

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

**Lesson: Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of
Anthropology**

Lesson Developer: Vandana Madan

**College / Department: Janki Devi Memorial College,
University of Delhi**



Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

● Chapter 1: RISE OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

● 2.1 RISE OF ANTHROPOLOGY

● 2.1.1 The Branches of Anthropology

● 2.2 THE GROWTH OF THE DISCIPLINE

2.2.1 Imperialism and Colonialism

2.2.2 Christianity and Missionary zeal

2.2.3 Scholars and “the other”

2.3 FOUR STAGES OF REFINEMENT

2.4 THE FORMULARY PERIOD

(a) Herodotus: The Greek Philosopher (c.484-425 B.C.)

(b) Montaigne (1533-1592)

(c) Joseph Francois Lafitau (1681-1746)

(d) Charles de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu (1689-1755)

(e) Charles de Brosses (1709-1777)

2.5 THE CONVERGENT PERIOD (1835-1859)

2.5.1 The British tradition

(a) Charles Darwin (1809-1888)

(b) Physical anthropology, imperialism and colonialism

(c) T.H. Huxley (1825-1895)

2.5.2 The German tradition

(a) Christoph Meiners (1747-1810)

(b) Gustav Klemm (1802-1867)

(c) Theodor Waitz (1821-1864)

2.5.3 The French Tradition

2.6 THE CONSTRUCTIVE PERIOD (1859-1900)

2.6.1 The British tradition of physical anthropology

(a) James Hunt (no dates available)

2.6.2 The British tradition of cultural and social anthropology

(a) E.B Tylor (1832-1917)

(b) Sir James Frazer (1854-1941)

(c) A.C. Haddon (1855-1940)

(d) W.H.R. Rivers (1864-1922)

(e) C.G. Seligman (1873-1940)

(f) A.R. Radcliffe-Brown (1881-1955)

(g) Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942)

(h) E.E. Evans-Pritchard (1902-1973)

2.6.3 The German Tradition of cultural anthropology

(a) P.W.A Bastian (1826-1905)

(b) F. Ratzel (1844-1904)

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

(c) Leo Frobenius (1873-1938)

2.6.4 The French tradition of social anthropology

(a) Emile Durkheim (1858-1917)

(b) Marcel Mauss (1872 – 1950)

2.6.5 The American Tradition of cultural and social anthropology

(a) Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-1881)

(b) Franz Boas (1858-1942)

2.7 THE CRITICAL PERIOD: 1900-1935

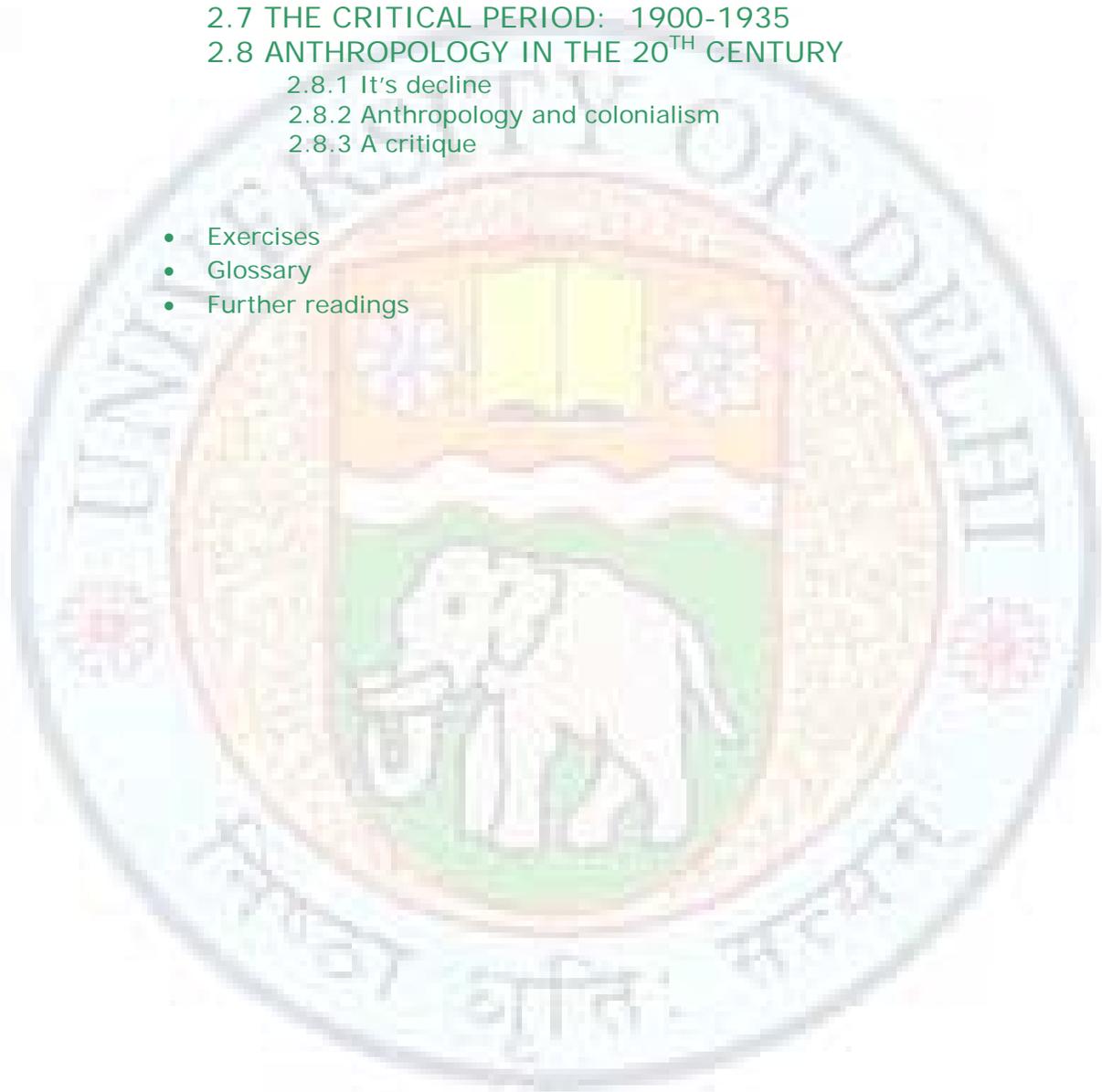
2.8 ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE 20TH CENTURY

2.8.1 It's decline

2.8.2 Anthropology and colonialism

2.8.3 A critique

- Exercises
- Glossary
- Further readings



Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

2.1 RISE OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Just as Sociology is regarded as the study of society; Anthropology is the science of man. The word Anthropology has been used from the 17th century onwards and it is believed that the Greek philosopher, Aristotle coined the term 'anthropologist' as meaning the gossip who talks to himself!

Very broadly speaking Anthropology studies the emergence and development of man from the physical, cultural and social viewpoints. Anthropology, acquired this definition in the middle of the 19th century when scholars tried to define a more scientific background for the social sciences.

In other words, Anthropology was a discipline that did not grow in vacuum. Many see it as an offshoot of Sociology and indeed there is a strong sociological influence in the defining of the discipline and shared theoretical perspectives. For instance British and French anthropology was deeply influenced by the work of Emile Durkheim. (See e-lesson on Rise of Sociology).

Thus scholars drew a link between Anthropology and other social and natural sciences arguing that there was a need to link the study of man with the study of evolution, the growth of primitive society and culture, and the study of language. Overtime this concern gave birth to distinct disciplines within the social sciences and to branches within Anthropology. Namely social anthropology, cultural anthropology, physical anthropology and the disciplines of archaeology and linguistics.

2.1.1 The Branches of Anthropology

The discipline can be divided into four broad sections each of which has a distinct subject of study:

- Physical anthropology or the study of human evolution and growth
- Cultural anthropology and Prehistory or the study of artifacts
- Ethnology or the racial and cultural distribution of man
- Social anthropology or Applied anthropology which applies the findings of the cultural and physical anthropologists in studying relations between communities etc

Each of these branches is interconnected.

Anthropology is also related through its branches to all the other social sciences and also some of the physical sciences. Like biologists, anthropologists study human morphology under the branch of physical anthropology; and like philosophers they study the nature of human nature and culture, under the branch of cultural anthropology. Thus the anthropologist can either be one from whom we seek facts or one from whom we seek our knowledge of things unknown.

What however distinguishes Anthropology from the other sciences is that:

- It has no fixed boundaries as it does not study a specific aspect of man or human activity
- It looks at man in a holistic sense
- Its method of approach is inductive and microcosmic

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

- Preconceived ideas do not guide research
- There are no models into which data has to be fitted
- Its investigations are carried out directly in pre literate societies

This last has great significance for the discipline and its growth and links with imperialism and colonialism.

2.2 THE GROWTH OF THE DISCIPLINE

2.2.1 Imperialism and Colonialism

In the 15th century the era of world discovery began under the European powers. This exploration and discovery ranged from the Americas to Asia and Africa. The search for markets and raw material send the Europeans far and wide .Economic activity was soon followed by political activity.By the 18th century Europe was passing through the Industrial Revolution and a central role had been played here by negro-slave labour from Africa.

