Anthropology, Colonialism and the Reflexive Turn: Finding a Place to Stand

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Abstract: This paper offers a reflection on the articles in the present thematic section. It focuses in particular on the relationship between the political stance taken by the articles' authors and the political positioning of anthropologists in the colonial project before the so-called "Reflexive Turn" in the discipline in the late 1960s and early 1970s. To this end, it critically assesses the point of view of those in the discipline who assert that this move presented a radical departure from a disciplinary orientation that until that time had, at best, ignored colonialism and, at worst, actively promoted it by offering evidence of the stance in opposition to it taken by at least some of our more prominent forebears. This paper concludes by indicating that, rather than representing a departure from an earlier orientation to colonialism, the anti-colonial stance taken by the authors of these articles reflects a perspective of long standing in the field.

Keywords: history of anthropology, colonialism, The Reflexive Turn, historical particularism, structural functionalism, evolutionism

Résumé : Cet épilogue offre une réflexion sur les articles présentés dans cette section thématique. Il vise à comparer la position politique prise par ces auteurs contemporains à celle d'anthropologues classiques du contexte colonial, c'est-à-dire avant le « tournant réflexif » de la discipline à la fin des années 60, début des années 70. Le propos sera d'examiner de manière critique le point de vue selon lequel le mouvement réflexif aurait permis une coupure radicale avec une orientation disciplinaire qui, dans le meilleur des cas, aurait ignoré le colonialisme et, dans le pire des cas, l'aurait promu activement. À cette fin, il sera question d'illustrer comment une partie de nos précurseurs les plus éminents ont apporté une opposition importante au colonialisme. Ainsi, il s'agira de démontrer que la position anticoloniale soutenue par les auteurs de cette section thématique ne représente pas tant un nouveau départ à une précédente orientation colonialiste, mais reflète une perspective qui existe déjà depuis longue date dans la discipline.

Mots-clés : histoire de l'anthropologie, colonialism, tournant

Introduction

I would like to thank Brian Noble for suggesting that I offer a few words of reflection on the 2001 Weaver–Tremblay lecture to which the articles that appear here are addressed and, in particular, to offer further thoughts on what I said at that time. This is what follows.

The point of my Weaver–Tremblay talk boils down to the words with which I began the last paragraph: "The voice of Canadian anthropology has largely been absent from this conversation" (Asch 2001:206), by which I meant the political relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canada. It was a plea to our community to become more active professionally in what I believe is a matter that lies close to the heart of at least those of us who are settlers—ensuring that our being here to stay rests on the implementation of a just relationship with Indigenous peoples.

In making this plea, I was reaching back to the passage in Talal Asad's challenge in his introduction to *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* (1973) that, during the period of British colonialism:

> If (the anthropologist) was sometimes accusingly called "a Red," or "a socialist" by administrators and settlers, did this not merely reveal one facet of the hysterically intolerant character of colonialism as a system, with which he chose nevertheless to live *professionally* at peace. [18]

It was a call for us to act differently, especially as most anthropologists in this country are also the settlers to whom Asad refers.

But I was more expansive in what I identified as our silence *professionally* than I ought to have been. That is, I ought to have made it clear that supporting Indigenous peoples with our technical skills and exposing the harms caused them by capital and the settler state are ways of acting *professionally* that are not at "peace with colonialism." In this regard, it is clear that our professional

involvement has grown exponentially. And, although this should go without saying, the work of peers such as Culhane (1998), Furniss (1992), Irlbacher-Fox (2009), Mackey (2002), Martin-Hill (2008),Warry (2007), along with that of Smith, Noble, Pictou and Feltes in this volume, and of so many others, like Marc Pinkoski, whose contributions are not frequently reflected in academic publications demonstrates that, even when one is overtly situated politically on the Indigenous side, a researcher with integrity provides trustworthy research.

