

Artist, Philosopher, Ethnologist and Activist: The Life and Work of Alfred Cort Haddon

Ciarán Walsh

Independent curator and writer (curator.ie)

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Alfred Cort Haddon (1855–1940) was an artist and philosopher who decided to become an ethnologist in 1887. Radicalised in the Torres Strait in 1888, he joined a network of utopians, anarchists, and socialists who looked to post-evolutionist anthropology for inspiration in their search for an alternative to dog-eat-dog capitalism. Post-evolutionist is employed here to indicate that the argument for evolution had been won by 1890 and Haddon's network adopted a post-biological form of evolution as a metonym for the human capacity to adapt and create new forms of social organisation. Haddon also decided to abandon his faltering career in marine biology in 1889 and go into anthropology instead. He spent the next ten years battling against a cadre of politically conservative anatomists who restricted academic anthropology to the study of bodies and were determined to keep Haddon and his radical ideas out of Cambridge University. This then is the story of a class war in science that inspired reformists in organised anthropology to challenge a ban on social enquiry imposed by Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–1895) and enforced as a scientific doctrine by anatomists operating as anthropologists in the second half of the nineteenth century.

That story never made it into the history of anthropology, and I remember it here with the intention of disrupting the common sense that prevails about Haddon and his role in the modernisation of anthropology. I draw on doctoral research that involved the reconstruction of the 'Irish' component of the Haddon Papers in Cambridge in an attempt to discover why Haddon measured the skulls of Irish 'natives' in the Aran islands in 1892. This part of his archive was more or less sealed by historicists who mined the same records in the 1970s, 80s

and 90s and rewrote the history of anthropology through the lens of Thomas Kuhn's (1922–1996) theory of scientific revolutions (1962), providing what appeared to be a well-researched and logical foundation for much of the scholarship that followed. Preoccupied with evolution bracketed by race and empire, they seized upon Haddon's training as a zoologist to set up an opposition between biological and socio-cultural anthropology. They used his organisation of the 1898 expedition to the Torres Strait as a triggering event for a scientific revolution by others very different to him, as Henrika Kuklick (1942–2013), the most cited author in this context, summarised it in a new history of British anthropology published in 2008.

The problem is they got it wrong. I can state that with confidence because I spent two years constructing a digital archive of material – including photography – relating to Haddon's entry into anthropology whilst working in Ireland in the first half of the 1890s. I used my experience as a time and motion analyst in the civil service to map the organisational structure of institutional anthropology and tracked the movement of ideas, methods, influence, and money. That research produced enough evidence to contradict most aspects of the accumulated scholarship on Haddon and there was, on the other hand, plenty of evidence of Haddon's interest in art and his anti-racism activism. I focussed on this, keeping one eye on the growing problem of racism-motivated violence in Ireland, the destruction of indigenous homelands across the globe, and state-sanctioned genocides of ethnic minorities like the Azeri, which, as my research progressed, metamorphosised into contemporary manifestations of the humanitarian problems Haddon attempted to confront.

I presented my findings to a panel convened by the History of Anthropology Network at EASA 2020 and shortly afterwards Berghahn Books commissioned a review of Haddon's status as an ancestor of modern anthropology. This developed into an independent – there was little interest in racism as a funded, research topic in November 2019 – post-doctoral study written against the backdrop of worldwide engagement with colonial legacies and structural racism in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd in police custody in May 2020. The present article is a summary of the some of the main findings of that study.

I propose that Haddon's upbringing in a nonconformist family steeped in the arts, humanitarian activism, and politics made confrontation with the imperial establishment and its agents in organised anthropology almost inevitable. The trigger, I argue, was his direct experience of the destruction of Oceanic civilisations by Anglo-Saxon colonists and I identify three main consequences of what I treat as radicalising event. The first is that he joined Patrick Geddes (1854–1932) and Henry “Havelock” Ellis (1859–1939) in a campaign to effect a root and branch reconstruction of anthropology – the first definition of radical that operates here – and this put him on a collision course with Huxley, his master. The second is that Haddon's attempt to put these ideas into practice in the Aran Islands in 1890 and 1892 ended his career in fisheries research and blocked his path to an alternative career in anthropology in Ireland. The third is that his reputation as a radical ethnologist put him at the fore in an anti-colonial insurrection in organised anthropology in 1895, and the backlash

had profound consequences for his career as an anthropologist in England. Finally, I propose that his vision for a post evolutionist, anti-colonial anthropology was matched by a formal engagement with the problem of representation and his experiments in cinematography, combined with his critique of orthodox anthropology, constituted a singularly modernist achievement in anthropology, which Alfred Radcliffe-Brown (1881–1955) later conceded came too soon in the history of anthropology. The piece finishes with a provocation. I ask if Haddon's battle with reactionary elements in organised anthropology is being re-enacted in the current stand-off between 'traditional' and 'practical' anthropology in a neoliberal academy.

