

to demonstrate that natives can build up systems of behavior and social communication, and that these can function smoothly in terms of inner understandings and other cultural correlates, without ever registering as criteria of classification in the kinship system.

One last item to suggest that behavior patterns between relatives can operate efficiently despite the lack of terminological reverberations may be in order. When I was gathering Jicarilla myths and tales, and relationship terms were given by informants, I would stop from time to time to inquire (since the Jicarilla have but two terms for grandparents, one for grandparents of each sex) whether the paternal or maternal grandfather or grandmother was meant. This itch for accuracy on my part irritated my informants at times, and I am sure that I was more than once suspected of injecting the question for its nuisance value. My informants felt that I should be able to make the identification from the context. If a child is said to run a few steps to his grandfather's home to hear some stories or carry a message, it was expected that I appreciate at once that with matrilineal residence in force only the mother's father would be so situated.

It must be understood that the native brings to his round of activity, whether that be the telling of a story, the performance of a rite, or the calling of a kinship term, a special sensitivity to the totality of his tribal life. Terms and classifications which a less sensitized anthropologist may consider essential to an understanding of the outline of a social system, may be made less necessary by some other hall-mark or ground of common understanding. Our office is to use kinship terminology when we can, and not to be ruled by it when we cannot.

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POLYNESIAN ANTHROPOLOGY TODAY *By* ERNEST BEAGLEHOLE

I

FOR a variety of reasons the present seems appropriate for considering briefly the status of Polynesian research in ethnology and anthropology, to evaluate research already done and to look at the immediate future in these terms.

The incentive to modern research in Polynesia came from a report prepared for the First Pan-Pacific Science Conference, held in Honolulu in 1920, by a group of prominent scientists, including Dixon, Kroeber, Lowie, Rivers, Sullivan, Terman, Tozzer, and Wood-Jones. This report, *Recommendations for Anthropological Research in Polynesia*, published in the Proceedings of the Conference, marks a new chapter in Polynesian research. It noted that research in all areas of the Pacific was of great importance but considered the Polynesian problem as the immediate primary undertaking, since Polynesia comprises the heart of the Pacific. The Report noted further that skilled anthropological study had had, to that date, no place in Polynesia, the greater part of available data having been gathered by untrained observers in an unsystematic manner. After surveying this material, the Report proceeded to sketch problems to be stressed in future research. These were general and specific topics of investigation paralleling similar discussions in, for instance, *Notes and Queries in Anthropology*. The Committee's remarks on linguistics were succinct. It stressed the necessity of coordinating synthetic work, pointing out that only a trained philologist devoting himself uninterruptedly to the task for five to ten years could solve the complex problems involved and leave Oceanic philology as an organized usable body of knowledge where then it was but a mass of chaotic data. Historic and psychological researches were also outlined, the former to meet the requirements of scientists wishing to study the exact cultural phase of the Polynesians at the advent of the first European discoverers, the latter embracing mental and sense testing and psychoanalytic fieldwork. Finally, the Committee felt a need for comprehensive synthetic research, especially in the fields of linguistics, cultural history, and racial affinities.

In research work carried out in Polynesia since 1920 there has been evident, in general, a desire to attack problems in the order of their urgency—the criterion of urgency very clearly being the rate at which essential evidence was disappearing. Anthropological research has seemed important because, according to some authorities, 1930 was the date beyond which the information for most islands would be of rapidly decreasing value. It was

with this assumed need of urgency in mind and with the support of the recommendations of the Committee that many detailed reconnaissance studies were initiated in 1920 and continuously carried on. This scientific survey profited much from a cooperation among the various sciences which did away with overlapping of research. By 1928 it appeared to some that, while the study of Polynesian culture was by no means complete, yet from some islands, especially those uninhabited, little more knowledge was obtainable, and for most islands about seventy-five percent of the ascertainable data had been gathered.

