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FORMAT

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MAURICE GODELIER AND THE STUDY OF IDEOLOGY

In recent years we have seen a gradual coming together of two trends in social anthropology which were earlier often thought of as opposite poles, namely the structuralist and the marxist. This development has been most marked within French anthropology. Where Lévi-Strauss in 1962 was content to leave to other disciplines the study of infrastructures proper (1966:131) he now admits a determining role (though not the sole determining role) to the relationship between man and his techno-economic environment (1974). And where marxist anthropologists never thought of questioning the axiom that it is the economic infrastructure which 'in the last analysis' determines the form and evolution of social formations, and frustrated the rest of us by always beginning with that 'last analysis' and never getting around to any of the previous ones, today ideology appears among the most frequent topics for marxist analysis. Among those explicitly concerned with the combination of structuralist and marxist approaches is Maurice Godelier. In this paper I wish to take up some points relating to Godelier's work on religion, ideology and the like.

Religion

We may well take as a point of departure a brief paper by Godelier entitled 'Toward a Marxist Anthropology of Religion', in which he gives 'an example of how Marxist anthropologists can proceed to analyze religion in the pre-capitalist societies which are their concern' (1975c:81). Not only is that paper addressed to the specific topic of religion, but it might also, in Godelier's own terms, constitute a starting point for the further analysis, which he has already outlined in the book Horizon....:

> If we define ideology as the domain of illusory representations of the real, and as we consider religion to have been, in the course of the development of humanity, the dominant form of ideology in classless societies and in the first forms of class societies, our results permit us to take a step towards a general theory of ideology (1973:337).

Already after these general statements a couple of questions arise. In the first place, Godelier speaks about marxist anthropologists analyzing religion 'in the pre-capitalist societies which are their concern'. Assuming that this is not just a slip of the pen, a marxist variant of the traditional but erroneous opinion that anthropology is the study of primitive societies, why is it that (marxist) anthropologists should restrict themselves to the study of pre-capitalist societies? It is true, of course, that anthropologists are better equipped than others for studying primitive (or pre-capitalist) societies, but this academic contingency should not be taken as a theoretical principle, especially not by marxist scholarship with its striving for theoretical rigour. It may, however, reflect a practical division of labour for the time being, in that Godelier envisages a stage where 'it will no longer be possible to go on counterposing anthropology to history or to sociology as three fetishized separate domains' and where anthropology and history 'appear as two fragments of historical materialism' (1972:xlii;247), thereby apparently subscribing to Terray's (1969) view that 'the aim is to replace social anthropology by a particular section of historical materialism consecrated to socio-economic formations where the capitalist mode of production is absent' (1972:184).

However, anthropology is still alive and likely to be kicking for some
time yet, and from an anthropological point of view the overall division of
the field into capitalist and pre-capitalist societies may have some undesired
consequences. I am not contesting that the field may be thus divided; marxism
possesses a fairly sophisticated body of theoretical constructs for the
analysis of capitalist societies, but precisely because capitalist societies
thus form a central category of marxist scholarship, pre-capitalist societies
come to constitute a residual category. This is not 'bad' or 'wrong' in
itself as long as we bear in mind that the two categories belong to different
logical levels. The first contains a well defined type of society while the
second consists of a mixed group of societies which do not necessarily have
anything in common apart from the fact that they do not belong in the first
category; the human penchant for thinking in binary oppositions may, regrett-
ably, obscure this state of affairs. Just as it is legitimate for a theologian,
but hardly for an historian of religions, a priori to divide humanity into
Christians and non-Christians, it is likewise legitimate for an economist,
but hardly for an anthropologist, to make the first, overall division into
capitalist and pre-capitalist societies.

Godelier became an anthropologist, he tells us, because he 'was drawn
towards a scientific activity that requires of the researcher from the outset
a degree of detachment from the facts, history and ideology of his own
society much greater than that required of the historian or economist studying
Western societies' (1972:x-xi). It is a corollary that the anthropologist
must, to the greatest possible degree, avoid employing concepts derived from
the analysis of his own society in the analysis of other societies, and he
must in any case make sure that the concepts he employs do not entail a
misrepresentation of phenomena in the other society. Leach told the British
functionalists in 1961: 'Don't start off your argument with a lot of value
loaded concepts which prejudge the whole issue!' (1961:17). I quote it here
as a preface to the second question in connection with Godelier's general
statements cited above. The question is, what does he mean by religion?
Judging from the 1975-paper, as well as from Horizon...., he seems to think
that religion is a universal phenomenon, that one may everywhere go and look
for an isolable domain of rituals and beliefs which may be presented as the
'religion' of the society in question. And this is precisely why the repe-
tition of 'Leach's rule' is warranted here. The degree of detachment from
the facts of his own society which is required of the anthropologist is such
that he should be very wary indeed in granting concepts like religion the
status of a universal category. As Crick has reminded us, 'some of the terms
we have used to frame our analytical discussions have been highly culture-
bound. "Religion" itself must certainly be included among these. Other
cultures (even Hindu and Islamic) do not have concepts at all equivalent
to our term "religion"' (1976:159). Whether Godelier's belief in the uni-
versality of the concept of religion stems from his reliance on Marx' and
Engels' writings on religion is a matter for conjecture. In any case he
summarizes their views as a preface to outlining his general theory, which,
roughly, runs as follows: In primitive society, because of the feeble
development of the productive forces, man has a very low degree of control
over nature; consequently nature appears in the human consciousness objectively
as a realm of superhuman powers. And because the savage mind operates prin-
cipally by analogy, those powers are represented as personified, superhuman
beings who exist in a society analogous to human society. They are thus
related to each other by bonds of kinship, as we well know from numerous
myths, and the reason for the close association between kinship relations
of social life and the sociological schemes of many myths is to be found

in the fact that in most primitive societies kinship is objectively the dominant structure. The sociological 'rock bottom' of myths, then, 'cannot be deduced from nature nor from formal principles of thought', it is the effect of social relations in the specific historical society (1973:337-39).

To readers unfamiliar with the writings of, for example, Durkheim & Mauss and Lévi-Strauss this may be novel, but it has been part of the 'theoretical capital' of anthropology for some time that 'the first logical categories were social categories': 'It was because men were grouped, and thought of themselves in the form of groups, that in their ideas they grouped other things' (Durkheim & Mauss 1903:82). This is not meant as a criticism of Godelier; on the contrary, I take it as a healthy sign that whether one is an avowed materialist or not, ther seems to be a general theoretical agreement as to the nature of those symbolic representations which we, if we like, may refer to as religious.

This fact is in a way also borne out by Godelier himself where he states the premiss for the marxist theory about mythico-religious consciousness. The premiss is that that consciousness is conditioned by two factors, namely on the one hand an effect _in_ the consciousness of specific social relations and relations between man and nature, and on the other, an effect _of_ the consciousness _on_ itself, i.e. the formal principles of thought (such as the principle of analogy) (1973:339-40). I can think of no better formulation of the general premiss for the study of 'superstructures' - but why restrict ourselves to a 'mythico-religious' part of the consciousness, the definition of which can only bring confusion anyway? I think that the general insight is so sound that the principle merits a wider application. Thus, the following quotation from Levi-Strauss is both a corroboration of Godelier's principles and an extension of their field of application:

> Therefore, two kinds of determinism are simultaneously at work in social life and it is no wonder that they may appear arbitrary to each other. Behind every ideological construct, previous constructs stand out, and they echo each other back in time, not indefinitely but at least back to the fictive stage when, hundreds of thousands of years ago and maybe more, an incipient mankind thought out and expressed its first ideology. But it is equally true that at each stage of this complex process, each ideological construct becomes inflected by techno-economic conditions and is so to speak, first attracted and then warped by them. Even if a common mechanism should exist underlying the various ways according to which the human mind operates, in each particular society and at each stage of its historical development, those mental cogwheels must lend themselves to being put in gear with other mechanisms. Observation never reveals the isolated performance of one type of wheel-work or of the other: we can only witness the results of their mutual adjustment (Lévi-Strauss 1974:11).

We may thus note the general agreement between the marxist and the structuralist view of 'superstructures' as being doubly determined, namely by the combination of material conditions and the way in which the mind processes experience, and then return to Godelier on religion. The first step 'toward the marxist anthropology of religion' is the following quotation from Marx: 'It is easier to demonstrate the earthly content of these ethereal conceptions of religion than to go the other way and show how the real conditions gradually become clothed in these clouds' (Godelier 1975c:82). A scientific, materialist

analysis should go from the 'below' to the 'above' rather than from the 'above' to the 'below'. I suspect that for all practical purposes the analysis has to go both ways simultaneously, but no matter what direction happens to be the predominant in the specific analysis, it is a fact that by moulding one's analysis too rigidly on the principles contained in the above quotation, one makes it very difficult to accommodate the second of the two components which according to Godelier himself is a premiss for the marxist theory of mythico-religious consciousness, namely the effect of the consciousness on itself. It seems to me that Godelier's marxist anthropology is here caught in the dilemma between a literal adherence to Marx' writings and the heeding of general anthropological insights.

A similar dilemma was present in the problem of 'religion' as a universal category, and Godelier in that case followed Marx. There is nothing wrong, of course, with describing certain phenomena in exotic societies as 'religious', provided that the western meaning of that label does not influence the analysis. But, as we shall see, 'religion' for Godelier is a rather value loaded concept, and this has some effect on the analysis. The analysis (1975c) is mainly of the Mbuti pygmies as described by Turnbull, while examples of 'religion' in other types of societies are very summarily sketched to indicate an evolutionary sequence. I shall restrict myself to some comments of the Mbuti analysis, but let us first repeat that in primitive societies where man has a very limited control over nature,

> The hidden causes, the invisible forces which regulate the affairs in the world are represented as superhuman creatures, that is to say as beings equipped with consciousness and will, power and authority, thus being <u>analogous</u> to man, but <u>different</u> in that <u>they do what man cannot do</u>, they are superior to man (Godelier 1973:338; emphasis original).

This statement can only be taken as an empirical generalization. The Mbuti are hunters and gatherers and have thus an extremely limited control over nature, so we should expect them to fit the generalization, but as a matter of fact they do not:

> The forest for the Pygmies, therefore, is an omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient divinity. They address it by the kin or kin-based terms that designate father, mother, friend, even lover, <u>but it would be a major error to think that the Mbuti conceive of the forest as a reality entirely distinct from themselves</u> (Godelier 1975c:82; my emphasis).

(It may be of interest to note that Durkheim & Mauss, who like Godelier adopted an evolutionary perspective, had seventy years earlier arrived at a generalization which fits at least the Mbuti case perfectly; to repeat and continue the passage quoted above: 'It was because men were grouped, and thought of themselves in the form of groups, that in their ideas they grouped other things, and in the beginning the two modes of grouping were merged to the point of being indistinct' (1903:82-83)).

The 'religion' of the Mbuti is manifested in the 'forest cult'. Religion for most people in western societies is an institution which involves things like prayer, priests, and a (personified) god. So also for Godelier, apparently, for he manages to impute to the world view of the Mbuti all those elements.

As for prayer:

> Each morning, before leaving for the hunt, the Pygmies light a fire at
> the base of a tree in honour of the forest. They pass in front of the
> fire as they leave the camp and they often chant to the forest to ask
> for game. In the evening, upon their return, the game is divided at
> the foot of the same tree, and a prayer of thanks is offered to the
> forest for the game it has yielded (1975c:82).

Compare that passage with Turnbull's description:

> The sacred hunting fire ..... is found throughout the forest. It is
> thought to secure the blessing of the forest which provides the game,
> and to bring good luck to the entire camp ... (It) is a simple act,
> involving the lighting of a fire at the base of a tree a short distance
> from the camp. In other pygmy groups I have seen a variation where
> the fire is lit within the camp, with special sticks arount it, pointing
> in the direction the hunt is going to take. In this case the fire is
> surrounded by a long and heavy vine laid in a circle on the ground, and
> when the game is brought home it is placed within this circle before
> being divided (1961:91).
> As soon as the hunters return they deposit the meat on the ground and
> the camp gathers to make sure the division is fair .... Cooking operations
> start at once and within an hour everyone is eating. If the hunt has
> been a good one, and the day is still young, the most energetic men and
> women dance immediately afterwards, followed by the children. In the
> course of such a dance they imitate, with suitable exaggeration, the
> events of the day. Or if the hunt has not been so good or a man is
> tired and does not feel like dancing, he will sit down and gather his
> family around him and tell something that has happened to him on the
> hunt (ibid:123).

