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Résumé de l'article

Cet article examine les plus récents efforts faits en vue d'introduire une approche historique au sein de l'anthropologie. Fidèle à une tradition bien ancrée dans la discipline, l'anthropologie symbolique commence maintenant, avec un certain retard, à se tourner vers des problèmes et des méthodes historiques. Cet article examine ce qu'ont réalisé Geertz, Wallace, Turner et Sahlins pour apporter à l'anthropologie symbolique une pertinence et une mise en pratique historiographiques. Tout en utilisant des méthodes différentes, trois de ces auteurs (Geertz, Wallace et Turner) ne parviennent pas à élaborer une notion de structure pouvant rendre compte du changement et de l'innovation. Sahlins réussit certes mieux dans cette démarche mais on doit faire intervenir un concept de processus historique dans son analyse. L'auteur suggère un tel concept.

History and Symbolic Anthropology: a Review and Critique of Four New Contributions to their Rapprochement

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This paper examines the most recent attempt to incorporate an historical approach within anthropology. Following a well established disciplinary tradition, symbolic anthropology is only now, relatively late in its career, beginning to address historical problems and methods. This paper considers the efforts of Geertz, Wallace, Turner and Sahlins to give symbolic anthropology an historiographic competence and application.

It is argued that three of them (Geertz, Wallace and Turner) fail in different ways to devise a notion of structure capable of successfully treating the facts of change and innovation. It is also argued that Sahlins enjoys greater success in this effort, but that his work must be supplemented with a concept of historical process. One such concept is proposed.

Cet article examine les plus récents efforts faits en vue d'introduire une approche historique au sein de l'anthropologie. Fidèle à une tradition bien ancrée dans la discipline, l'anthropologie symbolique commence maintenant, avec un certain retard, à se tourner vers des problèmes et des méthodes historiques. Cet article examine ce qu'ont réalisé Geertz, Wallace, Turner et Sahlins pour apporter à l'anthropologie symbolique une pertinence et une mise en pratique historiographiques. Tout en utilisant des méthodes différentes, trois de ces auteurs (Geertz, Wallace et Turner) ne parviennent pas à élaborer une notion de struc-ture pouvant rendre compte du changement et de l'inno-vation. Sahlins réussit certes mieux dans cette démarche mais on doit faire intervenir un concept de processus historique dans son analyse. L'auteur suggère un tel concept.

The purpose of this paper[1] is to consider four new anthropological approaches to the study of history. Reviewing the recent works of Clifford Geertz, A.F.C. Wallace, Victor Turner, and Marshall Sahlins, I will consider some of the theoretical innovations which have been occasioned by the new rapprochement between history and symbolic anthropology. I will seek to determine where these innovations succeed and where they fail to contend with the particular demands of an historical anthropology.

I shall argue that several of the paradigms that have guided anthropological investigation have been challenged to take account of history. This demand is indeed one of the recurrent themes in the development of anthropological thought. Thus, evolutionary, Boasian, and functionalist anthropo-

logies have all been accused of an historiographic insufficiency. It is not surprising then that symbolic anthropology should similarly be under attack. It is the purpose of this paper to review the attempts of Geertz, Wallace, Turner and Sahlins to respond to this new criticism.

History and Anthropology: An Overview

History as an anthropological concern has entered into the discipline in a curious manner. Characteristically, it has assumed its periodic prominence in anthropology only at a late stage in the development of the several paradigms that have governed anthropological investigation. It has entered into consideration only when a prevailing paradigm has begun to exhaust its early promise, and practitioners and critics of the paradigm are no longer so enamoured of its accomplishments. Much of history's interest and importance in anthropology has been its use as a critical perspective from which to attack prevailing paradigms, hastening their collapse or revision.

History, then, has played a useful role on the margins of anthropology. But it has remained on the margin. There are two reasons for this. First, the critical power of an historical perspective has rarely been used with success in the early and triumphant years of a paradigm's development. That a new paradigm is indifferent or even hostile to history is itself rarely a matter sufficient to discourage its emergence, or arm its critics. No one has ever brought a new and developing paradigm to its knees with the charge that it neglects history. It is only after skepticism within and without the paradigm has been established that history serves as a useful point of criticism. Second, history's role as a critical perspective is rarely rewarded. When a new paradigm is found on the rubble of the old, it is rarely more sensitive to the issue of history than its predecessor. Thus, while history has proven useful in bringing old paradigms down, it is rarely made a central and active concern in the ones that replace it.

In short, we have characteristically turned to history not to build new paradigms, but to criticize and reform old ones. As a result, history has been frequently the bridesmaid and rarely the bride. Apparently it serves us better as a polemical instrument than an analytical one.

