

Understanding the Present and the Past: Perspectives on Anthropology and Archaeology

Indrani Chattopadhyaya

INTRODUCTION

Anthropology is known to be the study of all aspects of human life, past and present. Archaeology is the study of what survives of the material culture of people who lived in the past. In this article I would explore the relations between archaeology and anthropology in general. As it would not be possible to go into the details of all the three disciplines of anthropology - physical, social/cultural and linguistic, I would emphasize the recent developments in social/cultural anthropology and archaeology. These two disciplines - Archaeology and Anthropology have a joint heritage but separate identities. Anthropology looks at structures of meaning as they exist in the present; archaeology provides a long-term perspective on the development of systems of meaning and the general conditions through which human meanings can be generated.

NATURE OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Both archaeology and anthropology are the outcomes of colonialism. Their early history is intimately bounded up with colonial expansion, encountering widely different cultures. The development of linguistics was also linked to initial moves in anthropology and archaeology. Development of comparative philology provided the basis for ethnology, a controlled historical study of different races and cultures starting from the basis of linguistic similarity and difference.

Archaeology is a fourfold hermeneutic study of past and present and, as a hermeneutic process, an attempt is made to understand the past in its contextual embeddedness. (Shanks et al., 1987). It is not just archaeologists who value knowledge of the past. An accurate representation of the past, is perceived to bear on the present, and is a critical element of all social life. 'Every process of action is a production of something new, a fresh act; but at the same time all action exists in continuity with the past, which supplies the means of its imitation' (Giddens, 1979).

Archaeology, as the study of material culture of people who lived in the past is historical; and insofar it is about material culture, it is cultural. Yet saying that archaeology is cultural history is rather 'a quiet revolution', because cultural history is considered already to a considerable extent anthropology, sociology, literary criticism and a whole lot of other things. We live in an age of what Geertz (1983) calls blurred genres, and one of its most striking developments is a "historical turn" all across the social sciences. The layering of time is central to the historical turn. Giddens traces three intersecting planes of temporality involved in every moment of social reproduction. The core of approaches pioneered by social scientists like Bourdieu (1977) Sahlins (1985) and Giddens (1979) lies in linking microanalysis of social interactions through institutional analysis to long-term processes. They work at all three temporal levels of the *duree* of activity, the temporality of *Dasein* and the third one, that Braudel calls the *longue duree*.

Some see archaeology as a natural science. Some as a social science and others still hold that archaeology is simply itself (David Clark) or it is like literary criticism, or even a form of political activism. Some post-processual archaeologists call themselves historians of the long term (Hodder, 1987), others try to bring texts and artefacts together. It is insufficient for archaeologists to take a particular pattern of cultural variation at some point in the past as static given situation that poses problems for interpretation. Archaeology has shown that these patterns come into existence and disappear again, and documenting and understanding the nature of these changes is one of its prime tasks, both as an end in itself and because changing cultural patterns imply changing rules of archaeological interpretation. Cultural variation results from all sorts of different factors, operating in various ways and in varying combinations. Different aspects of variation in pottery, for example, may relate to vessel function, cooking techniques, the size of the domestic group, the rank of the individuals using the pottery, whether it is made

by the specialists, as well as the milieu in which the potters learned their craft. Local knowledge is bounded in time as well as space. Events are a primary category of analysis. But the other side of the coin is that they only 'really' make sense when set into grander flows of conjunctural and structural time. The linguistic turn, within cultural history, has made it somewhat like a moving between practices and representations.

Anthropology also has had shifting definitions - some people stressed that the key element to be studied in anthropology is the social structure provided by kinship, these were self proclaimed social anthropologists. For others, the crucial factor is culture, which ranges between the material objects that people make and use, to their sets of beliefs and views of the world. Today, it is almost impossible to decide where society stops and culture starts. Nevertheless both terms, social and cultural anthropology, are in common use to designate slightly different forms of anthropology and this needs acknowledging. Other important terms are 'ethnography' and 'ethnology' that refer to the observable aspects of society encountered by the anthropologist in the field. Ethnographic data are synthesized back home and then it is combined with theory to produce a rounded anthropology. Ethnography, often seen as the equivalent of excavation, is somewhat looked down as the basic toil, whereas the really worthwhile activity is the comparative work of anthropology carried out on the data; as it is with interpretational aspect of archaeological data. Today, with a greater emphasis on material culture and practical action in general, there is some overlap between cultural anthropology and ethnography.

