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# The Subject and the Profession: The Hawthorn Lecture, University of Ottawa, May 20th, 1989

Kenelm Burridge

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## THE SUBJECT AND THE PROFESSION The Hawthorn Lecture, University of Ottawa, May 20th, 1989

Kenelm Burrige  
Nanaimo, British Columbia

*Since this lecture was 'spoken to' rather than read, and the written word tends to be different from the spoken, what follows is not exactly what was said and, in any case, contains one or two afterthoughts.*

Madam President, Members of the Society —

I feel very privileged to be giving this lecture in honour of Harry Hawthorn, a scholar and a man whom I hold in the highest respect, admiration, and affection. The more so because, although I would do most things within reason to honour Harry Hawthorn, when I was invited to give this lecture my first impulse was to decline — for two reasons: First, I had decided that when I became emeritus I would follow Harry's example, leave the profession alone and get on with other things. I had no wish to cling on. There is something about becoming emeritus which turns most if not all of us into, quite simply, ex-professionals: a reversionary process in which back-burner topics, belonging to a quite other intellectual space and best forgotten, are trotted out in stilted, because old fashioned, idioms. Second, following from what I have just said, I did not know what to talk about. No use an emeritus nailing flag to mast or peering into the future. He or she is at ground level, at best part of that - no doubt rich - mould and mulch on which the forest grows.

But here I am. I must get on with my topic - **The Subject and the Profession** - a kind of personal retrospective which, rather than merely nostalgic, attempts a parable of history.

By way of introduction I ought to tell you that for me the dominant among other emotions at becoming emeritus, retiring from the profession but not necessarily from the subject, was a great feeling of release. Release, primarily, from the strangulations of university and professional rules and regulations which have developed over the last twenty years. A blessed release from being type-cast, and release too from professional *shibboleths* and obfuscations which, although always there, have become all the more odious for the transformation of academe from a bunch of unorganized amateurs (in the literal sense of the word) into an industry with a product to market.

But not a release unmixed with sorrows. Rather as one feels after a spell of fieldwork: happy to have done and go on to other things, but sad at leaving... Letters from fellow emeriti asking me to help found or join an association so that we might get organized, put pressure on our universities to obtain study spaces and secretarial help, give lectures, teach - all those things we have been doing for thirty years or so, which I cannot say I was always happy doing, and which in any case I do not want to go on doing - allows one to empathize with prison recidivists: where you've been for a while becomes home, warm and comforting, comradely, a space whose pulls are hard to resist.

Those who started their apprenticeships in anthropology when I did, shortly after World War II, came to it by a variety of wayward and circuitous routes: literature, law, history, theatre, philosophy, politics, economics, the colonial service, even missionary work. There was no working up the ladder of majors or honours, M.A., and Ph.D. Indeed, perhaps smacking of making a virtue out of necessity, a preliminary degree in some other discipline was considered a necessary advantage: to try to understand an exotic culture without knowing something of one's own in a formal, self-conscious and more or less objective way was thought presumptuous.

Overwhelmingly, we rationalized our otherwise apparently adventitious arrivals in terms of the freedoms of action the subject offered: wide open opportunities for intellectual and physical adventure and exploration and, at that time, a good dose of near-messianic or romantic moral fervour - what might be called a philanthropic *altravale-tudinarianism*.

We were warned at the outset that fellowships for fieldwork and, after that, appointment to university posts (the only real professional possibility) were few and far between. We would have to work really hard. "No slacking here!" as one of our professors put it. Only two or three of us out of a class of rather more than a dozen would survive to become professionals. Even then, unless we had private money of our own, living would be poor. A qualification in anthropology was no way to riches and only qualified one for anthropology, little else. Any doubts and we should be off, not waste our time any further.

Well, as it happened, academia was furthest from my mind. Having spent much of my childhood and youth in Oxford, I knew that academe required size ten in hats. I had hoped when I applied and was interviewed for the diploma course at Oxford that, after some preliminary training, I might be able to dash off to the field, obtain data and artifacts, and bring them back for the academics to discuss and deal with.

Professor Evans-Pritchard looked at me askance. "We do our fieldwork for ourselves", he returned. "You have a lot to learn!"