Charles Seligman (1873–1940), a member of the 1898 Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Strait, published a summary of Haddon's early life in an obituary written in 1940 with the assistance of Ethel S. Fegan, a librarian who gained a diploma in anthropology with Haddon in 1929. Alison Hingston Quiggin (1874–1971), Haddon's research manager and biographer, added more detail in a memorial 'sketch' published in 1942, the only biography of Haddon written to date. Both accounts are of interest because they acknowledged Haddon's work as an artist and a curator, but the difference between the two is more relevant. Quiggin wrote from the perspective of Haddon's career in anthropology while Seligman framed this as an interlude in a life devoted to the ethnological study of art. Both agree on the influence of Caroline Haddon, Alfred's mother and an author who left an account of home-schooling her children in nature studies in *Woodside Or, Look, Listen, and Learn* (1887). It is intriguing because this illustrated monograph captures the mix of nonconformism and art that shaped Haddon's approach to ethnology and provided a methodological template for his ethnographic output in the wake of his first expeditions to the Torres Strait, New Guinea, and the Aran Islands. Haddon's father John was a talented illustrator who inherited a thriving print business that acted as an agency for the Baptist Missionary Society. That inheritance included a commitment to humanitarian causes and an active involvement in the arts. Haddon's grandparents John Haddon (1784–1855) and Elizabeth Cort (1799–1878) were active in the anti-slavery movement and other causes. Elizabeth Cort was a painter who studied under Richard Parkes Bonington a leading landscape painter based in France. John Haddon was a singer and published several collections of secular and religious music (Cruft 1916, 55). His father's sisters were equally influential. Caroline Haddon (1837–1905) and Margaret Hinton (1826–1902) – she married James Hinton (1822–1875), a controversial philosopher of science and religion – extended the family's networks into a lively if niche scene of utopian, anarchist, and socialist associations in the 1880s (see MacKenzie 1975; Hineley 2012; Ferretti 2016), the second definition of radical that operates here. Caroline Haddon authored Fabian Tracts on socialism and marriage and sponsored Ellis in preparation for his groundbreaking study of sex and sexuality (see Weir 2006). Haddon got his first experience of teaching nature studies at a progressive school for girls his aunts founded in Dover. Family circumstances forced Haddon into taking over the family business at 19 years of age but, like his father, he lacked business acumen, and both agreed it would cost less for Haddon to go to university than remain in charge of the business. Cambridge

was the preferred option because of its culture of latitudinarianism and, given the family's increasingly precarious finances, the natural sciences became the preferred route to a career in teaching (see Quiggin 1942). Haddon entered Christ's College in 1875, specialised in zoology and comparative anatomy, graduated in 1879, and was recruited by Huxley shortly afterwards.

Huxley was a vocal and combative advocate of secular science and, operating from his base in the Government School of Mines in London, acquired the political connections to effect a major restructuring of the natural sciences in Britain. He neutralised the influence of the church, broadened the social base of participation in scientific research, professionalised training, and ushered in an era of practical science in line with liberal economic policies. It was, however, a reactionary political project shaped by Huxley's response to the Chartist protests of 1848. He aligned himself with right-wing opponents of the working-class movement and for two decades used his Working Men's Lectures to counter calls for social reform with an evolutionist doctrine of survival of the fittest in a stable capitalist system (White 2003, 114). His appointment as fisheries inspector in 1881 confirms his influence in government circles and that sets the scene for his connection to Haddon. He was among a new generation of middle-class, academically trained, natural scientists whom Huxley inducted into a complex system of interlocking marine biology assets that operated as follows: specimens were collected and classified by field zoologists on expedition or working in universities and associated laboratories. The collections were sorted and displayed in museums, which functioned as centres of specialist research and public instruction in natural history from an evolutionist perspective.

Haddon applied for a job in the British Museum but failed a qualifying examination and Alfred Newton (1829–1907), his professor of zoology, lobbied Huxley on his behalf. Huxley duly arranged for a job as part-time professor of zoology in the Royal College of Science in Dublin and put him in charge of reorganising the natural history collections in the Museum of Science and Art in the city. Haddon duly got involved in fisheries research funded by the Royal Irish Academy in 1885 and 1886 and this provides the first sign that Haddon was ill-suited to a traditional academic set-up. Robert Lloyd Praeger (1865–1953), a librarian and naturalist, met Haddon when members of Belfast Naturalists' Field Club attended Haddon's university extension (extra-mural) lectures in the 1880s. Praeger (1949, 27) remembered him, at Quiggin's request, as an energetic and humorous contrarian who dressed unconventionally and tended to shock prudish people. He published a photograph taken at the start of the 1885 expedition (fig. 1) that shows Haddon posing as a mariner amongst academics, his contrariness matched only by Rev William Spotswood Green (1847–1919), another mariner who would later end Haddon's career as a marine biologist.