I now realize that the point of my comment was directed specifically to the absence of one particular dimension of disciplinary engagement, that is, what I would call engagement as professionals with *settlers* in finding a place to stand in relation to Indigenous peoples. It was clear then, and is even clearer now that, in absenting ourselves from intervening in this conversation, we place ourselves apart from our sister social sciences, political science and law, where address of this matter has blossomed, bringing to the scholarly community, politicians, administrators and the judiciary, as well as to the public, a vast, deep and exciting literature of engagement that is of the highest quality. In this regard, let my colleague Jim Tully's highly influential *Strange Multiplicities* (1995) stand in for it all. And I hope that my recent book, *On Being Here to Stay* (2014b), offers a contribution to this literature from our disciplinary perspective. What I am offering here are a few thoughts on what led me in that direction.

Judging Our Past

I think we all know that the principle reason for our avoiding this kind of intervention connects directly to the story we now tell ourselves of our positioning in such discussions earlier in our history that, to return to Asad, at best we avoided intervention and thus remained "at peace" with the colonial project and, at worst, as with our participation in "indirect rule" or our obsession with "salvage ethnography," complicit in it. As we tell the story, our realization of this positioning led to a "crisis"; one of three that inaugurated what we call "The Reflexive Turn" in the late 1960s and early 1970s that turned our disciplinary positioning on its head. As Levi put it:

> The first crisis [the other two being recognition of male bias in research and of the subjective nature of research represented as objective] came out of the recognition and subsequent critique of the discipline's complicity with structures of inequality wrought by European colonial expansion and its aftermath. [2015:n.p.]

I reflected the reasoning that resulted in our silencing of our voice in the Weaver–Tremblay lecture in these words:

> Still, as an anthropologist I have a particular concern that is not shared by any other professional. The concern is serious and is not new. Anthropology has a long history of appropriating voice. As we all know, there are some in our discipline who have treated Indigenous peoples as objects, speaking about them as though they were not there. Others have treated them as children, speaking for them. Our past is filled with ghosts. [Asch 2001:204]

And what I argued is that, notwithstanding this history, we have a legitimate role to play in the current discussion, and thus urged our intervention in it *professionally* as individuals and as a community.

I now look back at that phrasing with some regret. I ought to have made it clear that the ghosts of which I was speaking refer to the practices of only *some* anthropologists of those times and not *all* of them—a point I could easily have made by comparing the testimony of Julian Steward as an expert witness for the government against the Shoshoni in the Indians Claims Commission cases, to that of Sol Tax, whom I identified in my talk as my first mentor in the field. In other words, my intent was not to offer my judgment on the field as a whole, but to assure even those who make that judgment that nonetheless there is an honourable orientation through which to intervene in this conversation about our relationship with Indigenous peoples here.

What prompts me to address this matter here is the attention given in the papers of Joshua J. Smith and Emma Feltes to the political locations of Sol Tax and James Teit respectively and, in particular, the latter's discussion of her connection with the political orientation of James Teit. Although Teit was an ethnologist who worked in the first decades of the 20th century, Feltes, whose work epitomizes an engagement unabashedly aligned against the unjust, colonial practices of the Canadian state, nonetheless states that:

> I found a kind of kindred ethnologist in James Teit, and his experience helped me to navigate a similarly complex research landscape. His endeavour to occupy both spaces—political partner and researcher—helps to frame challenges that continue to play out in the academy and in anthropology in particular. [2015:478]

That is, here we have a disciplinary ancestor who, long before the reflexive moment, aligned himself politically against the colonial project so openly that he became secretary to an Indigenous chief and secretary-treasurer

of the Indigenous political organization The Interior Tribes of British Columbia and in that capacity was given the responsibility to transcribe and translate for the government of Canada, a most important political manifesto put forward by that community, the Laurier Memorial. And, in another decision that is out of keeping with the times as recounted in our current historiography, Feltes cites Wickwire (who has studied Teit's work extensively), who concludes that, "taking his lead from the Aboriginal leadership, [Teit] embarked on a new form of ethnographic text making aimed at mobilizing a united Aboriginal body against an aggressive assimilationist regime" (2015:477).