So much for the ethnographic evidence of prayer!

Priests are introduced where Godelier describes a major ritual in which
everybody participates. He tells us that there 'are no priests among the
Mbuti', which is a perfectly valid ethnographic statement, but then he goes
on to say, 'Or, rather, everyone is a priest and a believer' (1975c:83), which
is patent nonsense unless we wish to consider anyone who takes part in any
ritual a priest, and that does seem rather pointless. We can only conclude
that Godelier is led astray by his own conception of religion so that he
treats Mbuti world view as if he were talking about western religion.

A god is the sine qua non of western religion. Hence in order to make
sense for Godelier, there must be a god in Mbuti 'religion':

> For them, the forest is all of existence - it consists of trees, plants,
> animals, sun, moon, and the Mbuti themselves. When a Mbuti dies, his or
> her breath leaves and mixes with the wind, which is the breath of the
> forest. Human beings, therefore, are part of that totality which exists
> as an omnipotent and omnipresent person; they are, so to speak, part
> of the body of God (1975c:82).

'So to speak', yes, if we wish to insist on there being a god. The forest
is the dominant category of Mbuti world view, the dominant symbol, if we like,
and the Mbuti themselves, like many aspects of their environment, are 'of

the forest'. But this fact is a fact of 'participation' (Lévy-Brühl 1949); it does not imply identity, and only an insufficient degree of detachment from the theological tradition of one's own society could lead on to think that this dominant symbol is best labelled 'God'. Speaking of god, a Mbuti put it this way:

> He told me how all the pygmies have different names for their god, but how they all know that it is really the same one. Just what it is, of course, they don't know, and that is why the name really does not matter very much. "How can we know?" he asked. "We can't see him, perhaps only when we die will we know and then we can't tell anyone. So how can we say what he is like or what his name is? But he must be good to give us so many things. He must be of the forest. So when we sing, we sing to the forest" (Turnbull 1961:87-88).

The man is obviously trying to explain a feature of the Mbuti world view in an idiom that the ethnographer may readily grasp, and he makes it quite clear that even if thre be a god, the Mbuti are not terribly concerned about him, and it would never occur to them, I believe, to equate the notion of god with the totality of the Mbuti and their environment.

To sum up: the forest is the dominant category in Mbuti society, it is the idiom in which most of their collective representations are expressed. It would, therefore, be reasonable in the (marxist) anthropological analysis of this society to take that category as the point of departure and try to trace the ways in which both material and non-material relations are transformed and expressed in that idiom. Instead Godelier starts from the category 'religion' which as a concept has no place in Mbuti thought; and because of this fact he fills up the category with elements from his own society (prayer, priests, god, - 'a lot of value loaded concepts'), the result being a distortion of the ethnographic picture for the sake of establishing a marxist evolutionary sequence of 'religious' phenomena. And after all, we are told, the exercise was not really worth it:

> By placing in sequence these four examples - the Mbuti, the Eskimo shaman, the Pawnee chief, and the Inca son of the Sun - I have created a theoretical trompe-l'oeil. For the sequence seems to suggest that the later development of the pervasive socioeconomic inequality to which I have referred was nascent even among the Mbuti.... [But] to understand the multiple forms of social evolution and the different functions which religion discharges in each case, we need a theory, specific to each case, of the conditions for the emergence of a given set of social relations and their relation to the base, the mode of production (1975c:85).

(A curiously narrow conception of the nature of theory). If the paper is a step 'toward a marxist anthropology of religion', it would seem, from an anthropological point of view, to have brought us squarely down on our own toes.

Kinship

My comments on the preceding pages should have made it clear that what I regard as the shortcomings of Godelier's approach stem from the fact that he treats 'religion' as a universally existing institution, the characteristics of which he seems to take more or less for granted. I shall argue,

briefly, that similar shortcomings can, for similar reasons, be found in his analyses of 'kinship'.

Godelier has repeatedly stated that in many primitive societies kinship functions simultaneously as infrastructure and superstructure (e.g. Godelier 1972:94-95,248; 1973:170; 1975:10,13), and he infers that kinship is in those societies a multifunctional institution. He then takes a 'majority of anthropologists' to task for reaching the tautological conclusion that kinship (or any other institution, as the case may be) is multifunctional in a given society because it is dominant, and it is dominant because it is multifunctional (1975a:13). The question for Godelier is, how can the fact that some institution (other than the economy) is dominant in a given society be reconciled with Marx' hypothesis 'that it is the economic infrastructure of society which in the last analysis determines the inner logic of its working and of the evolution of the various types of society' (ibid)? The answer he provides is

> ...that it is not enough for an institution such as kinship to assume several functions for it to be dominant within a society and to integrate all levels of social organization.... (it) must also function as the system of relations of production regulating rights of groups and of individuals in respect to the means of production and their access to the products of their labour. It is because the institution functions as the system of relations of production that it regulates the politico-religious activities and serves as the ideological schema for symbolic practice (ibid:14;cf. 1973:43,89,217-18; 1974:626; 1975b:35; 1977:47).

This may be so, but in fact Godelier perpetuates the 'positivist' error of the 'majority of anthropologists' whom he criticizes, because he imputes to the social facts from other societies a totally unwarranted institutionalization. This theoretical error is all the more conspicuous as the ethnographic material on which the statement is based is drawn from Australian societies, notably the Kariera. The linguist von Brandenstein (1970) has analyzed the meaning of the section names of the Kariera four-section system, and on the basis of that analysis Godelier states that

> ...the division into sections provides an organizing scheme for the Australians' symbolic representation of the world and of its immanent order. The same principles and the same divisions order nature and society, dividing human beings and all natural creatures into the same categories; nature appears as an enlarged image of society, as its continuation (Godelier 1975a:11).

I can find no good anthropological reason why such classificatory principles should be treated as an 'institution' called 'kinship'. This point has been repeatedly stressed by Needham; referring precisely to von Brandenstein's analysis of the Kariera four-section system Needham comments:

> ...social life is variously framed and governed by collective categories, and ... in analysing any given society the task is to trace the significance of these categories, throughout their full range of connotations, without making in advance any prejudicial distinction into what is and what is not kinship (1974:33).

Needham is concerned solely with collective categories and is not inquiring into the material functions of such categories. However limited, and

limiting, such a position may seem, this does not invalidate the anthrop-
ological soundness of the cited argument.

So, confronted with the general question of why it is that kinship
assumes a dominant role in many primitive societies, the general answer
might be that it is because anthropologists (including marxist ones) have
tended to see all systems of classification which include the classification
of people into categories such as lineal relatives/non-lineal relatives,
marriageable/unmarriageable, etc., as 'kinship systems'. The societies in
which 'kinship' is said to dominate are usually small-scale and rather station-
ary ones. It follows that many of the members who cooperate in the daily
production will actually be related by descent or by marriage. Because of
this, genealogical connections present themselves as an obvious parameter
for the classification of the social universe. But classification is a
socio-cultural procedure which is arbitrary in relation to biology. Kinship
is not the social expression, or ideology, of genealogical connections.
On the contrary, kinship is in those societies social relations (of production
etc.) which are ideologically expressed by means of genealogy. As Sahlins
has put it:

> Indeed, the realation between pragmatic cooperation and kinship defin-
> ition is often reciprocal. If close kinsmen live together, then those
> who live together are close kin. If kinsmen make gifts of food, then
> gifts of food make kinsmen - the two are symbolically interconvertible
> forms of the transfer of substance. For as kinship is a code of conduct
> and not merely of reference, let along genealogical reference, conduct
> becomes a code of kinship (Sahlins 1976:57-58).

Once we have come to this understanding of 'kinship' we have in effect done
away with the problem, let alone the institution, of kinship. By the same
token we have done away with the problem of domination versus determination
because it has become clear that <u>every mode of classification is dominant
in relation to what is classified by it</u>. What we have left is the problem
of the relation between cultural systems of classification and the 'real'
facts of social production and reproduction, or, if we like, the relation
between superstructures and infrastructure.

Superstructure and infrastructure

In the two previous sections I have tried to show that the shortcomings
of Godelier's analytical practice stem from an anthropologically rather
unsophisticated treatment of such phenomena as 'religion' and 'kinship'.
This is all the more disappointing since he has, in fact, on the theoretical
level partly realized the possible pitfalls of his own analytical practice:

> When kinship functions as a production relationship, what is involved
> is no longer kinship such as it exists in our society; the same is true
> when religion, the temple and the god constitute the dominant social
> relationship. Nor is this religion as it exists in our society. In
> each case, kinship, religion or politics need to be defined anew (1974:626).

But what is the use of such theoretical insight if it is not applied in the
concrete analysis?

I shall now turn to Godelier's theoretical practice in considering the concept of ideology and its relation to infrastructure and superstructure. The concept of ideology occurs frequently in Godelier's writings, but I have found it somewhat difficult to form a clear picture of what it means. We have seen it defined as 'the domain of illusory representations of the real' (1973:337), but that only begs the question about what is real and what is not. Only a rather simplistic and ethnocentric materialism can confidently equate the real with the material conditions for social life, and Godelier has, indeed, gone beyond that stage:

> To investigate the ideological, the conditions for its formation and transformation, its effects on the evolving of societies, is for a marxist, it seems to me, to investigate the relationship between infrastructure, superstructures and ideology. Should we designate those realities 'instances' as Althusser has done, should we consider them as 'levels' of social reality, as somehow substantive distinctions of social reality, as institutional chunks of its substance? I think not. In my view a society has neither above nor below, nor has it really levels. That is why the distinction between infrastructure and superstructure is not a distinction between institutions. It is in principle a distinction between functions (1977:42).

We note that it is no longer a question, for a marxist, to construct a 'scientific theory of ideology' by accounting for the process by which the 'real' conditions in each specific case become clothed in the clouds of religious conceptions and then to generalize on the basis of a number of different cases (1975c). Now infrastructure, superstructures and ideology are equally parts of social reality, which is the object of study for the rest of social anthropology as well.

> Furthermore it appears that the notion of the 'real' is itself subjected to some modifications; among the productive forces there exist, namely, certain 'intellectual' means for appropriating nature:

> We find that at the heart of the most material relations between man and the material nature which surrounds him there exists a complexx set of representations, ideas, schemes, etc., which I shall call 'ideal' realities, the presence and intervention of which is necessary for any material activity to take place. Today [sic] anthropology has embarked on the investigation of those ideal realities which are included in the various material processes of the societies which it analyzes. This is the vast field of ethnoscience.... (1977:43).

The ideal realities, it is admitted, are percieved primarily through the linguistic discourse of the groups in question, and they are thus facts which are indissoluble from language and mind. Consequently, language and mind may function as components of the productive forces, and the distinction between infrastructure and superstructures is thus not one 'between the material and the immaterial, as I cannot see that the mind should be any less material than the rest of social life. Neither is it a distinction between the sensible and the non-sensible. It is a distinction of place inside the activities necessary for the reproduction of social life' (ibid)

It follows from the above quotations, first that it is not really the structural aspects of infrastructure and superstructure which are important;

in fact they are not even to be regarded as structures proper and should
perhaps rather be labelled infra- and superstructural functions respectively.
Second it follows that infrastructural functions are those activities necessary
for the reproduction of social life, but since these activities include
mental constructs such as indigenous taxonomies and the like, in short every-
thing that we are accustomed to think of as just social life, one wonders
what kind of phenomena may have superstructural functions (cf. Dresch 1976:58).
We are of course at liberty to regard the whole of social life as having the
purpose of the reproduction of social systems, but rather than being a
theoretical advance it seems to me to be a truism resting on the same kind
of logic as the one employed by Marvin Harris when he reduces the rationality
of social relations to that of adaptive advantages (Godelier 1973:52; 1974:
621; 1975b:52). In case we do not wish to go that far, there remain two
possibilities: either it is the anthropologist who is to judge which activ-
ities are necessary for the reproduction of social life, or it is the natives
themselves. In the first case we are (once again) laid open to charges
of ethnocentrism, in the second every marxist anthropologist ought to do
nothing but ethnoscience. In any case it seems to me that the net result is
to make nonsense out of the notions of infrastructure and superstructure.