Following the Industrial revolution European countries and England were faced with the problem of utilizing the tremendous amount of power they had learnt to generate, the power of steam and machines .So agents of industry i.e., trade and commerce set sail to find new raw materials and markets to sell their goods .Here Africa, Asia and the Far-East took on significance .The increasing demand for goods and the supply of raw material naturally required political action. Thus **imperialism and colonialism** took birth. It suited the agents of imperialism to study the languages, customs and practices of the people over whom they were trying to establish control. Some of the earliest ethnographic reports were compiled by British administrators who *were not anthropologists*. A central role was played here by the Christian missionaries.



(world map of colonialism in the 1800's)

Source : <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonialism>

1.2.2 Christianity and Missionary zeal

Following Reformation, the spread of Christianity emerged as a tremendous missionary activity. It sought to convey the gospel to all those people and lands that it perceived as pagan. Thus many missionaries undertook the study of social and religious institutions in distant lands that had been discovered by the travelers,

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

explorers and the colonizers .The movement of the traders and imperialism to these lands was accompanied by Christian missionaries seeking to proselytize i.e., convert, the colonized .The success of the imperialist depended to a large extent in knowing who they were dominating. This need to know and the desire to proselytize together led to the early missionary study of the customs and practices of the “other”. The British thus learnt the importance of descriptive study in their colonial territories which eventually helped in the growth of the discipline of Anthropology.

1.2.3 Scholars and “the other”

In the 18th century we thus find these societies had not only become the meeting ground of the colonizing imperialist and missionary, but they also raised the curiosity of the European philosophers who saw these societies as prime examples of **man living in a state of nature** .It is this image of the “savage other” that led scholars to distant shores. It is these scholars and their initial attempts at understanding the unknown land and the “savages and heathens” that inhabited these lands that eventually gave birth to the discipline of Anthropology.

Interesting detail

Abbe Dubois

One of the first and most detailed study of Hindu society and the caste system in India was by the Abbe J.A. Dubois (1765–1848) a French Catholic missionary who came to India in 1792.His work was called *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies* and was published in 1816.In his work he not only described the Hindu way of life but also the problems related to administering the country by the colonial government.

Source: Original

2.3 FOUR STAGES OF REFINEMENT

The discipline of Anthropology developed over the centuries. The crucial time period was the 19th and 20th century when the discipline was formalized. It is believed that historically there have been four periods or stages in the growth of anthropology.

These are:

- *The Formulary*
- *The Convergent* (1835-1859)
- *The Constructive* (1859-1900)
- *The Critical* (1900-1935)

In each period the discipline was broadened and refined .Each stage also had its significant contributors. Different traditions of the discipline also took shape over the years with significant work emerging, as in the case of Sociology, from Britain, Germany, France and America. Germany and France played a less significant role in the birth of Anthropology than they did in Sociology. In the following sections we trace the growth of the discipline by looking at each period.

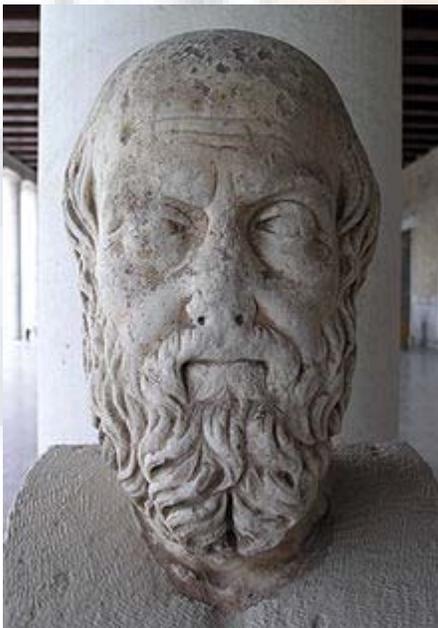
Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

2.4 THE FORMULARY PERIOD

This period begins with the early Greek historians and philosophers, then the travelers and explorers of the 16th and 17th century and then work of scholars from different parts of the world from the early 18th to mid 18th century. We look here briefly at some of the significant works in this period, as these set the stage for the growth of the discipline and some of its significant premises as well as an engagement in **ethnographic research**, a method central to the discipline of Anthropology.

The subject began first in its formulary years by borrowing from other social science and natural science disciplines. Most writing in this period reflected a colonial mindset and attitude of domination and racial and cultural superiority.

(a) Herodotus: The Greek Philosopher (c.484-425 B.C.)



Many regard Herodotus to be the first anthropologist. In Western society Herodotus is considered the first historian and the first ethnologist. His travels brought him in contact with different cultures, customs and races and in his writings he compared the different things he saw and recorded. In the 5th century he traveled over much of the known world, to Libya, Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, Thrace, Macedonia, Scythia, and eastward into what is now southern Ukraine and Russia. The wealth of detail about manners and customs of the Greek and their neighbours that he compiled is unrivalled in Greek literature before the Roman Age. Herodotus believed that the first duty of the scholar was to interpret a picture of mankind and to illustrate it by parallel cases. This meant describing and then comparing different societies, events and their histories. Such an exercise led to the birth **of comparative studies**. The detailed nature of his observations and such comparative descriptions have been the reason for his being seen by many as the **first anthropologist**.

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

(b) Montaigne (1533-1592)

In the 16th century, Michel de Montaigne, one of the most popular French essayists of the Renaissance, wrote on the division between France and other countries based on the **superiority of French culture**. His work introduced **ethnocentrism** into description and was a great skeptic. It is believed that his works influenced many including Shakespeare whose *King Lear* and *Hamlet* are influenced by this skepticism and richness of description.



By the 18th century the North American and Polynesian world had been discovered and this surety about white dominance portrayed in the work of Montaigne had begun to weaken. Overtime, such information gathered by travelers and explorers began to be seen not just as bits of trivia but data for constructing historical schemes of the development of society.

(c) Joseph Francois Lafitau (1681-1746)

Some believe that the history of comparative ethnography started with the work of the

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

Jesuit missionary, Lafitau , who worked among the native American Indian



community . Lafitau in 1724 published an unparalleled piece of ethnographic description that compared American Indian customs particularly those of the Iroquois with those of the ancient world described by Latin and Greek writers. His work is seen as a precursor to the work of Lewis Henry Morgan, one of the greatest anthropologists to have contributed to the understanding of American native culture and society (see section 2.6.5 below).

(d) Charles de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu (1689-1755)

Montesquieu was a French social commentator and thinker from the period of Enlightenment. He has several works to his credit and is the most frequently quoted authority on government and politics in colonial pre-revolutionary British America,



In 1748, Montesquieu published *Esprit des Lois* that became one of the first theoretical works in social anthropology where he compared the legal systems of different societies arguing that these difference were

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

the result of the different social contexts in which they arose. Many regard him as the first functionalist theorist

(e) Charles de Brosses (1709-1777)

In 1760 **Charles de Brosses**, a French writer wrote on parallels between ancient



Egyptian literature and the religion of West Africa.

His work included detailed descriptions of the South Seas and was used by James Cook in his discovery of Australia. In fact it is in his work that the description of Polynesia was first found. This little Island nation went on to become the field site of several significant future anthropological works.

2.5 THE CONVERGENT PERIOD (1835-1859)

The Formulary period was followed by a period of convergence where the various ideas about man and his evolution were identified. This period also highlighted the close relation between disciplines in their struggle to understand the origin and development of man and society. Many of the early descriptive works of the travelers and writers cited in the above section played an important role in setting the stage for further research. During this period we also see a clear development of the discipline in different continents and the emergence of the main branches within Anthropology. The work of scholars in this era laid the foundation of the later developments in the discipline. There were not too many significant contributions in this era except in the British and the German intellectual tradition. The work of the naturalist **Charles Darwin** and the parallel work of the sociologist **Herbert Spencer** (see e-lesson on Rise of Sociology for a detailed discussion) on the theories of evolution played a significant role in shaping anthropological work in this period. Some of the important scholars are highlighted here.

