Ethnographic Salvage and the Shaping of Anthropology[1]

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IT IS AXIOMATIC that without the data derived from observation there can be no science; the organization of the particular kind of information produced by controlled experience constitutes those more-or-less extensive systems of explanation that provide us with a scientific view of the various universes that we occupy and seek to understand. The notion, however, that data collection is itself value free, that facts are facts, is old-fashioned and naïve; it oversimplifies the understanding of the scientific process and invests the extensive bodies of "fact" with a false sense of truth. It should not surprise those engaged in the search for understanding and knowledge that the kinds of data we seek—and therefore find—are conditioned by the particular problems we define and, in a more general way, by our view of the universe. Similarly, the kinds of data we collect and the particular viewpoint each of us selects skew the resulting theoretical systems. Science in general, or any scientific system in particular, is culture-based in that it reflects the particular values, the particular epistemological view, that a society accepts, sanctions, and uses as a basis for the behavior of its members. A clear example of this occurs in the history of human biology. The science of human biology—and its derivative, physical anthropology—is a product of medical, and more particularly surgical, interests. These inevitably emphasized the pathological in contrast to the normal. In fact, it is difficult to grasp the concept of normality within a population except in terms of the pathological whose very existence demands its recognition. Thus the valuable contributions of John Hunter during the eighteenth century derived from his collections and systematization of the abnormal in man, and it was this emphasis on the abnormal, the pathological, that channeled the discussions as it provided the data for the interpretations of racial differences, their origins, and their meanings throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries. Only with the emergence of the concept of population and its linkage to genetics does a pathological view of human variability and change for the meaning of races lose its appeal and importance. There is then a complex interplay of data and theory in any science that affects both the kinds of data collected and the theory that results. Further, the exact nature of this interplay is situationally determined, that is, it is a function of the particular intellectual milieu that itself is a product of a time-centered sociocultural system. Thus, science, whatever the phenomena with which it deals, is a part of culture, and each science is part of a culture.

Man's self-awareness accounts in only a very general way for his anthropological concerns. If one adds the awareness of differences occasioned by the group contacts that human mobility ensures, it is not difficult to recognize that the existence and consequent description of human differences—any of which could have severe social consequences—are continuing problems in the creation and maintenance of "thought systems" and/or culturally defined environments. Such a process was particularly noteworthy in the Western intellectual tradition not only because of the increased awareness of human differences that, at various times, more intense mobility and migration produced, but also because of the ability, through writing, to record such differences, a record that in its accumulation provided data that demanded some form of classification and systematization, which, in turn, raised the common problems of the classificatory level of modern science.

Both the accumulation and use of the data concerning human differences led within the

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Western intellectual tradition to traditional ways of explaining them. By tradition I mean here a continuing—and generally unquestioned—notion regarding the manner in which data were to be collected or the purposes for which they were collected or the kinds of explanatory systems for which they could be used. Much of what passes for anthropology prior to the nineteenth century falls within a long-standing tradition of collecting and compiling. This tradition is deeply rooted in Western intellectual history, as Margaret Hodgen (1964) has amply demonstrated (see also Myres 1908), and it provides us with most early accounts of exotic peoples. Both collection and compilation had a prescientific character in that they were neither analytic in character nor theoretical or explanatory in purpose. The stimulus for such collections was essentially the utility of the information for the solution of practical concerns or the illustration of general or universal cosmological schemes of which man was only a part.

In commenting on the "ethnological observations" of Friar John de Plano Carpini (d. 1252) and Friar William Rubruck (d. 1293), who were sent by the Pope to China during the thirteenth century and the trader Marco Polo who followed them (d. 1324), Hodgen notes that their descriptive and on-the-spot accounts were not motivated by scientific curiosity.

> The accounts of the two missionaries . . . were practical intelligence reports, made at the behest of an ecclesiastical superior, in order to obtain quick but essentially superficial information concerning the manners of a potentially hostile adversary. The Polo report . . . was written by a trader in the interest of traders [1964:102–103].