Relationship between Anthropology and Archaeology

In a way it makes no sense to attempt to look at the relationship between the two disciplines of archaeology and anthropology, as neither of them are single entities. There is much internal variety, with archaeologists defining themselves as scientific, ecological, and historical as well as anthropological. Also there are differences in the meaning of anthropological archaeology in different times and varying places. In order to give a preview I shall look at the divergent meanings given to the term 'anthropological archaeology' on the two sides of the Atlantic. My intention is not to trace the history of development of these

two disciplines of anthropology and archaeology but to show the different trends that give these two, their own distinct identity.

Looking at the mutual influence of the two disciplines it would be wise to say that the frameworks of thought developed in anthropology are important to archaeology, and it is the results of archaeology that have made the most impact on anthropology. There has been a subtle process of mutual definition over the last century. We are familiar with the myth about the origin of anthropology that is centered round the person of Malinowski, who invented the methodologies and procedures of fieldwork which allowed anthropologists access to large, important and verifiable information about non-European peoples. His work was distinguished from the second-hand data gathered by armchair ethnographers like Tylor and Pitt Rivers. This trend of gathering information necessitated the setting up of a separate area of study, social anthropology that alone had the fieldwork methods and theoretical approaches to generate and analyze the ways of life unlike our own. However, the publication of Malinowski's diary in 1967 changed his reputation and there was soul-searching about the nature of his fieldwork method.

The early history of fieldwork could be traced in North America in 1879 to document the traditional ways of life amongst Native American groups. Boas (1858-1914) is often seen as the founder of anthropology in North America. His role is crucial for professionalization of the discipline. His students included almost all of the most influential figures intellectually and institutionally in the first half of this century in USA. - Benedict, Herskovits, Kroeber, Lesser, Lowie, Mead, Sappir and Wissler who set up departments in Berkeley, Chicago and North-western universities. A crucial difference in the States from Britain was the breadth of Boas's interests that included not only social anthropology, but also linguistics, physical anthropology and archaeology. Although Boas rejected evolutionism, as did Malinowski, his notions of culture and cultural change were artefact-focused and looked both at past and present. His interest is reflected even today, in the position of anthropology in North America, where general Departments of Anthropology are found encompassing these four fields of the subject: linguistics, prehistory, social and physical anthropology.

In Britain A. C. Haddon (1855-1939), a zoologist in Cambridge University took his first multi-disciplinary expedition to the Torres Straits to look at different aspects of the human personality through psychology, linguistics, physical anthropology and social anthropology. For the first time new media were used to record information and the most important innovation was River's development of the 'genealogical method'. Though he was not the first one to collect genealogical information, he was the pioneer in understanding the centrality of kinship to all other aspects of life. The knowledge of kinship allowed the investigator to look at the data and successfully find information on residence, clan membership, social laws of the group, totems, demography, physical anthropology, and linguistics. The Board of Anthropological Studies was established in 1908 in Britain. Haddon and Rivers were responsible for the 'Cambridge School' and trained Radcliffe-Brown, Hocart and Layard amongst many others.

We can evaluate Malinowski and Boas's influence on either side of the Atlantic. Malinowski's claim to have moved anthropological fieldwork from 'the verandah to the village' has a considerable truth in it. It was the systematic nature of information collected by him that was crucial for further anthropological research and he was the one who believed on 'objectively acquired knowledge and not just subjectively formed notions'. Malinowski's pupils Montegu, Evans-Pritchard and Raymond Firth were extremely important in institutionalizing social anthropology and in this sense Malinowski built the foundation of the modern discipline, demolishing the old Victorian evolutionary approaches. Establishment of the new discipline, with its own methodology caused a split between archaeology and anthropology. Boas and Malinowski developed theoretical frameworks, as they needed them for the discipline. The differences in ideas have affected the two disciplines: archaeology and anthropology.