2.5.1 The British tradition

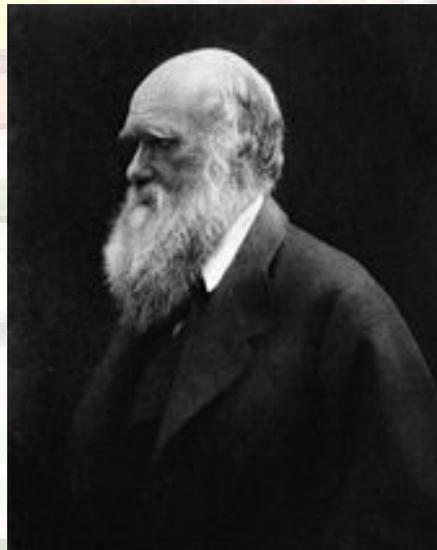
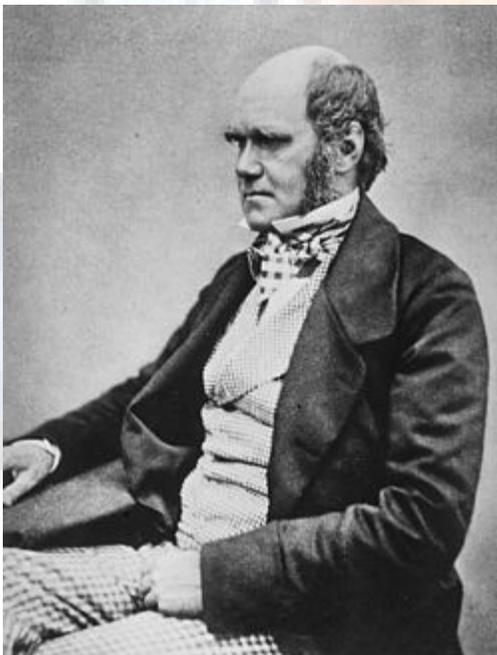
In the first decade of the 19th century in England there was no figure whose work survives as of major historical importance. In the mid 19th century anthropology was not a distinct subject but its basic postulates took birth through several other disciplines that shared the interest in human society and culture.

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

This period gradually gained significance as in 1834 slavery came to an end in the British Empire and in 1837, *The Aborigines Protection Society* was formed . In 1843 the *Ethnological Society* was founded in Britain and devoted itself to the collection and systematization of observations on the human race. The most seminal contribution in this period came in the 1840's from the naturalist Charles Darwin and the sociologist Herbert Spencer.

a) Charles Darwin (1809-1888)

In 1835, Darwin, an English naturalist began his voyages to the Galapagos islands. Based on his observations over the years he wrote his famous thesis of natural selection based on the idea of the "struggle for existence" and the "survival of the fittest". This was published as the *Origin of Species* in 1859 . Many believe 1859 to be the date of the birth of Anthropology. In fact with the publication of Darwin's *Origin*, a period of the formalization of the discipline followed.



(The "evolution "of Charles Darwin!)

The work of Charles Darwin not only provided the evolutionist view of nature but also created a semblance of order in the intellectual atmosphere of the time. It provided a focus to the different attempts at theorizing that were taking place in the time and it also enabled an integration of biological and cultural studies. His work also showed how human institutions and beliefs had patterns that could be studied .It is believed that with Darwin, the history of anthropology as a single, though many sided science began.

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology



(The voyage of the *Beagle*, in which Darwin journeyed and explored
Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Darwin)

While Darwin was compiling his work on evolution an interesting development was taking place in the world of Sociology where Harriet Martineau, the only female sociologist in the mid 19th century published an English edition of the work of Auguste Comte (see e-lesson on Rise of Sociology for details). This made the scientific method of positivism available to scholars across the world. Further by 1855, the sociologist, Herbert Spencer, influenced by Comte had already contrasted the theories of creation and development and had been acknowledged by Darwin as the great expounder of the principle of evolution (see e-lesson on Rise of Sociology).

(b) Physical anthropology, imperialism and colonialism

It is important for students to note that by this time the mechanical and industrial revolution had brought to the forefront the human struggle for existence between individuals and societies. This was closely tied up to the European notion of superiority that enabled these powers to dominate other nations. Imperial developments appeared to show that the lesser societies were made of lesser breeds without law and would be destroyed or dominated in the process of evolution. Darwin's famous hypothesis on survival of the fittest seemed to justify this.

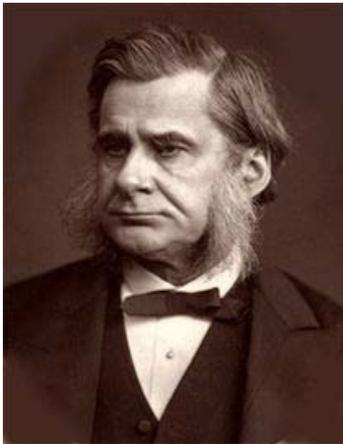
By the end of the 19th century it was thus believed by many, that some nations had the right to subjugate others but the Church was not happy. Everywhere there was a tendency and desire to synthesize the sciences in a search for answers to questions about social life and cultural and religious differences.

The work of Darwin and the sociologists Spencer and Comte were crucial in providing a focus as well as an evolutionary impulse to study the growth of societies and "other" cultures. This gave impetus to scholars to study the ability of some nations to colonise and subjugate the native, because of their evolutionary superiority. Several scholars contributed to this causation through their work in the area that is identified as physical anthropology. The branch of physical anthropology peaked during this period as archaeological findings added strength to the Darwinian idea of evolution.

(c) T.H. Huxley (1825-1895)

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

Significant here, using Darwin's hypothesis to the study of man was the work of the scholar T.H. Huxley, who was also called Darwin's "bull-dog" as he defended his idea of evolution dearly .



Huxley used physical data such as the Engis skull found from the valley of the Meuse in Belgium that had been discovered in 1833, and the Neanderthal skull that had been discovered in 1857 and compared these to a modern skull to conclude how the human brain had indeed evolved. He devised new systems of measurement and classification of skin colour and human hair and used this as a basis for differentiating races. He believed the Caucasoid race, to which the "white man" belonged, to be far superior to the other racial groups. His work was important from the anthropological perspective as this concern with the unequal relation between races was present in France, England and America and closely related to colonialism and slavery.

In this phase up to the 1900's the discipline thus constructed itself along evolutionary lines. In fact till the end of the 19th century, the scholars from the different branches of anthropology followed Darwin's principles to construct a science of man and the differences between racial groups .

Did you know

Human zoo's

Human zoos, also called "ethnological expositions" or "Negro Villages" were public exhibits of humans in the 19th and 20th century, where humans were displayed usually in a "natural" or "primitive" state. The aim was to often emphasize the cultural differences between civilized Europeans and the non-European peoples. The idea of these zoos was predicated on Darwin's idea of the racial and intellectual superiority of the White man which was the outcome of evolution. Many of these zoos actually described the indigenous people of Africa as representing a stage somewhere between the great apes and humans of European descent. These ethnographic zoos were finally shut down in the mid 20th century after much criticism for their racist content.

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology



[Ota Benga](#), a human exhibit, in 1906. Age, 23 years. Height, 4 feet 11 inches.
Weight, 103 pounds.

Brought from the Kasai River, Congo Free State, South Central Africa, by Dr. Samuel P. Verner.
Exhibited each afternoon during September.

— *sign outside the primate house at the [Bronx Zoo](#), September 1906*

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_zoos

2.5.2 The German Tradition

While most of England was interested in the evolutionary scheme of things as it upheld the idea of colonial domination, a new discipline had begun to take a distinct shape with the work of German scholars some of whom were anti-Darwinian. Their interest was primarily in what came to be known in later periods as cultural anthropology

(a) Christoph Meiners (1747-1810)

Christoph Meiners was a German philosopher, who supported a polygenist theory of human origins. He wrote on comparative history and cultural history and was critical of the concept of Enlightenment. Much of his writing was racist in character. He agreed with Darwin's theory of evolution reflected in his justification of slavery. Meiners spent time examining the diversity of human behaviour and unusual customs asserting the need for a new discipline that would study aspects of social behaviour such as social attitude, law and government, and most importantly cultural practices and tradition and customs that were native.

(b) Gustav Klemm (1802-1867)

Klemm was a German anthropologist. Taking up from where Meiners left off, Klemm developed the concept of culture and is thought to have influenced the prominent English anthropologist Sir Edward B Tylor. Klemm spent most of his life as director of the royal library at Dresden where he pursued historical studies with particular regard to the progress of civilization and humanity. He was a great collector of artifacts. Klemm proposed evolutionary models for the growth of human culture, similar to the ideas of Aristotle and Rousseau. He distinguished three stages of cultural evolution which he identified as those of

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

- savagery
- domestication
- freedom

Klemm divided mankind into active and inactive races and believed that peoples differed in mentality and temperament. In 10 volumes between 1843 and 1852 he tried to describe the races of man.

(c)Theodor Waitz (1821-1864)

Waitz was a German psychologist and anthropologist who was one of the first to realize the full scope of anthropology as a science. He saw anthropology like a bridge between the physical and the historical parts of our knowledge of man with ethnography or ethnology as the investigation of the lives of various peoples. His significance lies in the thoroughness with which he presented data. He was severely critical of Darwin. Thus while, Meiners saw Montesquieu as a predecessor to the growth of Anthropology, Klemm conceived his work as an extension of the work of Voltaire. Waitz on the other hand was engaged in studying the relationship between culture and geographical contexts.

2.5.3 The French Tradition

With the abolishing of slavery and the rise of an anti-Darwinian perspective seen in Germany, there arose an intensified interest in empiricism based on detailed fact finding. This continued well into the 19th century. Not only did this give rise to societies primarily for the protection of aborigines (see section 2.5.1 above) which also engaged in the collection of ethnological facts, but such societies also arose in France, and a general sense of concern with the extinction of primitive people was perceived. The discovery of human bones, flint instruments, ruins and other physical and cultural evidence in different parts of Europe led to a recasting of theoretical formulations.