The *Jesuit Relations* were reports designed to stimulate interest and support back home for the missionizing activities of the priests. And much of the eighteenth-century ethnographic data was compiled to satisfy the needs of the collecting craze or to fit and support some theory about the nature of man that had been spun out of the operations of reason.

By the eighteenth century, these data, often accumulated only for their exotic interest, came to be used traditionally either to explain man's nature or to unravel his history—goals that often were not readily separated. The collection of data for their own intrinsic interest or value, the essential stimulus for the formation of collections, gave way to their use for the illustration of general systems or comprehensive statements as to the nature of man. Collection was inspired by the necessities imposed by theoretical schemes that possessed logical rather than empirical foundations. These are some of the different motivations that have powered the collection of ethonographic data and an interest in peoples whose ways of life contrasted so sharply with that commonly known to the European.

During the nineteenth century people began to sense the urgency of collection for the sake of preserving data whose extinction was feared. In this awareness the tradition of salvage begins and from this derives its force. This tradition of salvage is the subject of this paper, for this tradition and the concepts and methodology that flowed from it imbued anthropology with much of its early character. Inasmuch as traditions persist long after the disappearance of the circumstances that bring them into being, the effects of this tradition are still significant in anthropological research. Whatever his conclusions for the future alteration of anthropology, Lévi-Strauss (1966) still sees the urgency in the continuing disappearance of human societies as he sees that that disappearance, the threat of the extinction of cultures, poses particular problems of identification for the field of anthropology itself. Such a sense of urgency is not new. It is a product of the truly significant changes that so clearly altered not only the notions of man but also those of science during early decades of the last century.

Apart from the more general shift in the ways of science, which emphasized, in a revival of Baconian philosophy, the collection of data at the expense of "idle speculation," two changes in view and situation strongly affected the purposes for which anthropological data were collected. The first of these was the gradual, though shocking, awareness that, whatever may have been the unity of his origins, man was fragmented into a series of groups whose distinctness was everywhere magnified

by the very increase in knowledge that was supposed to emphasize his unity. By the end of the first quarter of the century, linguistic studies had shown that it was not possible to accept the notion of a universal mind reflected in a universal language. The essential differences, both grammatical and lexical, among languages were so extensive that it was possible to conceive that the varieties of man represented not only the superficial characters of custom, but reflected, in fact, different mentalities, differences of major importance in a period when rationalism had not yet been entirely purged by the enthusiasm of the Romantic movement. However superficial racial differences might seem to those who sought to maintain the more humanistic notion of man's oneness, it was difficult to discount as insignificant the mental differences, the differences in thinking that comparative philology seemed to be demonstrating. Hans Aarsleff's (1967) description of the development of linguistics in England is most instructive in this respect. The effective demonstration by Sir William Jones that there was an essential difference in syntax and vocabulary between the Indo-European and the Semitic languages was intellectually traumatic, particularly to those nineteenth-century ethnologists who continued to argue for the essential unity of the human species. This position was hardly questioned during the eighteenth century, but came under serious attack during the first half of the nineteenth. Thus, for example, Arthur James Johnes (1843), one of those attempting to maintain the older notions of an essential psychic unity of man, applies Baconian principles of observation to demonstrate *contra* Jones and his followers that all languages are essentially the same and thus proves not only the unity of the human race but the recency of his origins. Unfortunately, such attempts depended too much on lexical evidence and ignored the essential arguments from syntax that had so convinced Johnes and that newer philologists were to use with such effect (see also Haas 1969).