As long as history remains a marginal presence in the discipline, it will always serve as the prelude to a paradigmatic shift or a last resort for paradigms in decline. Until we incorporate it at the centre of our analytic models, we shall continue to use it only as a source of easy criticism or hasty repair. Until it becomes a way of seeing anthropological data instead of anthropological models, we will continue to dwell on its apparent promise instead of realizing its somewhat more substantial reality.

There are several examples of this characteristic use of history. Franz Boas struck his first blow against evolutionary anthropology by insisting on the "fundamental historicity of cultural phenomena" (Stocking, 1968:211). Having used history for this polemical purpose he quickly demoted its role in his inquiry. Just one year after his opening attack on the evolutionary paradigm, he made history subordinate to his own comparative method and the pursuit of general laws (1974:68). When this project collapsed, Boas announced gloomily that anthropology can be only an "historical science" (1940:258).

Kroeber took up the cry a generation later, and ironically, but not surprisingly, the object of his criticism was the inadequate historiography of Boas and his movement. In "History and Science in Anthropology," he accused Boas of using a historical method but never doing history (1935:544). Furthermore, he found fault with Boas' students, Fortune, Mead and Benedict, on the grounds that they failed to be "broadly and completely historical" (Ibid:557). Kroeber concluded that the Boasian movement, while historical in some of its characteristics, was "overwhelmingly unhistorical" and even "anti-historical" in its results (Ibid:558)[2].

Here again, the inspiration for a fundamental criticism of a prevailing paradigm came from history. It is of course ironic that this attack on the Boasian paradigm should have come not only from a Boasian, but from one who used Boas' own "giant killer," history, as a polemical instrument.

Evans-Pritchard used history for a similar purpose in his attack on a different paradigm. In a public address delivered in 1950 he attacked functionalism for an "absurdity": the neglect of history (1962a:21). In an address delivered in 1961 he stepped up the argument and the attack, accusing Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown of an "extreme hostility to history" (1962b:46). He dismissed as "snobbery" functionalism's need to model itself after the natural sciences. With this blow at the prevailing paradigm he argued, as Kroeber had done, for an essential similarity between history and anthropology[3].

These attacks on the evolutionary, Boasian, and functionalist paradigms spring, as we have seen, from a conviction that the neglect of history radically qualifies the paradigms' claim to pre-

eminence. Characteristically this "damning" criticism came, in each instance, very late in the paradigm's career. Belated as the criticism was, it was seen to have a certain authority, and it succeeded in all three cases in striking an effective blow. The argument that anthropology resembles, and must be made to incorporate, an historical approach was given credence where before it was ignored. It served as one of the theoretical concerns which enabled anthropology to disengage itself from one paradigm and move on to the next.

History has to this extent served us well in the discourse that has advanced the development of anthropological thought. It remains, however, that the bridesmaid has yet to become a bride. We have made the case for history against the prevailing paradigm, only to neglect it in the construction of the next.

Certainly some impressive historical work has been accomplished by anthropologists within the several paradigms. Kroeber (1923) and Evans-Pritchard (1949) both made contributions to an historical anthropology, and their example has encouraged work and reflection of an equally impressive nature (Lewis, 1968; Nadel, 1951). Developments such as the field of ethnohistory have established an historiographical tradition within the discipline[4]. It is also true that Marxist anthropology has treated history as an integral part of analysis (e.g., Wolf, 1969; Worsley, 1957) and is therefore exempt from the charge of ignoring it.

Still, to undertake historical projects is not the same as bringing history into the discipline and making it a central part of the anthropologist's background and ability. We have yet to give history the attention that Boas, Kroeber, and Evans-Pritchard demanded for it. Thus it is possible for Silverman to say in 1979 that historical data remains a background to anthropological analysis rather than an integral part of it, even for those who can draw on a rich historical record (1979:413). Also it is possible for Cohn to observe that the rapprochement between history and anthropology is still more a programme than a reality (1981).

History, as they say, repeats itself. In the last few years one of the new paradigms in anthropology has been made the object of a familiar attack. Structuralism in particular, and symbolic anthropology in general, have been accused of having neglected history. Thus Lévi-Strauss, despite his claims to the contrary (1963:25), has been faulted for the atemporal aspect of his theory (Marc-Lipiansky, 1973:254; Sahlins, 1977:22)[5]. Symbolic anthropology has also been charged with an indifference or incompetence with regard to history[6].

A venerable tradition in anthropology is thus perpetuated. Now relatively well established, structural and symbolic anthropology are being asked to account for their historiographic inadequacies. This demand suggests that the paradigm has come of age, that we are no longer blinded by its accomplishments, and that we are newly attentive to its faults. As always, this is a complaint we think to make only after the paradigm has reached maturity.

Still, the accusation is made. Now it is structural and symbolic anthropology that must reckon with the challenge that has confronted and proved problematic for the evolutionary, Boasian, and functionalist paradigms.

