



## Vignettes: Highs and Lows

The factual correction of error may be the most sublime event in intellectual life, the ultimate sign of our necessary obedience to a larger reality and our inability to construct the world according to our desires. For science, in particular, factual correction holds a specially revered place for two reasons: first, because we define the enterprise as learning more and more about an external reality; second, because we know in our hearts that we can be as stubborn and resistant to change as petty bureaucrats and fundamentalist preachers—and undeniable factual correction therefore becomes a kind of salvation from our own emotional transgressions against a shared ideal.

—Stephen Jay Gould, in *Eight Little Piggies: Reflections in Natural History* (Norton)

Polygraph subjects . . . have developed a set of techniques . . . to "beat" lie detector tests. . . . [One] technique is to use some substance prior to the test to mask one's responses. Typewriter correction fluid such as White-Out is believed by some to be effective for this purpose. . . . Subjects have been known to paint their fingertips with it to thwart the galvanic skin response measure—surely a ruse that would not be difficult to detect. Alternatively, the subject can drink it. One individual who was told by a friend that he could beat the test with correction fluid "drank five bottles of White-Out, threw up during the pretest interview, and confessed."

—F. Allan Hanson, in *Testing Testing: Social Consequences of the Examined Life* (University of California Press), quoting Eloise Keeler

Early agricultural development should be an integral part of the study of agricultural origins, and with chapters devoted exclusively to areas in which the most enduring crops were introduced rather than indigenous (Europe, Desert Borderlands of North America), this volume notably addresses development. The most interesting and challenging issue in the transition from foraging to farming is why agriculture took hold and why agricultural cultures and societies spread across the globe. As Minnis argues, "The introduction of crops themselves cannot be the sole catalyst for the transition to intensive agriculture." Perhaps our best archeological studies of this process come from Europe, where Dennell cites "three different types of interactions between foragers and farmers," colonization, symbiosis, and resource acquisition and modification without a shift to farming. The inclusion of a chapter on Oceania would have provided a particularly telling contrast to the European case, for islands minimize the effects of exogenous influences on agricultural societies, allowing archeologists to trace the first introductions of crops, the development of agricultural systems, human population growth, and the outmigration of groups seeking new agricultural land.

*The Origins of Agriculture* differs significantly from other recent works on the subject in its dedication to the role of archeological plant remains in elucidating

the events of interest. Indeed, it might have been named "The Origins of Plant Agriculture," but never "The Origins of Agricultural Systems." The origins of animal husbandry and the integration of domesticated animals into farming economies receive deserved treatment in *Transitions to Agriculture in Prehistory* (Anne Birgitte Gebauer and T. Douglas Price, Eds.; Prehistory Press, 1992). Another recent companion volume is *Foraging and Farming* (David R. Harris and Gordon C. Hillman, Eds.; Unwin Hyman, 1989), representing the perspectives and diversity of intellectual traditions of a truly international group of scholars. These publications enhance rather than reiterate the information available in *The Origins of Agriculture*, which holds its own place as the most comprehensive and current review of the subject.

Joy McCorriston

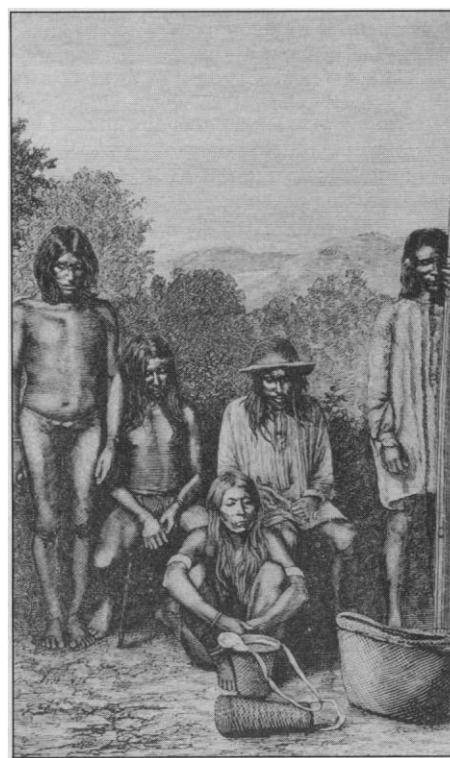
Department of Anthropology,  
Smithsonian Institution,  
Washington, DC 20560