I am still learning.

Nevertheless, from childhood on I had been reading about one or other aspect of what I came to know as anthropology. Also, I had in my youth, quite adventitiously, lived with peoples of different culture in various parts of the world, and I wanted to go to a field, re-experience and find out more. The

doctorate could take care of itself. Something would turn up.

And of course things did turn up. They usually do.

What I should emphasize about those days, because of the contrast with the present, is the freedom we thought we had: colonies of empire to move about in, a more or less privileged access to those with power as well to those without, and an almost complete absence of all those bureaucratic requirements and political restraints upon travel which entangle professional life today. The best qualification or disqualification was one's character and address, not just the piece of paper recording your marks in courses. Still, there were, and necessarily so at the time perhaps, rather stricter constraints on method and theory than there are today.

To my dismay, for example, as it had been one of my best and favourite subjects at school, history was tabooed. In a couple of years, of course, as though by a Polynesian chief but, in fact, by an African, the taboo was lifted. History was readmitted to the professional discourse. Essays appeared in a variety of journals advising us that we had in fact been doing history all along. An observation, like history, fated to repeat itself in relation to other disciplines. Whatever it might be we are likely to find that some of us have always been doing it.

Few though we were, disagreement and difference were rife. Malinowskian 'science' and functionalism were frowned on in Oxford, encouraged in London. Radcliffe-Brownian structure-function and the French sociologists were our models. But socio-cultural anthropology (or just social anthropology as we thought of it then, for cultural anthropology was dubbed a 'culturology' that Americans did) should not be modelled on the natural sciences. There were no necessary causal links - only relations which seemed to go together, had a logical fit with one another.

Psychological and biological reductionisms were strictly tabooed - although, like history and embedded in our own cultural upbringing as they were, they were hard to avoid. Instead, we had, roughly, Durkheim, Collingwood's 'colligation', Evans-Pritchard's 'systematic historiography' and version of structure-function, and something we found hard to define - except as relations which went together - but fondly called 'structure'. There was an insistence on learning another language, on coming to grips with another culture through their language, on allowing those studied to have their own voice, speak for themselves. Literary skills, an ability to

describe or expose and argue with some awareness of the subtleties involved in understanding and translating what actually was said were thought essential. The job before us was to translate one culture or social order into the terms of another. We had Marx, we had Weber - a choice of weapons.

Anthropology - social anthropology - was not simply a way of thinking about people, culture, or society - although we recited the *trope* often enough. Some thought of it as adequately defined by the sociological imagination - the ability to see ourselves and others as equally programmed, the children of our cultures, obedient to their dictates. Others thought to avoid the question by saying that social anthropology was what its practitioners did. While some thought kinship, a logical model with finite possibilities whose empirical realizations were even more restricted, provided the exemplar, others thought kinship a tiresome mechanistics. Still, accepting as primary the task of translating another culture into the terms of one's own, bringing certain kinds of otherness into the cognizance of the reasonably well educated, social anthropology could be described as

*The systematic analysis, exposition or disclosure of the relations between, and the normative restraints placed upon, thought and action by the physical environment, its resources, and what was called (again vaguely but usefully because exploring just that was the object of the exercise) the social structure. Always in relation to the total social situation.*

It sounds even more old hat when said out loud, but at the time it was stimulating, implying the discovery of categories of social living which would not be based on or in any way the same as our own *a priori* assumptions. Obsessed as we were with the power of what we called custom, verbs tended to be predominantly in the passive voice. The peoples of other cultures rarely seemed to do anything for themselves: they were done to, according to the dictates of the social structure. We were the privileged ones who, in spite of our own enjoined conformities, could initiate.

When I joined the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, the notice on the front door which I had remarked as a schoolboy, as an undergraduate, and a graduate, was still there. It read

*Except on weekdays (including Saturdays) between 2.pm and 4.pm the Pitt Rivers Museum is SHUT.*

"It is shut" runs the first line of James Fenton's ode to the Pitt Rivers Museum. "22 hours a day and all day Sunday."