The historiographic problem that now faces structural and symbolic anthropology is at least as difficult as the one that faced the earlier paradigms. As much as any of these contest an atemporal character. Indeed it is fair to say that much of the explanatory power of these ideas has been purchased at a price: the exclusion of history. We have, in short, made another pact with the devil of synchrony. Structural and symbolic anthropology have purchased the explanatory range and acuity of their models at the expense of history.

This bargain leaves the paradigm in an unenviable position now that the historiographic challenge is before it. If the paradigm's range and acuity depend upon an atemporal approach, there can be no accommodation of history without a loss of explanatory power. Furthermore, if this explanatory power is the basis of the paradigm's present position, there can be no accommodation of history without an eclipse of the paradigm.

The challenge before structural and symbolic anthropology is therefore clear. It is to rethink its ideas of structure, system, order, and context in a way that admits of the facts of discontinuity, process, and reproduction, and to do so in a way that does not destroy the existing explanatory power of the paradigm.

This challenge has its Scylla and Charybdis. On the one side is the danger of simply taking up historical topics without theoretical revision within the paradigm. Wedded as they are to an atemporal model, current ideas of structure and system will simply fail in a diachronic context. Nor can these ideas make a merely modest concession to event and diachrony. No faint-hearted tinkering with the model will allow it to account for its present historiographic inadequacies. On this side of the challenge it must be recognized that there can be no assimilation of history without theoretical metamorphosis, no reproduction without transformation.

On the other side of the challenge is another difficulty. When structural anthropologists seek an historiographic proficiency and the ability to account for event, change, and process, they must ensure that they do not give up the explanatory range and acuity of present models. They must ensure that they do not accommodate history by sacrificing the ideas of structure and system which are their strength, and indeed their potential contribution to historiographic scholarship. They must ensure that the baby is not thrown out with the bath water.

History and Symbolic Anthropology: Four New Approaches

Structural and symbolic anthropology are beginning to respond to the demand that they contend with history. They are beginning to take up historical topics, and to create theoretical approaches capable of dealing with them. I will examine such undertakings as they are represented in the recent work of Clifford Geertz, A.F.C. Wallace, Victor Turner, and Marshall Sahlins. Each of these authors will be examined with a view to judging the strategies and success with which they incorporate their new historiographic concerns. Something more than a new approach to ethnographic investigation hangs in the balance here. Maitland (1936: 249) was plainly wrong to argue that anthropology would become history or nothing at all. But if the past role of the historiographic challenge in anthropology is anything to judge by, the paradigm of symbolic anthropology will contend with history or it will suffer the possibility of eclipse.

The four works treated here are diverse in the range and nature of the historical topics they select for study and the motivations from which they spring. Geertz's work, *Negara. The Theatre State in Nineteenth Century Bali* (1980), is a study of the nature of government and politics in the social, economic, ecological, and especially, ritual contexts of nineteenth century Bali. Geertz's over-riding concern is to demonstrate the inability of moaern political theory to account for the role of culture in political discourse. There is, Geertz argues, a tendency for students of politics to dismiss the symbolic, rhetorical aspects of politics as prejudice, obfuscation, and posturing that bear no important relationship to the "real" instrumental, gain-seeking, coercive "facts" of politics. This treatment of politics as the play of appetite, interest, and conflict, Geertz argues, obscures the fact that "a structure of political action is also a structure of thought" (1980:135). Geertz seeks to give an account of Balinese politics that stresses the centrality of its cultural, theatrical aspect.

Wallace's historical study is entitled *Rochdale: The Growth of an American Village in the Early Industrial Revolution.* This work treats the history of a cotton-manufacturing town in Pennsylvania between the years 1825-1865. It considers the social, economic, technological, religious and ideological changes that took place as the village was caught up in the early industrial revolution, and transformed in virtually all its aspects. Wallace's concern is to present Rochdale in fine ethnographic detail drawn from surviving documents such as diaries, memoirs, and newspapers, and to situate it in the much broader terms of the historical developments of the nineteenth century. This double perspective gives us Rochdale from a macroscopic point of view and nineteenth century America from a microscopic point of view. He allows us to see Rochdale from the inside-out and the outside-in. This study began as an exercise in personal curiosity born of private concern: Wallace wanted to understand the history of the town in which he lived. It became the occasion of 553 pages of finely detailed and broadly reaching scholarship of which new anthropological theoretical developments were the result.

Turner's study, "Social Dramas and Ritual Metaphors" has no special empirical focus. Concerned with explaining the "temporal structure of certain types of social processes" (1974:33), his work is essentially theoretical and makes only passing reference to historical particulars, including his previous work in Mexico and Africa. The motivation for the study was Turner's dissatisfaction with the ahistorical, or insufficiently historical, nature of the functionalist paradigm.