So that discussion, matched by Smith's paper in which he makes clear his debt to Sol Tax and the approach of action anthropology to orient his political engagement, offers me the opening to rectify the omission in "Finding a Place to Stand" that there was an anthropology, even before the reflexive turn, that aligned more closely with its position than is thought. Or, to put it another way, there were figures (many in fact) other than Sol Tax and James Teit both in North America and Britain who neither lived "professionally at peace" with colonialism nor were complicit with structures of inequality wrought by European colonial expansion.[1] It is a point I will illustrate with brief reference to two moves offered in the standard narrative as examples of what was wrong with anthropology before the reflexive moment: historical particularism, which is often described as a method that depicted cultures of the times as though colonialism and exploitation did not exist; and, structural functionalism, which is often characterized as an approach that was professionally at peace with the colonial project within which it was embedded or, even worse, was complicit in it.

On the Political Locations of Historical Particularism and Structural Functionalism

The Standard Narrative: The History of Anthropology as a Discipline

Speaking in very broad terms, as now written, our disciplinary history in my understanding and confirmed in such current introductions to cultural anthropology texts as Bonvillain and Schwimmer (2009), Eller (2009), Ember and Ember (2011), Peoples and Bailey (2009), Rosman, Rubel and Weisgrau (2009)[2] treats the development of both historical particularism and structural functionalism as responses to 19th century evolutionism's presumption that it had derived universal laws governing all human culture throughout history without sufficient evidence to support it. This led to a new orientation, which emphasized above all else the need for extensive fieldwork and the need for caution before asserting that there were laws governing human history (Darnell, Hamilton, Hancock and Smith 2015).

Where the approaches differed was on the focus of such work. For Boas, each culture is unique in that it develops along its own path and so "we must study it *individually*; not as a representative of some hypothetical stage" (Peoples and Bailey 2009:71). Hence, we arrive at the conclusion that, while we need to understand cultures in an historical context, cultures are unique and cannot be compared. In the standard account, the consequence was that Boas advocated that anthropologists "devote their energies to collecting as much data as possible, as quickly as possible, before cultures disappeared (as so many already had, after contact with foreign societies)" (Ember and Ember 2011:20). There is no mention that advocates of historical particularism took notice of colonialism and its impacts on the peoples with whom they interacted professionally beyond sometimes asserting that a central purpose of their work, called "salvage ethnography," was to rescue information from dying cultures, thereby predicting the inevitable demise of these ways of life when confronted with colonialism. In that sense, it follows that they "ignored colonialism" and, at least at the margins, may have been complicit in it (cf. Hancock 2015).

In contrast, the purpose of intense fieldwork in structural-functional theory as espoused by Radcliffe-Brown (1935) was less to capture what was unique in a culture than it was to discover how a set of institutions (unfamiliar to the Western mind) functioned (worked together) to create a stable, predictable rule-governed environment in which its members could live in peace. The intent was comparative in that, as Radcliffe-Brown saw it, it would be possible to ultimately discover the laws governing human history by following the method proposed by Auguste Comte in which one begins with controlled comparisons to develop rules that govern social life today and, only when this is well understood, to search for how these developed over time. That is, structural functionalists eschewed history in favour of comparison. It must also be mentioned that some texts also inform us that, at times, anthropologists in this school aligned themselves directly with the British colonial authorities (especially in the period of indirect rule or a political system in which the colonial power governed local populations not directly through administrators but through pre-existing local governing structures); an example being when Evans-Pritchard took money from colonial authorities (Bonvillain and Schwimmer 2009:48) "to inform them about conflict within a group that had

not yielded graciously to British rule" and when they provided information that they believed might be helping in implementing colonial policies.