Today, of course, like so many other institutions, museums tend to be open. The curators who once upon a time disliked having visitors, loathed getting anything out, and winced if a specimen were touched, now welcome visitors and invite them to see, touch, feel and fiddle... Way to go - Glasnost! But history also teaches us that for every new flower allowed to bloom a dozen ways of stifling it will be invented.

At that time the subject was not more or less encased in a professional subculture of varied systematics and political ideologies caught in one of many administrative nets in an educational-industrial complex. It was a loose but informally exclusive fellowship which included antiquarians, ex-colonial administrators, folklorists, missionaries, and the seriously interested eccentrics of the kind that some emeriti from a variety of professions tend to become.

Although in Oxford, at any rate, it was not long before the professionals began shaking off the amateurs, the profession itself was not the organized bureaucracy it is today. Since a career was scarcely visible, careerist ambitions were minimal - although there were of course certain anxieties. The work itself and advancing the subject for its own sake, bringing varieties of otherness into cognizance, revealing the discipline as an important key to more relevant philosophy, theology, literature, and social science or sociology - these were paramount. Topics and problems abounded. Identity and discipline were provided by theory and method.

Nevertheless, current and often varying professional methodologies combined with the allegiances and taboos of the senior generation were then, as today, much more restrictive than they seemed.

Thus, while I was certainly naive, I did not take it amiss when, for example, prior to an interview for a fellowship, one of my professors advised me in confidence that if I wanted to do well I should declare an interest in Polynesian outrigger canoe lashings. They were the chairman's secret passion.

"So, Burridge", that chairman asked in the event, "Why do you want to go to Oceania?"

"Well, Sir", I ventured, "there is this problem about Polynesian outrigger canoe lashings..."

The chairman was speechless, jaw dropping, pale face beginning to glow a light purple - evidently not a passion others were welcome to share. Silence - until another member of the board rescued me.

So, canoe lashings - perhaps a clue to the colonization of Madagascar (history) - were out. And one vice of bureaucracy, the manipulation of juniors to get at your peers, was present. Would string figures, the iconography of Moses' horns or the Buddha's topknot or mythology - even kinship, Radcliffe-Brown's favourite but Malinowski's derided algebra - be in or out when the time came if ever it did come?

When I joined Siegfried Nadel in Canberra, the first student in a new department, he informed me in that Prussian way he had which brooked no argument, that for him psychology was essential to social anthropology. I was to forget all that Oxford nonsense. (Later on and in due turn I was to be told that cargo cults, mythology, and individuality were outside the purview of the subject!)

The history of anthropology, as I came to realize later, is not only a series of cycles, readdressing much the same problems under different names and idioms, so that, for example, at one of my first professional meetings and seated next to an elder, that elder was driven to exclaim as a young turk read his paper: "But I said that thirty years ago!"

A linear elder, caught in progress and development; for whom scientific knowledge, once gained, became cumulative, to be taken for granted. Yet there was no question at the time of reinventing the wheel. It was a restatement in current idioms of discourse on what had, over time, become ritualized, opaque. And this kind of recycling - not yet the popular concept and activity it is today - is surely an essential part of our business.

Much more importantly, though, like a fashion store the poses and clothing of whose models are constantly changing, this history is a series of changing alliances with and oppositions to other disciplines, a series of ins and outs, of altering the criteria of inclusion and exclusion roughly geared to particular topics or problems which are abandoned after an attention span of, say, 15 years, in favour of new topics and problems. Further, if for our ancestors and elders socio-cultural anthropology was going to pose problems in order to solve them, by the later 1960's that ambition had reached a peculiar apogee. It was going to solve all problems everywhere.

Well, that kind of idol was bound to have feet of clay. So we turned to problem posing rather than problem solving. Then, because problem posing is usually a reformulating, a recycling, which is a kind of solving, temporarily definitive statements, we began to deride both as elitist and authoritarian: from being able to solve everything to being able to

solve nothing. Even if we did not resort to political sloganeering and name-calling, we could use a current idiom of intellectual argument and say that since whatever you write or say is going to undermine its own claim to determinacy, let it hang in non-meaning, in query rather than exclamation.