Sahlins' work, *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities: Structure in the Early History of the Sandwich Islands Kingdom,* is devoted to the confrontation between the British and Hawaiians in eighteenth and nineteenth century Hawaii. Sahlins describes how these two cultures confronted and responded to the difficulty of the colonial encounter. This study sprang from Sahlins' conviction that structuralism and Marxism are incapable of allowing us to do so (1981:21). Anthropology must, he argues, come to terms with history. The failure to do so will leave our search for the meaning of culture unconsummated (1981:30).

Let us now examine how each of these anthropologists came to terms with incorporating an historical perspective. In the introductory section of his work, "Bali and the Historical Method," Geertz draws a distinction between history as a

record of events, and history as an account of "the formal or structural patterns of cumulative activity" (1980:5). Geertz claims that while these two types of history are normally mutually supporting, the Balinese case gives insufficient evidence of history as event. It is therefore only history as structure that is in these historiographical circumstances possible, and therefore only a study of history as structure that he will undertake.

How cunningly this argument makes a virtue of Geertz's necessity. With this distinction, Geertz solves virtually all the problems before him as an anthropologist undertaking an historical project. First of all he has managed to excuse the fact that he is not in fact trained to deal with events. There are, he says, no events to study. Second he has characterized the study of history in such a way that it conforms exactly with the kind of anthropology he would do in any case. If the sort of history that can be done in Bali is indeed a matter of "formal or structural patterns" who would deny that an anthropologist is perfectly qualified for the job? We must be suspicious of anthropology that makes history over in its own image.

Of all the dodges anthropologists have used to sidestep their responsibility of reckoning seriously with their historiographic obligations, this is a particularly smooth but not uncharacteristic example. What is perhaps especially galling about this instance of the honoured anthropological custom is that it conceals its refusal to do history with the claim that it is history.

Let us look at how one does what Geertz calls "history." Geertz says we may begin by "constructing an appropriate model of sociocultural process" and that this model itself depends upon three approaches: 1) the consideration of comparable but historically distinct sequences, 2) the use of a far-reaching historical sociology, the ideal-type paradigms of Max Weber, and 3) an analysis of the "structure and functioning of a current (or recent) system that resembles the one in question". This last approach he calls "ethnographic". It is difficult to see anything that is historical about this enterprise. It does appear to have something to do with nineteenth century Bali, and to this extent to have something to do with the past. However, it must be granted that not all studies of the past are by definition historical, any more than it is the case that all studies of language are by definition linguistic.

But let us give Geertz his due. His construction of a model for the systems of government that prevailed in Bali from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries is no small accomplishment, no modest piece of anthropology. He has given us a model that is sophisticated enough to be neither perfectly coherent nor structurally simple. He has acknowledged the tension between state ritual that gave expression to a unitary and exemplary center on the one hand, and the dispersive and segmental tendency of the state structure on the other (1980: 18-19). He has given us the play of status rivalry, the struggle for power within the formal structure of authority, the deployment of clientship and alliance through marriage, and an acknowledgement of conflict at all levels of politics. He has shown us the articulation of ecology, cultivation practice, ritual and trade. He has outlined the symbolic organization of space and action in the Balinese court. In short, the model he constructs is not inconsiderable; his achievement in identifying and describing it, not unimpressive. Geertz's work is skilled and by even the highest standards of anthropological practice, exemplary. Nevertheless the fact that *Negara* is impressive anthropology does not save it from being terrible history. Or, more exactly, no history at all. Instead of history, we have the usual anthropological obsession with system. Indeed we are given system of an unusually coherent kind for a man who has compared culture to an octopus, and surprisingly structural from a man who has accused Lévi-Strauss of an obsession for order. Bound to our ideas of system, Geertz undertakes a history that destroys the possibility of a diachronic perspective and therefore pre-empts the serious study of event or change, or discontinuity, or rupture. There is no question that when Geertz makes his particular bargain with reality we are well rewarded. This individual exchange of event for system leaves anthropology the richer. Still we must ask whether the bargain is not misconceived. When the content of study is five centuries of Balinese history, surely it is not atemporal structure but "event" that must be the salient property and the real intellectual challenge of the project. It is all very well to dismiss this contention with the argument that there are in the Balinese case no events to study, but can we not argue that this claim invites a counterclaim: that in 500 years of history it is just as likely that whatever the state of the evidence there is no structure worthy of the name?

In sum Geertz has undertaken an historical study but refused to make any concession to the new methodological and theoretical demands made of him. His response has been merely to call his anthropology history. A.F.C. Wallace, as we shall see, makes a rather more deliberate attempt to grapple with the historiographic issues and pro-

blems before him. His anthropology is changed by this encounter.

Wallace tells us that in undertaking the research for *Rochdale* his first instinct was the conventional anthropological one. He was anxious, he says, "To see to what extent the concepts of the cultural anthropologist who is used to conducting fieldwork (in a small community) could be applied to the documentary remains of a community of about the same size over a generation" (1978:XV). This early assumption was eventually invalidated. At some point in his research Wallace decided that the concepts of the cultural anthropologist were not in fact sufficient for his historical task. It is the recognition that set in train a process that transforms his anthropology.