The political position of the two theoretical orientations foregrounded in this narrative is aptly described in the following quote from a recent text (Hansen 2014:117):

> Classical anthropology saw its role as providing counterpoints to a homogenizing and universalizing narrative of Western modernity as the unquestionable standard against which everything else could be measured. The pockets of unadulterated wildness and primitiveness on islands and in remote highlands were supposed to teach "us" about our own past, and that the category of the human was wider and more diverse than could be ascertained in Europe and North America alone. This older project challenged neither colonialism nor bourgeois culture and mainly affirmed the boundaries between the primitive, the traditional, and the modern.

It thus renders a framing in which figures such as Boas and Radcliffe-Brown occupy a political orientation counter to that of Teit and Tax (with whom both worked, Teit worked with Boas and Radcliffe-Brown was Tax's supervisor) and one in which it would be problematic for those of us, like Feltes, Smith and myself, who engage in the kind of work we do to find a disciplinary connection, much less a tradition within which to stand.

An Alternative Narrative: The History of Anthropology and Colonialism

What I am suggesting is that a very different image of our history emerges when we view the development of historical particularism and structural functionalism not as responses to the inadequacy of 19th century cultural evolution as a method in the field but as counters to that theory as a justification for colonialism. Here is what I mean.

Certainly from the times of first colonization, European colonizers have justified the colonial project through a comparative anthropology in which our way of life was found to be superior to those of the colonized. Further, there is no doubt that, at least since the latter part of the 18th century, the stadial theory of universal history provided the paradigm to "explain" the course of that history as a series of steps from most primitive (hunter-gatherers in our present terminology) to ourselves. And indeed, beginning perhaps with Condorcet's work in the late 18th century, we planted in ourselves the idea that came to justify the colonial project; namely, while some might develop on their own or with our benign encouragement others may fail to progress and die off or make strides only by great effort and through our direct intervention. As he put it in his *Outlines of an Historical View of the Progress of the Human Mind* (published in French as *Esquisse d'un Tableau Historique des Progrès de l'Esprit Humain* in 1793/1794, and in English in 1796),

> the advances of these two last classes [what he called "tribes" and "hordes"] will be more slow, and accompanied with more frequent storms; it may even happen that, reduced in numbers in proportion as they see themselves repelled by civilized nations, they will in the end wholly disappear, or their scanty remains become blended with their neighbours. [1796:256–257]

Thus, by the turn of the 19th century, the central propositions justifying colonialism were put into place.

However, one crucial element was missing: a time frame within which to quantify just how far behind us were those at other and, particularly, the very earliest stages. The reason is that at that time, the history of the earth was measured in biblical time and so (for reasons I will not dwell on here) this meant that we were all very close, for the first stage of universal history began only after the Flood and thus a mere 4,000 years ago (Trautmann 1992) and this hardly seemed sufficient time for any portion of humanity to have come through them all. Therefore, by and large, at that time the stadial theory was considered by most to be "conjectural history" (389). It meant that many who accepted the stadial theory of progress (such as the members of the Aborigines' Protection Society) and even a White Man's Burden to assist in development, took the view that, notwithstanding Condorcet, all portions of humanity could be raised up by encouragement, not discipline.

It is no doubt familiar to most of us that, through a series of scientific discoveries, the use of biblical time to describe earth's history was discredited and replaced with geological time in the 1830s. What is less well known is that Charles Lyell, the author of the book that put the use of biblical time to its end, insisted that it remain in place for the reckoning of humanity's history. His reasoning was that, given that human beings were a special creation of God, it was best to leave our history in the Good Book until there was incontrovertible evidence to the contrary. And this is precisely what happened with the discovery at Brixham Cave in 1858 of artefacts in situ with animals known to have been extinct "before the Flood." As a result, Charles Lyell declared the end of biblical time at a meeting of the Royal Society the very next year and, as Trautmann (1992) (whose article on this matter I commend to all) says, with it "the bottom dropped out of human history and its beginnings disappeared into an abyss of time" (380) to be replaced by

what he calls "ethnological time," the time frame we still use today.