As an academic, Haddon specialised in sea anemones and wasn't doing well. Geddes and Karl Brandt (1854–1931), a German zoologist, led the field with their work on biosociality and symbiosis. Melbourne University rejected Haddon's application for a job in 1887 and his 1888 revision of the taxonomy of sea anemones was unremarkable except for the involvement of

Alice Shackleton, the first woman to present a scientific paper (Haddon & Shackleton 1891) to the Royal Dublin Society (RDS). However, disagreement over the formation of coral reefs developed into a challenge to Darwin's authority and Huxley – nicknamed Darwin's Bulldog – took Haddon's difficulty as an opportunity to settle the row. He drew up a research brief and arranged for Michael Foster (1836–1907) in the Royal Society to fund an expedition to the Torres Strait. Oceanographic research was instrumental to the development of ethnology between the 1760s and 1840s and Huxley entered anthropology by this route. He met Australian aboriginals and sketched Papuans during the *H.M.S. Rattlesnake* expedition (1846–1850). Also, ethnographic material from the *HMS Challenger* expedition (1872–1876) was sent to the Natural History Department of the British Museum and there is some evidence that Huxley envisaged a similar arrangement for Haddon's expedition.



Fig. 1

Anon. 1885. Dredging party, 1885, with friends [plate 16] sitting, left to right: A.C. Haddon (in front of light suit), S. Haughton, W. S. Green, C. B. Ball; standing: Sir D'Arcy W. Thompson (light suit), Sir R. S. Ball (yachting cap), Valentine Ball (at end of trawl).

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Becoming an Ethnologist

Haddon and William Henry Flower (18831–1899), whom Huxley had installed as director of the Natural History Department (Huxley 1900, 71), set about planning the ethnological component of Haddon's expedition. Haddon consulted Samuel McFarlane (1837–1911), an evangelist who established a regional base for the London Missionary Society (LMS) in the Torres Strait in 1871 and donated over two hundred ethnological specimens to the British Museum between 1876 and 1886. He advised Haddon to use the LMS base on Mer Island as a staging post for an exploration of New Guinea, then regarded as a dangerous place for Europeans. Haddon intended bringing an artist – his younger brother – and McFarlane argued against it on the grounds that they would be treated as commercial collectors and, as such, lose any logistical support available from the LMS. Haddon heeded the advice, took on the role of expedition artist, and added a camera to his kit along with a questionnaire on

magico-religious topics drawn up by his friend and mentor James G. Frazer (1854–1941).

In June 1888, Haddon interrupted a reading of his revision of sea anemones to members of the RDS and announced his imminent departure for the Torres Strait. He arrived on August 8 and shortly afterwards went on a week-long tour of islands. His sketchbook, photographs, and journal reveal an exclusive and determined focus on the collection of ethnological material relating to customs and, especially, secular and ceremonial dance. At the end of October, he wrote in his journal that anthropology had displaced “Coral reef investigation” and “General marine zoology” as the focus of the expedition. He left the Torres Straits in April 1889 and returned to the British Museum where he sorted his collections and wrote up his notes. On September 16, Haddon read “On some former Customs and Beliefs of the Torres Straits Islanders” into the record of Section H–Anthropology of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS 1890, 786). In October, Flower curated an exhibition of anthropological (skulls) and ethnological (dance) material and Haddon told a journalist of his intention to publish his “full journal and observations, especially as he made a large number of coloured drawings on the spot”. Contemporaneous press reports of the massacre of a missionary party in New Guinea underscored the dangerous and unprecedented nature of Haddon’s expedition. The Anthropological Institute announced his election as a member on November 12 and two weeks later, he presented ‘The Ethnography of the Western Tribe of Torres Straits’. At some stage he joined the Folk-Lore Society – the hyphenated version was used at the time – and its President George Laurence Gomme (1853–1916) later congratulated the society on its “capture” of Professor Haddon, who went out to the Torres Straits on behalf of natural science and “returned an ardent folklorist, and immediately joined us” (Gomme 1891, 13).