A second, situational factor was the obvious effect of civilization in altering the natural world. Though the concept of change had become commonplace through the popularization of the Newtonian world view during the preceding century, the acceptance of the idea of a changing open-ended system was a particular product of the nineteenth. It was everywhere supported and documented by the observed effects of an already successful science and technology that had been harnessed with such effectiveness by the Industrial Revolution. In contrast to prevailing notions of the stability of the universe—the universe of man as well as that of nature—change through which there was to be an infinitely extended expansion accompanied by advance and progress became the watchword of the new order and the essential assumption of the new sciences. Though geology provided both the theoretical and the empirical basis for such a faith, the more mundane accomplishments of the new industrial system contributed their constant documentation and support. And these accomplishments destroyed natural monuments that had seemed rooted in the nature of things. It mattered little that the destruction was the inevitable price of progress; the destruction was real and it was there. The effect of man, the effect of his civilization on the world of nature, was felt with an impact that a century and a half has hardly lessened. Man altered landscapes. But if this were not enough, there was also the awareness that he altered irrevocably the system of organic nature. Though the acceptance of extinction was part of the new world view that the century early came to accept, man's own role in the disappearance of nature's products came as some surprise, a surprise overlaid with guilt, which continuing attempts at conservation could hardly expiate. It was hungry sailors who had killed the dodoes on Mauritius as it may have been equally hungry proto-Maori who had caused the Dinornis to disappear in an earlier age. For the naturalist whose aim was to describe the natural order, the threat of the necessary advance of civilization, for which the ghost of the dodo was the immediate symbol, was awesome. In the developing biological sciences, the reaction to this threat was an increased effort toward collection in order to preserve in some fashion—in zoological gardens or natural history museums—those permanent records

of nature that civilization—a beneficent civilization to be sure—in its inevitable progress would surely destroy.

As real as this problem was for the naturalist, its impact—at least on an emotional level—was much greater in the more limited area of human affairs where the advance of civilization produced a threat of destruction that was so much more obvious. The awareness of the destructive impact of European civilization on native peoples and their cultures was both sudden and traumatic. As in the almost contemporary cases of urban blight and the desolation of the urban poor, the dysfunctional effects of the spread of European influence and power was dramatized as it was provided official recognition through the formality of parliamentary investigation. The report of the British Select Committee of Aborigines (1837),

> appointed to consider what measures ought to be adopted with regard to the Native Inhabitants of Countries where British Settlements are made, and to neighbouring Tribes, in order to secure to them due observance of Justice and the protection of their Rights; and to promote the spread of Civilization among them and to lead them to the peaceful and voluntary reception of the Christian Religion

stressed in the laconic and low-keyed language of such reports the extreme danger to the very survival of these peoples if the patterns of half a century of colonization were to be continued.

The committee recognized, in the opening paragraph of its report, the disastrous changes visited by the spreading influence of British imperialism on the varied branches of the human species:

> The situation of Great Britain brings her beyond any other power into communication with the uncivilized nations of the earth. We are in contact with them in so many parts of the globe, that it has become of deep importance to ascertain the results of our relations with them, and to fix the rules of our conduct towards them. We are apt to class them under the sweeping term of savages, and perhaps, in so doing, to consider ourselves exempted from the obligations due to them as our fellow men. This assumption does not, however, it is obvious, alter our responsibility; and the question appears momentous, when we consider that the policy of Great Britain in this particular, as it has already affected the interests, and, we fear we may add, sacrificed the lives, of many thousands, may yet, in all probability, influence the character and destiny of millions of the human race [1837:3].

There follows the detailed summary of the record. The flat, only apparently bland record scarcely conceals, as it was not intended to do, the horror of the record of racial destruction. To introduce the section on North America, a telling comment is quoted from a Chippeway chief:

> We were once very numerous, and owned all of Upper Canada, and lived by hunting and fishing; but the white men, who came to trade with us, taught our fathers to drink the fire waters, which has made our people poor and sick, and has killed many tribes, till we have become very small [1837:6].

This charge sets the tone of the report. On continent after continent, in place after place, the record was a dismal one for the survival of man and the maintenance of human justice. The Caribs are gone, the inhabitants of New Holland have been made even more wretched than they were, the Tasmanians have been resettled and virtually destroyed, "murders, . . . misery, . . . and contamination have been brought to the islands of the South Pacific" where "our runaway convicts are the pests of the savage as well as of civilized society"; and in South Africa large areas occupied by the invading European have been denuded of their native inhabitants. Over and over again, everywhere, the report emphasizes the human destruction that follows from the expansion of British power.

