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# The History of Anthropology in Spain: Raptures and Inheritances

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## THE HISTORY OF ANTHROPOLOGY IN SPAIN: RUPTURES AND INHERITANCES

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(translated by G. W. S.)

Spanish anthropology has experienced a considerable development in the decade since Maria Catedra discussed, in these pages, some of the most significant moments in its history, along with brief commentary on some of the more recent studies (HAN 5, #1, 10-15). But like other anthropologies of the "periphery," Spanish anthropology remains largely unknown to the international anthropological community. Certainly, in many respects the trajectory of anthropology in Spain coincides with the recent evolution of other "national anthropologies" (cf. Diamond 1980; Hannerz 1983). But in this necessarily brief sketch, we can only allude schematically to the more specific aspects of its history.

From a sociological perspective, the circumstances of contemporary Spanish history are important keys for the understanding of the recent history of Spanish anthropology--not surprisingly, in view of the relatively marginal character of the discipline in its academic institutions. The attack on the ideological bases of the regime of General Franco and the slow recuperation of democratic liberties permitted the recovery and expansion of traditions of thought which had long been proscribed in academic life. In particular, the Franco regime had required the reformulation, or had literally forbade the continuation, of many anthropological and ethnographic investigations projected before the beginning of the Civil War in 1936. In the same period, a strong scientific isolationism made it impossible to keep up with the evolution of international anthropology, and for several decades institutional support was given only to folklore studies which legitimated the ideological and political presuppositions of the regime. The situation continued until the middle of the 1960s, when the anthropologist Claudio Esteva introduced a dramatic change of direction.

Returning from exile in Mexico, Esteva became director of the Museo Nacional de Etnología, and in 1966 created in Madrid the Escuela de Estudios Antropológicos. During this first stage, the majority of cultural anthropologists worked in the same departments as prehistorians, archeologists and Americanists, whose strongly diffusionist orientation presented an important obstacle to the development of cultural anthropology. Seeking to separate themselves from physical anthropology and prehistory, and to find an opening next to the older and established tradition of folklore studies, the first Spanish cultural anthropologists committed themselves strongly to the modern theoretical orientations of metropolitan anthropologists. Functionalist, structuralist, neoevolutionary or Marxist approaches, until then ignored if not literally prohibited by the official academic policies, began to be incorporated into this emerging new anthropology. Their introduction, at first largely on the basis

of a voluntary autodidacticism, nevertheless found several avenues of institutional consolidation. Thus, following upon the Escuela de Estudios Antropológicos, several departments of anthropology were created in the principle universities. Those of Barcelona and Madrid, directed respectively by Claudio Esteva and Carmelo Lison, served especially as the first important nuclei of cultural anthropologists.

Bibliographic production is in this case a good indicator of the development of cultural anthropology. As Joan Prat (1977) has shown in a documented study, the number of references with a cultural or social orientation since the 1950s has exceeded 500, with a progressive increment between 1965 and 1977--and this figure has grown significantly in the last few years. Fieldwork in Spain by foreign anthropologists (mostly Anglo-Saxon) has been another important factor in the rapid expansion of cultural anthropology. The monographs of British anthropologists interested in Mediterranean societies, and of Americans preoccupied by the problems of modernization and social change, contributed not only to gaining recognition for anthropological studies of Spain, but also constituted important methodological and theoretical reference points for native anthropologists. Finally, the growth of numbers of investigators in the academic centers of the United States, Britain, and France also contributed decisively to the progressive "internationalization" of Spanish anthropology.

Another defining feature of contemporary Spanish anthropology is its marked character as an anthropology carried on "at home." This tendency has, notwithstanding, important historical antecedents. The evolution of Spanish anthropology has been in important respects similar to that of other European countries where the distinction between Volkskunde and Volkerkunde has divided the discipline into two major orientations (Stocking 1983). In Spain, there has been only a limited production of studies of non-European "others." The combination of a precarious scientific development and the decline of colonial power made possible the realization of only a few overseas expeditions, of uneven ethnographic interest. Nevertheless, in the second half of the nineteenth century the discipline managed to attract the attention of a sector of the more liberal intellectuals who were interested in the Darwinian debates, principally through the Sociedad Antropológica Española founded in 1865 by Gonzalez Velasco (Glick 1982; Puig-Samper & Galera 1983). At the same time, studies of the popular traditions of peasants also achieved a notable development. Pursuing the objectives of the Folklore Society of London, A. Machado y Alvarez opened the way for the creation of many societies for the study of folklore throughout the country. But the most ambitious project along this line was a large scale inquiry of national scope into popular customs relating to birth, marriage and death carried on by the Ateneo de Madrid in 1901 (Lison 1971). Present-day anthropology, despite the theoretical rupture already noted, has continued studying communities or domestic social groups within the various Spanish geographical zones. The only exceptions to this line are a few works in South America. In the most recent period, the "crisis" of