In December, Haddon informed Geddes that he intended to “go into Anthropology” and Geddes asked how? Did he intend to join the skull-measuring business or join him in a movement led by former Communards and anarchists that was mobilising around the new discipline of comparative sociology in France? Haddon showed no interest in physical anthropology whatsoever, although he was well aware of the demand for and value of anatomical specimens. It is not surprising then that Haddon sided with Geddes and his decision became evident in two Fabian-style tracts published in 1890 in *Lippincott’s Monthly Magazine: A Popular Journal of General Literature, Science, and Politics*. ‘Incidents in the Life of a Torres Strait Islander’ appeared in the January to June edition and drew on the work of anarchist geographer Pëtr Kropotkin (1842–1921) to define the task of ethnography as an instrument of anti-racism activism. Geddes was instrumental here. He was Huxley’s protégé but disagreed with his politics and sided with Kropotkin after socialists challenged Huxley in the working-class press (see McLaughlin-Jenkins 2001). Geddes introduced Haddon to Kropotkin’s work and the article in *Lipponcott’s* marks the point where a class war in biology and geography spilled over into anthropology. ‘Papuan Dances’ followed in the July to December edition and Haddon used the ethnological study of dance as a platform for expounding a faith-based, universalist philosophy.

Haddon spun the switch from marine biology to ethnology as an accidental outcome of contact with islanders whose customs and beliefs had been destroyed through colonisation. Because nobody cared, he felt it his “duty to fill up all the time not actually employed in my zoological researches in anthropological studies” (Haddon 1890, 297–8). Haddon journalled the effects of population collapse on Nagir, the very first island he visited in 1888, and thereafter had a very literal understanding of survival. He informed Foster in 1891 that “the Islanders are dying out & most of the islands rapidly losing all their past customs so that there is not much chance of very much new information being obtained about them”. This constituted, he believed, a calamitous loss of ancestral knowledges that linked the extremes of humankind. Haddon may have been restrained in his presentations to organised anthropology but he was clear about why this was happening. He drafted a critique of the Imperial Institute and pitched it to leading journals, including *The Nineteenth Century* which published the exchange between Huxley and Kropotkin. He described the extermination of the Tasmanian people in the 1830s as “legalised murder” and concluded that a toxic mix of imperialism and atavistic racism resulted in the extermination “slowly or rapidly, unintentionally or by force, [of] the inhabitants of the countries we annex” (Haddon 1891, 10). In effect, Haddon revived the humanitarian and anti-imperial arguments of ethnologists associated with the Aborigine Protection Society in 1830s, which emerged from the abolitionist campaign his grandparents were involved in (see Cruft 1915, 55; Morrell & Thackray 1981, 283–4). This set him on a collision course with the colonial administration in Ireland during a survey of fishing grounds in the west of Ireland in 1890.

The Aran Islands

Haddon returned to his teaching job in Dublin in January 1890 and resumed his duties as a government scientist. The RDS appointed him chief scientific officer of the Survey of Fishing Grounds, West Coast of Ireland. Arthur J. Balfour (1848–1930), a Tory MP and head of the British administration in Ireland, organised the survey after his heavy-handed suppression of a popular, land reform movement in Ireland cost the Tories seats in the first local elections held in England in 1889 and threatened their parliamentary majority in the forthcoming 1892 general election. Haddon, for his part, planned to use the survey as an opportunity to collect folklore and asked Flower for advice on measuring people. Flower thought it unlikely that the people of the west of Ireland would submit to measurement and suggested he take photographs instead. The survey reached the Aran Islands in July and it was a turning point for Haddon. Prior to departure, Geddes introduced Haddon to the work of anarchist geographers Kropotkin and Élisée Reclus (1830–1905), the sociologist Frédéric Le Play (1806–1882), and the anarchist ethnologist Élie Reclus (1827–1904). Crucially, Geddes introduced Haddon to Ellis, his aunt Caroline’s protégé and a member of the utopian Fellowship of the New life. Ellis read Haddon’s work on the Torres Strait and New Guinea, agreed that the teaching of anthropology in England was in a deplorable state, and decided to work together to “reconstruct” it. In May 1890, Ellis commissioned a study of anthropology for the Contemporary Science Series, a series of utopian, reformist, and anarchist

treatments of subjects relevant to scientific social reform that Ellis edited and wanted to anchor with a text on anthropology modelled on *The Study of Sociology* Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) published in 1873.