This was followed the same year by Darwin's *Origin of Species*, which offered a "scientific" explanation for the evolution of life forms, and then his *Descent of Man* in 1871, which extended biological evolution to humanity's history. And, while there were others, such as Tylor, who traced out cultural evolution, as I see it, it was only with the publication of Lewis Henry Morgan's *Ancient Society* in 1877 that a specific chronology to account for the origin of humanity and the putative stages of cultural evolutionary development was offered.[3] After stating in the preface that "the great antiquity of mankind has been established. It seems singular that proofs should have been discovered as recently as within the past thirty years, and that the present generation should be the first called upon to recognize so important a "fact" (1877:5); and, in chapter one, that "the latest investigations respecting the early condition of the human race are tending to the conclusion that mankind commenced their career at the bottom of the scale and worked their way up from savagery to civilization through the slow accumulations of experimental knowledge" (1877:3), he goes on in chapter three to state:

> What may have been the relative length of these ethnical periods is also a fair subject of speculation. An exact measure is not attainable, but an approximation may be attempted. On the theory of geometrical progression, the period of savagery was necessarily longer in duration than the period of barbarism, as the latter was longer than the period of civilization. If we assume a hundred thousand years as the measure of man's existence upon the earth in order to find the relative length of each period—and for this purpose, it may have been longer or shorter—it will be seen at once that at least sixty thousand years must be assigned to the period of savagery. Three-fifths of the life of the most advanced portion of the human race, on this apportionment, were spent in savagery. Of the remaining years, twenty thousand, or one-fifth, should be assigned to the Older Period of barbarism. For the Middle and later Periods there remain fifteen thousand years, leaving five thousand, more or less, for the period of civilization. [1877:38]

With this, European colonization appeared to be justified on scientific grounds, for if the evidence showed that "three-fifths of the life of the most advanced portion of the human race [meaning ourselves], on this apportionment, were spent in savagery" (1877:39) then the least advanced were at least 40,000 years behind us and still had several stages to pass through before becoming like us. European conquest was a natural evolutionary process that could well lead the less advanced to die off or, were we willing, might with our direct intervention be able to raise themselves to our level. It is a point that Morgan put in in his concluding paragraph this way: "It must be regarded as a marvellous fact that a portion of mankind five thousand years ago, less or more, attained to civilization ... through unassisted self-development" (1877:553); a portion he limited to only two groups, for he goes on to say,

> in strictness but two families, the Semitic and the Aryan, accomplished the work through unassisted self-development. The Aryan family represents the central stream of human progress, because it produced the highest type of mankind, and by gradually assuming the control of the earth. [1877:553]

In short, 19th century cultural evolutionism was the "handmaiden of colonialism," or to put it more precisely, beginning at that time, colonialism was (and still is) the handmaiden of 19th century cultural evolutionary theory. I am arguing that it was to the head of steam given to the apparent confirmation of the scientific basis for colonialism provided by 19th century evolutionary anthropology that later anthropologists, like Franz Boas, Radcliffe-Brown and many others, reacted. Their objective was to discredit the "scientific evidence" on which the justification for colonial project then rested. Their method was to advance approaches, like historical particularism and structural functionalism, that could offer scientific evidence directly challenging the validity of the "science" on which Morgan based his conclusions.

With this in mind, let me return to the characterizations of historical particularism and structural functionalism contained in the standard accounts, only now as responses to 19th century evolutionism not only as a method in anthropology but also to the proposition that it provided scientific evidence sufficient to justify the colonial project.

Historical Particularism as a Response to Colonialism

What I am suggesting is that historical particularism sought to discredit two assertions of cultural evolution fundamental to the justification of colonialism: (1) the human race was governed by a universal law in which what comes later is superior to what comes before; and (2) the comparative method (Boas 1896) scientifically confirmed that Western culture was superior to all others. To this end, Boas argued that the better science is to begin with the intensive study of each culture "*individually*; not as a representative of some hypothetical stage" (Peoples and Bailey 2009:71). And as his article