We might wonder than why Godelier should bother about the distinction
at all. I suspect that, as an avowedly marxist anthropologist, he felt
the need to come to the rescue of the hypothesis about the determining role
in the last instance of the economic infrastructure. Considerable effort
has been devoted to this salvage. We might say that the operation was
successful; the patient died. The success lies precisely in the fact that
a distinction between infrastructure and superstructure is no longer tenable,
and consequently there is no question of the determining role of either.

Conclusion

Did we also do away with the concept of ideology in the process? Not
quite; it crops up again where Godelier addresses the problem of how to
distinguish between ideological and non-ideological ideas (1977:47-49).
But the 'solution' he offers appears to be rather an anti-solution:

> Thus we see that it is impossible to define an idea as ideological by
> using a single criterion (the criterion of false or true, the criterion
> of legitimacy or illegitimacy), nor by the addition or juxtaposition   f
> the two because they do not coincide. Each time the reasoning halts.
> In fact, to escape the dilemma of the formal or functional definitions
> of the ideological we have to work out a theory of the components of
> the power of domination a d oppression, a theory of the relation
> between violence and consensus (1977:49).

So, the way to escape the dilemma is to talk about something else. Before
concluding the paper with some eminently sensible thoughts about the relation
between violence and consensus, Godelier treats us to some scattered obser-
vations which do not in any obvious way tie in with other parts of his argu-
ment, but which contain some solid anthropoligical insights. The first
point is that 'all social relations exist simultaneously in the mind and
outside it'. Thus, and this is the second point, which 'a certain marxism
has too often forgotten', the mind not only passively reflects reality, it
interprets it actively; it even organizes all the social practices in this
reality and thereby contributes to the production of new social realities

(ibid). The realization of these points, we are told, is what makes all
the difference between the several ways in which to be 'materialist' in
scientific and political praxis...

   If points like these, and like the bits about the linguistic cimponents
of the productive forces, are accepted by the proponents of the traditional
marxist wisdom, we may all take leave of our scepticism and hand it
Bloch (1975) that he was ahead of the rest of us in perceiving that theo-
retical controversies between marxists and non-marxists never reflected a
total break. If, on the other hand, the rest of the marxist establishement
is unable to go along with Godelier, it remains for him to declare that
the business of 'marxist anthropology' was a gigantic hoax, of which he
has himself been a victim.

                                                                  Jan Ovesen,

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When Paul Dresch commented (1976:73) that anthropology's
'pretensions to radicalism' were 'laughable', he was right. And yet
there may be a fine irony in such laughter for it expressly rings through
an expanse that should no longer be taken seriously - riddling a broadly
marxian edifice which nonetheless inheres as the 'rationality of our time'
(Jenkins:1977:82).

It is the notional laughter that I wish to roam with here, merely
as an organising thwart and cursory excuse for more general comment on,
and exploration through, a broad sweep of educated radicalism and its
apparent, educated dismissal. Indeed the sweep of the following para-
graphs, it should be emphasised, draws on - and often rides on the
language of - a fairly widely dispersed family of radicals, some more
wistful than others, and some better known to us perhaps.[1] We shall
pick up Dresch's comments in a moment and return to them later on again;
indeed, we shall change pace often, seemingly re-trace our steps, tread
lightly here and more heavily there, and turn full circles - but there
neither has been nor will be any mere 'pre-amble' here. We might note
that this discussion writes itself through and as its own ethnography,
situated as it is especially in a School where radical pretensions of
various kinds have long been within its truth. Moreover, all that I say
is ethnographic material, a part of the very subject and object of a dis-
cussion which has no easy entry or departure, no clear beginning and end
- nor can it be said to have any 'deviation' which does not itself point
to, emanate from and define an educated preserve where a rigorous
ideality sets strayness aloose, extra-mural. The whisper perhaps of
some 'ethnomethodological' conceit in some instances bears its own pre-
tensions, but even as the text here seems to comment upon itself, we
should not be too anxious to get to an essential point or unearth any
strata. It is still always and evenly a reading, a leçon; it is
itself at once a grammaticalising closure and an event, let us say, but
one that will also be 'read' and should not be reconstituted in any pris-
tine, unspoken intentionality nor, indeed, rigorously and cuttingly
excavated for its 'affective cement' (Merleau-Ponty: cited Wood M.:1978:124).

Dresch's comments were not, of course, a simple act of relegation,
denigration and diminution; he was not, for instance, expressly questioning
or belittling the definitive status of 'marxist' rationality for those who
live it out in various forms. It is more the claim to a generalised
analytical competence that he is laughing out, by pointing to some of its
inadequacies and naiveties. But for the moment, and for our purposes here,
we can allow ourselves to read in another, subtle throwback. Marxism is
one particularly forceful example of educated radicalism and one which has
the notorious power of diminishing the status of other world-structures,
of denying them rationality and autonomy, of englobing the irrational and
incorporating the illusory; it has the power of epistemological derision.

However, when its enunciations involve, for example, the conflation
of other rationalities and the mists of early social development along
with the fantasies of childhood and of mystical fervour (e.g.Godelier:
1973:337) and, further, when we learn that some people are virtually and
unwittingly standing on their heads in the forests of darkest Africa
(e.g.Godelier:1975 on the Mbuti), then even as our oppositional propriety

is secured - the joke must be on us. Quite how we ever took it
seriously, if we did, is a function not only of a certain schooled
weight of discursive authority but also of an enduring metaphysical-
metaphorical complex which insists on such re-writes in the proper
understanding of 'other cultures'; an unworked complicity with the
lines of compulsion in this complex, lines that lubricate a truth
well-born as well as obvious good sense, draws others demeaningly
into the light of our self-evident rationality, letting them float
evocatively into educated ethnographies, marxist and non-marxist
alike (cf. Chapman:1977b for an account of some European ethnography
in this respect). So often they enter the realm of the serious with
the full ambiguity of an appealing, ingenuous ignorance - looking even
rather daft, pathetic, sleepy in their tradition as we solemnly yet
hastily structuralise them before they wane and are lost in some night
of dreams. Alternatively we might try to wake them out of it, to
re-animate the inert (cf. Foucault (1966)1974:328) and to let them -
as the emergent force of History - cross the line firmly on their feet
with politico-economic effectiveness. On this side already are those
who claim the weighty competence of theoretical clarity. Feeling wide
awake and alert, we have taken ourselves seriously, variously claiming
a grip on reality and a handle on history.

     In order merely to suggest how the motor of educated, radical
Reason may have started well - embarking on a course which has its own
quasi-automatic validity - but has since back-fired, we are setting
out on a brief and necessarily impressionistic journey through a moral
and metaphorical space, through a metaphysical edifice which can house
revolutionaries and conservatives alike as companion travellers,
drawing breath with the same natural inspiration. If we seem, in
some instances, to be _playing_ with the rippling and echoing elasticity
of language, celebrating its wildness and irrationality - that 'blurring
and sliding of signifieds' (Culler:1977:1) - and if it appears that we
are not engaging in serious work, or panning the world for unequivocal
signs, then we are moving still within this same space. Within it too
we might intuit that some readings will no doubt pretend to structure
their sense as Proper, as in some way seizing on and representing the
real meaning (underlying, implied or whatever) of this essay, just as
some would lay claim to the real, serious, tidy, true or fundamental
ordering of the world. It is a space also then wherein certain
tacitly prescriptive lines of demarcation might wish to conjure up some
'poetic licence' in this presentation; we may ultimately sense, however,
that this licence - solemnity's concession to frivolous excrescence, to
loose departure or deviation - is difficult surely to place, if not
ironically redundant: an interference, getting in the way - not of
History - but of the movement of language.

     Now in this space, in which we are travelling already, we can
expect neither a tidy scheme nor a neat sequence: do not await either
one here. If you renounce analytical surety and purity and suspend
the security of external guarantees, you will not lose the thread nor
leave the ground. You will not be let loose in some awesome ether or
escape into unstructured free space; nor need you fall into any
yawning abyss of floundering relativism where worlds drift apart, as
if untied and decentred. Involutions, inversions and slovenly, un-
strained analogies need not worry us, and any omissions will readily
present themselves. This is not an apology for lazy scholarship but
a gentle push and reminder in a journey through casual structuration
and the wear and tear of semiotic inflation and symbolic conflation.

In a space of linguistic reflex, memory and evocation, there is no fixed
or innocent substratum and linearity has no privilege.   It is a tense
and perhaps tortuous and perplexing exercise, but you can relax. Change
gear as you will, read in what you like; distraction is all right,
language is behind and ahead of us.   But do not motor too hard, keep
calm.   The slope of common-sense will keep us moving all the while.

It is hoped, nonetheless, that within and through all this very
blurring and sliding some key points will be clear enough - even if only,
in the manner of educated fetish, this piece should seem aptly suggestive
already by a certain density and opacity, swept up in the quiet but
irresistable promise of clearer vision.   Clarity bears its own power
and expansive effectivity, both as rational lucidity and transparent
unity (cf. Jenkins:1977). Indeed marxism and radicalism generally and
conscientization (or 'consciousness-raising') in particular perhaps -
that 'pedagogy of the oppressed' (Freire:1972a) which is one of radica-
lism's most influential and well-dispersed pedagogical forms - can be
seen as a wish for clarity, a struggle for power.   Nonetheless, if
this presentation seems to be rambling without discipline now, to
require more rigorous organisation and taming, if it appears to be
superficial or to rest on ephemeral metaphor if not on some spontaneous
intuition...if it appears uneducated, unsound...then the argument is
already making itself.   In this meandering, we might just note a comment
from Paulo Freire, from that 'architect' (Colonnese L.M.(ed):1971:109)
of a subversive, revolutionary education; it is a comment offered on
his own tightly referenced and succinctly ponderous texts, telling us
that they mark the aspirations of

> ...a petit-bourgeois, of a university professor who, at
> the time of writing, had not yet attained the post (Freire:
> (1973)1976:8; my trans.).

In particular, any seemingly presumptuous aspiration to sophisti-
cation and trenchancy here on the part of a woman would, in this
instance, bear its own peculiarly meet leçon.   In effect, it may be
that the flow of argument throughout will be seen, suitably enough, as
no more perhaps than an evanescent bubble, blown up before you only soon
to burst and leave the hardier to get on with the real tasks ahead; it
may appear, fittingly again, as no more than a commentary unsettled,
resting on the solidity of Dresch's (op.cit.) incisive deconstruction,
at once parasitic on and supportive of its acuity.[2]   Yet, by that very
deconstruction, we may have glimpsed already the difficulties of
asserting primacy, the problem of stacking the world in layers.   The
comments here aim rather to slip into and re-present a current and
murmuring disquiet about 'what it is we are doing' (Dresch:op.cit.:72);
they do not seek valeur in any too easy opposition to either Dresch -
or, indeed, to the macho edifice of marxism - as female to male (even
though such a relation would be a tidy nicety indeed for the lines of
symbolic classification we are both expressly and unwittingly weaving
through here).   Moreover, any such opposition itself would merely
risk ready incorporation, posing willingly as a supportive alterity
with delimited competence - and this piece, this little bit of stuff,
would then, as a matter of course, be tacitly sifted, as the fanciful
from the serious, and slipped into a box of trifles, devoid of mater-
iality, like many an otherness of our rational Schooling.

We need a little mental hop-scotch; we can return to Jonathan
Culler for some helpful pointers in our flexes and arabesques.   We

are well reminded by Culler, in his reading of Derrida, that in any
attempt to be a master-hand at clarification by dismissing any
seemingly 'non-serious uses of language'(1977:3), by deeming them of
secondary concern, let us say, as merely spontaneously poetic, meta-
phorical and symbolic, for example, then we commit them as proper only
to an unrigorous realm that permits play and bemusement. Moreover, we
effectively cast them as obscure, shut them off 'from the clear light of
day, where indeed they have no place'(ibid). They are thereby defined,
he tells us, as lacking 'a direct relation to the light'(ibid); they
immediately appear as 'ungrounded...derivative'(ibid) and, moreover, as
'unguided...in an oblique and problematic relationship to truth...based
...on figures of speech or appeals to emotion'(op.cit:1). In the all
too familiar and now conservative position that Culler has evoked for
us here, we are also sitting comfortably through a radical hermeneutic,
cradled in a revolutionary edifice. And that very familiarity and
comfort perhaps is one significant problem. However, in order to
resist any too easy recourse to complacency and satisfied alignment, we
might take up Culler's reminder again to note that there is no place
outside 'the literary system of philosophical discourse'(ibid) to make
a dismissive judgement of this kind. There is no position without, no
infra- or meta-level, no secure, steadfast or transcendent place to sit
or to stand to effect a dismissive critique; we shall not stride then
to the assumption of a stance more educated than educated or more
radical than radical... Hence, in the educated space where our journey
is housed, '...we can only try to deconstruct it from within'(ibid);
we are going to take seriously its metaphors; we will risk educated
impropriety; we may even dabble a little perhaps in the mischief of
deviance.