The publication for Comte's sociological theories in the 1830's led to an increased influence of Sociology in anthropological development. Anthropological contributions in France during this period remained minimal. This however changed in the later 19th century as discussed in the section below.

2.6 THE CONSTRUCTIVE PERIOD (1859-1900)

This period was significant in the development of Anthropology as parallel intellectual discoveries and refinement of the discipline was taking place across Europe and America following the significant work of Darwin and the increasing interest in ethnography, empiricism and cultural studies. As more scholars questioned Darwinian ideas, a shift also took place from the engagement with the physical aspect of human kind to an interest in studies of culture and society. This refinement and the emergence of Anthropology as a clear new discipline is discussed in the following section in detail.

2.6.1 The British tradition of physical anthropology

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

Towards the end of the 19th century and early 20th century, the branch of social anthropology had taken birth and the method of fieldwork had become recognized a central tool for data gathering. As you will see, a central role was played here by what is known as the Torres Strait expedition in 1898, under the leadership of A.C. Haddon. However the two personalities who dominated British social anthropology and gave it its present character are Bronislaw Malinowski and Radcliffe –Brown, as discussed below. Long before these works came however the writing of James Hunt.

(a) James Hunt (no dates available)

In 1863, Hunt founded the *Anthropological Society* arguing that the duty of the anthropologist was to understand the place of the lesser races such as that of the “**negro**”. However the society lost its prestige as soon it became entangled in religious and political questions and racial prejudices. The Anthropological Society, Hunt proclaimed, would concern itself with the collection of facts and the identification of natural laws that explained the diversity of humankind. It would also cast its intellectual nets more broadly, dealing with the physical as well as the cultural aspects of humans.

Hunt and his closest followers were vehemently anti-Darwinian. They believed that Africans belonged to a different species than Caucasians. Hunt saw them as **substantially and irredeemably inferior**, and that slavery was the role for which they were best suited as they were incapable of "civilization". Hunt's death in 1869 was followed by the Ethnological society and the Anthropological society becoming united as the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland and the *Journal of the Ethnological Society* and the *Anthropological review* were merged in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*.

Interesting detail
RAI
Today the Anthropological Institute that Hunt created is better known as The Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland or RAI, a scholarly association dedicated to anthropology in all its many fields and applications
Source: Original

From the time of Darwin to the 1870's, many museums and societies were founded for the study of Anthropology .These was spread from Paris to London to Berlin Moscow Vienna and Washington. In the 1870's in England several scholars such as J.G.Woods, Arthur Thomson and A.H.Keane were writing not only on the physical aspect of races but also on their culture and the evolution .In fact in 1895 ,Thomson began to give regular lectures on physical anthropology at Oxford in the hope of enabling the discipline to grow.

2.6.2 The British tradition of cultural and social anthropology

(a) E.B Tylor (1832-1917)

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

Edward Burnett Tylor is regarded as the father of British cultural anthropology.



His influence is stronger among American rather than the British scholars today. For Tylor, Anthropology was a science of cultural history as well as a reformist science. Tylor wrote *Primitive Culture* in 1871, where he defined culture as material and non material i.e., artifacts that one could hold, and learned behavior that was experienced as values, beliefs, customs practices and so on.

Tylor was also deeply interested in religion and viewed it differently from the idea that God was superior to man. Instead for Tylor religion was the belief in spiritual beings and these were found every where. Tylor tried to make anthropology scientific by using what he called **social arithmetic**, or the tabulation of customs to see how they are interrelated.

He is thus seen as the founder of the **comparative method** by many, though he did not use the term. He also introduced into anthropology the term 'survival', namely the idea that given societies and usages were survivals or vestiges from an earlier culture such as processes, customs and opinions carried forward by force of habit which represent an older culture from which they have evolved.

By thus defining the subject matter of anthropology as culture, Tylor founded the **school of cultural anthropology**. He believed that it was necessary to study geographical distribution and trace the diffusion of cultures. In fact he was critical of the emphasis that sociologists made on totemism being individual and argued that it was a collective phenomenon (see section on Durkheim in the e-lesson on Rise of Sociology). Like the German scholar Bastian (discussed below), he believed in the psychic unity of man (see Bastian, section 2.6.3), which is what created the shared cultural symbols and practices more than the idea of evolution or diffusion. Tylor

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

believed it was important to study a culture through its growth and decline and to study artifacts to distinguish if they had been borrowed from other cultures.

His greatest contribution was to the study of primitive religion which he defined as **animism**. Animism was based on the belief of the primitive communities that all natural things---flora, fauna, rivers, stones etc--- contained a soul or **anima**, and were thus worthy of worship. It is interesting to note here that because primitive man's survival depended on his understanding and harmony with nature, he thus worshipped nature by attributing it with supernatural qualities and in doing so ,he also indirectly became a conservator of nature.

In his book *Primitive Culture* ,1871 Tylor emerged as the foremost British anthropologist of his time unparalleled by no other scholar for the next 30 years when in 1898 his student Andrew Lang wrote *The Making of Religion* where he broadly agreed with Tylor's understanding of religion. After *Primitive Culture* Tylor wrote no complete work except *Anthropology* in 1881. In 1883 he became a Professor of Anthropology in Oxford. He keenly believed in the importance of Anthropology in policy making.

Anthropology has been defined in different ways and it is believed that through Tylor's approach this discipline has helped to establish the matrix of social life in many cultures.

Thus by the 1880's an interesting shift had begun to take place within the discipline from the assertion on Anthropology being about the physical nature of man to keener interest in his language, customs behavior practices i.e., the cultural aspects. This led to the birth of cultural anthropology. Up until now anthropology had been largely quantitative and "scientific".

(b) Sir James Frazer (1854-1941)

During the Constructive period however no scholar is believed to have made the whole European world conscious of the "other" than Sir James G. Frazer ,a Scottish social anthropologist



It is Frazer who made governments aware of the need to know the value of the culture of those they colonized and thus governed. In his *The Golden Bough* (1890),

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

Frazer assimilated data about themes of myths, rituals found among the ancient Greek and Latin works and then defined them as common to all parts of the world in simple societies. He wrote on myth and comparative religion and showed that religion had some universal themes such as fertility of man and land. He also wrote of the importance of sacrifice. Deeply influenced by Tylor's *Primitive Cultures*, he tried to study the nature of primitive superstition throughout the world. He distinguished magic and religion into separate categories.

He introduced the notions of **homeopathic and sympathetic** magic through which he showed that the symbolism of magical rituals helps establish the desired effect. He also believed that magic, religion and science formed an evolutionary scheme in the rational understanding of man about the nature of things. Magic and science for him were more alike than magic and religion. Yet he was also skeptical about the role of magic in human societies and called it a **bastard science**.

The work of Frazer deeply influenced the lives of young scholars in England some of whom took it upon them to engage in ethnographic research of the most detailed kind. A significant contribution came here in the late 19th century from the work of a group of scholars who set out on an expedition to far off countries. The work of these scholars made seminal contribution to the growth of Anthropology because of the use of the ethnographic method by them. Important here was the Torres Strait expedition led by the anthropologist A.C.Haddon to New Guinea in 1898. Along with Haddon were six other scholars, of whom, Rivers and Seligman made transformative contributions to the anthropological field. Each of the six was an expert in his field. The Torres Strait Expedition is a landmark in the growth of anthropological research.

(c) A.C. Haddon (1855-1940)

In 1898, A.C. Haddon published in America and England his, *Study of Man* insisting that Anthropology was not just about the study of physical anthropology or culture but a whole science of man. It was accompanied by **ethnography** which was the description of people and the comparative study of societies which were also studied by sociology, religion and linguistics (see e-lesson on Sociology). This work marked the birth in Anthropology of the shift from physical anthropology to cultural studies and the introduction of field-based research and descriptive studies of the subject matter or **ethnography**.

In 1898, Haddon led the famous **Torres Strait Expedition** which was the first anthropological expedition with a view to covering all aspects of the life of a community. Systematic fieldwork came with Haddon, who was both an anthropologist and ethnologist. He was accompanied by his daughter Kathleen and colleagues such as W.H.R.Rivers who had turned from psychology to Anthropology. The expedition arrived at its field of work and spent over a year in Torres Strait, New Guinea, and Borneo, and brought home a large collection of ethnographical specimens, some of which are now in the British Museum.

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

Haddon paid a third visit to New Guinea in 1914, and came home during the last War, but the War destroyed the study of Anthropology in the University for the time. After the War he renewed his constant struggle to establish a sound School of Anthropology in Cambridge.

(d) W.H.R. Rivers (1864-1922)



It is Rivers who stressed the importance of **fieldwork** and its centrality to the growth of the discipline of Anthropology. Yet he began first by carrying out neurological studies on the natives of the Torres Strait islands. It was at this point that Rivers began collecting family histories and constructing genealogical tables. This gave birth to his seminal work on **native kinship systems**. He followed the historical method similar to the German school. His method of statistical analysis in fact brought precision into social anthropology. Rivers went on to make some of the most significant contributions in the field of kinship studies along functionalist lines when he argued that kinship institutions played a central role in any society and were functionally interconnected to other social institutions that made up a society. He wrote his *History of Melanesian Society* in 1914, several volumes along both evolutionary and historical lines and is regarded as the most significant quantitative analyst of his times as well as ethnologist. Here he presented the diffusionist thesis for the development of culture in the south-west Pacific. He also worked among the Todas of south India (found in the Nilgiri hills). He questioned his informants through an interpreter and observed what he saw as survivals of an earlier stage in society. It is he who also first proposed that marriage rules are different in different kinship systems and therefore societies.