Two months later, Haddon arrived in the Aran Islands and described them in his journal as “the most remarkable islands I have as yet come across anywhere”. He had discovered a pre-Aryan, self-governing community (fig. 2) that appeared to have escaped the worst effects of Anglo-Saxon colonialism, a form of an-archic social organisation that Ellis and Gomme explored in *The Village Community* (1890) and infused with, Haddon thought, a reconstructionist zeitgeist. “An-archic” is used here because it connects this *zeitgeist* with Ellis’s use (uncited) of a re-definition by Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865) of “an-archy” as a metonym for “self-government” (Proudhon 1863, n.p; Ellis 1890, 14). Thus, the Aran Islands were the perfect place to test a synthesis of anarchist geography, sociology, ethnology, and revamped political economy that Geddes formulated in Le Playist terms as the study of the relationship between place, work, and folk (see Renwick 2012, 92-93). Haddon left the survey for a week and ten pages of his journal document his fascination with the glacio-karst landscape, the islanders, their way of life, and the archaeological sites scattered throughout the islands.



Fig 2.

A village community, the Aran Islands. Haddon & Dixon, 1890, Inishmaan, digital scan of silver gelatine, glass-plate negative by Ciarán Rooney for curator.ie (2019). The original negative is held in TCD School of Medicine.

As usual, Haddon had a sketch book and a camera, but his assistant Andrew Francis Dixon (1868–1936), an anatomy student in TCD who studied embryology under Haddon, had a new-generation, quarter-plate camera that was faster (fig. 3) and Haddon discovered that the slowest ‘instantaneous’ photograph was better than the fastest sketch. He advised readers of his journal that “it wd be as tedious for you to read as for me to write” a description of the islands and promised that he would present a slideshow on his return to Dublin. This marks the beginning of an extended experiment in photo-ethnography that culminated in

experiments with colour photography, cinematography, and synchronised sound recording in the 1898 expedition, a mere three years after the Lumière brothers had exhibited the new art of cinematography in Paris. In 1899, Haddon authored a manifesto on photography as ethnography as the only major revision of the third edition of *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*.



Fig. 3

Andrew Francis Dixon's photographic kit, including 50 glass plate negatives in a slotted box provided by R. J. Welch, an 'instantaneous' quarter plate camera similar to the one Dixon used and donated by Chris Rodmell in 2014, a negative holder (slide), and a first-generation albumen print.

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The survey of fishing grounds also marks the end of Haddon's career as a government scientist. The ongoing threat of famine in the islands had become a lightning rod for anti-government sentiment and Balfour thought the discovery of new fishing grounds around the islands would counteract nationalist propaganda and help reverse electoral losses. He asked Rev William Spotswood Green to manage a fishing survey and, as part of the deal, appointed him Commissioner of Irish Fisheries, the Irish equivalent of the Inspector of Fisheries post held by Huxley between 1881–85. He routed the money through the RDS to avoid accusations of state socialism and market distortion and, given the political stakes, Haddon's decision to leave the survey for a week was a mistake that Green criticised in his first report to the RDS. He did not name Haddon but criticised a naturalist's interest in things that had nothing to do with fishing. This perceived lack of scientific focus was exacerbated by political differences. Green did not use the word famine and, instead, put the government case that the islanders were "satisfied to multiply and live on the brink of starvation" and habitually appealed for relief whenever their pastures were blighted and the fishing failed (Green 1890, 52). Haddon sided with the islanders and the commentary for his slideshow – discovered in 2013 – reveals the influence of Mary Banim (?–1939), a journalist, antiquarian, and home ruler who published a series of articles on the islands in 1890 and whom Haddon later tried to recruit as an ethnographer. It is hardly surprising then that Green replaced Haddon at the end of the survey and all that remained of his career as a government scientist was his part-time job in the Royal College of Science. Anthropology became Haddon's only opportunity for advancement as an academic but his contrariness scuppered that as well.

The Skull-Measuring Business

Shortly after Green denounced him, Haddon joined Daniel J. Cunningham (1850–1909), professor of anatomy in TCD (fig. 4), and Francis Galton (1822–1911), entrepreneur and founder of eugenics, and presented their plan for a branch of Galton’s anthropometric laboratory in Dublin. Haddon proposed that the laboratory undertake a rolling survey of “ethnic islands” in the west of Ireland and thereby assist anthropologists in their endeavours “to unravel the tangled skein of the so-called “Irish Race”” (Cunningham & Haddon 1891, 36). Rev Dr Samuel J. Haughton (1821–1897), senior fellow of TCD and president of the Royal Irish Academy, brokered a deal whereby the academy funded the Dublin Anthropometric Laboratory and managed its ethnographic programme. Haddon and Charles R. Browne (1867–1931), a medical student who acted as a fieldworker for Cunningham, carried out the first survey in the Aran Islands in September 1892. Cunningham, however, had no interest in physical anthropology. He focussed instead on the ethnographic survey as means to, as Flower put it (BAAS 1894, 768–9), “elucidate various social problems” that fed political unrest in the west of Ireland and so bolster opposition to the campaign to end British rule in Ireland. John Kells Ingram (1823–1907), the incoming president of the academy, endorsed the strategy when he signed off on Haughton’s deal on the eve of the opening of the laboratory.