Now we know, for example, that the fact/value dialogue that still
rages in social science (see e.g.Lessnoff M.:1974) moves in a familiar
way (cf. Chapman:1977a). It works with a measured strictness and con-
straint; its propriety demands a strained and sieved space, demands
that all untidy edges be cleared away on all sides to bound its Truth and
shear off, distance, and relegate the unreliable. The rich metaphorical
haul that this dialogue reaches into can centre a certain innocent ground,
can protect the serious and the real (or indeed practical, analytical
and properly philosophical discourse) from mere parasitic commentary,
from flights of fancy and speculation, and from any undermining engage-
ment with considerable ideological effectiveness (cf. Culler:op.cit.).
It is no soft and easy task of course; clearance is unending; hard
data are laced with frills in spite of themselves. However, in the way
in which facticity can define itself against an unreliable wildness that
hovers ever on its fringes, we can perceive a certain congruence perhaps
between the rustication of the colonised and of 'value-judgements' that
elided in social anthropology (cf. Hurley:1976 for some examples of this).
This double image, in which the scientistic observer senses a sejunction
and redeems his alter ego cross-culturally, risks, however, framing
those thereby deemed given to Tradition, to the non-scientific, to the
emotional, to the familial ('kinship'), to the extensions of the hearth
and heart, to the spiritual even superstitious, and to the mythical, in
clear and self-validating opposition to the facts and necessities of
reason and material advance (cf. Conlin:1976; Hurley:op.cit., for a
discussion of some of the 'dualist' arguments here, including develop-
mentalism and isolationism.

If, however, in a not dissimilar vein, French blood can now flow
freely, as well we know, where positivism of this kind has congealed; if

also social anthropology - like Man himself - seems aptly to tremble on
the frontier between 'being' and 'non-being' (e.g. Freire (1969)1976:
142-3; Dresch:op.cit.:73; Needham:1970) - a dichotomy which suitably
calques on the well-rehearsed tension of the culture/nature divide (cf.
Crick:1976:53) - then we find ourselves riding a tandem of consenting,
though not simplistically nor securely analogous, dualities. In the
simultaneity of a merry jaunt through town and countryside, for example,
through city and village, industry and community, School and hearth,
classroom and playground, through the stifle of machinery on to fresh air
and soil, from fussy encagement to unfathomed stretches, and back again,
the points would make themselves with an effortless structuration. At
the same time as we might note, by the briefest dint of craft and
subtlety, recurring lines of classification, with certain persuasive,
dove-tailing resemblances and involutions, we are pretentiously skirting
through a fleeting ethnography of anthropological 'part-worlds' and
'half-worlds' (borrowing here the eloquent terms of Chapman:1977b); they
might be organised by the totalising figure of Man, a figure now
urgently summoned by many to life, liberty, and an untiring pursuit of
his completeness (e.g.Pocock:1977; UNESCO:1972 esp.pp.153-9; Freire:
1972a; 1972b; Salazar Bondy:1975; Ladimeji:1972; Calhoun:1976;
Franco C.:1974; Lizarzaburu:1976; see also Bataille(ed):1976; Lister
(ed)1974 etc. etc.; cf. also Foucault(1966)1974 on this pursuit).
Without any fatuous stretch of language, we can quietly read in Man's
parts as we go along, wending through the slips and elisions of such
part-worlds and sliding between the constitutive domains of the individual,
the social and the global, even as the figure is 'dissolved'. Language
has no other medium of dissolution but itself and is its own hermeneutic.
So just let language play all along here and it will have done the work
for us; mine is the task of 'arbitrary' punctuation in this journey, not
heavy road-works.

We are moving on now towards a sweeping compendium at once dense
and fragile, on towards an arbitrary list that may seem contrived but is
the work of spontaneous conspiracy. Conflations will pose themselves
with unsummoned agility as might echoes of what has gone before and
shadows of what might be said. The few selected references that I am
throwing in here - but very few of very many, like the imagistic congru-
ities themselves - will seem clumsy perhaps, but will serve to re-assure
us of our status. You can read the academic 'necessity' of such refer-
ences, and of the examples too, as part of the ethnography: they weight
spontaneity, pin it down. They give solidity and shared ground too to
any vapid superficiality or lonely musing. Parentheses may be involuted,
turned outside in or inside out, but mutually interdependent and irreduc-
ible dualities would seem to defy collapses akin to that of culture into
nature or vice versa. We are safe. Do not let the references jangle or
tie the flow unduly, however, and do not pretend to leave intuition behind
nor try to grasp the whole. You may well fell a compulsive desire to get
on now to the basic point or an impatience for the root of the matter,
if not for some spruce summation, amidst the blurr. But any such
tunnelling impatience or keenness for stark precision might well evoke
its own resistance to narrowness, inevitability and closure within this
space, conjuring up within it some mystery and freedom of manoeuvre
again in 'ethnological fictions' (cf. Chapman:1977:vi) or metaphysical-
metaphorical othernesses of various kinds. We are moving, after all,
in the endless to-ing and fro-ing of an 'unavoidable duality', of an
'empirico-transcendental doublet' (Foucault:(1966)1974: e.g.pp.326-7).
We are following the tale of a figure that is ever a 'novelist of him-
self' (Salazar Bondy:1969:129), through a complex terrain 'always open,

never finally delimited, yet constantly traversed' (Foucault op.cit.:322).
Bear with me now through this rhetorical chorus; if it should get boring,
such after all is the traditional nature of ethnographic facts.   Con-
templative susurrations might gather themselves around any stolidity here,
as the limitations of the 'facts', their fringes marked with joy, and
stark edges softened if not erased.

     We all know now about the shift from function to meaning; even if
not precisely cognisant of the fullness of its promise, we are riding
well the tandem of its appeal.   We recognise the force of its protest
at least.   The ineffability of Man in the positivist idiom marks a well-
dispersed metaphysical concern: a loss, an absence, a neglect, a
reduction. It is the language of alienation (as elsewhere, many a
referential pin would guarantee our text here), of violation (e.g.Freire:
1972a:58; Nielson:1973:19; cf. Derrida(1967)1976:106), of impoverishment
(e.g.Crick:1976:49), of confinement and closure (e.g.Berger:1976:112;
Illich & Verne:1976:216; Salazar Bondy:1975:67;71-2; Foucault:(1961)
1965; 1975; Althusser:1972; Hughes:1977:13; Weber:1924, cited Giddens:
1971:21); it is the language of black boxes, of hollow emptiness (e.g.
Freire:1972a:60; (1972)1974:19), of massification (e.g.Freire:1972b:79),
of death in a mass (e.g. Bauman:1976:55), of the immaterial lost to the
material.   We slip now into an elastic consonance of reports; in this
dialogue we can find aversions voicing the worries of this fatal confine
or protesting the chill of a dominant, heedless monotone, lacking in
texture, richness and harmony. It is no encroachment of the extraneous
nor any futile subjective detour to wave markers before you like this.
We might recall, too, that we are merely skimming here: a deeper weight
and broader expanse can be found in the references cited and elsewhere;
we place an essential largesse in parentheses, at once suggested and
repressed by the meticulous and evident demands of space and time, but
promised.

     And now some reports, where we are to trip lightly (and fantasti-
cally) even as convolutions (and caution) might slow us to a measured
pace, or lull us in rhythmic cadence. We might, for example, read of
a bewailed absence of meaning in the word and the solitary letter
(e.g. Freire:1972a:60; Verne:1976:219), in that 'dead letter', as
Derrida puts it, 'the carrier of death' (Derrida (1967)1976:17). We
hear too of a lack of unity and life in inertia (e.g. Freire(1972)1974:
20; Lizop:1976:209; Taylor:1977), of a lack of a radical 'anthropo-
logical essence' (e.g. Salazar Bondy:1969:21), or of 'sensual and
active being' (e.g. Smart:1976:33), of a loss of free play, free space,
spontaneity and interiority all lost in exteriority, in 'inert object-
ivity', in rationalist causality and formalistic rigidity (e.g. Salazar
Bondy:1975:65; Weber:1924: cited Giddens:1971:235; Illich(1971)1973;
Hodgkin:1976; Merleau-Ponty:1962:54; 55; Berger & Pullberg:1965:204).
We meet too the noting of a lack of vital depth in linearity (e.g.
Bernstein:1971:60-1; Verne:1976; Ardener:1971), of 'unconscious
sources of energy' untapped in surface pedestrianism (e.g. Hampshire:
1973:19); and we learn too of a deadly cold absence of temporality in
space, of the loss of an inner dynamism and richness in an outer world,
and of the very pulse of history grown faint in Structure (e.g.
Godelier(1973)1977:220; Freire:1972a:65; Dresch:1976:71; Ardener:
1973; Hughes:1977). And more. We read too of the neglect of soft
'music' in repressive silence (e.g. Mariátegui(1928)1971:276;
Althusser:1972:260), and of 'joy' repined in the tensionless taken-
for-granted (e.g.Illich:1974:18; Freire:1973:7); we learn of some
untutored, soulful heartbeat barely heard in effete decadence (e.g.
Mariátegui(1928)1971:276), and of an animate, living ideality cast

aside in vulgar materialism (e.g. Mariátegui:op.cit.:287; Friedman:
1974) - like mind in matter, along with the soul and heart neglected
in the privilege of the body or of the intellect abstracted, skin-deep.
And yet more. We have heard tell of the absence of semantics, of a
full-blooded meaning, in syntax, in that 'unsavoury skeleton' (e.g.
Brittan(1972)1974:337; Smart:1976; Illich(1971)1973:74; Crick:1976:
45) as we know too of religion or art sadly disregarded in science
(e.g. Apel:1974:48) and enchantment bewailed in calculating logic
(Weber:1924:cited Giddens:op.cit. loc.cit.). Indeed, provisionality,
speculation, imagination, novelty and creativity are menaced and dulled,
we learn, in the clamps of Schooled Truth, in positivist-empiricism
and in the mundane and the trivial (e.g. Bernstein:1971:57; Holt(1967)
1971; Dresch:1976:67; Freire:1973:7; C. Wright Mills:1970).

We shall keep on moving here for a while. Just take what you
want from all this; celebrate or tie up its looseness; you will cover
it all in your own way.

We well know of the much lamented lack of 'direct experience'
and of the 'immediate', of relevance and heart-felt response, in
opacity and abstraction (e.g. Merleau-Ponty:1962:54; 58). We know
too of the loss of living speech in the linear, printed text, as we
do of the silencing of some 'rural tom-toms' and of the 'discourse of
the masses' in the stony somnambulance of the industrial production-
line (e.g. Verne:1976:216;227). As the pastoral has thus ceded to the
urbane, openness has given way to closure, informality to formality,
flexibility to rigidity, and learning to Schooling (e.g. Lister (ed)
1974; Salazar Bondy:1975; Illich:(1971)1973; Dale, Esland &
MacDonald (eds) 1976). The very 'smile' of a child can be suppressed
by the demands of a harsh world outside, where rigorous 'basic skills'
are necessary properly to cope in an adult reality (e.g. Gray J.:
1978:308). From there comes the lament of some absent 'unbroken text',
of a lost continuity and participation, and of an 'unbroken beginning'
denied in the worrying and 'lifeless' prejudice of the external (e.g.
Merleau-Ponty:1962:54; Ashton Warner(1963)1971:185; Calhoun:1976).
It is as common to hear of the total vacuity of non-cooperative isol-
ation and secular specialisation as to bewail that sense of 'community'
absent in the Modern (e.g. Salazar Bondy:1965:461; 1975:65; Poole:
1975; Tönnies(1887)1955:39; UNESCO:1972:xxxix; cf. Plant:1974).
We have heard tell thus of a hearth lost in 'homelessness' (e.g. Berger:
1976:39), of the personal lost to the impersonal (e.g. Illich:op.cit.:
74; Lizop:1976), and of the private shut off and neglected in the
public (e.g. Franco:1974:543). Stay with me: the sense of loss is still
deeply with us, the absent is elusive (and the not-yet and the unsaid
spur us on with a curious, casual urgency) like some secret, intangible.