## A Colonial-Era Science

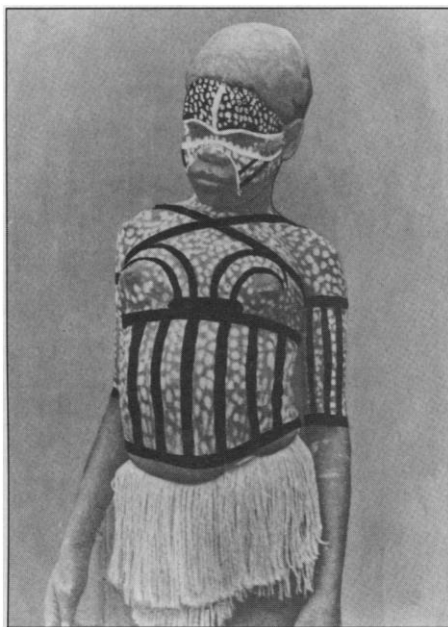
**The Savage Within.** The Social History of British Anthropology, 1885–1945. HENRIKA KUKLICK. Cambridge University Press, New York, 1992. x, 325 pp., illus. \$44.95.

During the second half of the 19th century, anthropology like many other disciplines made the gradual transition from being an avocation to being a profession. In Europe, as in America, this general trend toward professionalism was in large part a response to complex sociopolitical changes wrought by advancing industrialization, but in each country the process was shaped by a particular national experience. Thus, not surprisingly, professional anthropology as it emerged in European countries and America assumed quite distinct national contours with respect not only to the institutions in which it was based but also to its research agendas. Henrika Kuklick's *The Savage Within* is concerned exclusively with the professionalization of British anthropology, and more specifically with the relationship between the British social milieu of the period under review and the corresponding development of anthropological theory and practice.

Much had occurred in British anthropology prior to the 1880s, the point where Kuklick begins her study. At this time, however, a series of Reform Bills were passed in Parliament that had far-reaching social consequences. Furthermore, in 1884 the British Association for the Advancement of Science formally recognized



"The physical homogeneity of populations of backward peoples: the Caribs as represented in E. B. Tylor's *Anthropology* (1892). He remarks on the facing page, 'The people whom it is easiest to represent by single portraits are uncivilized tribes, in whose food and way of life there is little to cause difference between one man and another.' " [From *The Savage Within*]



"A contrived document, this photograph is frankly described in the Torres Straits Expedition reports. Not only does the caption acknowledge that lines have been drawn on the photograph to highlight features of the body painting traditionally applied to a woman who has just passed through her puberty rites (which are so obvious that they could not pass unnoticed), it also reveals that the costume she is wearing was especially made to suit . . . photographic requirements." [From *The Savage Within*]

anthropology as a legitimate and independent science (namely by the formation of Section H for anthropology); and coinciding with this event was the ensconcement of E. B. Tylor (1832–1917) at Oxford, where he was successively appointed keeper of the University Museum, reader in anthropology (1884), and full professor (1896). Although in retrospect Tylor's promotions were an important factor in securing a position for anthropology in the British academic landscape, the future of the discipline at the time was far from certain, as Kuklick explains.

It is against this general backdrop that Kuklick examines in considerable detail the nascent social structure of British academic anthropology. Aspects of this period in British anthropology have been covered by George Stocking in his *Victorian Anthropology* (1987), but Kuklick manages to cast a fresh light on what may appear to many to be well-trodden territory, while at the same time orchestrating a wealth of biographical and institutional information she has gleaned from archival sources and primary literature. To the nonspecialist reader (namely those of us who are not cultural anthropologists), the opening chapters of her book are relatively straightforward, but as the focus shifts to the 20th century many of Kuklick's arguments, and more particu-

larly the generalizations she derives from them, presume an intimacy with anthropological theory that many of her prospective readers may not have.