Fig. 4

Browne, c. 1891, Daniel J Cunningham standing in the doorway of the Dublin Anthropometric Laboratory.

The Liberals and their nationalist allies defeated the Tories in the 1892 general election and planned to put a second home rule bill before the Imperial Parliament in London, provoking a political crisis that provided the backdrop for the survey of the Aran Islands. Haddon attempted to retain the sociologically-oriented methodology developed by Geddes but this plan was upset by a row with Huxley. Haddon spent most of 1891 trying to publish his critique of the Imperial Institute but journal after journal rejected it and, rather naively, he turned to Huxley for help. Huxley suppressed it in January 1892 on the basis that it would not be acceptable to the government. He recommended that Haddon concentrate instead on the systematic collection of anthropological information in association with the institutions that constituted organised anthropology. Haddon deferred to Huxley and incorporated craniology as a dominant feature of the methodology employed in the Aran Islands, going so

far as to take a series of ‘selfies’ showing Browne measuring Tom Connelly’s skull and Haddon entering the data into a form designed by Galton (fig. 5). Operating through the Folk-Lore Society, Haddon persuaded the Anthropological Institute to adopt this hybrid as a model for a wider survey of village communities throughout the UK and the BAAS subsequently took over the management of the multi-agency Ethnographic Survey of the UK and Ireland.



Fig. 5

Haddon & Browne, 1892, Anthropometry in Aran.
 Courtesy of the Board of Trinity College, the
 University of Dublin

Haddon’s strategy failed and Cunningham, like Green, imposed a pro-government line on the report Haddon and Browne presented in 1892 and the academy published in 1893. Cunningham dropped Haddon from future surveys, although he remained, on paper at least, a member of the management team and served as the contact between the Irish and UK surveys. Haddon turned to the field club movement in Ireland and used the UK survey as a pretext to mobilise a popular ethnographic movement in association with the Belfast Naturalists’ Field Club. He let the skull-measuring business slide and concentrated instead on the organised collection of folklore as a part of a cultural revival programme that Praeger and Francis Joseph Bigger (1863–1926) instigated in 1892. Haddon pursued his photo-ethnographic agenda and recruited Clara Patterson, one of his extramural students, as an ethnographer. Patterson photographed singing games in rural districts as part of Haddon’s investigation of the form and function of dance and I have argued elsewhere (Walsh 2020) that this gave practical effect to the anarcho-utopian philosophy he presented in *Lippincott’s* in 1890 and simultaneously established the slideshow as a new form of performed ethnography.

Haddon’s adoption of the slideshow was practical in origin. He attempted to publish illustrated monographs on the Torres Straits, New Guinea, and the Aran Islands in 1890 and 1891 but the cost of illustration was prohibitive and he developed the slide show as an alternative. This became his preferred ethnographic method and he presented at least five slideshows on the Aran islands between 1890 and 1895, when the crisis over home rule

reached a crescendo in a general election that once again became a referendum on the integrity of the union between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. This activism put him in the vanguard of an anti-colonial movement that launched an insurrection during the meeting of Section H-Anthropology in 1895.

Insurrection

William Flinders Petrie (1853–1942), an archaeologist and Egyptologist, took over the presidency of Section H-Anthropology in 1894 and asked Haddon to present the case for other civilisations in a public discussion of the impact of colonialism scheduled for the Working Men’s Club in Ipswich in 1895. Haddon used the text of his suppressed critique of the Imperial Institute as the basis for a blistering attack on Anglo-Saxon values and the appalling humanitarian record of the British Empire, opening his speech with a reference to the inadequacy of Balfour’s anti-home-rule strategy in Ireland. The speech generated headlines across the UK and Haddon sustained severe criticism from within anthropology. Some correspondents treated it as an insurrection by anthropologists who had wandered into sociology and, as such, had no business being members of an organisation for the promotion of science.

The BAAS sanctioned Haddon by refusing to provide funding for a second expedition which Haddon proposed as an ‘Immediate Investigation of the Biology of Oceanic Islands’. His language was coded. The proposal referred to the impending *extermination* of native flora and *fauna* by invasive species but did not refer to genocide. The Tasmanians had *disappeared*, and the natives of Oceania were *being modified*, *dying out*, or otherwise *vanishing* (BAAS 1896: 487–9). It didn’t work. Haddon spent two years trying to raise money for the expedition but the BAAS strategy of limiting dissent by restricting access to funding (see Morrell and Thackray 1981, 283-4) appeared to be working until Haddon dropped a bombshell. He reported that he was organising an expedition with a committee in Cambridge “for the purpose of continuing his researches on the Anthropology of the Torres Straits Islanders” (BAAS 1897, 352).

