



History of Anthropology Newsletter

Volume 5

Issue 1 *Summer 1978*

Article 7

1-1-1978

Radcliffe-Brown's Receipts: The Nomothetics of Everyday Life

George W. Stocking Jr.

This paper is posted at ScholarlyCommons. <http://repository.upenn.edu/han/vol5/iss1/7>

For more information, please contact repository@pobox.upenn.edu.

The debate took place three days later, filling the large lecture room on the first floor of the Social Science Research Building. The rotund Linton was slightly under the influence of fluids he had taken to ward off a cold; the lofty Radcliffe-Brown, still sporting a monocle which midwesterners had seen only in comic strips, looked every inch the emigre from Edwardian Cambridge. Although it was expected that Radcliffe-Brown, with his dominating personality and sparkling rhetorical flair, would have all the better of it, informants recall that Linton held his own quite well. But while there are no detailed memories of the content of the debate, it seems clear that the hoped-for translation between conceptual idioms did not occur.

Through less public channels, however, there seems to have been some communication of ideas. Commuting weekends to Madison, Tax maintained regular contact with Linton throughout his graduate years, and recalls that Linton expressed considerable curiosity about the ideas he was hearing in Radcliffe-Brown's courses. In this context, they had long discussions of Linton's work in progress; and although the informality both of the channels of communication and of Linton's scholarly style make explicit documentation difficult, it seems evident that The Study of Man was at certain points indirectly influenced by Radcliffe-Brown's ideas. Although influences in the other direction seem somewhat less likely, Radcliffe-Brown's American experience did lead him to sharpen some of the terms of his oppositional stance. As Fred Eggan has noted, it was at Chicago that he dropped the idiom of culture-- which the Boasians also used--and began to speak more narrowly in terms of "social structure." (G.W.S.)

II. RADCLIFFE-BROWN'S RECEIPTS: THE NOMOTHETICS OF EVERYDAY LIFE

Recounting his experiences as a graduate student for the departmental historian, Philleo Nash recalls some rules of social life which Radcliffe-Brown offered to him outside the classroom:

1. For salad dressing: "Press the garlic into the salt with a fork; then dissolve the salt with vinegar; and then add the oil."

2. For brussel sprouts: boil them one by one in a large kettle of water, plunging them into cold water the instant they are done.

3. For cocktails: "They should be cold, strong, a little sweet and a little bitter, and you must drink them while they are still laughing at you."

Radcliffe-Brown's personal cocktail invention-- which he called the "Claire de Lune" and Nash calls the "Silver Shadow"--consisted of one-third gin, one-third kirschwasser, one-sixth lemon juice, and one-sixth orgeat syrup. (Our fancy piqued, we went out searching for orgeat (almond) syrup, but found the concoction a bit too sweet for a scotch and soda palate.) (G. W. S.)

BIBLIOGRAPHICA ARCANA

I. NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF SPANISH ANTHROPOLOGY

Mária Cátedra
Department of Social Anthropology
University of Madrid

(translated by Maryellen Bieder)

While in theory anthropology builds communication between cultures, its short history has produced great schools or national anthropologies, such as the English, the American, the French and the German. Inasmuch as the diversity of focuses, methods and scientific traditions enriches the discipline, I will attempt to point out very briefly the comparatively more modest and generally little-known Spanish contributions to the different sub-fields of anthropology: ethnography, general anthropology and social anthropology.

The earliest history of Spanish ethnography begins with the discovery of the New World. The diversity of life styles and the difference between the Spaniards and the people of the New World provoked a "chain of response: after experiencing a certain degree of surprise, the Spaniard first registered astonishment, then began a search for the explanation of the strange phenomenon, and lastly exhibited the tendency to share this new knowledge."¹ The Indians expressed their perception of the Spaniards through the symbolism of their codices and in their oral traditions, while the Spaniards described the New World in their letters, natural histories, accounts, reports, etc. In the 16th century, conquistadors, missionaries and administrators provided a quantity of ethnographic data unsurpassed at that time by any other nation. Although the focus is conditioned