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

Interesting detail

A strange side to River's!

Interestingly Rivers's suffered from a lack of visual memory, due to a childhood genetic defect or physical trauma. He could not remember visually what he saw. This was dangerous for an anthropologist for whom "description" was the key to research. Nevertheless when he came to the Islands, his first task was to examine first hand the colour vision of the islanders and compare it to that of Europeans. In the course of his examinations of the visual acuity of the natives, Rivers found that the colour vision of Papuans was not the same type as that of Europeans; they possessed no word for blue, and an intelligent native found nothing unnatural in applying the same name to the brilliant blue sea or sky and to the deepest black! Rivers was also a doctor during the first world war treating patients for neurological problems following the war.

Source: Original

(e) C.G. Seligman (1873-1940)

Equally important was the work of C.G. Seligman who was also on the expedition and was trained in medicine.

He continued to carry out and encourage fieldwork from London on his return. Seligman was the first to engage in cultural analysis of the language of tribes across the world such as the Sudanese tribes. He also greatly influenced the work of later scholars such as Malinowski and Evans-Pritchard. In his work is reflected the vast interests that had begun to develop under the rubric of Anthropology and how this discipline brought together scholars from different fields.

The Torres Straits expedition was 'revolutionary' in many other respects as well. For the first time, British anthropology had been removed from its 'armchair' and placed into a sound empirical basis, providing the model for future anthropologists to follow.

Through this expedition the method of ethnography and fieldwork had been born.



(In the Torres Straits: Haddon is , sitting ,Rivers is standing first from the left and Seligman, second from the left)

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

(f) A.R. Radcliffe-Brown (1881-1955)

The British anthropologist Sir A.R. Radcliffe Brown, was deeply influenced by the work of Spencer and liked to elaborate the analogy between biological systems and social organisms. He believed that the anthropologist was seeking like a theoretical sociologist generalizations about human society and thus defined his work as a "comparative sociology". He argued that what an anthropologist seeks is a functional unity between parts of a whole that reveals some kind of a system. This unity could be seen or understood only by living in a society and observing its parts, i.e., by doing fieldwork. He was seen as a structural-functionalist but often denied it and carefully distinguished his concept of function from that of Malinowski, who openly advocated functionalism. While Malinowski's functionalism claimed that social practices could be directly explained by their ability to satisfy basic biological needs, Radcliffe-Brown rejected this as baseless. He nevertheless brought the French and British schools together. Radcliffe-Brown evaluated the function of religion in terms of its contribution to the survival of society as a whole.



Along with Malinowski his was a view that was humanistic and instrumental. Radcliffe Brown's most major and most lasting work was *The Andaman Islanders* published in 1922. It was based on extensive fieldwork on the islands.

For a generation of scholars tired of piecemeal analysis and ideas, he provided a bridge between theories. His work and ideas suited the material of the early fieldworkers and put paid to the work of American scholars and refined that of the Germans and the French.

The empirical value of his work however decreased as his statements about the nature of society became more dogmatic. Radcliffe-Brown rejected both of the views of evolutionism and diffusionism because of the untestable nature of historical reconstructions. Instead, he argued for the use of the comparative method to find regularities in human societies and thereby build up a genuinely scientific knowledge of social life.

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

Radcliffe –brown became the keenest empiricist in England and had integrated the observations of the anthropologist within the world of sociological speculation. He argued for a 'natural science of society'. He claimed that there was an independent role for social anthropology here, separate from psychology, though not in conflict with it. This was because psychology was to be the study of individual mental processes, while social anthropology was to study processes of interaction between people (social relations). He claimed that existing social scientific disciplines were arbitrary and did not have any principled reason to exist; once our knowledge of society is sufficient, he argued, we will be able to form sub-disciplines of anthropology centered on relatively isolated parts of the social structure.

Along with Malinowski he is considered the father of modern social anthropology

(g) Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942)

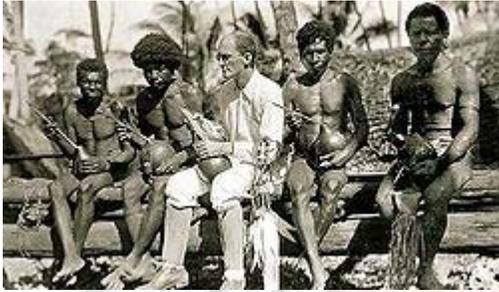
Bronislaw Malinowski, was a Polish anthropologist who contributed significantly to the British tradition. He represented what is called the structural –functional school. He is credited with some of the most significant ethnographic work in the discipline. Malinowski was a student of James Frazer , C.G. Seligman and Radcliffe-Brown. While Radcliffe-Brown was studying the Andaman Islanders , Malinowski was busy in the same years working among the Melanesians in Papua New Guinea.



He was deeply influenced by Frazer's *The Golden Bough*. His study of these islanders and their way of life became a passion for him and from his fieldwork emerged some of the most in depth studies of a society and its customs and culture. In 1914 he traveled to Papua New Guinea and was stranded on the islands due to the outbreak of the WW I. Malinowski was not allowed to return to Europe from the British-controlled region because he was a Pole from Austria-Hungary. Australian authorities gave him two options: to be exiled to the Trobriand Islands, or to face internment for the duration of the war. Malinowski chose the Trobriand Islands. It was during this period while living on the Islands, that he conducted his in-depth study or fieldwork on the method of economic and ritual exchange among the islands, called the Kula.

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

Malinowski's method of data collection advanced the practice of **participant observation**, which remains the hallmark of ethnographic research today. Fieldwork for him was an emotional and moral engagement with a people. He pointed out in the 1930's the importance and need for studying the culture of a society through empirical analysis.



(Malinowski with the islanders)

Malinowski's was one of the few anthropologists who drew inspiration from the school of functionalism expounded in the work of Spencer and Durkheim. In his research the idea of function found its greatest elaboration. Malinowski believed that customs find their survival in the usefulness they have for a society, thus stating that social organization was closely connected to biological need. Man needs to reproduce to survive like all other species but what distinguished man from animal was his ability to live as a collective group or organized society and has the ability to transmit his culture to the next generation. The transmission of knowledge and heritage needs institutions such as marriage, family and exchange.

Interesting detail

Statistics and Anthropology

As the discipline grew and tried to make its observations more exact, statistical methods began to be used. Statistical thinking had come to Europe between 1820- 1850. In France, Durkheim had used the method in his pioneering work on suicide.

Many argued that laws could not be identified for subjective issues which were the content of anthropological research, but generalizations could be made. E.B. Tylor had in 1899 made a presentation to the Royal Anthropological Institute using statistical correlations in an attempt to carry out a comparison to understand marriage and customs in 350 societies. Even Frazer had tried to use statistics in the comparative method.

Source: Original

(h) E.E. Evans-Pritchard (1902-1973)

Towards the end of the constructive period came the work of the British anthropologist E.E. Evans-Pritchard (1902-1973).

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

He was deeply influenced by the work of Seligman and began his career with field work in 1926 with the Azande, a people of the upper Nile. This resulted in both a doctorate (in 1927) and his classic *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande* (in 1937). Evans-Pritchard continued to lecture at the LSE and conduct research until 1930, when he began a new research project among the Nuer tribe in the Sudan. After his return to Oxford, he continued his research on Nuer. It was in this time frame that he was exposed to the work of Radcliffe-Brown and his structural functionalism approach.

Evans-Pritchard argued that what Anthropology was looking for were patterns and not laws and patterns of behaviour needed to be studied to understand the nature of societies. He also believed in the importance of history and understanding the past to be able to know the nature of the patterns of simple societies in the present. Such an approach was more historical than scientific. This led to a debate in the British Universities particularly in Cambridge on how to make anthropology more scientific given that its subject matter was society and culture.



Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

(Evans-Pritchard among his Nuer people)

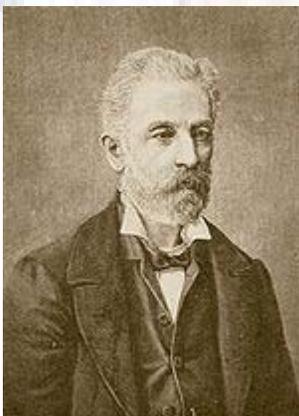
It is to the credit of Evans Pritchard that along with Malinowski and Radcliffe Brown he helped establish the **branch of social anthropology** as a study of the nature of social organization, religion, law and other institutions in the simpler societies. Several of his works on the Nuer, as mentioned above, are seen as classics of British social anthropology. His emphasis on the importance of social structure based on this work led to a shift in theoretical traditions and the birth of the importance of structuralism over structural functionalism as pioneered by Radcliffe-Brown.