Wallace evokes two ideas to help him come to terms with history. One of these is the metaphor of contest, the other is a revised version of T.S. Kuhn's idea of paradigm (1962). The first came as what Wallace calls a "considerable surprise." What he did not expect to find when he undertook this study was "an organized structure of conflict among the main participants in the story that required a period of time before the strategies of the sides combined towards resolution" (1978:XVI). The second idea, that of paradigmatic change, was a guiding idea from early on in the research project.

An exact analysis of these ideas is made difficult by Wallace's circumspect, almost reluctant, treatment of them. He rehearses them in an almost oblique manner, apparently preferring not to make them an obvious presence in the book. This indirect manner will be valued by historical readers but from an anthropological point of view, especially in these experimental circumstances, it does not serve Wallace or the reader well. Indeed one can be forgiven the impression that Wallace's organizing ideas serve as little more than book ends between which the manuscript itself is propped. He treats the idea of conflict on page 16 of the introduction, and the idea of paradigmatic change in a nine page appendix (most of which is taken up with a discussion of the industrial revolution); in between are 478 pages of history which show no obvious evidence of either theme. Fleeting evidence there is but something much more substantial is needed if other anthropologists and historians are to find inspiration or instruction in this work.

But let us set this complaint aside and examine the way in which these two ideas affect Wallace's history and transform his anthropology. The idea of conflict or competition allows for an important departure from a synchronic anthropology. It admits to the possibility that structure is located in

time, and the further possibility that only the particular study of particular events will recover this structure. Unlike Geertz, Wallace has not merely dressed up his anthropology as history; unlike Geertz he has sought structure in diachronic development. The structure that he seeks to give us has a temporal character. The idea of competition, for instance, suggests the existence of a structure within which two parties are cast in determined roles, bound by particular rules and assigned particular rewards and positions according to the outcome of their interaction. While this interaction is characterized in advance as competition, it is not predetermined in its details or consequences. Here we have a model that grants to "event" the capacity to determine structure. The necessary relationship between system and synchronic view has been broken.

It is important to differentiate this argument from those of similar earlier ones. What Wallace implicitly and imperfectly acknowledges is the determinative effect of real time on structure. His is not a processural argument that says that some structures are completed only over time (for instance, the developmental cycle of a family). Nor is the event considered here social action or ritual that transforms the token of one cultural type into the token of another, allowing structure to reproduce itself in the process. These instances of action are, after all, only demonstrations of Lévi-Strauss' argument that structure uses event to fashion activity and time into structure. With Wallace's metaphor we are beyond simple notions of reproduction. We have begun to consider the possibility of a structure accomplished by change.

There is however a limitation to the notion of competition as a guiding metaphor for the study of anthropological history. While it allows for the possibility of a structure fashioned out of event, it presupposes too much of what will become of this structure. After all, the contest metaphor allows event to take a part in the creation of structure but it also specifies its outcome. It is supposed that activity will result in an assymetrical conclusion defined in terms of win or loss. This is the only uncertainty, the only structural outcome that can be determined by event. Even a radically unexpected outcome will not revise the structure of the contest, its determination of an outcome, or the larger order in which the context takes place. The problem here is that event is not unlimited in its innovative powers. Wallace gives us an analytical tool that allows for only two structural options.

There are difficulties with the second organizing device as well. The notion of paradigmatic

process is a model with five stages: innovation, paradigmatic core development, exploitation, functional consequences, and rationalization. The model begins with an innovation in one small corner of a system and observes its growth by these specified stages. It is not an account of the initial innovation. This is simply given. Wallace speaks of the innovation having an "inner logic" according to which, in a manner that would please Lewis Henry Morgan himself, paradigmatic process subsequently unfolds, first in paradigmatic core development, then in exploitation by religious, economic and political groups, next by functional implication and then by rationalization. The innovation springs unanticipated and unbidden from the mind of the innovator and then begins to reverberate throughout the system building momentum as it makes itself felt on the area in which it originates. It is then seized upon by interest groups as it exerts its influence more and more widely. Finally, it is given religious, philosophical, political and economic justification.

As a guide for the study of change, this scheme too has its problems. First of all it is a little too sudden in its diachronic development and a little too uncontextual in its sense of origins. This model produces its innovation with a flourish—as if from a hat. We are given no sense of the structure in place, the context in which the innovation occurred, or the relationship it bears to the order it is going to so radically transform.

