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A Tribute to Philip Gulliver

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Exploring Knowledge, Power and Practice in Society and Culture was the title of the Plenary Session in which Professor Philip Gulliver presented his views on "Thinking about the 'Crisis' in Anthropology" at the 1993 CASCA meetings at York University. The introduction to Professor Gulliver's address was given by Dr. Malcolm Blincow.

We are honoured to offer our admiring and affectionate respect to Philip Gulliver. Philip has recently retired as Distinguished Research Professor of Anthropology at York University, after spending the latter part (some twenty years) of his internationally distinguished career as an anthropologist here at York. To momentarily invoke the metaphor of age sets — one of the several significant social phenomena which Philip has made such pioneering signal contributions toward understanding — we recognize and honour a "senior elder" in our midst: respected departmental colleague; admired teacher and supervisor; exemplar of ethnographic practice and eminent contributor to comparative anthropological theory; and, not least for some of us, also as dear friend.

Philip was born in 1921. Both his parents were schoolteachers; he passed his childhood in rural Leicestershire. On the eve of World War II, he entered University College Nottingham to study geography, but with the outbreak of hostilities he volunteered for service, spending most of the war (1942-44) in the North African desert as an aircraft radio technician. As with so many other anthropologists-in-making at that time, Philip's wartime experience effected multiple crossings of boundaries - physical, emotional, moral, as well as sociocultural and intellectual, all of which later impelled him towards his vocation as an anthropologist.

Following the war, he completed his undergraduate education — now in sociology — through an external degree programme linked with the University of London. He then entered the doctoral programme in anthropology at the London School of Economics. He returned to Africa — this time to sub-Saharan East Africa — to embark on his first period of fieldwork, spending three years with pastoralists of the Turkana and Jie peoples of northern Kenya and Uganda.

Philip's pioneering contributions as an Africanist and comparativist, as theorist and ethnographer, soon emerged from this first and subsequent immersions in a variety of field contexts in East and Central Africa — altogether, an astonishing dozen years of fieldwork amongst seven different peoples in a two decade period (1948-70). During this time Philip's professional career criss-crossed several times between East Africa, the U.S., and Britain: he held the position of Research Sociologist for the Government of Tanganyika (1952-58) and taught at Makerere College (1965) in Uganda; in the U.S. he taught at Harvard (1958-59), Boston University (1959-62), and the Universities of Minnesota and Washington (1969); and in Britain he was affiliated with the L.S.E. (1951-52), and with the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London (1962-71) where he became Professor of African Anthropology.

In 1971 Philip left Britain permanently for Canada. He initially took up a position at the University of Calgary (1971-72) before moving to York in 1972. From 1979 until the present — with Marilyn Silverman, his active co-researcher and fellow author, York colleague and loving partner — Philip has spent a further four years doing research in an entirely different cultural area of the world, a small southeastern Irish town and its rural hinterland.

During the course of Philip's career, the quality of his work has been recognized through the bestowal of a number of outstanding honours: the Wellcome Medal for Anthropology in 1957; the W.H.R. Rivers Medal for Anthropological Research in 1967 from the Royal Anthropological Institute; election as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 1982; and appointment as a Distinguished Research Professor of Anthropology at York University from 1984 onwards.

As teacher and supervisor to students in three different continents, and as an author known to anthropologists worldwide, Philip has provided us all with a notable intellectual legacy, one in which he has addressed, explored, and developed our conference theme of the crossing of boundaries. For he has always sought to combine comparative analysis with particular ethnography, theoretical insight with applied practice, and — wherever fruitful, but not merely for the sake of passing fashion — to link interdisciplinary visions, theories and methods with anthropological perspectives. All these are features, surely, which intrinsically embody the best ideals and practices of our discipline.

Let me briefly illustrate this through some comments on a selection of Philip's numerous written works. These key texts display a striking versatility and range; they cover the study of pastoralism, age set systems, legal anthropology, social network analysis, and most recently, historical anthropology. In each of these areas, Philip has helped shape some of our discipline's basic understandings and approaches.

For instance, Philip's earliest fieldwork among the Turkana and Jie peoples (1948-51) resulted in the first concrete understanding of the processual links between the shifting contexts of ecology and the dynamics of household life cycles, as well as the first detailed ethnography and explanation of age set systems, among pastoralist peoples. His first extensive monograph *The Family Herds* (1955), rapidly became and has remained an acknowledged classic in pastoralist studies. A second fundamental contribution developed out of Philip's applied fieldwork on socio-economic change and its conflictual repercussions among the Arusha people of northern Tanzania (1956-58). This resulted in *Social Control in an African Society* (1963), one of the key texts in the emergence of legal anthropology. Philip's ongoing consolidation of work in this field was capped by *Disputes and Negotiations* (1979), a masterful synthesis which engaged and drew upon the social psychological, game theoretic, labour relations, and legal literatures to develop a theoretical, comparative model of dispute and negotiation processes from an anthropological perspective. A third major contribution would eventually emerge from fieldwork conducted among the Ndendeuli people of southern Tanzania (1952-54). The ethnographic information then gathered was of such superior quality that it provided the basis, in *Neighbours and Networks* (1971), for one of the finest theoretical and methodological

demonstrations of social network analysis when that perspective appeared in the late 1960s. Finally, his most recent fieldwork, the study of a small south-eastern Irish town and its rural hinterland from 1840 to the present, has led to his and Marilyn Silverman's co-authored social history written expressly for the town's inhabitants, *In the Valley of the Nore* (1986), as well as their co-edited contribution to historical anthropology, *Approaching the Past* (1992). Here, in a long introductory chapter, they comprehensively and incisively summarize and critique the extensive literature on the interface between history and anthropology, and they go on to raise important methodological and conceptual issues that particularly occur in the "doing" of historical anthropology. In addition, they have completed (but not yet published) the first of several historical monographs on the shopkeepers, farmers, and industrial proletariat of the town and its surroundings.

With the study and "doing" of historical anthropology, we have come full circle. For I want to conclude this introduction with some remarks concerning the history of anthropology itself, and Philip's place within it. In the study of pastoralist segmentary lineage political systems, a number of anthropologists, including Philip, pointed to the critical significance of "genealogical amnesia" and "genealogical telescoping" as practices which, in time and over space, both enabled and legitimated the socio-political adjustment of corporate groups to one another. There is a lesson here for anthropologists. For, as we adjust our own theoretical-political positions in the here and now, we too have practised historical amnesia in the re-shaping of our own past. From today's vantage points, from which emerge all-too-easy caricatures of the historical regnancy of structural-functionalism, it behooves us well to remember that the most talented of a younger generation of anthropologists were already launching — in structural-functionalism's heyday — a critique of that paradigm, some elements of which would become the commonplaces of the next decades and eventually even the "discoveries" of yet later ones. Like all forgetting, with its flattening of horizons, we have homogenized our own past. In an age when the latest in anthropological insight presumes to celebrate heterogeneity, we would do well to consider the nuances and complexities, just as much as the contradictions and silences, and — dare one say it — even the permanent contributions from that past. Colleagues and friends, let us welcome Philip Gulliver.