This parliamentary report, with all of its detail and in the fullness of its understatement, emphasized for all who had the interest to read it the imminence of the racial destruction that lay in the immediate future, and for those who were concerned not only with the human questions but with the scientific ones as well, the conditions that the report exposed made necessary remedial action.

Already the Tasmanians were a pitiful remnant, to disappear completely by mid-century. Though their lands had been plundered and they had become the objects of the most vicious genocidal acts since the first settlement of Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania)

at the beginning of the century, the full horror of the destruction became public only with the parliamentary hearings of 1836 and 1867.[2] But even such a case so offensive to the awakening social consciousness of the English middle class could be excused by an appeal to progress—real and divine. The Rev. Thomas Atkins, generalizing from the Tasmanians, whose lands he had just visited, wrote

> Indeed, from a large induction of facts, it seems to me to be a universal law in the Divine government, when savage tribes who live by hunting and fishing, and on the wild herbs, roots, and fruits of the earth, come into collision with civilised races of men, whose avocations are the depasturing of flocks and herds, agricultural employments and commercial pursuits, the savage tribes disappear before the progress of civilised races . . . [Turnbull 1966:2–3].[3]

Though one might view the destruction of the races of man as the inevitable and just promise of progress, that destruction was a fact, and it was a fact everywhere.

Though the idea of the corrupting influences of civilization was not a new one—it is, in fact, a continuing theme in Western culture—the idea that such alterations were the necessary price of an indefinite progress was a particular product of nineteenth-century optimism. In the face of the inevitable and necessary changes, in the face of an almost infinite variety of man whose details were essential to a definition of man, the obligation of both scientist and humanist was clear: he must collect and preserve the information and the products of human activity and genius so rapidly being destroyed. Before the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1839, James Cowles Prichard set a tone that was to alarm an emergent anthropology for a century:

> Wherever Europeans have settled, their arrival has been the harbinger of extermination to the native tribes. Whenever the simple pastoral tribes come into relations with the more civilised agricultural nations, the allotted time of their destruction is at hand; and this seems to have been the case from the time when the first shepherd fell by the hand of the first tiller of soil.
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> Now, as the progress of colonization is so much extended of late years, and the obstacle of distance and physical difficulties are so much overcome, it may be calculated that these calamities, impending over the greater part of mankind, if we reckon by families and races, are to be accelerated in their progress; and it may happen that, in the course of another century, the aboriginal nations of most parts of the world will have ceased entirely to exist. In the meantime, if Christian nations think it not their duty to interpose and save the numerous tribes of their own species from utter extermination, it is of the greatest importance, in a philosophical point of view, to obtain much more extensive information than we now possess of their physical and moral characters. A great number of curious problems in physiology, illustrative of the history of the species, and the laws of their propagation, remain as yet imperfectly solved. The psychology of these races has been but little studied in an enlightened manner; and yet this is wanting in order to complete the history of human nature, and the philosophy of the human mind. How can this be obtained when so many tribes shall have become extinct, and their thoughts shall have perished with them? [Prichard 1839].

The urgency so clearly a mark of Prichard's appeal contrasts sharply with the reasoned calm of a similar prospectus written by Josef Marie de Gerando almost forty years earlier for the short-lived Société des Observateurs de l'Homme in Paris.[4] The difference in style reflects differences in both purpose and concept; at the beginning of the century, though recognizing the ameliorating effects of civilization, it was yet impossible for one to comprehend the full extent of its human destruction. De Gerando, like the travelers to whom he appealed, still saw the world of man as one that was stable in its variety; it was the very notion of stability that provided the promise of human understanding that a full description of his variability would and could provide. Though a full discussion of this point would go beyond the immediate concerns of this paper, it is also possible to see this shift in attitude during the first third of the nineteenth century, particularly in England, as a reflection of the rise of what Stephen Marcus (1966) has called Victorian humanism, that is, the development of some sense of compassion and awareness for the conditions of the poor and the economically disenfranchised.