This is an example of the sacrifice of system referred to before. It is inevitable that when we undertake the transition from one scholarly paradigm to another, some anthropologists will simply forsake the idea of system or structure to accommodate change. This will be the technique by which they effect the transition from atemporal to temporal models. They will give up the idea of structure at one end of the model or both. In this case, Wallace has dispensed with structure at the moment change begins. This enables him to begin "de novo" and work through to an historically constructed system. Plainly this heuristic device has the virtue of simplicity. It removes much that would distract us. Still it must be said that it betrays its anthropological origins as much as it does the historical data with which it works. It has solved the historical problem and allows us to see the constructive relationship between structure and diachrony, but it does so only by forgetting the notion of context and structure to which our discipline is so productively wedded. Or, to put the matter in terms of its own historical particulars, Wallace allows us to see 1850 Rochdale as the

creation of several various events and forces. This is however an insufficient account of structure and event to the extent that it fails to give us the Rochdale of 1800 or the Manchester of 1750 from which new structure was fashioned. This particular bargain with reality sacrifices old structures for new ones, both in history, and in theory.

A second problem with Wallace's model is its lack of sophistication. The five stage model of change he gives us appears to be a simple functionalism turned on its side to allow for change. Once we have been given the original innovation, everything follows in "box car" manner, the connection between each stage is set in progress by an inevitable casual bump. While each of these explanatory units allows us to look separately at an aspect of change, the overall articulation of these units is left unspecified.

It is worth observing that the model did not obstruct Wallace's ethnography. There is some superb anthropology in this book, especially when Wallace looks at culture in place, or ideological change over time. But this is plainly raw ethnographic talent at work. It is not aided by the theoretical model that informs it, and it indeed would not have occurred at all had Wallace restricted himself to the explanatory confines of the model he has constructed.

In sum we can say that the first methodological guide, the idea of contest does not endow event with sufficient constitutive powers in its creation of an eventual structure, while the notions of paradigmatic change, on the other hand, gives insufficient attention to, and thus no way of accounting for, the structure in place when events occur.

Let us now look at the work of Victor Turner. I will draw chiefly from the theoretical article "Social Dramas and Ritual Metaphors" published in his 1974 collection entitled: *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors*. Turner's solution to this historical problem is a radical one.

He tells us that his fellow students of Africa working in the functionalist paradigm saw history in terms of cycles and repetition. Their concept of time was, as he puts it, structural, not free. What was not cycle or repetition was unassimilable contingency, something that fell to historians to study. Turner chose to turn this perspective on its head. Where the functionalists saw reproduction he saw change. It is not just from functionalist notions of history but even from more recent anthropological and historiographic ones that Turner departs.

He argues that it is only a processual perspective that enables us to see the real relationship between structure and event. He argues that

structure is profoundly temporal in nature. It is only in and over time that structure is realized; only in and over time that we can observe it. Structure resides in process only.

The way in which one identifies this structure is through the examination of processual units. These are either "social enterprises" in which actors co-operate in an effort to achieve by common action some collective goal, or "social dramas" in which a breach of social relations is followed by mounting tension, redressive action and the return to the old order or the creation of a new one. Each of these phases has its own specific properties and characteristic rhetoric. It is in social enterprise and social drama that structure is supposed to reside. So located, it is always, in the words of Turner, "incomplete, open-ended, unconsummated (and) on its way to ending" (1974:35). The structure of society or culture is the structure of the processual unit.

The importance of these processual units to historical study is therefore paramount. As Turner puts it, "the explanations for both constancy and change, in my opinion, can only be found by systematic analysis of processual units and temporal structures" (1974:43).

In fact, his claims to the contrary, Turner's position is not so stark as this. The truth of the matter is that he does acknowledge another kind of structure. This structure is the one that resides in cultural models of the world. This structure, unlike the processual one, is atemporal. It exerts a steering function on social events; it converts "rapid and irregular events" into "slower and regular rhythmic" ones (1974:37). It is this atemporal structure that organizes and gives consistency to the temporal structures of social process.

Turner's solution to the problem of an historical anthropology is, as I have said, a radical one. It contends with the relationship between structure and event by devising the intermediate category "process." This strategy effects a dramatic revision in the terms of the argument.

No longer do we have a structure in place within which change occurs. Now we have a structure that is never manifest until after the fact of its enactment. Apparently it is a structure that operates with unmarked similarity in all times and places. All cultures, whatever the superficial differences between them, harbour processual units which act as the organizing device of event and the conduit of history.

This strategy shows a willingness to undertake a radical and imaginative rethinking of the problem but it is not, finally, successful innovation. If Wallace is to be faulted for having ignored the structure in place before and after change, Turner must be faulted for making it disappear. Now we have no way to deal with structure except as it is concerned with the organization of a processual unit. All other cultural categories and principles are left out of account, except as they exist as atemporal mental models, which themselves exert no influence on process except as they direct the organization of a processual unit. To incorporate events, Turner effectively disposes of the kind of structure to which anthropology has devoted so much of its attention and on which it relies for analytic guidance. Once again the baby is thrown out with the bath water.