In this sense anthropology seems to be returning to its etymological origins: a gossiping or talking about humankind or, more elevatedly, a discourse on the modes of discoursing about the nature of socio-cultural life - a double-headed chasing after the signified as it disappears under the significations of the signifiers.

We have come a long way - full circle or, rather, through a Vico spiral. For even if we have boxed the compass of alliances and oppositions, taboos, inclusions, exclusions, constructions, deconstructions, recycling, and other changes of direction, we have perhaps been learning.

Let me now chronicle or recycle in more detail some of these generalities.

When, in the 19th century, theology was deposed and relegated to fifth place in the hierarchy of disciplines behind science, history, social (once natural) philosophy, and economics, the battle for primacy or, if not that, equality, began. The claim to science was general. Among the humanities history was paramount, and those interested in the history of peoples and their cultures could hardly not be historians of a kind. Led astray, however, by their over active imaginations into gross but hugely entertaining conjecture and speculation, the synchronic analyses arising from fieldwork rendered them obsolete. From the 'twenties through to the 'fifties, except for Kroeber and a few like-thinkers, history was thought irreconcilable with a synchronic mode of analysis.

Then, as we've seen, the taboo was lifted - as it had to be when ethno-history started to become available. But a distinction remains. The history of historians albeit of another culture is not anthropology. And if much of anthropology can be historical and historians have learned how to use anthropology, the subtle differences between historian and anthropologist have not, to my mind, yet been satisfactorily articulated or rationalized. They probably arise from the peculiar schizoid awareness derived from intensive fieldwork - creating documents out of the tedium, excitement, and mess of living with others, experiencing at least two spaces at the same time, and attempting to reconcile people actually known with intellectual categories. ☹

In Britain in the middle of the 19th century the fight and polarization between historians and natural scientists resulted eventually, through the good offices of T.H. Huxley (who wanted royal patronage for the Anthropological Institute), in agreement to live common law rather than marry. Radcliffe-Brown, anti-history, wanted the methods of natural science but was certainly not clear on how the social or cultural could be related to the biological. Malinowski's science of culture, witness his 'needs', was grounded in biology. Boas was, as usual, in two minds, but was in no way against biology. As with history so with biology: even with a sociological imagination it is in fact very difficult for anthropologists to escape the Western culturally determined primacies of history and biology. Nevertheless, until the advent of social biology in the late 'sixties biology was not thought a necessary part of the practice of socio-cultural anthropology, and reasoning from the biological to the cultural is still, quite rightly on the whole, tabooed.

For myself, on the other hand, I do not see how medical anthropologists can do their jobs properly without an informed access to and use of both biology and psychology. So many physiological and psychological conditions seem to me to arise from, are the product of, socio-cultural conditions that it would be wrong of us not to reveal situations of disease or disability in terms of their socio-cultural aetiologies. But there is a deal of bridgework to be done.

Granting the taboos on both biology and psychology expressed a fear of the real dangers of silly naivetes and reductionisms, and kept one on the straight but most complex path of exploring the socio-cultural to its limits, knee-jerk *shibboleths* against history, biology, and psychology are surely dogmas of the worst kind - because ultimately not maintainable.

Much the same may be said of comparative modes. Like the earlier historical anthropologists, the comparative methods of the 19th century, supposedly scientific, brought comparison into disrepute. However, since institutions or structures are neither *sui generis* nor, as one so often hears it today, wholly unique, but are variants of each other, a knowledge of, a nose for, what these variants are or are like - what was called comparative ethnography - seems to me, as it was but is not now, essential for any decent work on any one particular variant. A theoretical perspective or framework that does not contain and give variants their due is scarcely worth the name. And yet, as with history, biology, and psychology, comparison is regarded not only as

odious but as dangerous to the professional. On the other hand, and much as it is resented by students, familiarity with more than one other culture is regarded as essential to a student's syllabus.