The British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS) responded to

Prichard's appeal by allocating

> for printing and circulating a series of questions and suggestions for the use of travellers and others, with a view to procure information respecting the different races of men, and more especially those which are in an uncivilized state [1839:xxvl].

A committee, with Charles Darwin as a member, was appointed with Prichard as its chairman to draw up the questions.[5] In its report two years later, the committee dwelt on the

> importance of ethnological researches, and on the absolute necessity for pursuing the work if anything valuable and satisfactory is to be accomplished; seeing that the races in question are not only changing character, but rapidly disappearing [1841:332–339].

The report concluded with the interesting observation that man should at least receive as much attention as the animals whose study formed the basis of natural history and that the extinction of the varieties of man should elicit at least as much concern as that of the infrahuman species.

The vanishing savage, then, was a constant theme. And out of the amalgam of moral and scientific concerns, an emergent anthropology —whether its focus was on the group or on the species—found a method and a role. The savage, vanishing before the spread of civilization led to the formation of the Aboriginal Protection Society, whose ameliorative concerns paved the way for the Ethnological Society of London just as, in reverse, concern with the condition of the "savage" turned the Ethnological Society of Paris into those paths of social and political action that Broca (1869) so decried and in which he saw the causes of its destruction.

This sense of urgency, this notion of an ethnographic—indeed a scientific—mission, not to stem the tide of civilization's advance but to preserve that which was about to be destroyed, was a constant theme throughout the century in those researches that provided the raw materials and experiences that were the foundation of a later anthropology. Nor was the urgency for salvage altered by the mid-century shift from the natural history ethnology of Prichard and his contemporaries to the species-wide concern of an anthropology for the solution of whose historical problems the comparative method seemed to promise so much. The need for the data so rapidly disappearing and the deep sense of its scientific loss, so significant for the reconstruction of human history, is clearly demonstrated by John Lubbock, one of the first to use the comparative method with such admirable effect. Speaking of the difficulties of interpreting in cultural terms the newly established records of paleolithic man, he notes in a passage that clearly reveals the paleontological sources of the method:

> Deprived . . . of any assistance from history, but relieved at the same time from the embarrassing interference of tradition, the archaeologist is free to follow the methods which have been so successfully pursued in geology—the rude bone and stone implements of bygone ages being to the one what the remains of extinct animals are to the other . . . Many mammalia which are extinct in Europe have representatives still living in other countries. Our fossil pachyderms, for instance, would be almost unintelligible but for the species which still inhabit some parts of Asia and Africa . . . ; and in the same manner, if we wish clearly to understand the antiquities of Europe, we must compare them with the rude implements and weapons still, or until lately, used by the savage races in other parts of the world. In fact, the Van Diemaner and South American are to the antiquary what the opossum and the sloth are to the geologist [1869:416].

This moral position, however, this sense of obligation and duty in the face of the needs of science, was not confined to England. The same mood and the same intensity, mixed often with a humanitarian interest in the life conditions of the aborigines themselves, led to similar concerns on the continent and in the United States. The Ethnological Society of Paris, soon to fall apart through its involvement in the political by-products of ethnographic salvage, circulated in 1840 a questionnaire of the same sort as that of the BAAS; and in the United States, the constant experiences with a disappearing, disorganized, and rapidly acculturating Indian produced, among the sensitive and the philanthropic, both a reservation policy—a kind of human preserve—and a salvage orientation. Joseph Henry, the secretary of the

recently established Smithsonian Institution, in urging the secretary of the interior to support the researches of Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, noted in 1849 that

> The learned world looks to our country for a full account of the race that we have dispossessed, and as every year renders the task more difficult, it is hoped that the investigations on the subject now going on . . . will not only be continued, but that means may be afforded for their more active prosecution [Schoolcraft Collection, ff4257–4258].