Archaeology, since its inception, has predominantly empiricist and positivist orientations. British archaeology owes its genesis to a number of different figures. Pitt Rivers pioneered field methods, basic techniques of stratigraphic excavation and recording in 1870's to 1890's. These methods were refined in the twentieth century by Mortimer Wheeler (1890-1976). Major theoretical advances came from V.Gordon Childe's picture of European prehistory as a mosaic of different

cultures, which may originally have had their own customs, kinship patterns, economy, rituals and beliefs. Differences are represented in the archaeological evidence over time and space. It is easy to demonstrate that the way people conduct their lives varies from time to time and from place to place, and this variation is important to archaeological interpretation. From this simple truism archaeologists have elaborated a complex explanatory edifice, based on the idea of the archaeological 'culture'. The fact that people living in different places conduct their lives differently to a greater or lesser extent shows in the material residues (the archaeological evidence) of those different ways of life. Archaeologists have classified these patterns of spatial variation into entities called archaeological 'cultures' – 'a culture must be distinguished by a plurality of well defined diagnostic types that are repeatedly and exclusively associated with one another and when plotted on a map, exhibit a recognizable distribution pattern' (Childe, 1956). These entities are regarded as actors on the historical stage, playing the role for prehistory, which has no written document. 'Cultures' have been regarded as indicators of ethnicity – self-conscious identification with a particular social group. Archaeological 'cultures' also have had a political role as legitimators of the claim of modern groups to territory and influence. These are controversial, yet essential, tenets of much archaeological methodology today. The question of the origin of ethnic groups in the sense of self-conscious identity groups is an important question, but it is analytically distinct from that of the nature of archaeological 'cultures'. It is only rarely, a question of objective groupings of material being discovered by the archaeologists that are used in political arguments (Rama Janmabhumi - Babri Masjid controversy).

Childe and Graham Clark were the two crucial figures in the institutionalization of archaeology in Britain. Clark held functionalist views very similar to those of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown (Trigger, 1989). Clark collaborated with geologists, palynologists and palaeontologists as he believed that reconstructing past environment is important in understanding change in life ways of people. There was some mutual influence between Clark and Leslie White. It is with Higgs and his team, who believed archaeology to be the study of long-term ethology, which took the discipline somewhat away from anthropology.

In the United States archaeology, from its inception, was closely tied to anthropology. Perhaps it is because of an apparent lack of time-depth in North America that kept both the disciplines and their methodological approaches together. To give one example Kroeber, a student of Boas, undertook considerable amounts of archaeological work in Pueblos. His main theoretical stance was drawn from functionalist anthropology. We can perceive two sets of archaeological research from the 1960s onwards. The first often goes under the name of ethno-archaeology (Rathje, 1974; Binford, 1978). The second trend was of depositional and post-depositional theory (Clarke, 1968.) and Schiffer's Behavioral Archaeology (Schiffer, 1976.).

Recent Trends in the Disciplines

In the 1970s an interest in trade and exchange for understanding social structure became prevalent and utilized many forms of economic anthropology (Renfrew, 1975: 3-59.). These influences along with various forms of Marxism, is the basis for models of change still prevalent in archaeology. There is a general opening up of theory to new possibilities and a convergence between archaeology and anthropology today. In the United States most archaeological teaching and research is done within departments of anthropology rather than in separate departments of archaeology. Conversely the British institutionalization of anthropology and archaeology as separate disciplines has resulted from an evaluation of the nature and necessity of fieldwork amongst anthropologists. Here, I would like to point out that archaeologists have started to critique the nature of their fieldwork too (Hodder, 1997).

Anthropology focuses on the material culture to find answers like social relation. Culture has been equated with meaning, either through the structuralism of Levi-Strauss or the more semiotic orientation of Greetz, who read the texts from material culture. Life as a whole can be seen as a series of transformations, as the relations composing people and things shift. Some transformations are occurring regularly, we call this continuity; some occurrences are unexpected and bring new sets of relations, we call them change. Life is a state of becoming. A crisis or a stress on continuity does not mean that the social process is static. Gender for example is not an inherent and invariable property of a person, de-

coupling of biological sex and social roles opens up the possibility of multiple genders beyond simply male and female for analysis and interpretation in anthropology. In fact gender relations are created in different contexts. In the study of gender, archaeology has developed a set of traditions of its own (Claassen et al., 1997; Marshall, 1998). Though, gender studies are not a unified field, archaeologists have argued that gender studies have to be situated within broader perspective of age, hierarchy etc. in other words, in line with the so called Third Wave Feminism (Gilchrist, 1994). The work of Bourdieu has been crucial in inspiring practice-based anthropology and archaeology, showing the importance of the mutual involvement of people, material culture and landscape.