on the comparative method indicates, he was able to demonstrate clearly that, when examined in detail, cultures were not only manifestly much richer and more complex than Morgan's armchair accounts provided, but also the comparisons on which Morgan (and others) drew their putatively scientific conclusions that produced their hierarchy of cultures relied on an arbitrary assemblage of facts. Furthermore, his method made it clear that the great variation and richness of these cultures (indeed their uniqueness) means that the history of humanity as a whole cannot be reduced to a set of laws that move humanity from what is simple to what is complex. Therefore, the colonial project was grounded on the erroneous proposition derived from 19th century evolutionism that science had demonstrated clearly that one society (or race, as with Morgan's assertions regarding Aryans) was superior to another. And while it was soon taken up by many "progressives" in the United States to counter a racist and ethnocentric ideology that justified (among other things) segregation, it took a long time for it to become hegemonic.

In sum, while historical particularism may seem simpleminded to us, the fact is that while simple, it was also very effective and, over time, proved of great value in helping to move the world community to the understanding that, counter to the position justifying colonialism, all ways of life and all peoples are equal in standing. Indeed, it remains of value today as a counter to those who denigrate Indigenous (and other) ways of life by describing them as somehow inferior to our own.

This is not to say that historical particularism had no shortcomings worthy of critique today; and indeed, beginning with Caulfield's article in *Reinventing Anthropology* (Caulfield 1974) pointing these out has virtually developed into a cottage industry. Of these, while not conceding on the point of unilineal evolution, Boas takes the view that, at least in North America, the settler population would eventually displace its original cultures. It led later generations of scholars to conclude that (as one faculty member at Columbia put it to me) these people were "broken down" and (as was commonly taught there), the choice facing them was to find ways to fit their practices into modernity (acculturate) or die out culturally (assimilate).

But what of "salvage ethnography," that is, doing work to capture a culture in the anticipation that it will soon die? I am convinced this is not a future Boas celebrated. I am also certain he would be overjoyed to learn he was wrong and even more that cultures whose ways of life he recorded in fear of their demise are still here (notwithstanding colonialism), and their members often turn to those very texts to provide information helpful to them as they build them up again.

In short, I agree with Caulfield (before she recites her litany of what Boas did wrong) when she says:

> I want to emphasize that I do not mean to say that anthropologists are imperialist, or that they favour exploitation; the vast majority are not and do not. In fact, the emergence of anthropology as an academic discipline in America was ushered in with a concerted attack on theories of racial and cultural superiority ... The Grand Scheme of unilinear cultural evolution as it was developed in the nineteenth century, placing Western European and American civilization at the pinnacle of humanity, was vigorously attacked by the Boasian school and the theory of cultural relativism was forged in the heat of many long theoretical battles within the discipline. [1974:183]

It is evident to me that, were this depiction of Boas's political location understood as well as are the critiques of his practices, the generation of engaged scholars being trained today would have much less difficulty in taking the view that where they stand is more in alignment with, and less in contrast to where he stood (Hancock 2014).

Structural Functionalism as a Response to Colonialism

Turning to structural functionalism, as I see it, this approach argued against the "science" behind colonialism in these ways: (1) by demonstrating, counter to the evolutionists' argument, that all ways of life were capable of handling their own affairs; and (2) science demanded that, before attempting to work out the general laws governing the history of social life, it was essential to work out those that govern social life today. To that end, British social anthropologists (here I am including others, such as Malinowski) much like the Boasians, devoted much attention to compiling detailed ethnographies; however, here the aim was less to foreground the variety of ways of life than to indicate that each way of life had rules that provided its members with peaceful, predictable lives and, furthermore, that these rules were not unique to each culture, but could be reduced to a few structural patterns that extended broadly throughout the world.

Again as with historical particularism, structural functionalism (and British social anthropology in general) embarked on intense fieldwork within small communities to elicit the information to substantiate their argument. Given the political context within which British social anthropologists worked, this position was deployed, as for example in Radcliffe-Brown's paper on "Patrilineal and Matrilineal Succession" (Radcliffe-Brown 1935; Asch 2009), to counter the legal position (based on 19th century

evolutionary "science") that there were some peoples so low on the evolutionary scale that their lands were legally unoccupied at the time of colonization (doctrine of *Terra Nullius*). However, the understanding that all peoples were properly equipped to run their own affairs independently of Western "advice" did not gain ascendancy in world affairs until 1960 when, Clause 3 of the United Nations (1960) "Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples" stated categorically that, "Inadequacy of political, economic, social or educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence."