In the 'forties environmentalism as it was called had just about disappeared - although you could still see it in *The Nuer* (1940), where Evans-Pritchard makes his bow to Myers, the great geographer. By the late 'fifties I was lecturing to geographers at Oxford on social ecology and in the 'sixties environmentalism came back again in much more sophisticated form as cultural ecology. Now, I would say, that is on the wane. But rest assured, it will come back - if only because it has been unable to solve within a consensus most of the problems it posed. Indeed, getting bored with seemingly intractable problems and then leaving them alone is at least partly why we keep coming back to them in an attempt to recycle. Nevertheless, as I shall mention in a moment, some problems are left on the shelf, orphaned.

In the 'sixties Lévi-Straussian structuralism, out of an alliance with linguistics, came as a new dispensation to some although fiercely opposed by others. Now, one might venture to say, it has become, like Marxist or neo-Marxist interpretations, a mite tedious as an end in itself although, again like Marxism, indispensable as an analytical tool. By contrast, Louis Dumont's version of structure, native born, out of the anthropological experience itself, seems to have found few converts. Not wholly shelved, one mode of structure, especially if it comes from outside the subject, seems to be as much as we want to handle.

Still, exclusion/inclusion is itself surely complementary to complementarity/encompassment, and I find it difficult to imagine an anthropology that does not employ some sort of theoretical framework which will exhibit or explicate more or less elegantly and efficiently what we inevitably think of as structures: those relations which fit or go together, form a set in relation to defined criteria.

As with Dumont's structure, so with many another product of anthropology itself: we tend to orphan them, preferring to parent the offspring of others from a comfortable armchair.

Whatever happened to kinship, supposedly the exemplar of the way we operated? It had begun to disappear from the syllabus because students would not enrol in kinship classes long before Needham told us it did not exist. The mysteries of the Murngin,

or Deacon's six section system on Ambrym, no longer set tongues a-wagging and pens a-scratching. While kinship, in general, has tended to be tucked into, for example, courses on the family, gender, or social organization, the last has itself been relegated to an outer rim of concern: a mechanistic figment which earns the accusation of turning persons into robots. In spite of the supposed virtues of a sociological imagination, imposing an equality of cultural programming in (at least) the semiotics of power and status, dismays Westerners who, perversely, want their individualities preserved. On the other hand, it could delight the Japanese, for whom the ideal person to meet or befriend might very precisely be as dependable as a robot.

Why was the mother's brother abandoned? A favourite of such as Rivers, Lowie, Radcliffe-Brown and others, Malinowski probably did for him. An important clue to the cultural reverberations of the whole Oedipus problem, and fairly recently resurrected by Spiro who showed Malinowski was wrong, Spiro's book has had little response. And yet, the mother's brother and the Oedipus could be the starting points of that triangular conflict between authority, conscience/desire, and status which speaks not only to sorcery and witchcraft but very possibly underlies the socio-cultural aetiology of many of those illnesses or diseases which are accessible to anthropologists in medical anthropology.

What, I wonder, might be the probable concomitants of the differences between a community based on descent, lineal rather than lateral relationships, and one not based on descent, one that emphasizes lateral relationships at the expense of the lineal?

Blank faces, eyebrows lifted?

The problem was raised but, as in a mirage, it came into view and then disappeared, caught, like so many other problems, in the vice between being a science or systematics of culture or society and being relevant to the current national or Western scene or conversation in contemporary idioms of discourse.

Now for some particular *shibboleths*.

The topic of race relations, race and racism, pops in and out of anthropology like a Jack in the Box: now under covers, suppressed, then riveting attention. An overtly honest 19th century problem joined to a primitive evolutionism became, in the hands of those who wished to make it so - and they will always be there - a moral and political evil. And yet, since all cultures and subcultures, including anthropology, are arrangements for ordination / subordination and

maintaining exclusivities, racism, it seems to me, is a part of culture everywhere which will not go away. We ought to know. Both in our work and as a subculture we have become adept at finding criteria of inclusion/exclusion. Perhaps because the genuine cultural problem in race can be so easily twisted for noxious political ends, and we are no longer regarded as authoritative on the matter, we ought to just leave it alone.

Alternatively, since much of anthropology today and over the past thirty years has been a long-laboured effort to free ourselves from our modernist 19th century inheritance, so that, as for example in hermeneutics, we reach for the pre-modern in order to inform the post-modern, and racism in its 19th century edition is but a particularly nasty variant of other modes of cultural exclusion, we might take a lesson from the truly religious. For they, trying to act out what might be a more adequate definition of literate religions than is usually given, attempt to transcend that and other of the more virulent modes of cultural exclusion.

