

The Science of Culture (1871)

Culture is that complex whole that includes art and law and ritual
Anthropology's the thing we use to study it
Anthropology's inherently comparative
Because otherwise we couldn't see variety in culture.

Anthropology's a scientific discipline
We use measurement to quantify phenomenon
We statistically analyze our data sets
So that we can understand the great variety in culture.

The "various grades [of culture] may be regarded as stages of development or evolution,
each the outcome of previous history,
and about to do its proper part in shaping the history of the future."

Culture changes over time and we should study it
Evolution is the thing that causes change
If we study evolution we will realize
Human beings are simply animals with aptitude for culture.

"the history of mankind is part and parcel the history of nature...
our thoughts, wills, and actions accord with laws as definite as those
which govern the motion of waves..."

Neo-Kantians don't like this view of humanness
For it seems to make us captives of our world
Without free will or ability to shape ourselves
Just get over it and recognize the potent force of culture.

Culture is that complex whole that includes art and law and ritual
Anthropology's the thing we use to study it
Culture shapes our lives in drives our human history
Anthropology thus helps us all to understand our world.