II

In the light of this rapid survey of what was needed in Polynesia, and what was believed to have been accomplished by 1928, it is of interest to attempt to evaluate some of the recorded research material. First, however, one feels that in laying a foundation of field work on which later syntheses are to be built, the survey method is an unprofitable method, though of value in filling in gaps after the foundation is finished. Its use by ethnologists was dictated undoubtedly by a felt need for speed. Hence in order to cover most of the Polynesian islands in ten years, only a little time was available for each. What time was available had therefore to be employed in collecting ethnological material along orthodox lines (e.g., along the lines of the Pan-Pacific Science Conference Report narrowly interpreted), and in anthropometric surveys. There is no point in discussing the validity of that preliminary survey of the Polynesian population which set 1930 as the deadline year beyond which for most islands information obtained would be of little value. In general it is safe to assume that the more old people there are participating in any culture the greater will be its vitality, but the experience of ethnologists who, for the sin of youth, have been condemned to work Polynesian communities since 1930, suggests that with a culture-conscious people like the Polynesians, a 1930 deadline was more pessimistically than soundly visualized. Be this as it may, the result is that expeditions have now been sent to most of the Polynesian islands. Much material has been collected, but I think he would be a rash ethnologist indeed who would defend the proposition that probably seventy-five per cent of the available data has been collected. My own feeling is that from most of the islands studied, the ethnologist has come back with material sufficient to establish with greater or less precision (usually less) the formal patterning of the culture studied, but with insufficient material to suggest, let alone to formulate, the more implicit patterns of the culture or of individual variation on the main pattern. Yet it is just these implicit patterns and these individual variations that help to define the

reference of the formal structure. Without information about them the task of describing how and why a Polynesian culture works has not even been faced.

The result, therefore, of the survey system is that we now have available a collection of surface data from almost all the islands enclosed within the so-called Polynesian triangle. But from all of these islands more information still is desirable and may surely still be obtained. As an example, take Samoa. Apart from early accounts, missionary and other, the last years have given us Margaret Mead's studies of Manua and Te Rangi Hiroa's work on Samoan material culture. Te Rangi Hiroa's study is already a classic, and Mead's reports have adequately covered one island of Eastern Samoa. But there remain other islands of the Samoan group. In order to study pattern and pattern variation in one of the largest and most interesting groups of Western Polynesia, there is vital need for studies at least from Upolu and Savaii. What one visualizes here is not a quick survey or an attempt to study formal structure only, but careful investigations of small isolated districts which will focus first on village life and then work out gradually to include intervillage and finally interdistrict relations. The situation must be somewhat similar for the Tuamotus. The Tuamotuan survey has covered many islands, some of them unique in that there still live on them men who have witnessed pre-Christian religious ceremonies and who have been conditioned from childhood to maturity by old-time social customs. With this situation one feels that the time of the expedition might better have been occupied, for the ethnologist at any rate, on but one or two of the islands, in order to achieve a well documented and penetrating study rather than dissipating attention in the effort to master the highlights of comparative Tuamotuan ethnology.

Granted then that the last years have seen much valuable work done and have transformed our picture of formal Polynesian culture, nevertheless one cannot but regret that the reconnaissance-survey sampling technique has been used rather than the slower but ultimately more valuable patient areal studies.

Regarding physical anthropology little needs to be said about recent work. Anthropometric measurements are an aspect of anthropological field-work that yields great success under the survey method. Work finished and in progress, first under Sullivan and later under Shapiro, has thrown much light on questions relating to the physical makeup of the Polynesian islanders. I think it yet impossible to correlate cultural distributions with physical correspondences, but the material in hand now allows us to talk with some surety about linkages of physical types within the Polynesian area.

