

Anthropological Questionnaires — A Note

by
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The questionnaire used by Lumholtz, though French in origin¹, represents one aspect of European scientific investigation of native peoples in other parts of the world. These questionnaires were compiled in an attempt to provide field workers with the means of obtaining the maximum amount of information during their explorations.

It is possible that James Cook was one of the first to formulate the methodology. The 'Rules to be observed by every person in or belonging to His Majesty's Bark the *Endeavour* for the better Establishing of a regular and uniform Trade for Provisions, etc., with the Inhabitants of George's Island [Tahiti]' enjoin those concerned 'to endeavour by every fair means to Cultivate a Friendship with the Natives, and to treat them with all imaginable humanity'.²

There are four other rules relating to trade matters, but Cook was well aware that some order in dealing with the natives was necessary if 'Confusion and Quarrels between us and the natives' were to be avoided.³ This friendly association allowed observations on the natives to be made and Cook devoted a number of pages in his *Journal* to descriptions of native peoples, their manners and customs, religions, weapons, etc. As well, he noted that 'Mr. Banks . . . understands their Language as well, or better than, any one on board'.⁴

The need to make full use of opportunities offered during the nineteenth century spate of exploration was seen by the British Association for the Advancement of Science. To this end the First Edition of *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*⁵ was published in 1874 'to promote accurate anthropological observation on the part of travellers, and to enable those who are not anthropologists themselves to supply the information which is wanted for the scientific study of anthropology at home'.⁶

A Second Edition⁷ followed in 1892 with various sections entirely recast.⁸ A Third Edition⁹ with minor alterations appeared in 1899, but the Fourth Edition¹⁰ of 1912 had considerable alteration:

'It was agreed that "its contents should be re-arranged on some scientific scheme of classification . . . that the vital connection of religion with most of the subjects of inquiry should be emphasized; that investigations into language, anatomy, physiology, psychology, and medical matters . . . should be excluded or very slightly treated." . . . 'It was also agreed "that narrative form should as far as possible be substituted for the old lists of 'leading questions'; and that care should be taken to define technical terms and provide precise English nomenclature for the chief classes of processes and things which anthropologists have to describe".'¹¹

The Fifth Edition (1929) continued in these traditions, but it was pointed out that in some sections like material culture there has been little need for alteration, whilst 'in the case of Social Anthropology, of which Magic and Religion now form an integral part, it was found that recent investigations necessitated so much revision that the only course to adopt was to re-write the whole of it'.¹²

'The object of this book is to enable all those who have opportunities for research to make the most of them, and to ensure that inquiries are made with some attempt at scientific method so, as to be of use to themselves and to students at home'.¹³ A Sixth Edition¹⁴ was published in 1951.

Physical anthropology was covered by another Committee of the British Association for the Advancement of Science¹⁵ which published 'a full series of anthropometric standards, with precise directions for employing them'.¹⁶

ENDNOTES

1. Société d'anthropologie de Paris, 'Questionnaire de sociologie et d'ethnographie', *Bulletins de la Société d'anthropologie de Paris*, 3e série, t.6 (1883), pp. 580-97. The title of the original Lumholtz response is 'Réponse alinéa par alinéa, pour les Australiens de Herbert-River, au questionnaire de sociologie et d'ethnographie de la Société', *Bulletins de la Société d'anthropologie de Paris*, 3e série, t.11 (1888), pp. 648-62.
2. James Cook, *Captain Cook's Journal during his First Voyage round the World made in H.M. Bark "Endeavour" 1768-71*, a literal transcription of the original mss. with notes and introduction ed. W. J. L. Wharton (London, 1893) Australian Fascimile Edition, no. 188 (Adelaide, 1968), pp. 60-1.
3. Cook, *Journal*, p. 60.
4. Cook, *Journal*, p. 225.
5. British Association for the Advancement of Science, *Notes and Queries on Anthropology, for the Use of Travellers and Residents in Uncivilized Lands* (London, 1874).
6. British Association for the Advancement of Science, *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, ed. for the British Association for the Advancement of Science, by a Committee of Section H [Anthropology] 5th edn (London, 1929) p. viii (Preface) — hereafter cited as *Notes*, 5th edn.
7. Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, ed. for the Council of the Anthropological Institute by John George Garson and Charles Hercules Read, 2nd edn (London, 1892).
8. *Notes*, 5th edn, p. vii (Preface).
9. British Association for the Advancement of Science, *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, ed. for the British Association for the Advancement of Science, by John George Garson and Charles Hercules Read, 3rd edn (London, 1899).
10. British Association for the Advancement of Science, *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, ed. for the British Association for the Advancement of Science, by Barbara Freire-Marreco and John Linton Myres, 4th edn (London, 1912).
11. *Notes*, 5th edn, pp. vii-viii (Preface).
12. *Notes*, 5th edn, p. viii (Preface).
13. *Notes*, 5th edn, p. viii (Preface).
14. Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, 6th edn, revised and rewritten by a Committee of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland (London, 1951).
15. British Association for the Advancement of Science, 'Anthropometric Investigation in the British Isles: Report of the Committee, consisting of D. J. Cunningham [and others]', *Report of the Seventy-Eighth Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Dublin, September 1908* (London, 1909), pp. 351-99.
16. *Notes*, 5th edn, p. vii (Preface).

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