With the advent of global connection, easy air travel and far reaching electronic media, the orientation of anthropology and archaeology is changing. For anthropology it is no longer Us studying Them - the Us in question were white, middle-class people from developed countries. There has been a shift in perception from cultures as static to cultures always in a state of becoming. There has also been a major shift in the belief that western knowledge is superior. Post-modernist thinkers, Foucault, Derrida and Bourdieu, to name a few have exposed and shaken the smug self-confidence of western thought and the ideas of these thinkers have given a new dimension to both anthropology and archaeology. The discipline of anthropology grew with an idea of culture as always local, but now the global element is disturbing this concept. New nouns and adjectives with a suffix to the word 'global' have been created e.g. globalism, globalisation, globality, and globalness. Diaspora is a major feature of the modern world and it cannot be studied by conventional ethnographic methods, yet it is very much a problem of anthropology (Clifford, 1997). One way out of these dilemmas is to develop multi-site ethnography, where local phenomena should be studied in terms to its connections elsewhere (Marcus, 1986:165-93). Now we accept that all sorts of people and cultures can coexist and keep their separate identities in the new global culture and none of them are considered inherently superior.

Another important effect that the change brought to these disciplines is the representations made in the museums. Clifford's (1997) idea of the museum as a contact zone and an area of

intercultural debate and exchange have caught the imagination of both anthropologists and archaeologists. The new information technology of CD-ROM and Internet is helping in relating information about artefacts in virtual form where it could not be done physically.

In archaeology, ethnicity has only recently come to the fore. New Archaeology has stressed local adaptations to the environment and culture as a set of functional purposes and rejected the view of culture as representing different peoples. Post-processualists, influenced by Barth's views in differences in identity, has somewhat put back ethnicity on to the academic agenda in archaeology. The most influential critique of functionalist approach of New Archaeology has been that of Ian Hodder (1982), who has looked at the nature of boundaries between groups through ethno-archaeological work. His central idea is to show that identity is created by symbolic means and it could be manipulated, so archaeologists have to be careful in interpreting their evidence. Material cultures also give other forms of identity, such as social hierarchy and gender. To look at these different forms of identity one has to study the history of the region because ethnicity arises from similarities and differences in people's *habitus* and shows how unconscious patterns of life are illustrated by symbols.

In understanding the new sets of relationships in the present world, both archaeologists and anthropologists are looking on literary studies, social theory and history. At the theoretical level most influential are French social theorists, Derrida and Foucault. Derrida's analysis of discourse and Foucault's ideas on power have been taken up by Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha to analyze Eurocentric biases, nature of global culture and marginality within the culture in the present. Archaeology and anthropology are aiming to learn the state of the modern world and to unlearn the set pattern. They will also have to realize the set of unequal relations that compose the modern world both historical and prehistorical. Past and present are intermingled and essential in understanding the future. To understand the contemporary scene we have to understand active relationships and our situatedness between past and present. For this understanding both perspectives of archaeology and anthropology are vital and essential.

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ABSTRACT Anthropology and Archaeology informs us of the full viability of life, past and present. Since the beginning, the discipline of archaeology and anthropology has influenced and informed each other. In this paper I have tried to chart and analyze their changing relationship. It is not possible to look at all the aspects of anthropology in this paper so I would only focus on the theories and methods of social/cultural anthropology and archaeology. Archaeology and Anthropology are linked intimately, in different ways in various parts of the globe. It is not just archaeologists who value knowledge of the past. Anthropologists are becoming more aware of the fact that an accurate representation of the past, as it is perceived to bear on the present, is a critical element of all social life. It is impossible to approach the present without the knowledge of the past and that much of this past is prehistoric, thus only accessible through archaeology. Archaeology and Anthropology has joint heritage and separate identities. Anthropology looks at structures of meaning as they exist in the present; archaeology provides a long-term perspective on the development of systems of meaning and the general conditions through which human meanings can be generated. In this article I would explore new trends in these two disciplines. Looking at the mutual influence of the two disciplines it would be wise to say that frameworks of thought developed in anthropology are important to archaeology, and it is the results of archaeology which have made the most impact on anthropology. No doubt there has been a subtle process of reciprocity between these two disciplines.

Author's Address: Dr. Indrani Chattopadhyaya, *Fellow*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Rashtrapati Nivas, Shimla 171 005, Himachal Pradesh, India
E-mail: indrani2001@yahoo.com