international anthropology, combined with the difficulty of financing overseas fieldwork and the reestablishment of sociocultural studies at home, have impelled in practice a "domestic" anthropology. Thus, in Spain, as in many anthropologies of the periphery, the reformulation of the object of study of the discipline has consolidated a tendency toward an anthropology carried on "at home."

In direct relation to the foregoing, one must note finally that the evolution of Spanish politics has itself had a peculiar development. Far from being a monolithic nation-state, Spain is a good example of a multinational state with important ethnic particularisms. State institutions coexist with others circumscribed to specified "autonomous communities," which are established over territories whose populations have to varying degrees maintained historical, economic and cultural differences with respect to the rest of the country. These circumstances have conditioned different lines of the evolution of anthropology in the distinct regions and nationalities, both in their theoretical traditions and their institutional features. In this context, one of the most representative cases is that of Catalonia, with a long tradition of folklore and ethnographic studies, in which there are concentrated today the largest number of professional anthropologists, and which exhibits a major consolidation of academic institutions. The establishment of departments of anthropology in the majority of the universities of these autonomous communities has progressed considerably since 1970. Notwithstanding, this proliferation of regional anthropologies has coincided with growing efforts at the unification of the discipline throughout the country. Many meetings, symposia, and especially the Congresses of Anthropology that have been held since 1977, all demonstrate, at least from a sociological point of view, important thematic and theoretical convergences among Spanish anthropologists. The functioning, over the last year, of the Federacion de Asociaciones de Antropología del Estado Español also reveals a conjunction of interests in the more institutional and academic aspects. Overall, the evolution of anthropology in Spain during the last decades demonstrates an intermingling of factors, revealing that its reformulation as a national anthropology has been based, paradoxically, on a strong "internationalization," simultaneously with a notable consolidation of anthropologies of the "nation building" type in the different areas of the country.

It is in this context that there has been a progressive upsurge of interest in the history of the discipline. Coinciding with with the development of national anthropologies, especially in Europe, the historical aspects of the discipline have also constituted for Spanish anthropologists (paraphrasing Hallowell 1965) "an anthropological problem." From the beginning of the 1970s, publications of an historical character have been increasing--with unequal effect, but without any doubt revealing an increasing historiographical preoccupation. After the early isolated investigations, in which the work of Lisón (1971) must be considered the pioneer, there have been a considerable number of historiographical projects, now reaching more than 200 bibliographical citations. In this context, the more than 30

papers presented at the Fourth Congress of Anthropology permit us to expect further increments in the future.

Obviously, the history of anthropology that has been produced in Spain has certain characteristics, some consistent with the general development of national anthropologies, others which derive from its own institutional peculiarities and theoretical evolution. A first characteristic is that, save for rare exceptions, this history has been carried on by anthropologists who do not consider historiographical investigation their principal activity. From this fact follow two effects. On the one hand, a portion of historical studies have been carried on simply because history "was there." Thus, many publications demonstrate a very traditional type of historiography, with little attempt to incorporate present methods of the history of science. On the other hand, the progressive discovery of materials for the history of the discipline has encouraged a certain fetishism of documentary sources. Another characteristic of this historiography, more significant even than the preceding, is that a great part of these studies has been focussed on tracing lines of demarcation between the old and the new strategies of investigation, which gives them a tone of "settling accounts" with the past of the discipline. A clearly "presentist" orientation is the common denominator of this body of work. In view of the theoretical penury of Spanish anthropology until the mid-1960s, and its strongly ideological orientation, one can understand the insistence on this perspective. Despite the risks that accompany "presentism," this was a phase that may be considered necessary for the generation of Spanish anthropologists formed at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, in order to guarantee the theoretical development of the discipline. Given the still fragile institutionalization of social and cultural anthropology in the face of older conceptions of a more folkloristic type, this phase does not seem to have ended. But even so, many of the best historical works have been realized within this orientation (cf. Azcona 1981; Moreno 1971; Prat 1985 ; Prats 1985; Valle 1981).