2.6.3 The German Tradition of cultural anthropology

While anthropology was making a shift from the branch of physical to the cultural and the social in Britain, a similar interest in cultural studies had arisen in Germany. Here the school of cultural anthropology took shape with an emphasis on the notion of diffusion of cultures through contact and the idea of a "psychic" unity of mankind that led him to create similar institution, behaviour and practices.

(a) P.W.A Bastian (1826-1905)

One of the first investigators to attempt a cultural study of the habits and customs of primitive people was the German traveler and scholar, P.W.A. Bastian. He engaged as a ships doctor and travelled to different parts of the world. He was interested in religious beliefs and was struck by the similarities he found where he went. He attributed this to the psychological ability of the human race to think similarly about culture. He was a scholar with penetrating insight and believed that people in different parts of the world shared similar objects, ideas and beliefs. This was the result of what he called the psychic unity of mankind (see Tylor section 2.6.2 above). This confronted the evolution ideas proposed by Darwin.



He believed that primitive people reflected many commonalities in their cultural lives because of diffusion of culture through migration. Primitive man had folk ideas which were largely confined to a region which through migration mingled with other ideas and created the culture of civilized societies. He was thus one of the first to write on hybridization of cultures through diffusion. Bastian who travelled across China, Malaysia, India and then Africa, wrote extensively on the culture of these societies.

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

Best known for his contribution to ethnography and anthropology, Bastian did his most detailed work on the Congo region in 1859 .

He also stressed the importance of studying cultural contacts and the history of ideas and institutions. In his work two schools of anthropology were thus united – evolutionary and the diffusionist . In 1859 he wrote a popular account of his travels along with an ambitious three volume work entitled *Man in History*, which became one of his most well-known works. In 1861 he undertook a four-year trip to South East Asia and his account of this trip, *The People of East Asia* ran to six volumes.

Between 1865 and 1873, he organized ethnological studies in Germany and transferred a great number of artifacts to the Royal Museum in Berlin. He emphasized the need for an independent society for anthropological studies in Berlin. From 1875-1876 he traveled in the West Indies and Central and South America; and between 1877-1878, he traveled to Persia, India, China, Australia and New Zealand. He wrote extensively on the life of the Polynesians. He also organized several expeditions between 1889-1898, across South America and Asia to gather further information on cultures, institutions and belief systems . He also wrote extensively on Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism. He is regarded as one of the greatest ethnographers and contributors to the discipline of Anthropology.

He was however **not an Anthropologist**.

(b) F .Ratzel (1844-1904)

Bastian's young contemporary Ratzel was also a traveler who opposed his theories. Ratzel believed that not all humans were innovative and so cultural elements probably developed in one place and spread from there to the different parts of the world (a fact today that both paleontology and archaeology confirm), through migration. He looked therefore for similarities between objects found in different parts of the world . His theories have come to be called *diffusionism*.

(c) Leo Frobenius (1873-1938)

Leo Frobenius was Ratzel's pupil and made significant contribution to ethnographic research . He engaged not only in travels but also collected significant artifacts for ethnographic museums. Based on his travels Frobenius developed the theory of shared culture further, by trying to trace the path of diffusion . While carrying out a study of the cultures of Melanesia and West Africa in 1898-99, he came to the conclusion that there was a genetic connection between elements of these cultures as well as between the cultures as a whole. This was similar to the idea of the psychic unity of humans proposed by Bastian.

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology



Of course the diffusionists engaged in a scholarly battle with the idea of evolution. This debate was important for the growth of the discipline and enabled the conclusion that a society and culture were the product of multiple factors, including the history of the given society.

Interesting detail

Frobenius and his many interests

Frobenius was fascinated by the cultural beauty of the African people and their artifacts. His collection of about 4700 pre-historical African stone paintings, are currently in museums in Germany. Frobenius is a figure of renown in many African countries even today. In particular, he influenced Leopold Sedar Senghor, one of the founders of Negritude, who once claimed that Frobenius had "given Africa back its dignity and identity." Aimé Césaire also quoted Frobenius as praising African people as being "civilized to the marrow of their bones", as opposed to the degrading vision encouraged by colonial propaganda. He was a man of varied interest and in the 1930s, he claimed that he had found proof of the existence of the lost continent of Atlantis.

Source: Original

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

2.6.4 The French tradition of Anthropology

The French tradition was more sociological than anthropological in this period of time. Nevertheless there were some significant sociological works that had their base in ethnographic data collection and contributed to the growth of an anthropological tradition in the mid 20th century. By the end of the 19th century the anthropological descent line had begun to express a theoretical shift as seen in the US (see section below). The Americans were the first outside Germany who spoke of the need to break away from the evolutionary school and to insist on historical analysis. This influenced the British anthropologist of the early 20th century and caused them to direct their interest to the study of contemporary society, neglecting archaeology and physical anthropology which till then were integral to the subject

(a) Emile Durkheim (1858-1917)

The French anthropological tradition was led by none other than the sociologist Emile Durkheim. Durkheim followed the British sociologist, Herbert Spencer in asserting that there was a specifically social aspect of reality that could not be reduced to the behaviour of individual organisms.

Social facts had to be studied as things which can exist independent of the consciousness of the individual people who make up society. Much of Durkheim's work was concerned with industrialized Europe. But he also applied himself to the problems of simpler societies. (We see this in his *Division of Labour* where he studies the nature of solidarity in both simple and complex society, the former being mechanical and in the latter, organic). Durkheim also combined in him the scientific technique and the method of fieldwork. Based on this his significant contribution was his study of religion in simple society and the role of religion in symbolizing social relationships.

Using the method of positivism, inherited from Comte (see e-lesson on Rise of Sociology), Durkheim set out to study the Australian Aborigine, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. He wrote this seminal work on tribal religion, as an attempt to explain the fact that man was a social being, and that religion had its beginnings in totemism and its is society that inspires man the totemic emblem stand for the collective social group. He also argued that magic was the result of a social agreement and an expression of community desire.

The growth of cultural and social anthropology in France in this period owes much to the lucidity and analytical skills of the French authors which other than Durkheim include H. Hubert and Marcel Mauss who wrote on sacrifice; and A. Van Gennep who wrote on rites of passage showing how rites represent not only an evolution of the stages in one's life but also social status.

The work of this French sociologist Durkheim, influenced deeply the work of the British anthropologists Bronislaw Malinowski and A.R. Radcliffe-Brown (see section 2.6.2 above). The former relied on psychology to answer man questions, but the latter for whom social structure was a central idea followed Durkheim closely.

(b) Marcel Mauss (1872 – 1950)

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

Mauss was a sociologist and anthropologist as well as the nephew of Durkheim. Mauss' academic work traversed the boundaries between Sociology and Anthropology. As an anthropologist he worked on issues such as magic sacrifice and gift exchange. Mauss had a profound influence upon the founder of structural anthropology, Claude Levi-Strauss, who is regarded as the most significant anthropologist in France in the mid-20th century.

2.6.5 The American Tradition of cultural and social anthropology

The 19th century saw the coming of age of the discipline of Anthropology and also a significant shift in the social sciences from Europe to America. American anthropology was a diversified subject that incorporated other subjects such as archaeology, cultural history and physical anthropology. It had close links also with psychology and biology. It had a distinct subject matter namely it was a science of culture. In fact in many British universities, Anthropology was well established long before Sociology was accepted and in many American Universities the two departments were combined.

(a) Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-1881)

Morgan was a pioneering American anthropologist evolutionist and social theorist. He is regarded as one of the greatest social scientists of the nineteenth century in the United States. He is best known for his work on kinship and social structure, his theories of social evolution, and his ethnography of the Iroquois, who had already been described by Lafitau (see section 2.4 above).

Morgan presented the kinship system of the Iroquois with unprecedented nuance. After putting aside scholarship to devote himself to his own family and his work as a lawyer, his interest in kinship and human social organization was reignited in the late 1850s. This time, Morgan expanded his research far beyond the Iroquois. American and European scholars had widely varying ideas about the origin of Native Americans. Morgan had begun to believe they originated in Asia. He thought he could prove it by a study of kinship terms used by people in Asia as well as tribes in North America. He believed in the idea of monogenesis as against the idea of polygenesis proposed by the German scholar Meiners (see section 2.5.2 above).

He determined to collect and sort the systems of relationship terms used by tribes spanning the greater part of the United States of America, and then collect data from peoples across the globe. With the help of local contacts and after intensive correspondence over the course of years, this research culminated in Morgan's seminal *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity* (1871). In this work, Morgan set forth his argument for the unity of humankind. An argument similar to Bastian's (see section 2.6.3 above). Morgan thus became increasingly interested in the comparative study of kinship (family) relations as a window into understanding larger social dynamics; he saw kinship relations as a basic part of society.

Morgan also presented a sophisticated schema of social evolution based upon the relationship terms, the categories of kinship, used by peoples around the world. Through his analysis of kinship terms, Morgan discerned that the structure of the family and social institutions develop and change according to a specific sequence. In the years that followed, Morgan developed his theories. Combined with an

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

exhaustive study of classic Greek and Roman sources, he produced his most significant work *Ancient Society* in 1877, which deeply influenced Karl Marx.