Turner investigates one of our options implicit in the processual view of society and change. He does not exhaust the possibilities of this view but it is perhaps fair to say that he demonstrates with some clarity the difficulty of this approach. We cannot solve the problem of structure in history by simply getting rid of it, anymore than we can, as Wallace sought to do, deal with structure by ignoring it.

Marshall Sahlins has been insistent in his call for an anthropological history. *Culture and Practical Reason* (1976) makes this call as does his state of the art review for the American Anthropological Association meeting in 1976 (1977). It is made again in his latest work *Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities* published in 1981. This latest work gives us an example of the historical analysis that Sahlins has suggested we undertake.

Sahlins does not avoid the formidable task of developing a thoroughgoing theoretical reform in order to deal with the demands of history. He has attempted to reconstruct structure so that it is no longer the Saussurian system of difference he employed in *Culture and Practical Reason*. In this 1976 work structure is defined as a formal set of relations, a formal system of difference. As such it is fixed and immutable. Defined thus in terms of fixed relations, cultural meaning disappears when relations are muddled or collapsed by the effect of history. For Sahlins in 1976 structure was capable only of absorbing the contingencies of event. It was something that took part in history only in so far as it was able to organize event according to existing cultural co-ordinates. The best that structure could do in the face of event was to reproduce the old set of relations in a new historical guise.

Sahlins' effort to construct a more temporally oriented anthropology has lead him to dispense with this notion. In its place he has put the concept of "global structure," a structure that is as he puts

it "pregnant with eventualities." This structure is no longer a simple fixed set of relations but a diverse collection of codes and meanings. Now signs and categories have a multivocal, polysemic character; now their relations have a logical instability. To this extent Sahlins' notion of structure has a new depth and versatility. His confrontation with history has transformed his idea of structure.

Sahlins' attempt to "historicize" the idea of structure owes something to the culture theory of his colleague at Chicago, Michael Silverstein. Silverstein (1976) has argued that meaning even in a steady state is always contingent. He argues that social context, the pragmatic characteristics of every speech event, serve to operationalize one of the several potential meanings of a sign. Sahlins has given this idea a diachronic aspect, arguing that because the sign is always attended by this depth and diversity of meaning, there exists what he calls a "reservoir of historical potential waiting as it were its own pragmatic cues". What always happens in the course of speech can now with some revision be said to happen in the course of history. In Sahlins' words: For historical analysis the important lesson must be that cultural categories and proportions, though apparently set and unambiguous at any empirical moment, are always logically unstable and meaningfully negotiable (1981:25).

It is plain that Sahlins' position has certain advantages over the positions previously considered. Unlike Geertz he undertakes a thoroughgoing transformation of his anthropology in order to study history. Unlike Wallace and Turner he does not solve the problem of history by ignoring or dispensing with the idea of structure. Instead he gives us an idea of structure that manages both to acknowledge that history always takes place within a constituted system, and to account for the way in which this system is able to direct and accommodate the effects of novel events. Sahlins lets us do history without forgetting our anthropology or forsaking the idea of structure to which we are so committed.

Sahlins' work gives us a notion of structure as supple and versatile as the historian's prose. It gives us an instrument of analysis that enables us to conduct ourselves with some of the subtlety of current historiographic practice without having to sacrifice the acuity and analytic precision that is our discipline's strength in the historiographic domain.

This is no small accomplishment but it is a necessary rather than a sufficient condition of his-

torical anthropology. We have yet to fully explore the contributions anthropology has to make to a dynamic theory of structure or a structural theory of history. What is required is a way of conceptualizing how structure, as Sahlins conceives it, articulates with the events of history and the process of change they set in train. If Sahlins has pointed out that an anthropological history must devote itself to understanding how the various and disparate pieces of the global structure are brought into a new historically salient relationship, he does not tell how this process occurs. He has made no theoretical provision for the symbolic strategies or techniques by which a new conjunction of cultural elements is accomplished. If structure is sensitive to event, capable both of organizing it and responding to it, the mechanisms of this sensitivity must be established. It is not enough to know in what structure consists, we must also know how it is accomplished.

The next step before an historical anthropology is therefore to show how the Sahlinsian notion of structure is profitably supplemented by ideas of process. For all the difficulties of Turner's scheme, the essential insight, that there are not just structures of thought but also those of event, is, it seems to me, altogether sound. There are structures that govern change, that constitute history by reconstituting themselves, and these must be considered if we are to begin to assemble an adequate theory of history and event, and construct an historical anthropology sufficient to the task before it.