While Haddon was away in the field, Macalister organised for a craniologist to be appointed to the first full-time position in anthropology in Cambridge University, institutionalising what Edward Brabrook (1839–1930), chairperson of the UK Ethnographic Survey, called a tendency to restrict anthropology to the study of the natural history of humans and suppress any “discussion under the name of anthropology of a variety of social, moral, and religious topics” (Brabrook 1896, 399). Frazer was furious and organised a lobby to have Haddon appointed to an equivalent position in ethnology. The university grudgingly conceded a poorly paid, part-time teaching post that was not enough for Haddon to resign his post in Dublin. Haddon was elected a fellow of Christ’s in 1901 and accepted the offer. However, the University Lectureship in Ethnology had a precarious foothold in the disciplinary structures of the university. Quiggin, whom Haddon recruited in 1904, described how for ten years or so “lectures had to be given at odd times and in odd corners’ such as a storeroom lined with

shelves holding skulls in the Pathology Department (Quiggin 1942, 116). Alan Macfarlane (2009) described how, in 1909, the General Board of Studies recommended, against considerable opposition, that Haddon be appointed to a University Readership in Ethnology. That opposition confirms that reactionary politics rather than knowledge production shaped the first version of academic anthropology and, despite the existence of an extensive paper trail, this story disappeared from the history of disciplinary anthropology.

The Knowledge Production Business?

There is a curious paradox at the heart of Haddon's story and the historiography surrounding it. Haddon was a modernist who, from the outset, engaged with the problem of representation in colonial contexts but his extraordinary visuality rendered this innovation invisible to historians. It's a small detail, but Haddon inserted himself as the white component of *Head-hunters, Black, White, and Brown* (1901), turning the title of his narrative account of the 1888 and 1898 expeditions into a mischievous take on the relationship between ethnologists, the people they study, and the representations they produce. He more or less abandoned text as an ethnographic method in 1890 and began a long experiment with photography as an ethnographic form in its own right, creating a foundation for visual anthropology that was buried under the "discipline of words" Margaret Mead (1995, 4–5) described in 1974, when she lambasted anthropologists and ethnologists who failed to move beyond the traditional instruments – the word itself she thought evidence of a restricted mindset – of pencil and questionnaire and exploit the ethnographic and epistemological potential of advances in audiovisual technologies. The loss of potential knowledge was such that Mead accused them of an act of criminal negligence.

Mead was not thinking about Haddon because, as Radcliffe-Brown acknowledged in 1931 (BAAS 1932), his formal experiments in knowledge production came too soon to register in the history of anthropology. Indeed, in 1911, William Halse Rivers (1864–1922), a psychiatrist who joined the 1898 expedition, gently edged Haddon, his friend and colleague, out of the history of *scientific* anthropology when he acknowledged progress in the way anthropologists collected information but discerned little by way of theoretical development (BAAS 1911, 385). This was a mistake. Rivers failed to see or overlooked the anarcho-utopian theories of social organisation that underpinned Haddon's practical innovations. Moreover, Rivers aligned himself with Galton, who demanded that the 'hard' criteria of the physical sciences – precise measurement, exact processes of reasoning, and the verification of definite laws (Galton 1877, 471) – apply to anthropology. Unfortunately for Haddon, River's paper became the starting point for historians who rewrote the history of anthropology in the 1990s and interpreted Haddon's experiments in form as an improved methodology for collecting data rather than a breakthrough in the field of visual anthropology. That confusion arises because historians have conventionally focussed on Haddon's training as an academic zoologist, which I treat as irrelevant as anything other than the circumstance that put him in a position to pursue his interest in art from an ethnological perspective.

The main problem for historians is that Haddon abandoned the study of anthropology Ellis commissioned in 1890. They agreed instead on *The Evolution in Art* (1895), evolution being a theme in the Contemporary Science Series that Ellis introduced with the *Evolution of Sex* by Geddes and Thomson in 1889. The failure of their anthropological project opened a 50-year gap between Edward B. Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (1871) at one end and, at the other, Radcliffe Browne's *Andaman Islanders* (1922) and Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922). Historians filled the gap with a gradualist narrative of methodological progress that runs from Huxley to Haddon before pivoting to Rivers, Radcliffe-Brown, and Malinowski. Joan Leopold (1991) raised a red flag – epistemologically speaking – when she reviewed Stocking's *Victorian Anthropology* (1987) and represented his determination to make evolution the primary determinism of anthropological thought and practice as a methodologically problematic and distorting lens. Nevertheless, Stocking became the “doyen of the anthropological past” (Urry 1989, 364) and had “an enormous impact on the way anthropologists see themselves and their profession” (Geertz 1999, 305). What Leopold flagged as distortion has become common sense in much of the literature that has accumulated since, especially that which deals with the 21 years Haddon spent in Ireland in a “a kind of cultural exile in a quasi-colonial population” (Stocking 1995, 99).