And commenting to Schoolcraft on his plan to describe the practice of cranial deformation among the Flathead Indians, Samuel Morton wrote that he did not

> know of any facts in the history of the race which should be more carefully rescued from oblivion than these; for the people themselves are passing rapidly into extinction, and the extraordinary modes in which they distort the cranium from the earliest infancy, would be denied by posterity were it not for the evidence we are now able to adduce from abundant materials [Schoolcraft Collection, ff4494–4495].

Though an intervening generation had introduced new theory and new uses of ethnographic data to provide the basis for a self-conscious science of man that clothed it with some philosophical respectability, John Wesley Powell could use ethnographic salvage as one of the primary arguments for the establishment of the Bureau of Ethnology, which, in carrying out its mandate, has indeed preserved so much that would otherwise have been irretrievable. "The work is of great magnitude," he wrote in his report to the secretary of the interior in 1878

> More than four hundred languages belonging to about sixty different stocks having been found within the territory of the United States. Little of value can be accomplished in making investigations in other branches in the field without a thorough knowledge of the languages. Their sociology, mythology, arts, etc. are not properly known until the people themselves are understood, with their own conceptions, opinions, and motives . . . The field of research is speedily narrowing because of the rapid change in the Indian population now in progress; all habits, customs, and opinions are fading away; even languages are disappearing; and in a very few years it will be impossible to study our North American Indians in their primitive condition, except from recorded history. For this reason, ethnologic studies in America should be pushed with utmost vigor [Darrah 1951:255–256].

Throughout the century and within whatever theoretical framework, the refrain was the same: the savage is disappearing; preserve what you can; posterity will hold you accountable.

Haddon introduces his *The Study of Man* (1898:xxiii) with the same injunction:

> Now is the time to record. An infinitude has been irrevocably lost, a very great deal is now rapidly disappearing; thanks to colonization, trade, and missionary enterprise, the change that has come over the uttermost parts of the world during the last fifty years is almost incredible. The same can be said of Europe and of our own country. Emigration and migration, the railway, the newspaper, and the Board School—all have contributed to destroy the ancient landmarks of backward culture. The most interesting materials for study are becoming lost to us, not only by their disappearance, but by the apathy of those who should delight in recording them before they have become lost to sight and memory.

And more specifically, Baldwin Spencer writes of the Australians:

> The time in which it will be possible to investigate the Australian native tribes is rapidly drawing to a close, and though we may know more of them than we do of the lost Tasmanians, yet our knowledge is very incomplete, and unless some special effort be made, many tribes will practically die out without our gaining any knowledge of the details of their organization, or of their sacred customs and beliefs [Spencer and Gillen 1899:ix].

With almost official imprimatur, Charles Read, the ethnographic chief of the British Museum, introduces his *Handbook to the Ethnographic Collections* with the most specific statement of the concerns of salvage—seventy years after Prichard first awakened the conscience of his scientific colleagues to the seriousness of the problem wrought by the advance of civilization and the spread of the hegemony of Western culture. "At no period in the world's history," Read wrote,

> has any one nation exercised control over so many primitive races as our own at the present time, and yet there is no institution in Great Britain where this fact is adequately brought before the public in a concrete form. Meanwhile civilization is spreading over the earth, and the

> beliefs, customs, and products of practically all aboriginal peoples are becoming obsolete under new conditions which, though interesting from an economic point of view, have only a secondary importance for the ethnologist. In proportion as the value of Anthropology is appreciated at its true worth, the material for anthropological study diminishes; in many cases native beliefs and institutions described in the book have already become obsolete, though it has been found convenient, in mentioning them, to use the present tense. Such facts alone enforce the necessity for energetic action before it is too late [1910].

"Before it is too late! Before it is too late!" The refrain runs through so much of the developing discipline that the needs of recovery of preservation, of salvage in the face of the impending extinction of peoples and their cultures dictated much that came to be anthropology both as science and as a view of man. It was from this concern—so much a reflection of the guilt of success—that anthropology took much of its shape.