To put Kuklick's argument briefly and simplistically, the orientation of British anthropology prior to the First World War had been dominated by the evolutionist viewpoint (represented by Tylor for one), which was committed to the notions of progress and directionality in human history. Ultimately these and related ideas coalesced into a theoretical lens through which Western civilization was viewed as the standard by which all other cultures should be judged—a perspective that clearly was not at variance with either the task of managing an expanding colonial regime or that of monitoring the benefits of social reform at home. But after the mayhem of 1914–18, the enthusiasm for evolutionist schemes and their extolling of Western civilization was palpably diminished, and in some quarters of the British intelligentsia even extinguished. It was in this context that the political and theoretical orientation of British anthropology shifted dramatically away from evolutionism to functionalism under the initial influence of Bronislaw Malinowski (1884–1942) and later of A. R. Radcliffe-Brown (1881–1955). In direct contrast to the evolutionists, the functionalists had little or no interest in history. Rather, they were far more interested in understanding how individual societies operated. In a nutshell, they envisioned themselves and their science as being of greater practical service. But, contrary to expectations, the functionalists found themselves cast in the role of cultural critics, with their ethnographic findings being of little practical value to their colonial mentors, who by and large were still operating under the illusion that the world had not changed. The structural-functional approach, however, continued to dominate British anthropology until well after the Second World War and the transformation of the British Empire into a commonwealth of former colonies. In recounting these developments Kuklick gives a relatively detailed and balanced review of the earlier influence of A. C. Haddon's (1855–1940) multidisciplinary expedition to the Torres Straits in 1898–99, and in particular of the frequently overlooked pivotal role of W. H. R. Rivers (1864–1922).

Although Kuklick initially deals with anthropology as it was and is formally observed at Oxford (and later at Cambridge)—namely, as a tripartite discipline—she becomes in the course of her book increasingly preoccupied with the concerns of cultural anthropology and neglectful of developments in archeology and

physical anthropology. The absence of any substantive discussion of the activity during the inter-war years of such workers as V. G. Childe, H. J. Fleure, A. Keith, G. M. Morant, and M. Tildesley is regrettable. And it should also be noted that this study examines the developments in British anthropology without recognition of any external influences in the form of intellectual exchange between British and Continental and American anthropologists. The book is nevertheless of value and will undoubtedly be of considerable service in stimulating discussion in graduate seminars as well as providing food for thought in cultural anthropological circles.

Frank Spencer

Department of Anthropology,  
Queens College,  
City University of New York,  
New York, NY 11367-1567



## Questions for Selectionists

**Natural Selection.** Domains, Levels, and Challenges. GEORGE C. WILLIAMS. Oxford University Press, New York, 1992. x, 208 pp., illus. \$55; paper, \$24.95. Oxford Series in Ecology and Evolution, 4.

When scientists agree on central concepts, a field comes of age—think of the laws of motion in Newtonian physics or the chemical bond and the nature of heat in chemistry. In evolutionary biology, according to Williams, the central concepts are natural selection, mechanism, and historicity. Evolutionary biologists are still hard at work on foundations; this field is still coming of age. Williams's book judges the progress achieved, states the issues not yet resolved, and takes a clear stand on controversial points.

It is not the first time. In 1966, Williams published a book with the title *Adaptation and Natural Selection: A Critique of Some Current Evolutionary Thought* that became a classic. It is still widely read and widely recommended to students. This new book could appropriately carry the same title. Comparing the two measures a quarter-century of progress in evolutionary thought.

In 1966, Williams was concerned to make clear that natural selection acts on genes, not on species; to destroy fuzzy-headed thinking about group selection; and to call attention to the central roles of life histories and sex. He succeeded fully. No one entertains seriously any more the sort of group-selectionist thinking that was common before Williams, together with Ghiselin and Maynard Smith, made his critique;