We have been reminded of an invisible wealth occluded in the in-
sensitive shutters of an outsider's 'camera lens', warned of a half-
world crudely reduced by an intrusive eye (e.g. Hughes:1977:13; Ladimeji:
op.cit); we have glimpsed a tantalising part-world dimly shrouded but
narrowly caught in time, only to be rudely laid out like a 'dead stretch'
(Ardener:1973) on tangible but untextured record. And yet while we
need a living base, some kind of provision amidst destruction let us say,
we might have all the while, it seems, but a 'fleeting presence'
(Althusser:(1968)1975:27) of absence.

But now, somewhat breathless, we can again find ready inspiration,
as many have done after all the Naturalizations of the unnatural. We

know that the savage barbarian, ever at the edge of Civilisation, trailing Progress from behind and below, has been fondly - if ambivalently - re-evaluated (cf. Chapman:1977a). By this same dexterity, we can quickly step to recall that there have been numerous kindred, resourceful re-evaluations, variously gathering up the East, an inner world, primitives, naturality, children (see e.g. Dearden:1972; Holt: op.cit.), women, the working-class, as well as values (e.g. Pocock:1977), irrationality and emotions (e.g.Kneller:1958:5), spontaneous curiosity (e.g.Hodgkin:1976), myth (e.g. Hughes:1977) and spirituality (e.g. Ladimeji:op.cit.). They are to be re-gathered into the family of Man along with some communal, 'convivial' bonhomie (e.g. Verne:1976), the kindred spirit, those close to the soil, 'bound to nature' and basic (e.g.Freire:1972a:142; cf. Benton:1976). Innocent communities without writing (e.g. Lévi-Strauss:1955; Verne:op.cit.) and the Third World, that child of super-power politics (e.g. Berger:1976), equally swell into the hollow of alienation where some essence is ever risked in the world to be known and recuperated. They might all linger meanwhile out there, elsewhere, as part-worlds: 'worlds apart' (cf. Bernice:1977), with a frontier between, and yet safely (and parenthetically) engulfed in the mature embrace of an all-encompassing world-structure. This fond interest, perforce, homes in also on those Indians 'in whose concept of life', we are told by a firmly committed and still influential radical, 'it is not Reason, but Nature that is interrogated' (Mariátegui(1928)1971:276-7). We sense a fondness for all those domains given a certain tristesse and quietus by the Modern. Gross artificiality, torpid superficiality, mechanical and punctilious routine along with grubby materialism and the boring indignities of 'functional imperatives' (e.g. Berger & Pullberg:1965:208) demand recourse to the unaffected; the grill of myopic rigour demands a half-world of purity uncontaminated, or a fancy unstructured, and looks to all those fanciful elisions of the non-serious, seen now as the 'casualties of Modern life' (Chapman:1977b:146). Variously tossed aside in the cramming of a weighty facticity and external analytic, or functionally dressed in the slips of the ephemeral and the immaterial, they are, not surprisingly, looked to - like an inner world - for inspiration in the fullness of resurgence of Man, of a figure that 'haunts thought from within' (Foucault(1966)1974:327).

But we have had a hint of ambivalence. Whilst its echoes can be sounded at intervals here, no crystal tone can iron it out nor pitch too stark a line anywhere, nor fall back on any singular couplet. Just bear it in mind, weaving it through the loom of our doublet. The ambivalent appeal of the very 'marginality' of all those inspiring realms slides easily into all that might be ambiguous to the anxious imperialism of a dominant male model: both outside and within, possessed of an uncontrollable, if not sinister, power of otherness. It is a power that can sentimentally assuage neurosis and is one that can also be drawn, in the politics of reversal, inversion or revolution, into dangerously close contact - as a challenging negative to an existing positive, as Unreason to Reason, in the manner of the historical dialectic, that comfort of intellectual radicals, a wildness tamed. We can tread more soberly here to note that, in an internal dialogue of educated protest and re-thinking, we can find that the necessary taming of any unfettered, spontaneous naturality (where, let us say, the unintentional must contain the intentional (e.g. Godelier(1973)1977:209; 218), where a wandering curiosity requires instruction after all (e.g. Hodgkin:op.cit.), where phenomenological idealism must find surer footing (e.g. Gintis(1972)1976) and where sedimentations are everywhere

to surface in a controlled manner with the pace of theoretical leverage)
reminds us that any unruled, unguided free space is impossible anyway
(e.g. Culler:1975:251-3; Foucault & Chomsky:1974; Apel:1974). Such
assertions might slide together into a grateful message of cultured
circles fearing the dissipating and dehumanising collapse of culture into
nature or any uncontrollable, bloody revolt alike. Naturality, we recall
too, is always close to base animality and sensuality, and is situated
where a lack of firm and measured constraint unleashes the fringes of
factuality and the petticoats of reality. Exciting, perhaps, but these
are licentious realms for the educated to (re)turn to; dabbling there
is a 'risk' (e.g. Freire:1972a:16) always, dangerous and unsound of
footing perhaps, if not improper and impure. A mere slip and we can
easily find some coherence in this piece. Hold on to these images
whenever we seem to be polluting bounds of acceptability, to be falling
out of the category of 'educated', or hovering dangerously on its
fringes. We might bear in mind, too, that all those marginal realms
then, by their very ambiguity, find their every utterance an already
fitting text for the hermeneutics of suspicion.

Such realms, at the bottom and on the edge, are re-evaluated,
brought and discovered within, to be channelled and tamed; they exist
at once to be celebrated and mourned. As the proper domains of the
political Left, they offer a rich, youthful and radical otherness to
draw upon even as they remain ambiguous as both a construct of diminution
- being all that cultural subtlety and the serious materiality is not -
and yet also a powerfully evocative counter-weight to a maturity itself
grown oppressively stale. Growing up in the world has had its price;
we might jauntily note the afflictions of that self-consciously rigorous
emergence: bear with me again. Emergence has variously sensed
petrification (e.g. Freire:1972a:45; Ardener:1973), fragmentation
(e.g. UNESCO:1972:154; McLuhan & Leonard:(1967)1971:107; Franco C.:
1974:542; Freire:op.cit.:47; Weber:1924: cited Giddens:op.cit.263),
ossification (see e.g. Warnock M.(1965)1972:141), stasis (e.g. Freire:
op.cit.:56), extinction (see e.g. Badcock:1975:81-2), disintegration
(e.g. Salazar Bondy:1969:17; Needham:1970), hypertrophy and atrophy
(e.g. Freire:op.cit.:145; see also e.g. Badcock:op.cit.loc.cit.).
For some all this has indeed meant neurosis (e.g. Lister:1974:9),
weakness (e.g. Salazar Bondy:1965:458), lethargy (e.g. Shaull:1972:9),
if not mutilation, maiming, truncation (e.g. Bauman:1976:75; Vasconi:
1976:73) and, perhaps luckily, anaesthetization (e.g. Freire:1972a:121).
Amidst also exasperation (e.g. Vasconi:1976:73), congealment (e.g.
Taylor:1977) and sclerosis (e.g. Freire:1972b:82; Salazar Bondy:1975:65),
amidst all this disease and sickness (e.g. Dore:1976; Freire:1972a:45;
cf. Derrida:1976(1967):106) and mortal freezing (e.g. Ardener:1973), a
certain frustration (e.g. Salazar Bondy:1969:7), impotence (e.g. Jenkins:
1977:65 of althusserianism) and sterility (e.g. Dresch:1976:64; Salazar
Bondy:op.cit.:12-13) has turned to dreams if not necrophilia (e.g. Freire:
1972a:45-6; 50-1).

Not surprisingly, those who have emerged thus look again to the
'submerged' (Freire:op.cit.:70) for re-generation, for their own 're-
animation' (e.g. Salazar Bondy:1975:66; cf. Foucault:(1966)1974:328)
and satisfaction. Not only does the Fall of the body seem to look to
the direct, the free and uncastrated (cf. Spivak:1976 lxix; lxxxiii)
but it seems that all this rigor mortis, this suspension of life, of

energy, of warm softness, of joy and of the very substance of
humanity itself has been long 'freezing the blood of the thoughtful'
(Chapman:1977a:93) even if they are not bent on revolutionary
endeavour or satisfactory monographs. If Man's 'integrity' is
recovered only 'on the basis of what eludes him' (Foucault:op.cit.:
323), this would seem to apply ever as rhetorical solace becomes
the language of Structure or a sophisticated dialectical restorative.
Concerned as it is, in Merleau-Ponty's terms, with the 'absence of
something which consciousness could bring into its presence' (1962:58),
the broken immediateness of the structural thematic generally is
peculiarly suggestive for those who lament a 'lost plenitude' (Said:
1975:319). It commends itself well to those who would seek the
recovery of a 'complete and original being' (e.g. Salazar Bondy:
1969:13), of some human autonomy sullied, repressed and 'forgotten'
along with its 'roots' (e.g. Salazar Bondy:1965:458-9; 1969:10;
Berger & Pullberg:1965:205). Radicalism has its own appeal. It
can reap the full play of a space where 'the lack of foundation is
basic and nonempirical' and where 'security of presence in the
metaphorical form of ideality arises' (Derrida:1973:7).

We are accustomed then to the search for an anchor for reality
and real meaning which is beneath and other than our actual and
present understanding of ourselves. The sham of this-wordliness
and the fallacies of appearance are ever persuasive notions (e.g.
Ambroggio L.:1971). Moreover, a lingering metaphysic of the material,
as well as the gravitational force of those deemed to be living out a
basic reality, weights the marxist construction. In its solid arch-
itecture, which variously has roots, foundations, functions, as well
as structures, floors and levels, it seems that we are still looking
down and within for a fullness of knowledge (for epistemological and
moral security) as we are to a symbolic fount, to a temporal or
logical primacy, for autonomy, completeness and at-one-ment. The
radical construction, with its ideas at the top and the economic at
bottom, as well as theorists at the head and the working-class below
at the base, draws on its own internality too and has always an
'inner darkness of exclusion' (Althusser(1968)1975:26) - its limi-
tations again 'outside, within' (ibid:27). It covers positive and
negative, as well as truth and error, overt and secret, public and
private along with its implicit morality and explicit science (cf.
Jenkins:1977); it scours the entire complex, penetrating every aspect
of the social, of the globe and of Man, by a facility of metaphorical
meetness, evocation and elision.

As its promise leashes the force of opposing severalities, shorn
of their excesses (e.g. in a rational community, a spiritual body and
material ideality, basic and inner rewards in a meaningful outer world
etc.), it speaks with all the authority of tradition. The Althusserian
notion of a determinant that is not dominant appears thus as a particu-
larly masterful stroke of compromise in an old see-sawing dialogue of
part-worlds that have long chased each other and now seek merger.
However, for all the polished mutation of the construction, the indi-
vidual is dissolved into the social which is dissolved into Structure
which re-emerges as Man, a figure that spills out in the proper ordering
of its parts, into individuals and groups again, in a customary division
of labour which many marxist intellectuals take for granted (cf. Williams
R.: 1978). It is the head that speaks of the base, after all, as if

from the heart. In connection with this figure, too, we find that that transcendental signifier - the Structure (as a 'structure of structures' (Althusser(1968)1975:17)), captures a desire for all absences it represents, as the Other of the Subject; it is an anthropological and anthropomorphic totality, itself an efficacious 'occult' (e.g. Godelier(1973)1977:163), which ever scans the text-analogue for a 'fleeting presence' of its own invisible spectre (cf. Jenkins:op.cit.). Man persists then, to try to see himself, in spite of himself, clearly in the glass - as much an 'impossible dream of plenitude' (Spivak: op.cit.:xvii; xx) as of an 'omnipresent providence' (Glucksmann A.: (1967)1972:77).