To anthropologists of my generation the fact of colonialism was not simply a given which might or would soon disappear. It spelled opportunity. We were critical, but knew that without it access to the field would become that much more difficult. Today, instead of being regarded as, say, the important and definitive cultural episode and process it was, colonialism, which has many largely unrecognized variants as enforced economic, political and socio-cultural dependencies, is still more of a whipping post than, as it might be, as presenting a series of vital problems concerned with the ways in which a native tradition absorbs or resists the pressures of a more powerful socio-economic and cultural order.

In much the same way, Christian missionaries who are our direct ancestors in ethnography as well as anthropology, and who used to be very much included, our allies in the great work, are now excluded, put into opposition. Despite the ontological and epistemological divide dating from the 19th century, but hardly made explicit, where they have worked missionaries have often been predicative. This very university (University of Ottawa) was in its origins a missionary foundation. Missionary work is, surely, a field that requires not the exclusion and derision it usually gets, but a more appreciative if also critical study of what, in the very specifically religious address, is regarded as worth taking up or, on the other hand, rejected. And some attempt to get at the why of them.

Moral relativism is, as it has been, a useful and, indeed, necessary fieldwork tool. It keeps things in

view, provides a focus, is inclusive and does not condemn or exclude. But beyond that it becomes a little ludicrous. Honour among thieves there may be, but as with Nazi, Stalinist, Maoist or Mafia moralities, we treat some moralities as more relative than others. We no more actually wholly believe in moral relativism than in evolutionism. They are in a word totems pulled from the tabernacle of traditional sacra when expedient, otherwise put away. Less revealing than blinding.

Like the noble savage. Certainly a more useful concept and tool than the savage savage. But surely it is time to discard the former as we have long got rid of the latter. Human beings are human beings, neither more nor less, on the whole equally prone to nobility or savagery as the situation seems to warrant despite the noble elegances of the platonic structures our artifice constructs for them.

Finally, why do we regard what a fieldworker says about the experience of others as somehow more objective, more scientific than what is said of his/her own participatory experience? Can we really be that much more accurate about the experience of others than we can be about ourselves?

Socio-cultural anthropology is, in truth, an omnivore, capable of absorbing or eating up anything that comes its way. But if the subject provides a wide spectrum of choice, is a more magnificent space-time vehicle than any Wellsian mechanical contraption, like Frazer's 'savage' we as professionals do tend to burden ourselves with a tangle of seemingly irrational taboos. And the profession itself, befitting perhaps a postmodernist phase, seems to have become an intricate web of particularisms. If some may be looking for, others are just not interested in, a statement, a meaning that subsumes and brings the particularisms together.

Speeding the reel with all its ins and outs, doors opening and shutting, white deceits, flirtations, espousals and divorces, the history of the profession might be an old fashioned bedroom farce. A melange of awkward and comical encounters, reversals, rude awakenings and hurried departures in which, as actors, we cannot help laughing at ourselves. Which we do more often than those in other disciplines.

Through most of this comedy, like the butler of the bedroom farce, Harry Hawthorn maintained his cool and kept a straight face. He took others more seriously than he took himself and, standing centre stage, guided his students to just those doors in both subject and profession that would suit them best. As a signifier he determined a signified. An example to follow.

Just where was Harry's centre, the centre?

The theses in which I, like many others, have assisted and followed have ranged in their ethnography from the Sudan and East Africa to Tibet, from South and Southeast Asia to Japan, and from Australia and Oceania to the Northwest coast and the Canadian interior. The topics have varied from the shaman to the sanyasi through trance, religious cults, mythology, history, aesthetics, missionaries, glossolalia, individuality, medical practice, fishing methods, semiotics, identity, art and iconography to the more ordinary political and economic. Much more of learning than teaching! And most of the students involved have found a place in academe. Others have presumably folded themselves into where they think they best belong.