Though the availability of the new data could provide the bases for a wide-ranging synthesis and universal history during the last half of the century, the intensity of the search for that data necessarily restricted the extent of the theoretical view available to the collector. From the need for salvage there emerged a kind of intellectual myopia whose distortion accelerated the process of an empirically based observational, item-oriented, theory-safe anthropology.

Prichard's questionnaire, though it reflects an older topical arrangement, is surprising in its coverage. His eighty-nine specific questions are broken down into some ten major categories: physical characters, language, individual and family life, buildings and monuments, works of art, domestic animals, government and laws, geography and statistics, that is, demography, social relations, and religion, superstitions and belief systems. Fifty years later, when preparing to set out for the Northwest Coast under the auspices of the BAAS, Boas was similarly told that what

> is wanted is an account of each of the eleven or twelve linguistic stocks in that region . . . and a description of the physical traits, character, traditions, social and tribal organization, wisdom and arts of the people of each stock—and, of course,—an ethnographic map [Boas Collection, Jan. 30, 1888].

In the development of an anthropology in America, the conditions imposed by the needs of salvage were particularly severe. Under Powell, from its formation in 1879, the Bureau of Ethnology (later the Bureau of American Ethnology) institutionalized through government support and sanction the collection of data as the rapid post-Civil War migration threatened the destruction of the Indian. In 1884, E. B. Tylor, moved by the sense of impending loss of the valuable sources of ethnological data, called on the newly established section on anthropology of the British Association for the Advancement of Science to initiate an intensive effort to record that which was about to disappear. Responding to that call in Montreal, and in the spirit of its action in 1839, the association established a committee to compile and to publish data on the varied tribes of the Northwest Coast. It was under instructions from this committee and its chairman, Horatio Hale, that Franz Boas did most of his early work—and most continuously—with the Indians of the Northwest Coast. Though he later rejected most of it (Codere 1966), the work of these years set the tone for much that came to be his field approach and his anthropological method (Gruber 1967; Rohner 1966, 1969). Drawn not only by his observation of that which had already been lost, but also by Hale's instructions for a comprehensive collection of data, he moved among the remnants of once flourishing communities whose cultures and languages were already fragmented by the forces of acculturation that accompanied the missionary, the cannery, the town, and the railroad. From an informant here and a small group there he gathered the data that were assumed useful and necessary to the reconstruction of cultural systems already on the point of disappearance. At Seaside in Oregon, for instance, he found that

> the Indians I visited are quite civilized, mostly half-French. There are altogether ten adults, the remainder of what was once the largest tribe in

> this part of the country . . . The Indians live only about three-quarters of a mile from here, and I went to see them right off. I was soon disappointed. The younger people don't know their language well; . . . Only one old woman understands the language, but she does not speak English, so that I have to rely on my Chinook . . . I worked yesterday . . . with the old "aunt" whose husband is a French half-breed. Today I shall continue but will probably leave again tomorrow evening because I don't think I will be able to learn much more from the old woman. I don't know yet where I shall go from here—perhaps upstream again . . . Here the Indians essentially live by digging clams which they sell in Astoria. They live like the white people but are a little more dirty [Rohner 1969: 119–120].

How different an ethnographic situation and problem from that, for instance, which Hortense Powdermaker faced in Lesu just forty years later (and only forty years ago) where she felt herself "lucky to be in a functioning tribal society" (Powdermaker 1966: 68).

Boas, like most of his contemporaries, accepted the necessities of change as the price of progress. With his characteristic humanism, however, he sought—and hoped—to control it. In 1889, he concludes a brief review of his work with the following paragraph:

> I wish to close with a few words about the anticipated future of these Indians. We find here very gifted people fighting against the penetration by the Europeans under comparatively favorable conditions. Their ethnographic characteristics will in a very short time fall victim to the influence of the Europeans. The sooner these aborigines adapt themselves to the changed conditions the better it will be for them in their competition with the white man. One can already now predict that the Kwakiutl, who have so completely shut themselves off from the Europeans, are heading for their extinction. Certain Indian tribes have already become indispensable on the labor market, and without them the Province would suffer a great economic damage. If we can succeed in improving their hygienics and thus lower their ruinous child mortality, and if the endeavors of the Canadian government can be successful in making independent producers out of them, we can hope to avoid the sad spectacle of the complete destruction of those highly gifted tribes [Rohner 1969:13].