However, at the time British social anthropology came to ascendancy, the colonial project was well ensconced, and was the political context within which structural functionalists had to position themselves. It is their insertion into this process, as though offering advice to colonial authorities regarding indirect rule, which leads to the accusation that they were complicit in colonialism. But in my view that is a very decontextualized, presentist claim.

As Lamont (2014) shows in his recent article, "Malinowski and the 'Native' Question," at that time the debate among colonial authorities was between "direct rule," which meant the imposition of Western (or as they would prefer "natural") law with a Western administrative structure throughout the colonies; or, "indirect rule," which meant that the authorities to a certain degree, would permit governance by locals based on their own political and legal orders. Anthropologists, then, had to choose whether to intervene in the debate or stand aside, either by remaining mute or (perhaps somewhat unrealistically) calling for the immediate end of colonial rule. For whatever reason, by and large they chose to intervene. Given what I have come to understand of Radcliffe-Brown's political location (and by implication, that of many others), this decision was taken not only because it matched their theoretical approach but also because it (likely) placed them on the same side of the debate as at least a good segment of those with whom they worked. Their goal then was not to *promote* colonialism but to implement practical measures they believed would *ameliorate* its impact on colonized peoples.[4]

As with historical particularism, it is evident to me that were the political positioning of British social anthropology better contextualized within the history of colonialism, engaged scholars would again have much less difficulty in taking the view that where they stand is more in alignment with and less in contrast to where they stood.

Conclusions

I am certainly not calling for a return to the anthropology of our forebears. Nor am I in disagreement with the position that a reflexive turn was required with respect to at least one of its foci, the male bias of earlier ethnographic work and theorization. What I am arguing is that anthropology did not require such a turn when it comes to its engagement with colonialism or with structures of inequality. What that moment required was the realization that what our predecessors had done needed to be further developed and perhaps, even recalibrated to reflect the new realities (Hancock 2015). And had we moved in that direction, we would be in no doubt that the work being done by engaged scholars today fits squarely in the mainstream traditions of our field and, thus that there is a longstanding foundation from which we today can build our place to stand.

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Notes

1 I do not have space here to go into this discussion in detail or with great rigour. That needs to await a later intervention. However, the direction I take can be gleaned from four previously published papers: "Folkways and the Ethics of Collecting" (Asch 2013), in which I discuss the political orientation of American "progressives," such as Franz Boas, and specifically address whether his intent was "salvage anthropology"; "Radcliffe-Brown on Colonialism in Australia" (Asch 2009), in which I address Radcliffe-Brown's political location on the matter of colonization in Australia; and "Lévi-Strauss and the Political" (Asch 2005) and "Lévi-Strauss on Theoretical Thought and Universal History" (Asch 2014a), on the relationship between Lévi-Strauss' theses respecting social relations and the theoretical underpinnings of the colonial project, a matter I address more fully in *On Being Here to Stay* (Asch 2014b).

2 I realize that the literature on the matter is vast and complex. I know that I will attend to it in writing a detailed paper. However, here I believe that because they present the story of the discipline we seek to share with the larger public, they lay out the most fundamental aspects of what we seek to represent as central to our disciplinary identity.

3 I could not find one in Tylor's *Primitive Culture* first published in 1871 nor in his *Anthropology* first published in 1881.

4 In retrospect, as Lamont makes clear (2014:91–93), this choice was no better than the other, for in the hands of Jan Smuts it offered a "scientific" basis for South African Apartheid. But, I do not think this is inevitable so long as there is good will on all sides (as is the understanding of those in Canada who seek greater authority for Indigenous law and political orders in our decision-making processes).

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