That statement does not take account of the anti-colonial politics, anarcho-utopian social theory, and formal innovation that characterises Haddon's work as an ethnologist between 1888 and 1898. Nor does it account for the conflict it generated between Haddon's network and three varieties of anthropology that dominated the post-evolutionist era at end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth: the reactionary nature of Huxley's configuration of institutional anthropology, the political utility of Cunningham's practical anthropology, and finally, the ‘hard science’ academic tradition Rivers founded in 1911. Instead, we have a conventional historiography built around a Kuhnian narrative of a shift from evolutionist speculation to social science that pivots on Haddon's organisation of an anthropological expedition in 1898 and treats him as the whipping boy for Huxley's biological version of anthropology. This represents a failure of scholarship and there is no excuse. Stocking transcribed and published Haddon's critique of the Imperial Institute in the *History of Anthropology Newsletter* in 1993 but a preoccupation with evolution bracketed by race and empire has ensured that this document entered academic scholarship as a proposal for the establishment of an Imperial Bureau of Ethnology and constituted a manifesto for an imperial anthropology. It remains, as such, as an essential part of the origin myth of modern anthropology.

Conclusion

I have countered such orthodoxy elsewhere (Walsh 2020) by arguing that Haddon's 1898 film of the last dance *Malu Zogo-Le* and associated sound recordings constitute a singularly modernist achievement in the field of anthropology. In the forthcoming study for Berghahn Books, I propose that his determination to have the voices of the victims of colonialism heard has its analogue in an online video campaign that Survival International organised in 2019 in

support of tribal communities who are subject to land grabs, racism-motivated violence, and legislated genocide at fourteen flashpoints across the globe. I now propose that Haddon's battle with Huxley, Cunningham, and Macalister over their determination to suppress any discussion of issues that might threaten liberal economic interests and imperial expansion has its analogue in the current stand-off between 'traditional' and 'practical' anthropology in the neoliberal academy.

Keir Martin and Alex Flynn posed the problem in an opinion piece in *Anthropology Today* in 2015. They argued that the alignment of research funding with neoliberal economic policies had a chilling effect on researchers who engaged with politically sensitive social issues. In 2018, Bruce Kapferer developed the argument and identified the greatest risk to anthropology as the shift from fieldwork as a basis for discovery to theory-led scholarship and economic pragmatism that, historically speaking, served those in power. In 2021, Sarah Green, outgoing president of EASA, considered the problem of constrained knowledge production and described a perfect storm in which populism, a drift to authoritarianism, and an increased dependence on external research funding had produced a backlash against those engaged with social issues such as "reproductive rights, LGBTQI+ issues, gender relations, asylum, and migration" (Green 2021, 4). That claim echoed Brabrook's 1896 description of a dominant, reactionary doctrine that limited the discussion of social topics under the name of anthropology in the 1890s and, in turn, supports Kapferer's sense "of a return of the past in the present" (2018, 2). Cunningham is particularly relevant in this context. He demonstrated the efficacy of his colonial system during an investigation of the physical condition of army recruits undertaken by the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Degeneration (1903–4). This paved the way for a new era of social policy informed by social science and this required the sort of structural links between government agencies and social scientists that characterise practical anthropology today.

The same conversation is taking place in sociology. In 2021, Aldon Morris, president of the American Sociological Association, called on members rediscover their radical roots, push the limits of knowledge production, and create "a sociology of liberation rooted in empirical observation and theorizing from data rather than ideology" (Morris 2021). Morris identified "gender discrimination and sexual harassment, racism, ableism, heteronormativity, devastating class inequalities" as pressing social issues and I have argued that historical precursors of some of those issues engaged Haddon, Geddes, Ellis and their associates, Caroline Haddon, and Margaret Hinton among them. Their attempts to radicalise the knowledge production business generated a tension between reactionary biological anthropology and reformist socio-cultural ethnology and that, I propose, is the real story of post-evolutionist anthropology in the 1890s. That tension never dissipated fully, and it has re-emerged in the current stand-off between a disruptive social anthropology and a practical anthropology of political utility.

The history of anthropology may just have caught up with Haddon and, from this perspective, some aspects of contemporary anthropology look very Victorian.

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