Lamenting a loss and variously constructing an Other in its likeness, confirms the politico-economic unfitness of others as it does the shrewd autonomy and wholesomeness of the thoughtful: they are convinced of their own head and heart, of their own soul and body, of both hands, of their stomach and ideas, and of their sexual and politico-economic prowess in the very labour of Man's birth. In dealing with the unfit, by a 'symptomatic reading' (Althusser(1968)1975:28) and with an 'informed gaze' (ibid), the marxist diagnostician is free to perceive and assert his own significant level of causality, his own reality, wherein the 'economic' and the struggle for power pose a telling 'index of effectivity' in themselves. In the meantime however, if the proletariat is made the symbol of alienated man, it is still the otherness of theoretical clarity, of perspicacious, radical Reason. If the masses are deemed so well given to the 'use of metaphor' (e.g. Freire:1972b:47) - to that untrustworthy language - then we know who would claim pervasive, lucid literalness, who would wish to lead some 'dumb experience...to the pure expression of its own meaning' (Husserl:1931:33; cited Merleau-Ponty:1962:xv). Radicalism's all too frequent distrust of language, however, has often led us to suspect that certain blurred signs or some ephemeral ideology might fly off - like the 'beating of wings', like mere 'wind' (Foucault(1969)1974:209), into a nether-ideality, as if arbitrary somehow implied speculative, untrustworthy (...). We sense that they might indeed be flapping up there, 'in the air' (Althusser 1972:247), if they are not pinned down, grounded (referenced), or related by 'structural causality' or whatever, to the prime reality of radicalism's own rectifying and disillusioning register, of which the de-poeticization might again seem as violating as positivist disenchantment (e.g. Ricoeur (1965)1976).

If the joy is to go out of the world again in this way, what then of the laughter? We are coming to that now, weaving around it slowly and subtly. We have long jovially lightened the weight of cultural practices, as we know, by slipping them into the realms we tacitly sift as of 'non-real status' (Ardener:1975b:25). To talk of our own process of thesis production as one long ritualised corpus of Schooling mythology implies a de-bunking. We can laugh. The domains of the serious and the phantasmic (which permits play and bemusement, we recall) are incontrovertible (cf. also Chapman:1977b). Shake up the categories, shake up and strain an edifice to its very structures, and - if it is not to collapse - a joke must fall out. By the same prescription of security and stability, it does not seem so unnatural still to make a long circular journey to 'discover' Indians, poetic and familial, engaged prolifically in ritual, rich in mythology, and to describe their manioc-processing or whatever as one long symbolic rite. Their commentary is lightened and supplies refreshment. Ours

supplies the references, the guarantees and the real. If kinship, ritual, mythology and symbolism etc., the realms of the 'unreal', seem aptly, persistently and overtidily to incorporate other cultures in the language of Reason, then we should not be surprised that this imperiously serious rationality would seem to have engaged in a furious debate with itself in the '60's. That autochthonous flurry of intellectual onanism wore itself out, blithe and blind, 'sterile' (Dresch:1976:64) indeed - and its impotence evocative of our immediate concerns.

Yet marxist _machismo_ is masterfully resistant to 'frustration', as we know; with a virile unfalsifiability, it has its own solution for gaining satisfaction, enjoying all the frills with a rigorously de-flowering earthiness. It will require little effort to appreciate the organising metaphor and grasp the serious ripples here. Marxism is endowed with a prime externality vis-à-vis the subject it thereby dissolves, but it is in the internality of the total formation that it finds the irresistable energy which spurs it on. Enticed by an internality which is at once basic to its own re-production and is yet variously concealed in the mists of intuition, the _macho_ neatly incorporates its female, in the multiplex shadows of metaphorical aptitude. Its generalisations aptly cover the specificity of her competence - but if she is to burst through her undecided chimera and decisively claim the competence and obligations of a male preserve, then she must renounce her claim to a domain set apart, no longer hold the gracious mystique of an unassailable femininity, renounce her uncontrollable powers. We are slipping fast here. At the heart of the matter is the ceding of her inner world, making it public, open to penetration. Radical Reason, after all, we learn, is the very 'driving force' (Salazar Bondy:1975), the very thrust that will drive through the 'veil' in a 'passage opened up' (ibid:49), and indeed 'illuminated', by its very own 'evident reason' (ibid), inhering in the seminal 'reality' it thereby introduces; into this 'fertile' counter-factual (Salazar Bondy:1965:459).

If the imagery here seems to offer us too easy, too fatuous, a journey, then so might marxist politicking: a ticket to ride. As marxism persists, discursively or in khakis, in 'racing...through the jungle' (Dresch:1976:60) or wherever, in its 'scythed chariots' (Ardener:1971:460), hunting its supportive alterity, it finds an already given location of the unreal; it meets other world-structures already promisingly debunked and yielding - if not passionately crying out for invasion, as 'parasitic on the serious' (Culler:1977:3), like a fluttering femininity. Moreover, those deemed muted in their helpless 'culture of silence' (Freire: e.g.1972b:57) are the unwitting prime targets: qui tacet consentere. And, anyway, should they speak out and protest, fickleness can claim no sure and mature credibility, as we know. It seems that those living out a basic reality do so without knowledge of the real - they are mistaken (e.g. Godelier(1973) 1977:164) and suffer from mystification in the illusions of their 'unscientific, spontaneous consciousness' (ibid) - in not knowing themselves, their needs and desires as the theorists know them. Saying no really means yes. For the fanciful and non-serious to presume otherwise, to cross the line without the required passport of educated capital or to cross it alone, can invoke a self-satisfied smirk from those already there on the other side - something akin to the old joke about the woman wearing the trousers, a joke that masterfully tames the unease of what might be castrating mockery in the tension of that divide.

But then, elsewhere, tradition is more explicitly assured and
the lines marking off those part-worlds and half-worlds are maintained
by the firmly discrete proprieties of their relative domains.   We learn
from UNESCO, for example, that that mysterious 'subjectivity', like
some mere slip and whimsy of fancy, must shyly retire to her 'own
particular domain', a domain where spontaneity freely 'flourishes', having
properly left a 'field where it has no place', a field where politico-
economic decisions are made (UNESCO:1972:147).   We have to beware,
however, of any insolent, butch transvestitism: of 'emotions dressed
up as reasons' (ibid).   Radicals can have it all taped in this manner:
they are not fools, they know you and you won't sneak past them in
presumptive disguise.   At that frontier of serious political engage-
ment, all those 'spontaneous impulses' (e.g. Salazar Bondy:1965:459;
Freire:1976(1973):13-17; cf. Hall, Lumley & McLennan:1977, on Gramsci
here too), along with symbolic affectivity and the undirected, unguided
'natural wisdom of the people' (e.g. Franco C.:1974:541) become
'irrational and immediate action' (ibid:542).   Immediacy, directness
and naturality, admirable in their own sphere, become irrational at
the border.   Without the aid of that clear-sighted reader above the
text, helping them properly to cross the line, to become 'progress-
ively rational' (Franco: op.cit.:loc.cit.), they are then dithering in
the mythical and are 'naive' (e.g. Freire:1974:64-5).   Heart in mouth
then, they border the realms of the serious with improper, inadequate,
untamed structuration, if not with irrationality, as if unstructured.
Instruction answers progressivism.   Appealing realms may flourish,
blossom in their beds, but the masses only make history by waking up
to reality; uprooted from lethargy, they must put their feet on the
ground and step out in strict formation, playing their part in the
drama of an 'authorless theatre' (Althusser:(1968)1975:193) but with
script in hand.   They have to learn to 'think structurally' (e.g.
Salazar Bondy:1975:167; Freire:1972b:57-60; Franco:op.cit.:542) -
and the dominant rationality, with its acute totalitarianism and
securely accredited power of reality definition, demands that the world
be structured in a particular way.

If those realms are not to fail then, to flounder in error and
folly, they must slough off all 'mental obstacles' (Salazar Bondy: op.
cit:49), along with the 'superficial, intuitive' (ibid:48) and that
'opacity and simplicity' (ibid) residing in their given leanings to
'emotions...impulses, myths' (ibid).   In some instances, it would seem
that their unreliable world has to be unpacked in the medium of pro-
gressive transparency, peeling off the layers that get in the way.   As
the product of 'space specialists' (Ardener:1975a:12), the marxian
construction is all too easily shifted into the gear of spatialised
time, in spite of warnings to the contrary (e.g. from Freire himself
(1972a:65) and also Dresch:1976: esp.pp.71-2; Jenkins:1976: e.g.p.40).
Those deemed gifted in the metaphorical and the symbolic seem to offer
an already representational language on a vertical axis, like some
literary excrescence, a poetic commentary condensed: the manifest,
laconic float selected from the sure embrace of a reality lurking
somewhere below.   Hence, as so often, we learn that the real is to be
'unveiled' (e.g. Freire:1972a:52; 1972b:42) and, indeed, a 'recuper-
ation' of that 'hidden or mystified reality' (da Veiga Coutinho:1972:9)
would seem to offer that certain presence at last of a literal
substrate; proferring thus a deep and essential base amidst anxious
insecurity, it might seem there is a place to rest now, a hearth, an
abode, a part-world that history has dispersed and restored.

But, of course, they never make it - for epistemological
security, in the 'last instance' (Althusser e.g.1972:247), is an
intellectual conceit, as would be the baldness of the edifice's own
collapse, and finality is majestically elusive - sparing us some
barren and meaningless petrification on that score at least. The
students of politico-economic effectivity might be sped instead on
a course by a radical pedagogy, by 'consciousness-raising', that
revolutionary arousal of intuitive consciousness, which invokes
both an Althusserian science and the energies of phenomenological-
existentialism to offset the inertia of Structure (see Freire:1972a;
1972b). The promise of transparent satisfaction is now unfulfilled
as they strain to hear the 'endless murmur' (Foucault(1966)1974:327)
of the Unconscious so that consciousness can re-appropriate it, so
that they can 'discover' what the pedagogue knows in an endless
theoretical registration and re-registration of the 'concrete'
(Freire:e.g.1972b:36) - in a register that is acutely 'prophetic'
(Ardener:1975a). It seems that the 'muted' (e.g. Freire:1972b:45;47)
might well find an 'authentic voice'(ibid) again only 'within the true'
(cf.Foucault:1971:16) of educated discourse, struggling for power
whilst the 'politico-discursive energy' (Mehlman:1976:15;17) of the
entire construction would be barrenly dissipated without their gravi-
tational force and subordinate dependency. Creatures of impulse are
disciplined, as also nature is de-naturalised, by an epistemological
crusade which has an all powerful language of context, of structure,
of situation; it will not allow that castrating mockery or emasculation
that Godelier fears, for example, as the 'triumph of mythical thinking
over the science which analyses it' (Godelier 1977(1973):220; cf.
pp.209;218). Other knowledges can be shelved with ready stratifi-
cation in a presumptuous hierarchy, in the space of an 'inexhaustible
doublet' (Foucault(1966)1974:327) and in an 'inexhaustible' edifice
(e.g. Freire:(1971)1976:225) which shrewdly points upwards and onwards
and is ever watched over by an 'unsleeping Reason' (Deleuze:1973:113;
cited Jenkins:1977:3). There is now no 'zero-point calm' (Said:1975:
328) at which it can come to rest.

We might well intuit here a subtle ruse of Teaching - as it usurps
the constitutive instability of Reading to sustain its own educated
piety (cf. Mehlman 1976) - or we might detect the towering authoritarian-
ism pointed to by Dresch (op.cit.). Reasoning with nature and the
universal _imaginaire_ for its own good, can have, as Mehlman tells us,
all the qualities of 'farce': it can have 'all the aplomb of the
Russian army protecting the socialist republic of Czechoslovakia from
bourgeois relapses' (Mehlman:op.cit.:18). Certainly, the possible
epistemological bullying and arrogance that might well be entailed
here(as both Berger:1976:137-8 and Jenkins:1977:61 have noted) can
breed its own monstrous absurdities, as we know. Proffering insist-
ently, as it does, the commentary of all possible commentaries, the
dizzy heights of such arrogance might well spin us in those very
'circles of certainty' (e.g. Freire:1972a:18) which radicalism seeks
to uproot. Any 'know-all ideo-logic' (Dresch:1976:68) of an educated
milieu is merely underlined. The strict fuss of any Knowledge too
tidy, too finished, necessarily generates fools (and this we know in
multiple, ironic ways); we seem to move round and round, analytically
drying and tightening the world till it splinters, gathering up the
pieces, injecting new life, and trying still to tidy it virtually to
a stop. We move uneasily, too, between 'capitalism's rapacity' (Jenkins:
op.cit.:182) and Science's violations again. In the same revolution,

you may put on your paradigmatic lenses, for example, only readily to
spot your own syntagms; opposition all too easily becomes conflict
and prophecy resolves itself in action (cf. Ardener:1971;1973;1975a).
In this connection, too, we might note that Paulo Freire, for example,
in his desire to resurrect meaning and to give profound materiality
to the politically ineffective, spontaneous structuration of those he
deems to be oppressed, shifts all too easily between a chomskyan
'deep structure' (e.g. Freire:1972b:32), phenomenological 'background
awareness' (e.g.1972a:87) and a marxist 'infrastructure' (e.g. 1972a:
76). In extremo, however, a sleight of conflation here would give
us the absurdly imperious notion of everyone everywhere being born
with the ineluctable syntax and relevances of our 'economic', thereby
harnessing our worst fears about depth analysis of any kind. Elsewhere
the position is simpler perhaps. Whilst experience may dance with
elusive agility, no-one is performing acrobatics in the sense of
categorically falling head over heels in their rashness or standing
on their heads; nor are they categorically up to their waists in
the economic with their heads in the clouds. That much is clear at
least. Nor yet are they inherently unstable, or psychotically or
childishly unable to distinguish the real from the unreal. We seem
to have an all too ready mythologic and prolific symbolism by which
naively to make this distinction ourselves, as well as to suspect and
to deride, and to destroy, to lament and to chase the ever disappearing.