Morgan elaborated upon his theory of social evolution and believed that there was an interplay between the evolution of technology, of family relations, of property relations, of the larger social structures and systems of governance, and intellectual development.

Looking across a vastly expanded span of human existence, Morgan presented three major stages of human life and was influenced in his analysis by the German scholar Klemm (see section 2.5.2) .These were

- Savagery
- Barbarism
- Civilization

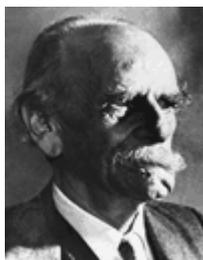


He lived among the Iroquois tribe and in 1851 published the monograph *The League of the Iroquois*, which was a description of the political system of the tribe .Morgan learned the language of these people to understand the terminology and kinship relations and found that at the center of this system was the individual whom he called *Ego*. Today this a standard technique in anthropology.

(b) Franz Boas 1858-1942

An important role in the development of American anthropology was played by Franz Boas , regarded as the **father of modern anthropology** ,who insisted that cultures were a product of several processes overtime and that there were historical connections between cultural elements. He set very high standards for all ethnographers when he published his *The Central Eskimo* in 1888.He argued that tribes were influenced by their environment and described in minute detail their culture and practices and presented a functionalist understanding of culture

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology



Boas was trained in the natural sciences and turned to Anthropology after a trip to the Eskimo community to study the geography of the region. The scientist in him made him skeptical about prevalent evolutionary theories. He was interested in how particular cultures grew and contributed significantly to all branches of Anthropology. Boas's work among the Eskimos set the beginnings of what became the central methodology to anthropology, namely, **fieldwork**. He was a physical anthropologist and his work became crucial to the growth of the discipline in America.

With a growing interest in culture, Boas engaged in fieldwork extensively and turned to cultural anthropology after he lived among the Eskimo from 1883-1884; from 1887-1902 he was in charge of the affairs of the Jesup North Pacific expedition which aimed at establishing the relationship between the aboriginal people of the north east of Asia and North America. As a leading cultural anthropologist, he spent a large part of his career collecting artifacts for American museums. Boas did not reject the comparative method and sought to understand cultural history of a community and then examine the laws governing social life. One of Boas's most important books, *The Mind of Primitive Man*, published in 1911, integrated his theories concerning the history and development of cultures and established a program that would dominate American anthropology for the next fifteen years. In this study he established that in any given population, biology, language, material and symbolic culture.

Interesting detail

Boas's eccentricities

While Frobenius was fascinated by the idea of collecting artifacts as representing cultures, Boas was deeply critical of this act of displaying artifacts in museums based on an evolutionary understanding of culture. He found strange ways of protesting such as placing himself on exhibition in a museum in 1894 alongside a group of Kwakiutl Indians.

Source: Original

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

Boas encouraged the "four field" concept of anthropology; he personally contributed to:

- physical anthropology
- Linguistics
- Archaeology
- Cultural anthropology

His work in these fields was pioneering: in physical anthropology he led scholars away from static taxonomical classifications of race, to an emphasis on human biology and evolution; in linguistics he broke through the limitations of classic philology and established some of the central problems in modern linguistics and cognitive anthropology; in cultural anthropology he along with Polish-English anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, established the contextualist approach to culture, cultural relativism, and the participant-observation method of fieldwork.

Reconceptualising Anthropology through the integration of different objects of anthropological research into one over-arching object, was one of Boas's fundamental contributions to the discipline, and came to characterize American anthropology against that of England, France and Germany. This approach defines as its object the human species as a totality. He understood the essence of the human species to be the tremendous variation in human form and activity (an approach that parallels Charles Darwin's approach to species in general). Boas was critical of theories of evolution and believed in rigorous empirical study. His orientation led Boas to promote a cultural anthropology based on the methodological tools of:

- empiricism
- ethnographic fieldwork
- cultural relativism

Boas's paid great attention to history. Boas and his students understood that as people try to make sense of their world they seek to integrate its disparate elements, with the result that different cultures could be characterized as having different configurations or patterns. His interest in culture made Boas an immensely influential figure throughout the development of folklore as a discipline that studied tribal culture. In order to professionalize folklore, Boas introduced the strict scientific methods to the discipline. Boas championed the use of exhaustive research, fieldwork, and strict scientific guidelines in folklore scholarship. This rigid scientific methodology was eventually accepted as one of the major tenets of folklore scholarship, and Boas's methods remain in use even today.

Many British and American anthropologists call themselves cultural anthropologists and maintain that their primary interest is culture. They are descendants of Franz Boas and E.B. Tylor.

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

Interesting detail
Boas's student
<p>Ruth Benedict (1887–1948) was an American anthropologist and folklorist and a student of Boas. She was engaged in extensive fieldwork at a time when few women entered the field of academics and held positions of authority.</p> <p>Benedict held the post of President of the American Anthropological Association and was also a prominent member of the American Folklore Society. She can be viewed as a transitional figure in her field. She redirected both anthropology and folklore away from the limited confines of culture-trait diffusion studies and towards theories of performance as integral to the interpretation of culture. In her book <i>Patterns of Culture</i>, she tried to show each culture has its own moral imperatives that can be understood only if one studies that culture as a whole. It was wrong, she felt, to disparage the customs or values of a culture different from one's own. Thus she was critical of racist and evolutionary theories. She worked among some of the most significant tribal groups in the Americas such as the Kwakiutl of the Alaskan coast and the Dobu of New Guinea.</p>
Source: Original

2.7 The Critical Period : 1900-1935

The period between 1900 -1935 is called the critical period because:

- there was a growing critique of the 19th century scholars
- and there was a chance that Anthropology would lose itself to super specialization.

The work in this period is diverse and scattered. But what is significant is the clear definition of the boundaries of the sub branches within Anthropology by the 1930's. This definition was based on the work done in the constructive period in the different intellectual traditions across Europe and America. As was seen in the above sections in each tradition the branches of physical, cultural and social anthropology became more clearly defined.

The critical period is marked by the further specialization of areas within the discipline that had begun to take shape in the Constructive period (see section above). These as we saw had got defined in the traditions from Britain, Germany, France and the US. This clarity of subject matter of Anthropology was because of several reasons:

- First, the belief that knowledge is what distinguished civilization from other lesser cultures which therefore needed to be studied as the "other".
- Second, when Anthropology began to grow as a discipline, other specialized disciplines were already engaged in the study of other people and cultures. This influenced the path taken by anthropologist. Consider for instance the contribution of Darwin to the growth of this discipline.

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

- Third, it was easy to study a people and community that were remote and intriguing that did not threaten established Eurocentric notions but only strengthened them.
- Fourth, the spread of European imperialism centuries had created contact between communities' races and cultures.
- The early 19th century was marked by a visible a tendency to make a transition from the rationalistic armchair theorizing of the Enlightenment to the methodical empirical study of social facts .

Thus by the 20th century and the beginning of the critical period three broad areas that defined Anthropology came to be accepted globally:

- The study of the physical characteristics that distinguish races from each other and the influence of the environment on man, became the branch of **physical anthropology**.
- Where anthropology looks at the history of how man acts in order to furnish the material that records how events occurred and are shaped and influence man, we have **cultural anthropology** .This branch deals with material culture. Many scholars also refer to the branch of cultural anthropology as ethnology. This branch deals with a comparative study of the physical and material and social cultures of the races of mankind.
- That part of anthropology that deals with non-material culture or social phenomena is called **social anthropology**.

As the discipline grew in the early 20th century it also became clear that it could not survive in isolation of other disciplines given the nature of its subject matter. Thus in this period we find Anthropology grew as a synthesis of ideas from other sciences. Also central to Anthropology was its method of direct and in-depth first analysis or participant observation based on field work i.e., living with the subject. It was this displacement in the direction of empiricism that sealed the qualitative character Anthropology.

2.8 ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE 20TH CENTURY

2.8.1 Its decline

The Critical period saw significant attempts at ethnographic research in different parts of the world. At the same time the anthropologist was threatened .This was because from the development of the discipline it was clear that as long as there were indigenous populations the anthropologist had his subject matter but as the traditional cultures are assimilated it was believed that Anthropology would lose its subjects. Further with the end of WWII, and the beginning of de-colonization many believed that the discipline of Anthropology was in danger of losing its human subjects. In fact following their subjugation, physical decimation and cultural deracination over centuries, the primitive people were no longer available in their pristine condition.

1.8.2 Anthropology and colonialism

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

As a result over the 20th century a conspicuous theme in the self critical disciplinary history of Anthropology has been the **colonial knowledge –power thesis** which was central during the colonial and post colonial regimes .This close link between Anthropology and colonialism received much attention in western academia well into the 20th century.

In 1965 the famous French sociologist , Claude Levi-Strauss in an address to the Smithsonian institute spoke of the legacy of Anthropology as emerging from a colonial and racial mind when he said that Anthropology was the daughter to an era of violence.