A start is just being made with the study of blood groupings of the Polynesian peoples. The material gathered so far is difficult of interpretation and it is of interest to note that a recent worker in the field concludes: That a great deal regarding racial history is to be learned from the distribution of the blood groups, provided the clues are correctly interpreted, is obvious . . . The deplorable aspects of the situation are the haziness of the superficial outlines of the problem, the mass of contradictory data, and difficulty of fixing on what is important.¹

It would appear therefore that it is premature to follow those who expect a revolution in our understanding of the Polynesians through present work on blood groups, though later, when work has advanced farther, general tendencies may disentangle themselves from the baffling complexity of material.

III

The linguistic situation in Polynesia is still chaotic. The injunction of the Pan-Pacific Science Conference that "expeditions be so planned that two men can handle the whole of archeology and ethnology, exclusive of linguistics," has in general been taken only too literally. Only one example of the result will be noted here. Notwithstanding the fact that phonetic records of Polynesian dialects can hardly be said to exist at present, there has been little attempt by recent investigators to clear up a matter which is of fundamental importance to comparative Polynesian philology; or at least, most investigators have attempted to clear up the phonetic problems of the areas in which they have worked only to make confusion worse confounded. In most recent ethnological publications the author has felt the need to summarize the phonetic characteristics of the dialect of his area. For whatever reason, the result is that systems employed in transcribing Polynesian texts are sometimes laughable in their absurdity. In general the obligation to be as systematically scientific in the treatment of the Polynesian dialects as, say, in archaeology or material culture, has been ignored. The necessity of building up a corpus of scientifically recorded Polynesian texts, without which no definitive comparative study is conceivable, has been ignored. This is due in part perhaps to the idea that what was good enough for early students is good for later workers, it being immaterial whether advances have taken place in the science of anthropology since the time when missionaries, struggling to reduce Polynesian sounds to a condition in which cheap printing of the Bible was possible, cast Polynesian into an alphabet at once unscientific and inadequate.

¹ William W. Howells, *Anthropometry and Blood Types in Fiji and the Solomon Islands* (Anthropological Papers, American Museum of Natural History, Vol. 33, Part 4, 1933), p. 330.

The situation was implicitly recognized by the Conference when it reported on the importance of a more adequate knowledge of the details of phonetics and a collection of native texts to supplement the missionary material already available. Presumably the Conference meant texts scientifically recorded. In any case, it will be recalled that the Conference felt that the linguistic problem should be thoroughly studied over a number of years by a trained philologist. It is a matter of regret that the linguistic situation is as vague and ill-defined today as it was twenty years ago. We are no nearer an understanding of the laws of phonetic change in the various Polynesian dialects, and none of the linguistic desiderata defined by the Conference is nearer achievement.

IV

One views the future with mixed feelings, conscious that much has been done in the past, but only too aware of the amount of work still to be done and the masses of data that may surely still be obtained from most Polynesian islands along other than old-fashioned lines of investigation. One hopes that the next years will see a continuation of the work on physical anthropology, that this investigation may be brought nearer completion. One hopes also that linguistic work will soon be initiated along the lines of the Conference Report of 1920 that this blank spot in Polynesian research be charted and mapped before it is too late. Again one hopes that in the future the lines marking the boundaries of permissible work (the "Polynesian triangle") will not be drawn with so much rigor as heretofore. It is often necessary to circumscribe research that effort may not be dissipated and energy wasted, but the time now seems more than ripe for a concerted and well planned attack on Fiji, for example, not only on the islands or areas where Polynesian influence is known or suspected, but on all the cultural variation of the whole Fijian area. Such work, well carried out, will undoubtedly add immeasurably to our knowledge of the extensions of western Polynesian culture, and, by contrast, to our present knowledge of Polynesian culture as a whole. Detailed knowledge of one of the areas where the cultures seem at present to overlap and intermingle in a confusing pattern will also enable us to evaluate with more surety the basic and superstructural contrast and similarity between Polynesia and Melanesia. Hand in hand with this attack should go work on the Polynesian outliers in the western Pacific. It might have been the part of wisdom for workers to have studied these earlier. Ontong Java and Tikopia are already worked, but the most fascinating outliers of all, Rennell and Bellona, if preliminary reports are correct, represent to this day stone age cultures presumably largely Polynesian, practically untouched by missionary or commercial exploitation. It