Another issue relates to the constitution of the themes of historiographical investigations. Attempting to trace the genealogical lines which make it possible to think in terms of "national tradition," some historiographical studies have been preoccupied with recovering the rich ethnographic materials, principally from the Americas, in the works of the Spanish historians of the 16th and 17th centuries. Concurring in some cases with Rowe (1964) and Hodgen (1964), these studies defend these ethnographic offerings as a foundation moment in ethnology, or at least as immediate antecedents of the discipline. Impinging on the problem of the beginnings of anthropological thought, these studies also insist that this pre-ethnology presupposes the emergence of a Spanish anthropological tradition different from other European traditions (Lisón 1971; Pino 1976, 1980). But the principal efforts have centered on the histories of the different regional or national anthropologies, as a consequence of the influence of the historical, sociological, and institutional factors noted earlier.

This historiographical production stands in direct relation to the level of institutionalization and the number of professionals in the different areas of the country. Thus, here, too, Catalonia is the one offering the largest number of historical studies (cf. Prat 1987). Among the most recent studies in which various traditions are studied in synthetic terms are those of Azcona (1987), Estévez (1987), Galván (1987), Mandianes (1986), Prats et al (1982), and Rodríguez (1986). More than half of the papers presented at the session on history at the recent Congress of Anthropologists were dedicated to these regional anthropologies, although despite their numerical importance, none of them attempted an exhaustive analysis. Instead, most of them were studies on the relation of these traditions to the different types of nationalism to be found in the Spanish state, in many cases themselves serving effectively as cultural diacritics. In this context, it is not surprising that there is little preoccupation with the construction of a history of Spanish anthropology as a unified "national anthropology." In line with this tendency, only a small number of communications to the recent congress raised questions relating to the overall national development. Unfortunately, one of the most recent attempts to present a general picture of the development of anthropological studies in Spain during the last century (Aguirre, ed. 1986) shows important lacunae of information and theoretical obscurities which in large measure limit its historiographical effectiveness. Nevertheless, various works of J. Prat (1977, 1987) reflect a more rigorous approach, both theoretically and methodologically. His examination of the differential development of anthropological studies on the one hand, and of folklore studies on the other, as the two principal "paradigmatic orientations" in the history of the Spanish discipline, opens the possibility of responding to the challenge sounded some years ago by G. Stocking to achieve a history of anthropology "historically sophisticated and anthropologically informed."

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Note: I am indebted to Professors A. Galván and J. Prat for much of the information contained in this article, although I am of course solely responsible for whether it has been used correctly.

Translator's Note: A similar caveat applies to the translation and typing of the present rendering [G.W.S.].

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SOME RANDOM FIELD NOTES ON A GATHERING OF SPANISH ANTHROPOLOGISTS

(G.W.S.)

Having spent six months there as a small child, on the eve of the Spanish Civil War, I was extremely grateful to be invited to return to Spain to give two talks at the Fourth Congress of Anthropology in Alicante: one, as the inaugural address ("Anthropology, yesterday and today: reflections on the 'crisis' and 'reinvention' of anthropology"); the other, to the section on the history of anthropology ("Malinowski's models: Maclay, Kubary, and Kurtz as ethnographic archetypes") [to forestall unnecessary correspondence, please note that neither of these is available for circulation at the present time]. Having lost my conversational Spanish in the half century since 1935, I must warn readers that it was only by virtue of the excellent translations provided by my hosts that I was able to deliver the talks in Spanish. By the same token, these brief notes--like the early field impressions of ethnographers--are based on a very limited knowledge of the language of the "natives," whose "customs and beliefs," I am embarrassed to say, were previously known to me only through a couple of articles I had read on Spanish anthropology (cf. Catedra 1977), and several very brief conversations with colleagues in the Chicago department. The justification for recording these notes is simply that many readers of HAN will be equally unfamiliar with recent Spanish anthropology, and may find them a useful addendum to Dr. Estevez' more historiographically oriented account.

As an organizing device for my paper to the Congress, I reviewed the history of American anthropology since the publication of Anthropology Today (Kroeber et al, 1953), using the contents of the Biennial and Annual Review of Anthropology, to make some observations about the extent to which the discipline had responded to the issues raised in the call for the Reinvention of Anthropology (Hymes, ed. 1972)--to the general point that the changes of the last decade and a half did not as yet seem to merit