It is recognized by scholars that historically, through colonialism large parts of humanity were rendered subservient to a minority and millions were placed in bondage. According to Joan Vincent, **British Anthropology** was from the beginning, implicated in the colonial experience. It began as an armchair discipline, when anthropologists relied on data collected by administrators, missionaries, travelers, traders; and then its professionalization in the universities, institutions, associations and journals.

American anthropology also had an internal colonialism dimension –a Bureau of Ethnology was established in the latter part of the 19th century to study the native American Indian .We also find that American imperialism was also reflected in an increased anthropological interest in the Phillipines, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico,over the 20th century.

1.8.3 A Critique

Given its subject matter, Anthropology has thus often conflicted with the administration and this has had an impact on the definition and theoretical orientations of the discipline,

Talal Asad the historian has argued that Anthropology is rooted in an unequal power encounter between the West and the third world. In this encounter ethnographic and historical knowledge of the colonized domains not only enabled the colonizers to “know “ and administrate territories but also reinforced the inequalities in capacities between European and non European worlds .

Thus there was a clear connection between anthropological knowledge and the expansion of European power. The anthropological gaze also fixed certain sociological categories in the societies that it studied.It is because of its blinkered vision and roots in colonialism, that Anthropology has been severely criticized. Such critique arose as from the beginning it was clear that racial and civilisational dominance were the driving force behind the anthropological enterprise. This critical perspective continued well into the 1950-1960's.

In the 1960's and 70's, following America's disastrous participation in the Vietnam war there arose a heightened awareness of how anthropological evidence could be used for aggression and imperialism.

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

Interesting detail

Project Camelot

The 20th century was marked by an increased participation of anthropologist in government policy formulation. A case in point is what came to be known in America as **Project Camelot**. This was a social science project undertaken by the American army and the Defense department in the early 20th century. The goal of the project was to assess the causes of violent social rebellion and to identify the actions a government can take to protect itself. This proposal caused much controversy among social scientists, many of whom voiced concerns that such a study would end up misusing social science research and particularly anthropological studies which looked at the culture's of communities in-depth.

Some however disagreed and there were also voices that social science research was an appropriate way to avoid cultural conflict. The latter was not a unique idea, as the US had recognized that much of the reason they went to war with Japan came from Japan attacking Pearl Harbor, and commissioned the anthropologist Ruth Benedict, a student of Boas (see section 2.6.5 above) to write a widely distributed book on Japanese society and beliefs. Due to protest from social scientists and others the Project was shut down in 1965.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_Camelot

In the 1970' and 80's, another set of epistemological and theoretical questions became central to anthropological history.

This came from literary criticism and post structural theory which together questioned "ethnographic authority".

Loop holes were found in the method of fieldwork which was not always detached and objective. Often Anthropologists were banned from doing research in some countries. Often they posed as economists or sociologist's .Often the validity of the information gathered was challenged and the subjectivity questioned.

Anthropological knowledge came to be seen as biased and asymmetric

In fact critics stressed the need to have more audio and visual documentation of subject matter.

From the course of its historical development an important fact that emerged about anthropology was that it was more than just study of the consequences of colonialism.

It was in fact a critique of colonialism as well bringing to the public questions about racism, and creating an interest in "other cultures", defending alternate ways of life and thinking.

According to Veena Das (2003), the end of the colonial regimes and the emergence of new nation states provided an important anchor for reorienting the concerns of the social sciences in both the metropolitan countries and the colonies.

Edward Said's pioneering work and critique of Orientalism provided a much needed impetus for the emergence of what came to be known as post colonial theory. His work paved the way for a new alliance between critical literary studies and the rise of a new Anthropology.

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

Exercises

Essay questions

- 1.1 Discuss how the missionary activity, gave birth to the discipline of anthropology .
- 1.2 What was the contribution of Frazer and Tylor to the rise of British anthropology?
- 1.3 Discuss how the German tradition in the Constructive period dealt with the idea of diffusion.
- 1.4 What was the contribution of Franz Boas to the birth of cultural and social anthropology?
- 1.5 Critically examine the relationship between anthropology and colonialism?

Objective questions

Question Number	Type of question	LOD
1	Match the following	

Question

Match the following:

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| a) A.C.Haddon | i) Trobriand Islands |
| b) Malinowski | ii) Torres Strait |
| c) Boas | iii) The Iroquois |
| d) Morgan | iv) diffusionism |
| e) Bastian | v) The Eskimo |
| f) Durkheim | vi) The Andaman Islands |
| g) Radcliffe-Brown | vii) Australian aborigine |

Correct Answer / Option(s)

- a) and ii)
- b) and i)
- c) and v)
- d) and iii)
- e) and iv)
- f) and vi)
- g) and vi)

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

Justification/ Feedback for the correct answer

Haddon led the Torres Strait expedition, hence a) matches ii). Malinowski did his fieldwork among the Trobriand Islanders, hence b) matches i). Boas's pioneered ethnography through his work among the Eskimo, hence c) matches v). Morgan carried out pioneering work among the Iroquois Indians therefore d) matches iii). Bastian pioneered the concept of diffusionism so e) matches iv). Durkheim wrote his major work in religion based on research among the Australian aborigines, so f) matches vii). Radcliffe-Brown studied the Andaman Islanders in 1922 ,so g) matches vi).

Resource/Hints/Feedback for the wrong answer

Other combinations are false due to reasons mentioned above.

Reviewer's Comment:

Question Number	Type of question	LOD
2	True or False	

Question

True or False?

- There is a close relationship between missionary activity and anthropology.
- Scholars of the convergence period were deeply ethnocentric.
- The various branches of anthropology were defined in the constructive period.
- The German tradition in the constructive period was supportive s of Darwin.

Correct Answer / Option(s)

- True: Because it was the missionaries who wanted to convert pagan populations who first carried out detailed descriptive studies of native people from colonized nations.

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • True: Most of the scholars of this period were deeply conscious of the superiority of their culture, intellect and genetics. • True: The various traditions in the constructive period contributed systematically to the study of physical, cultural and social anthropology. • False: German scholars during the constructive period were clearly anti-Darwinists as they believed in the idea of diffusion of culture which goes against the notion of the primitive being savage ,which was believed in by Darwin.
--	---

Reviewer's Comment:

--

Question Number	Type of question	LOD
3	Multiple choice	

Question

<p>Choose the correct answer:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That part of anthropology that deals with non-material culture or social phenomena is called (a) linguistics (b) evolution (c) social anthropology (d)diffusionism 2. Boas was an immensely influential figure throughout the development discipline that studied tribal culture. This was called (a) Project Camelot (b) folklore (c) comparative method (d) empiricism 3. Morgan is best known for his work on (a) evolution (b) racism (c) kinship (d)religion 4. Evans-Pritchard contributed significantly to establishing the branch of (a) ethnology (b) social anthropology (c) negro studies (d) folklore 5. The psychic unity of humans was proposed by (a) Herodotus (b) Lafitau (c) James Hunt (d) Bastian 6. Malinowski pioneered the method of research called (a) participant observation (b) statistics (c) selection (d) social arithmetic 7. Frazer called magic a (a) game (b) innovation (c) bastard science (d) empirical tool
--

Correct Answer /	
-------------------------	--

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

Option(s)	1. Answer: (c) 2. Answer: (b) 3. Answer: (c) 4. Answer : (b) 5. Answer : (d) 6. Answer : (a) 7. Answer : (c)
------------------	--

Justification/ Feedback for the correct answer

--

Resource/Hints/Feedback for the wrong answer

<p>a) That part of anthropology that deals with non-material culture or social phenomena is very specifically called social anthropology. Cultural anthropology deals with material culture.</p> <p>b) Boas was an immensely influential figure throughout the development discipline that studied tribal culture. This discipline was called folklore studies as it tried to understand the culture of simple or folk people through their traditional narratives</p> <p>c) Morgan is best known for his work on kinship and social structure and in fact pioneered the study of terminology as well</p> <p>d) Evans-Pritchard contributed significantly to establishing the branch of social anthropology through his study of social institutions</p> <p>e) The psychic unity of humans was proposed by Bastian</p> <p>f) Malinowski pioneered the method of research called participant observation through his work among the Trobriand Islanders amongst whom ehe lived to gather a first hand account of their lives.</p> <p>g) Frazer called magic a bastard science because it tried to explain supernatural phenomena through scientific principles which were however not wholly accurate</p>

Reviewer's Comment:

--

Institutionalisation of Disciplines: A History Of Anthropology

Glossary

Ethnocentrism :the belief in superiority of ones own culture in comparison to another

Ethnography: which was the description of people and the comparative study of societies

Fieldwork :the method of studying a people or community by engaging in practical research rather than relying on archives

Polygenist: theory of human origins which believes that there are multiple lineages of human origin

Social arithmetic: the tabulation of customs to see how they are interrelated

Further readings

Das Veena(ed).2003. The Oxford Companion to Sociology and Social Anthropology.
New Delhi : Oxford University Press
Said Edward. 1979.Orientalism.Newport:Vintage Books