might have been strategic to study these outliers for the light they throw on an authentic Polynesian culture before white contact, along with studies of the more easterly Polynesian communities, instead of waiting until islands within the orthodox Polynesian triangle were completed. This is a matter of opinion. But it is surely not a matter of opinion that a study of these two outliers in particular should be carried out within the next few years. The need here is imperative. It is to be hoped that those interested in Polynesia will be able to make a complete, long-continued, and detailed study of all aspects of this culture, its formal patterning and its language, as well as the more implicit patterns and its cultural conditioning of the personalities that have grown up within it.

One would also wish for continued work in Samoa, especially along the lines of village studies in various districts; more work in the Ellice group where social organization is imperfectly known; in the Gilbert Islands, a meeting place of Polynesian and Micronesian cultures, where systematic work by trained observers might supplement the small body of material at present available. An extension of this work in the Gilberts to include the Mortlock Islands and perhaps some of the Marshall and Carolines, if such work is possible today under the Japanese mandate, would help to fill in the many gaps left by the earlier German literature.

Coming to Central Polynesia, one would expect closer attention to the material culture and technology of Tahiti, and a renewal of the Tuamotuan studies, not in the form of surveys but of reasonably long-continued and detailed areal studies of those islands that the initial survey indicates have most to offer. The Austral group is still inadequately worked. These islands might be profitably restudied in the light of manuscript and other material made available by earlier workers. A similar observation applies also to the study of the material culture of Tonga. This work, supposed to have been completed many years ago, is still not available, and it would seem that a new survey of this aspect of Tongan culture is desirable. Gaps in our knowledge will also continue until we have much more detail on the many technological processes involved in the material culture of the Marquesas.

Of Hawaii and New Zealand little need be said except to stress the necessity of coordinating work in each area. Hawaiian archaeology is fairly completely surveyed. Hawaiian linguistics will perhaps be difficult to study owing to lack of phonetic texts and probable changes, particularly phonetic, that have occurred during the past hundred years. Hawaiian material culture is distressingly incomplete. Museum study and fieldwork, however, may still bring some understanding here. Hawaiian ethnology has a dream-world character, consisting, with honorable exception, for the most part of

old accounts by untrained workers, accounts which are remarkable more for their high degree of formal systematization and structural rationalization rather than for any attempt to appreciate how ancient Hawaiian culture really worked. A skilled and summary survey of all those accounts with a careful noting of general and specific gaps seems necessary before field workers can attempt the task of reconstructing Hawaiian culture.

In New Zealand, to remind oneself of what has been done in archaeology, linguistics, physical anthropology, material culture, and ethnology is only to realize anew the magnitude of the task that awaits systematic exploration. This is, of course, no reflection on earlier workers. It is more an appreciation of their success under extreme difficulties. But it is also a realization that in the past neither university nor museum, neither public nor private interest, has had more than an elementary understanding of its obligation to further scientific work in a unique field of inquiry. Whatever be the reason for this indifference, and I am not concerned to analyze it here, it is still true that there is much that can be done in New Zealand using the techniques of modern anthropological method. Along with a linguistic study of specific cultural sub-divisions among the Maori people should go a detailed anthropometric study and research on social organization in those areas where a tribal group has maintained an integrity of residence and traditional association since the arrival of the first canoes. In social organization especially, by drawing on museum material and on older literature, one would expect work of such a nature that when placed alongside of the few earlier areal studies, one would be able more completely to see the problem of pattern and variation in those different sub-cultural groupings that we are too prone to lump together as constituting our stereotype of New Zealand Maori culture.