The needs of salvage then, so readily recognized through an awareness of a savage vanishing on the disappearing frontier of an advancing civilization, set the tone and the method for much that was anthropology in the earlier years of its prosecution as a self-conscious discipline. Out of both tone and method there emerged an emphasis, an approach, a tradition that set the parameters for an anthropology that followed. Such an approach could lead only to a collection of data rather than a body of data. The very operation of the collection itself infused the data with a sense of separateness, a notion of item discontinuity that encouraged the use of an acontextual comparative method and led only to the most limited (because they alone were observed) ideas of functional correlation. Moreover, the sense of salvage with its concern with loss and extinction, stressed the disorganization in a social system at the expense of the sense of community; it stressed the pathology of cultural loss in the absence of any real experience with the normally operating small community. The recognition of the pathology of that state provided the basis and rationale for the useful concept of the ethnographic present as the ideal of organization—but it was an ideal whose reality, stability, and order were to be the source of a continuing skepticism. The fact was that the very notion of salvage insisted on the investigation of those sociocultural systems already in an advanced state of destruction; as with the development of medicine itself it was the abnormal that set the norm of investigation.

If the disintegrative character of the units to be studied effected a view of intracultural isolation in the living situation, if the process of collection led to a distorted notion of the separation of culture from society, practice from person, the extent of the range of collection inevitably created a holistic view of human behavior and of human nature that became one of the significant, if not the most meaningful, hallmarks of anthropology as a discipline of man. The demand for the whole range of information necessitated in the mind of the single collector a sense of order, a sense of system.

Finally, I believe the needs of salvage, in its stress on the imminent destruction of men and

cultures, induced a profound humanism in those who were constantly charged with the preservation of the remnant. Prichard's concern, like that of Boas, was not only that data are being lost, but that peoples are being lost as well. *The loss of man on the frontier of civilization:* How constant a theme in anthropology!

The savage was the vulnerable party; it was he who was so constantly the focus of salvage ethnography. The loss of the savage, so real to the anthropologist, pointed up his value. Salvage provided the opportunity for human contact and human contrast. Here savagery met civilization, the presumed past met the present, stability met change. In the knowledge of the savage and the realization of his extinction we came to know that unless we know all men, we can understand no man. For throughout, in the stress for salvage, we feel that in the disappearance of the savage, in the irrevocable erosion of the human condition, we inevitably lose something of our own identity.

NOTES

[1] This paper is an expanded version of one given as a part of a symposium entitled "The Vanishing Savage" at the meetings of the American Anthropological Association, Seattle, Washington, November 1968.

[2] See Turnbull (1948) for a sometimes overwrought historical account of the tragic history of the Tasmanians during the early period of European occupation.

[3] In the United States, at just about the same time, Henry Schoolcraft and Lewis Cass take the same position with reference to the American Indian and support a reservation policy as the means of preserving the Indian from the debilitating influences of advancing Euro-American civilization (see Freeman 1960, 1965).

[4] See Stocking (1968:13–41) for an enlightening description of this slight efflorescence of an anthropological interest in the flush of the Napoleonic fervor for science.

[5] In a valuable historical work soon to be published, John Crump describes the activities of Thomas Hodgkin, Prichard, and George Edwards, whose concerns created the spirit and the structures through which the call to preservation was sounded. As he has discovered through his effective exploitation of the extant correspondence, the success of this movement was owing to both the humanitarian and scientific concerns of this small group. The Quaker-based humanitarianism that provided this early effort with some of its meaning and much of its zeal persists as a *leitmotif* in anthropology through the influence of Tyler and Boas into the present.

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