James Boon's work on operators, conjunctions, and culture suggests one of the ways in which a new notion of historical process might be phrased. Boon defines a "cultural operator" as a "succinct and orderly conjunction of elements from what appear as diverse orders" (1973:10). Operators, according to this definition, are fixed and stable. They are privileged instances of order, essential to the organization of relations of meaning. Placed in a diachronic framework, and given a processual and dynamic character, the notion of operator becomes a useful way to view the effort to organize a new set of symbolic relations within the global structure. Operators are projects undertaken by historical actors which serve to conjoin cultural categories and relationships not previously aligned. By manipulating thus the elements of the global structure, actors revise the order of thought and action. Just how this conjunction will be accomplished, just what medium will be used for its representation, and just what elements will be conjoined are choices to be made according to the circumstances of each historical period confronted with the need

for change and innovation. Indeed we should expect to find several such operators in a period, each offering a different alignment of the global structure. What will be common to the efforts of all of these historical operators is a similarity of project. All of them will represent the effort to disengage the present elements of structure in order to endow persons, things and activities with new significance. All of them will share this common end. Consciously or not they will all have become "bricoleurs" fashioning the new out of the old[7].

Conclusions

I have attempted to suggest that several paradigms that have guided anthropological investigation have been seen to suffer from historiographic insufficiency. All of them have been urged to incorporate what was absent from their original charters: historical method, theory, and data. This time honoured critique has now been levied at symbolic and structural anthropology. Now this field, too, is having to include an historiographic interest and sophistication that it previously lacked.

This paper has sought to demonstrate that symbolic and structural anthropology have three choices in the study of historical issues. The first, long practiced and now refined into something like an art, is the treatment of historical material in conventional ethnographic terms. This tendency, exhibited by Geertz's *Negara*, encounters insurmountable difficulties. The various ideas of system and structure in which anthropology has invested so heavily and on which so much of its analysis depends, are defined in terms essentially hostile to event, temporality and change. To this extent the conventional ethnographic treatment of historical matters is necessarily problematical.

The second option is to change anthropological definitions of structure and system in such a way that they allow for history. The works of A.F.C. Wallace and Victor Turner examined here suggest that this effort runs the risk of incorporating events only at the cost of forsaking concepts of structure. In this case, anthropology succeeds as history only by dispensing with its analytic strengths.

This third option is to create new notions of structure that are capable of dealing with the problem of event without such a penalty. I have suggested that Marshall Sahlins, for one, has pointed the way to such a scheme. With this accomplishment, the next step is clear. It is to devise a new theory of historical process that shows how change and innovation are variously mediated by historical actors, and how new structure is fashioned as a result.

NOTES

1. This paper was written for and given at a session entitled "History and Anthropology" at the C.E.S.C.E. meetings held in Vancouver, in May of 1982. Thanks are due to fellow participants, John McMullan and Daphne Kelgard, and to those who attended the session, for their comments and criticism. The author would also like to thank the Killam Trust for their support, and Elvi Whittaker, K.O.L.B. Burridge, and anonymous reviewers of this journal for their suggestions.

2. Whether Kroeber's, or indeed my own, potted history of Boas' historiography is apt should be considered in the light of the latter's treatment of the question (Boas, 1936).

3. For attempts to reconcile functionalism and history, see Eggan (1954), Kroeber (1935), and Smith (1962).

4. Ethnohistory, impressive though it is as an attempt to undertake an historical inquiry in an anthropological context, does not stand as an adequate rapprochement of the two fields. It is, first of all, a subdiscipline with its own body of practitioners, and, to this extent, does not represent a generalized acceptance of historiographic interest, method and data in anthropology. Still more problematic, ethnohistory has not, even as a subdiscipline, proved to be the occasion for theoretical innovation in anthropological theory or paradigms (Axtell, 1978:119; Carmack, 1972:231; Cohn, 1968:445). It is therefore not surprising that the four anthropologists considered below, who *do* make the study of history the occasion of theoretical innovation, neither situate their work in, nor draw from, the ethnohistorical tradition.

In the interest of candor I acknowledge that most of my own work in historical anthropology (McCracken, 1982a, 1982b, 1983a, 1983b) has not taken up the theoretical issues that follow from the application of anthropological concepts to historical problems. Instead I have followed the conventional tack, criticized here, of treating historical data as if they were no different from ethnographic data.

5. See, for instance, Silverman's (1979:417-419) criticism of two symbolic approaches.

6. Plainly this criticism has been encouraged by Lévi-Strauss' own insistence that the structure of "cold" societies absorbs history, and renders ineffectual its transforming power (Lévi-Strauss, 1966:233-244; Sahlins, 1976:23; Maranda, 1972:345). For attempts to reconcile structuralism and history, see Gaboriau (1970), and Pouwer (1975).

7. In another place (McCracken, 1983c) I have sought to do historical anthropology along the lines proposed here. I have attempted to show how dress and etiquette in Elizabethan England served as operators, as opportunities for innovation which reconstructed the various elements of the global structure in an effort to find a regnant order that rearticulated the facts of culture with those of history.

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