in former colonies. Government funding, especially in the United States, also became suspect, given accusations that anthropological research sometimes provided a cover for intelligence work. Wenner-Gren grants were seen as clean money, and an increasing number of students submitted their dissertation proposals for scrutiny and funding. Senior anthropologists turned to the Foundation when they needed supplementary funds or a relatively small amount of money to initiate or complete a project. Wenner-Gren thus had an unparalleled opportunity to inform itself about the emerging theoretical issues that would be likely to guide a substantial body of work in the future. This was enhanced by the way the Foundation kept in touch with its grantees, who reported on their projects and subsequent work and became a reservoir of promising candidates for inclusion in appropriate meetings. Research initiated under Foundation auspices might later provide the focus for a conference or workshop, again under Foundation auspices.

The published list of grants is a roll-call of anthropologists and highlights fifty years

of anthropological history. Since the beginning of the 1980s, the list has charted the growing number of anthropologists from newly independent countries. Some have benefited from the special fellowship program for Third World students initiated by the Foundation in the 1980s. Those selected as Fellows must be committed to returning to work within their own countries, but some first carried out dissertation field research in Europe or America – thereby putting to rest some of the uneasiness about the legitimacy of studying the other. We have met the others and they are us, and no less worthy of being the object of anthropological interest because of this.

But some may ask whether anthropology with all its fits and starts is deserving of support and what has been gained from it all. It is worth remembering that while anthropologists themselves have sometimes questioned the value of what they are doing, they have changed their world as well as reacted to it. Their vocabulary now permeates the other social sciences and the language of politicians and others who speak to the public through the media. If discourse is signaled by vocabulary, then current discourse is anthropological discourse. Anthropology has also contributed to the general debate on issues about which human beings feel deeply: it has provided a more sophisticated understanding of the forces that lead people to swear by ethnic identities, create and maintain social boundaries, overcome their prejudices, and recreate their lives when they have been destroyed by war, famine, or other disaster.

But anthropology is not the only discipline relevant to these issues, nor can we expect to come to definitive answers even in conjunction with the other disciplines concerned with human action. Humility is the order of the day. I agree with Susan Tax Freeman, who wrote, "An anthropological training ought above all to create an awareness of the range of potentially relevant questions and instill in working anthropologists a humble recognition of the partial nature of any single scholar's contribution."

The Wenner-Gren Foundation, in devoting itself to anthropology as a discipline, has helped to create such awareness of relevant questions, while at the same time it has encouraged the discussion among different disciplines and intellectual positions that leads to better answers.

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