Now, for all those with an earthy turn of mind, the sexual
implications that I have invoked in some instances, as playing out the
moral space involved, may well have made this presentation ' "feel"
real' - as Ardener long ago noted of the forceful calques of 'positivist-
analogues' and of 'divisions in the most behaviourist reality' alike -
including, he tells us, those 'sex differences, bodily laterality,
geographical directions' (1971:458). The roundabout of certainty has
its axis, its anchor, and reality is guaranteed. Along with this,
the mainstay of dense reference and the back-up of an educated passport
may persuade you of some truth in this piece. Equally, the solidity
of the marxist construction has weighted its favour with a near
bewitching self-verification. We can exploit the richness of the
riddle.

If marxism already feels 'real' with its own earthy persuasions,
then it can ride with Truth and Reality all too easily, without need
of and spurning any sexual calques. We know that its epistemological
heftiness is by no means flighty, but that it nonetheless pretends to
skirt under the wear of the 'conceptual' and the merely 'semantic'
(e.g. Friedman:1974:449), tearing a seemingly flimsy veil it cannot
take seriously, as the fluff of mere words. Yet even if wafting in
this ethereal sphere has felt strangely real, flirting outside and
within, we too may have taken advantage of a fragile realm to bring
a point home, raised a blush and impertinently gone too far, with
permissive, unwarranted licence. (And all the questions are begged:
where do we look for permission, what is the measure of our looseness,
where the providential centre of propriety, and what realms are
retreating shyly or what domains trespassed upon?) It may be that my
own evocative surrender to the temptation of a sexual reading will
radically secure an appeal. It may well sound the death-knell too
of this piece in serious academic debate, and the argument will not
be heard: Malinowski, after all, we have learnt, might well be dis-
missed as a commercial profiteur for his account of the sexual life

of savages (e.g. Leach:(1965)1966). Eliding wilds and fundamentals could be my undoing, dismissed as I thereby dismiss others. No serious, 'educated' journal would take us perhaps, for the elisions at once strengthen and cheapen, if not sully and weaken, our textual validity. And yet, we have met with this before and marxism and indeed structuralism, for instance, would seem to have survived such a domesticating dismissal already. Marvin Harris, for example, in his account of The Rise of Anthropological Theory (1969) detected also a Fall. When social anthropology here began to have fanciful recourse to the non-empirical, to unconscious energies (when the ponderous Anglo-Saxon found himself seduced, aptly enough, by his ever-inspiring alter ego), then Harris warned of 'debauchery', of a 'weakening of the ...fibres', with the venture pronounced moribund as it seemed to evoke 'all manner of musical and sartorial novelty', something to do with our 'mysticism...miniskirts' (Harris:1969:544-5; cited Ardener:1971: 458-9). Licentious realms indeed and altogether non-serious. Positivism can become reductive constraint but culture dissipated in naturality is also a sensuality - as much as is a 'puritanical' (Harris:ibid) externality going overboard in the unfettered plumbing of depths, in the joyful exploration of fringe fancies and of those petticoats of factuality and the real world.

A mere conflational whisper would seem readily and riotously to evoke 'all manner of' wine, women and song here and conjure up for us thus a picture of many a belittled otherness safely and enchantingly glossed and ethnographed. At the same time, kindred loose associations closer to home, improper in the keen and wary realm of Proper structuration, suggest a multiplex resonance of the fatally undermining dissipations of rigour, of serious, educated discourse. Little wonder perhaps that where marxism has raped gleefully in the conviction of proprietorial union, it is now felt necessary to defer full satisfaction (e.g.Derrida:1973:129-160; Spivak:1976:lxvi). If, however, Harris secures propriety and if he finds the possibility of derision in the improper crossing of lines, along several axes, and if he finds danger therein - then the relative purity of this piece is confirmed - dismissed or not. Moreover, if expressly selecting some of the imagistic and symbolic conceits of our own theoretical venture seems to trivialise it here - to lighten it to the frivolous - then such is the nature of poetic justice; therein we might find the very economy of social anthropology and its own curious existential duality.

Meanwhile, in the intellectual ventriloquism of much marxism, a self-contained dialogue of Rationality with its own limitations (cf. Chapman:1977b) and the striking lack of any 'phenomenological rectitude' (Dresch:1976:70) in many instances, has meant that others find their parts spoken for them. With an infusion of blood again from a familiarly lively source, a certain textual-sexual energy of inconsummate union (e.g. Derrida: La Dissémination: 1972:260; see Spivak:op.cit.:lxvi) would indicate that language has played its own tricks and has caught up with the radical pretensions. An impenetrable 'hymen', a multi-implicational veil that will not be pierced, has left them confusedly resentful perhaps, undoing their 'assurance of mastery', and an economy of energy has erupted to deconstruct the construction (e.g.Spivak:op.cit.:xlii; cf. Jenkins:1977). Life and death, along with presence and absence, play against each other in the edifice of radical Man and it has reached its own inertia, frustrated; it has been self-ruptured anyway, castrated and shorn of its roots in

the curious intensity of its own discontinuity (cf. Mehlman:1976).
The convoluted profundity of an absurd riddle would suggest that many
a marxist has structured his own spontaneous structuration into
Proper Structure, has structured himself into inertia, his flow of
energy congealed, and the vital signifié frozen.

And so why then is it 'laughable'? By way of calquing some
final points on to what we might have intuited already, we can turn
again to our point of departure and vainly try to clear a little of
the clutter. We can picture the attempt to control the world via
the intellectuality of traditional marxism as the '...Jikany Nuer
sacrificing in front of advancing smallpox' - a juxtaposition that
Dresch(1976:55) has posed for us. If we find ourselves smiling, as
well we might, then the bemusement would seem to flow in good measure
and with peculiar imperativeness, not merely from the permissive
celebration of order, laughing out the untidiness of the mix, but
from the force lying in the oppositional lines of the domains in which
the activities related to sacrifice and to smallpox, respectively, are
covered in our world - in the divide of our own religion and science
and their unlaboured conflations. We have, in that picture of the
Nuer, an evocation then of a fanciful claim to competence in a weighted
realm where it has no place, of the sheer impotence of a will to power
and mastery through an activity that has its own domain of competence -
properly delimited, elsewhere and intruding with no little degree of
impertinence. Religiosity, the immaterial, vainly crosses a maginot
line and the dust settles in a chuckle. Crossing back again, it is not
surprising perhaps that we should smile somewhat quizzically at Science's
laboured quest for a heavy, material infrastructure in the 'religious'
and the 'mythical' etc. - in those domains lightly set apart anyway
only for ready capture. But there is more than that. We have a
picture too from Dresch (op.cit.) of an inner world of the academic
cloister - of the ivory tower where the Left flourishes, devoid of
panopticon influence, locked in its own abstractions - attempting to
placate and dominate an external world of economic recession and
political strife by throwing out books, words, by chucking impotent
ephemera on to the blaze outside with all the presumptive conviction
of masterful materiality.

And yet more, and finally here. If we can find an inappro-
priateness and inadequacy in the structural-functionalists in terms
of their naive and superficial concerns (e.g. Crick:1976:101), just
as we have long sifted the superficial and naive from the profundities
of Reason - then it is natural also to find an impertinent inadequacy
in those who would blindly carry their own naive, immediate reality -
their everyday, spontaneous rationality with its pressing 'necessity' -
into the wider world of political effectivity and grandiose theor-
etical abstraction outside and beyond, across the lines. This is
what marxists have done, by pretentiously sophisticated tropes, with
their generalised, organising ontology of the 'economic' (cf. Dresch:
op.cit.:70). If it is a measure of reason to take this metaphor seriously
at home (cf.ibid.:60), it may well be a naive, improper and intrusive
impertinence to extend it thus outside, in disguise, hastily clad in the
remnants of its neighbouring domains, as if others are fools. '...kinship
is really "economics" (but the locals don't realise it?)...'(ibid:59).

If we have laughed at all then, we have at least recognised what
Merleau-Ponty has so aptly termed the 'presumption on reason's part'
(1962:63; orig.emph.).

Maryon McDonald.

NOTES

1. I should point out here that since one field of particular interest to me has been that of current educational re-thinking and its more or less 'radical' proponents, then many of the authors cited in this text are drawn from a family of the thoughtful concerned with that area. Augusto Salazar Bondy, José Carlos Mariátegui, Alfonso Lizarzaburu and Carlos Franco, for example, are all Peruvian writers who share this concern in various forms. Paulo Freire is Brazilian by birth and now based in Geneva; Vasconi is also Latin American and Illich figures here too as does his French colleague, Etienne Verne. John Holt, Ian Lister and others variously associated with the 'de-schooling' ethos are also drawn upon as is Ashton-Warner, a fore-runner in some respects of Freire's pedagogical theory. Others such as Althusser, Godelier, Friedman, Smart and Merleau-Ponty, for example, are perhaps better known educated radicals, all of whom in various ways have directly and indirectly influenced and re-presented a radical re-thinking of education and 'educated' in a marxian framework. It will be evident that the organising terms of 'radical' and 'educated' embrace a loose field here but their juxtaposition suggests a certain irony and can effect a tight discursive closure with considerable influence from above. From there, the internal dialogue of disciplined Propriety then looks down upon the untutored realms it has at heart and surveys them for controlled surfacing to its own lofty heights, leading them properly up and out into the wide world of Reality. Certain tensions and axes of the relations involved here are played upon in this paper.

2. Whilst it seems, in a sense, to fall back into certain niceties I might wish to avoid, it is necessary, if only as a point of good manners, to note that this piece does indeed owe a direct and grateful debt to the work of Dresch(1976), Jenkins(1977), Chapman (1977a,1977b), Ardener(1971,1973,1975a,1975b) and Needham(e.g.1973), for example. That they are all male, and seemingly given to analytical trenchancy, is significant for this commentary - but does not, I hope, render it merely derivative, nor naively dependent, nor aptly given to any fickle equivocation or muddled contrariness.

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REALITY AND REPRESENTATION

It seems that anthropological structuralism is gaining itself a rather casual bad reputation, sullied as it is by the over-weening ambition of Lévi-Strauss's cosmic objectivity, the apparently mentalistic aridities of symbolic classification, and the surface opacity of much structuralist and post-structuralist theory. In the previous issue of this journal Shelton argues that Saussurean structuralism produces an 'intellectual theory which only emphasises the relations between signs and reduces their practical function to that of communication or knowledge' (1977:171). Classificatory systems are 'divorced from their contextual reality' (ibid:172), and contradiction is ignored 'in favour of ideal abstraction' (ibid:172).

These remarks are made in review of Bourdieu, who himself says that:

> The language of rules and models, which seems tolerable
> when applied to "alien" practices, ceases to convince as
> soon as one considers the practical mastery of the
> symbolism of social interaction -- tact, dexterity, or
> savoir-faire -- presupposed by the most everyday games of
> sociability and accompanied by the application of a
> spontaneous semiology, i.e. a mass of precepts, formulae,
> and codified cues (1977:10).

Bourdieu claims to be rooting out an objectivist structuralism which locks social life into 'reified, reifying models' (ibid). He emphatically asserts, however, that his work 'is not a new form of sacrificial offering to the mysteries of subjectivity' (ibid:4). We can, I think, sympathise with his project, while suspecting that his design, at least in this aspect of its ambition, proceeds little further than its annunciation. He says:

> The science of practice has to construct the principle
> which makes it possible to account for all the cases
> observed, and only those, without forgetting that this
> construction, and the generative operation of which it
> is the basis, are only the theoretical equivalent of
> the practical scheme which enables every correctly trained
> agent to produce all the practices and judgements of
> honour called for by the challenges of existence (ibid:11).

