Discussion Questions

ANTH 300

**On Lewis Henry Morgan**

1. What does Eriksen mean when he says that “It was in this world of upheaval and transition that anthropology first emerged as an academic discipline” (p.15) and that “It is hardly surprising that anthropology arose as a discipline at this time” (p.17; referring to the late 19th century)?
2. Considering the racism that prevailed at the time Morgan wrote, do you think that he reinforced such racism or that he rebelled against it?
3. Did Morgan play a part in perpetuating the “extinction discourses” that Brantlinger discussed?
4. How does Morgan draw on the ideas of Charles Darwin in developing his ideas of social evolutionism? How does he differ from Darwin?
5. Do the ideas of social evolutionism still have any influence on popular or scholarly visions of non-Western people?
6. Discuss Morgan’s methodology (how he collected data). Was he a true fieldworker or an armchair intellectual?
7. What social “things” did Morgan focus his attention on?
8. Was Morgan concerned with understanding and interpreting the emic perspective of the people he studied?
9. Did Morgan have any sense of culture as an integrated whole?