As a space-time vehicle, subject and profession have afforded me, as they give most of us, a wonderfully privileged and - our former professors were surely mistaken - not unprosperous life. Still, the wide variety of materials and problems that come our way could only be possible in relation to a relatively flexible intellectual address, some sort of centre or centrality capable of containing or absorbing into itself the diversity in the segments and more distant peripheries.

Today the received wisdom is that there is no centre, and if ever one was thought to exist it was a mirage, a misconception of false metaphor and metonymy: for all our attempts at science a bundle of homeopathic and sympathetic magics we have practised on ourselves. Still, often and again in graduate committee meetings, as students go through their proposals, they are asked: "Yes, but when or where will you get to the anthropology?" Implicitly, a centre or centrality, some definitive features or characteristics which mark off an anthropological address from other disciplines are being asked for - even if the response rarely finds more than a grudging consensus replete with reservations.

Perhaps the question is simply an historical residue, proper to the elders of a subculture who want to maintain tradition and identity in the face of post-modernist particularisms. The buzz-phrase, 'in relation to the total social situation', disappeared years ago. The task of bringing otherness into a more generalized cognizance has been taken over by novelists, television, tourism, and traveloguers. The modes of analysis and exposition which used to be distinctive are being or have been taken over by other disciplines which, having developed them, are now passing them back to us: the ambition to infuse



other social disciplines with our ways of thinking and analysis has been more or less realized. The profession, it would seem, as part of an educational-industrial complex governed by the civil service (as it might be the Post Office or Via Rail), is being returned to the sea of general social studies from which, in many institutions, it once emerged, retaining distinction as an administrative unit mostly concerned with minorities and special interest groups. Those detailed ethnographies of what are now called the third and fourth worlds, whose voices we tried to echo and which gave us much of our *raison d'être* as scientists of society or culture, are dwindling away, and other kinds of professionals have moved the voice into louder and more strident tones.

Still, perhaps the exotic or non-conformist small community really is and should remain the centre for an apprentice, a kind of chrysalis from which the qualified professional can venture in any direction he or she chooses. If Harry Hawthorn's true centre was elsewhere, his professional life was characterized by a deep and wholly committed concern for the relatively disfranchised or ignored, whoever they were, whatever it was. He gave them, and he taught others to give them, a voice. A voice which, for all its inevitable distortions through translation and then reproduction, taught us if we listened. Which required us in accuracy to use and develop often stilted but distinctive modes of thought and exposition if that voice were to, as we wanted it to do, enter into the mainstreams of conversation and intellectual discourse.

If we want to maintain more than an administrative distinctiveness, I would suggest, we should continue in that way. We should listen to the ignored, disadvantaged and disfranchised - who will not necessarily be the same sorts of people, the same sorts of things, tomorrow as they are today or were yesterday. Their voices still have, at least in the

imagination, a ring of authentic exclamation and meaning. From there it becomes possible to discover the necessary hypocrisies of the rich and powerful. Further yet, I would say, one is led back through Bastian to the real centre of the subject, a quest for the elusive constituents of what we signify by the words, Human Nature: probably a fairly modest repertoire of attributes and potentials.

But for myself, at any rate, the quest's the thing - getting at the ethnography. Rationalizing by the most efficient means at hand the ways in which peoples use those few potentials to find or construct order, meaning and worthwhileness in their lives, their relationships with each other and in the things they make - discovering what categories can make sense of the messiness of real life, living. And these categories, discoverable and to be discovered, not the same as our own but variants of them, are distinct from, if often they must be convergent with, those of natural science and literature. It is an engagement in which taboos on this or that research enterprise, however necessary they may seem at the time, must always break down.

And now I must come to an end. I am happy to say that almost all the students with whom I have been involved have broken one or other extant taboo. And they have prospered. It is the way both subject and profession advance.

Only an idiot, I suppose, would say he would not have had it otherwise, was left with no 'druthers'. Which brings me pretty close to the mark... Still, if you all enjoy, and are as happy in the subject and profession as I have been, well, you will not be satisfied - who wants that? - but you will have to say, "My fault!" For what else is there that offers so much?

Thank you for inviting me to speak. Thank you for listening so patiently. My best wishes to you all. May the Society prosper!