It is only when this work, in New Zealand and elsewhere, is completed that synthetic studies of Polynesian culture will have a final validity. Some aspects of this culture should be systematized sooner than others. This is especially true of material culture, where Te Rangi Hiroa's work during the past years has elaborated a method of analysis based on form and technology which in his capable and painstaking hands has produced measurable results. It is a method that gives an exceptionally firm support for comparative distributional studies, and enables one to appreciate more and more the specific cultural peaks that have been built in specific areas upon widespread Polynesian cultural patterns. It is likely, I think, that the concept of cultural peaks—highly developed patterns of behavior or thought constructions in social or material or artistic life—will ultimately prove more fruitful as a coordinating concept in Polynesian anthropology than

the present tendency to deal exclusively with Polynesian sub-cultures or strata of cultures. The latter tend to set up artificial conceptual barriers; the former make one continually aware both of differences and of underlying similarities in all Polynesian cultures.

Two related aspects of Polynesian culture are still, even today, almost unknown territory and may well deserve careful field study. The first concerns those complex problems relating to the impact of Polynesian culture upon the typical or aberrant Polynesian growing up within this culture. The orthodox study of a Polynesian culture is usually a presentation of abstract forms of behavior. The personal meaning of these forms is rarely considered save by a side-glance. Yet every field worker who has lived for the briefest time in a Polynesian village must be aware of extreme personality differences among his informants and friends. A few minutes' observation of a gang of playing children should be enough to prove the point. In Polynesia, as elsewhere, it seems that a good approach to the study of primitive personality lies in a careful and conscientious record of the activities of children with whom the worker is intimately acquainted. Save for a little recent work, practically nothing is known of the life of Polynesian children when they are not engaged in the playing of that interminable list of games which most of us so laboriously describe. Observation suggests that doing other things besides playing institutionalized games is a major activity of some Polynesian children at least. It also suggests that could such observation be continued over long periods, it would be possible to amass a body of data constituting a formidable challenge to both psychologist and anthropologist. Projected research in this field, however, must definitely take account of what may be termed the time-series, the importance of extended observation of the same selected children over a significant period of time. Observation of specific adolescents in a specific culture is legitimate enough. Inferences from these studies as to the general factors involved in the cultural conditioning of young children in the same culture are at best suggestive only. What is needed is life histories of young children from birth to, say, five years. When this information has been correlated with family background and cultural dynamics, it will be time for generalizations on the impact of Polynesian cultures upon the individual maturing within them.

The second aspect concerns the evaluation of the pattern configuration of Polynesian culture, the master ideas that are the guides to individual behavior. Experience suggests that Polynesia is a good field for testing the significance of the whole concept of patterns of culture, especially in those areas where European culture is as yet but a thin veneer over certain

aspects of the old cultural life. Cultural ideals are writ large in Polynesia—in the large body of traditional history well preserved on paper or in informants' minds, in the mass of chants that almost defy the translator's desire for decent English but hardly his understanding. A scientific evaluation, for instance, of the sex activities and symbolisms in Polynesian culture would reverse most current anthropological stereotypes of the dynamics of Polynesia. And with a clearer conception of the master patterns, much that is obscure in the complexity of that culture change brought about by contact of Polynesian with Western European culture is made understandable even if all difficulties are not immediately solved.

Polynesian anthropology today, in sum, has reached a cross-road where reorientation of research towards newer problems unclear to scientists of 1920 should go hand in hand with a determination to conclude successfully lines of work already well furrowed. This earlier work is the only possible basis for comparative and historical studies. Reorientation will give along with this the key to our knowledge of how and why Polynesian culture works, what gives it a continuing meaning and vitality for individual Polynesians. Neither field of research can be particularly successful unless the ethnologist is continually aware of the fact that Polynesia exists by definition only. Too rigid adherence of interest at this stage to only those groups of people living within the boundaries of the Polynesian triangle as traditionally defined can produce nothing but creeping paralysis and ultimate self-stultification of research.

HONOLULU, HAWAII