We begin to suspect, perhaps, that to 'escape from the ritual either/or choice between objectivism and subjectivism in which the social sciences have so far allowed themselves to be trapped' (ibid:4) requires more than a determination to effect that escape, coupled with resolute assertions of its imminent achievement.

We can leave this quasi-Marxist critique for the moment, and return to the most recent issue of JASO, where Scobey, speaking of Lévi-Strauss's structuralist project, says:

> What is odious ...is not structuralism per se or the notion
> of depth analysis, but rather the claim to a structuralist
> science (1977:150).

We are told that: 'The figure of the scientist is not sufficient response' (ibid:148), but rather the anthropologist must acknowledge 'his personal place in the events that led to his crisis' (ibid).

Going back a little further, we find ourselves informed that 'both structuralism and the search for universals are basically anti-semantic concerns' (Chapman 1977:59). This was said in review of Crick's book (1976), prefacing a statement of his to the effect that 'structuralism opts for syntax rather than semantics' (1976:45). Crick himself, while concerned to show that functionalism 'left out this most basic human characteristic of humanity' (Pocock 1977:596), had similar criticisms to make of much structuralist endeavour.

It is not my purpose here to contest these assertions. They are all, indeed, each in its own way, incontestable. Nor do I intend to argue that they are all in some sense representative of a unified critique. This is obviously far from true, with a wealth of fundamentally cross-grained avenues of argument opened up. The marxist statements and those from a soi-distant semantic anthropology in particular pose as mutually opaque. My only purpose in starting with these kinds of criticism of structuralism is to draw attention to how familiar they are. We are exhorted to seek 'context' and renounce 'abstraction', to forsake 'rules and models' in favour of the 'practical', 'everyday', 'spontaneous semiology' conjured up by the 'challenges of existence'. We are asked to put back 'humanity', reinstate 'meaning', and acknowledge our 'personal place'. Structuralism is variously accused of denying history, totality, change, life, meaning, and of concealing beneath its claims an intellectual or ideological substructure (whether this is dubbed 'scientist', 'objectivist', 'bourgeois' or whatever) which stands between us and our object of study, and denies us any adequate formulation of our problems.

The familiarity of this may just be a measure of my advancing age. Nevertheless I think it would be fair to say that the faults that we are now finding in structuralism are precisely the faults that were being found in functionalism ten and twenty years ago, faults that structuralism in some way or another promised to repair.

What has happened? The same old debate is going on, and all our carefully constructed plans for its dissolution have merely been subsumed by it, chewed for flavour and tossed aside.

Structuralism brought with itself an appeal, an appeal to which mainstream British social anthropology responded with considerable enthusiasm, to study the social ephemera to which functionalism had assigned only a derivative, secondary and dependent role. We can quote from one of the definitive theorists:

> We shall be able to distinguish between instrumental
> imperatives - arising out of such types of activity
> as economic, normative, educational and political -
> and integrative imperatives. Here we shall list
> knowledge, religion, and magic. Artistic and
> recreational activities we shall be able to relate directly
> to certain physiological characteristics of the human
> organism,... (Malinowski 1944:38).

The exotica of myth, ritual and symbolism (to employ a triad that is now built into course descriptions and publishers' lists), rather than being merely expressive, integrative and validatory of the more solid social phenomena, became, for structuralism, objects of study in their own right.

It was with the investigation into myth, ritual and symbolism -- that exotic
triad of expressive activities -- that structuralism made and held its appeal.
We can think of the Mythologiques, Purity and Danger, Totemism,
The Savage Mind, Right and Left, and so on. These works, that belong to a
self-consciously structuralist tradition, often effect within themselves
a conventional division of labour wherein they leave to others the examination
of economics, politics, and social structure. Much of the implicit intellectual
ideology that made apt this division of functions between the 'symbolic'
anthropologist and his empiricist partner, between those who studied rep-
resentations and those who studied underlying realities, can be found in the
alliance/descent debate, or in debate about just what a symbol was, and what
a symbolic equation was supposed to be doing. It is here, where charges of
'idealism' flourished, that we can locate the source of the division of
labour which I am discussing. Inappropriate as these charges often were,
it must be said that structuralism did not do much, in its practice, to
refute them, or to deny the conventional coherence of this division of labour,
wherein structuralism took to itself the 'classificatory ephemera', and left
to others the 'material referent'.

It seems clear that structuralism has all along run the risk of being the
idealist department of social anthropology, the top floor where clouds
floated past the windows. This is apt, not just within criticisms levelled
at structuralism by 'sceptics of a more materialist persuasion' (Ovesen 1977:151)
that it was 'an essentially idealist or mentalist undertaking' (ibid), but
by structuralist practice itself, which often, by choice of subject, accepted
the justice of such criticism and rendered it apt.

I think, therefore, that to consider structuralism to have consisted
only in its scientific ambitions is, while not misplaced criticism, at least
misrepresentative of how structuralism slotted itself into a predominantly
empirical pre-existing tradition. It also obscures the nature of the appeal
that structuralism made. British anthropologists in the fifties and sixties
had their own scientistic, objectivist, abstracted system of context-divorced
models and would not willingly have espoused another that presented itself
as such. It was as a release from this sterility, into the free air of
meaning, that structuralism came. It is of some ethnographic interest here
that when I began studying anthropology, in 1970, my experience of structuralism
was as of some exciting if unfulfilled promise, entirely in tune with all the
other exciting if unfulfilled promises that the late sixties held. A thorough-
going relativism became a theoretical vehicle for liberalism, and the autonomy
of alien classificatory structures provided a location for this relativity.
Structuralism in its 'fundamental structures' guise was obviously a potential
threat to this. Arguments like the Berlin and Kay hypothesis (1969), that
colour categories were determined by a structural universality rather than
being subject only to the relativistic self-determination of their own
arbitrary classificatory structure, were ill-received where relativism had
become an attitude of mind. Roy Willis, in a seminar given in Oxford in
1977, told how personal a threat such determinisms were to his view of the
world -- determinisms that did, as it were, make him fear for the freedom
of man. Just as Sartre retreated in horror from the fundamental structures

of Lévi-Strauss, so did a relativism derived from the inalienable autonomy of symbolic structures retreat before the threat of universals, fundamentals and biologisms.

There are clearly two very important threads running through structuralism -- one, the Lévi-Straussian fundamental structures of the human mind, the cosmic objectivity, and the other, the exultation in the mutual opacity of self-determining conceptual systems. These can of course be integrated in various ways and at various levels, but they are both unquestionably there, and have, I think, rather different implications for determining the kind of public reaction that we might expect structuralism to get. Both strands are present in Crick's book, although the emphasis is essentially on meaning, on conceptual structures, on semantic exploration, on humanity as humanity, on man as the meaning-maker and so on. Crick lets slip the occasional, even slightly thoughtless, appeal to deep structures that are, as it were, syntactical rather than semantic. He expresses, for example, the desire to:

> sink beneath cultural terms which are not safely
> used in anthropology to an analytical level of
> sufficient depth that satisfactory commensurability
> between cultures can be obtained (1976:113).

This strongly evokes the Lévi-Straussian ambition of an objectively secure intellectual isomerism before which cultural autonomy will dissolve. It should be said in fairness to Crick that this is exceptional in a work otherwise devoted to the problems in the analysis of meaning that a quasi-positivist, quasi-behaviourist social science ignored and engendered. There are various rather complicated reasons why these two facets of structuralism should be capable of disguising themselves as a unity, and I will limit myself here to observing that behaviourism is not empiricism is not crude ethnocentrism is not bone-headedness, but that all these, attributed to a previous intellectual order, were read into one another to create a unity, such that it was possible to line up oppositions like behaviour to ideas, and surface reality to grammatical depth, to attribute a virtue to the study of the second of each pair, and to proceed into a meaning that was, at the same time, a profundity beyond the reach of ordinary man.

I think that the vision of a structuralist science exposing the crystalline clarity of inalienable and eternal structures of the mind is not very important to Crick, is not very important to understanding the enthusiasm that structuralism generated in British social anthropology, and is not even very important to a perfectly rewarding reading of Lévi-Strauss, or destructive of what we choose to find valuable in his work. Structuralism came on the scene as a relief from the bogus positivisms of conventional social science, positivisms that treated the expressive aspects of life as ephemera. Structuralism provided a way of dealing with these phenomena that, if still reductive, was reductive to an essentially fictional, and thus theoretically unconstraining, space. Symbolism could now evoke its clarity from within itself, or from the mind, which turned out to be more or less the same thing, when the unconscious became structured like a language. The creative spirit was freed from the necessity, more or less crudely conceived, that its productions should contribute to the support and validation of the social structure, a social structure that was itself external, constraining, and empirically realisable.

The point can perhaps be summed up by the use of a now well-worn phrase
-- the shift from function to meaning can very easily be read as the shift
from functionalism to structuralism. This is in many ways a serious misrep-
resentation, but there is certainly no other flamboyant -ism that we can
attach to the concern with meaning, and the manifold misreadings that allow
the conflation of structure with meaning, and permit of their co-existence
with other more positivist modes, are still very much with us. Briefly,
I think that structuralism has been allowed its place in the social sciences
in contract with a theory of symbolism which it ought thoroughly to undermine,
but which has nevertheless subsumed it, and restricted it. I will not elaborate
this at the moment, but will proceed to give some idea of the nature of
that 'pre-structuralist' theory of symbolism, wherein symbolism becomes a
specialist field, and semantic anthropology a slightly exotic idealist
dabbling.

I will go to a Mediterraneanist for my first example to illustrate this
problem, partly because the retreat into the 'symbolic' is a disease particularly
endemic in European anthropology at the moment, and partly because I am
familiar with the material. I have no doubt that we could find the same
argument resounding in a traditional manner throughout contemporary anthropology.
Peter Loizos, speaking of politics in a Greek Cypriot village, says that:

> Rules for control do not always work, the existence
> of norms does not prevent deviation. Furthermore,
> they are not free-floating -- the anthropologist
> must show cause why such rules exist (Loizos 1975:291).

This is familiar enough -- rules exist because reality causes them; reality
can nevertheless, in its irreverent and mischievous way, defy the rule by
deviating from it, and so on. We are asked:

> So if a village has an operating and efficient norm which
> states that neither conflict should be restrained, this
> norm needs a two part expl nation: why did it emerge, and why
> does it persist? (ibid:292).

This is a world we can all recognise, if without pleasure. Norms and deviation,
rules and reality, and their like, confront one another as the idealist
to the realist, as abstraction to historical fact. Am I alone, I wonder, in
finding in the word 'norm' a drug to make my heart sink? Within this trad-
itional epistemology Loizos then remarks in what is something of a _non sequitur_
within an otherwise perfectly well-ordered argument:

> Here it is worth remarking that certain fashionable
> structuralist approaches to linguistic categories appear to
> run the risk of setting language free of any important social
> action, in such a way that social change would be impossible
> to pin down. The definition of politics used by the villagers

is required by critical social processes, and we can
predict that if social relations change, the category
'politics' will change too; but the categories cannot
be understood without prior analysis of social
relations (ibid:294).

To this upsurge of feeling he appends a note, thus:

Ardener (1971) has done his best to drive a wedge between
what he insists are two incompatible approaches to
analysis; but his short sighted syntagmatic functionalist
is an obvious straw man, and this seriously undermines
the rest of his argument. By blowing the trumpet too
loud, he risks deafening his listeners, or at least
driving them away (ibid:301).

I do not make this last quotation in order to examine the arguments in detail,
but in order to draw attention to the arbitrary and largely misdirected
vehemence of the attack. The work contains no other theoretical considera-
tions of this order, no other concessions to the demands of a polemic that
nevertheless obviously agitates the soul; it is otherwise a pleasant,
interesting and untroubled analysis.

The point that I wish to make, a point indeed without any great novelty,
is that to phrase a critique of the 'study of categories', as Loizos would
have it, in this way, is thoroughly to misunderstand its nature. It is
important to note, however, that through 'fashionable structuralist approaches'
of the study of 'categories' we are going to risk losing the linguistic forms
altogether, as the categories float heavenwards, loosed from reality and
social action, and as social change, which has presumably followed the
categories into the aether, becomes impossible to pin down. The category,
the representation, the expression, the rule, the ideal, and the unreal, are
not to be understood without a prior knowledge, and I would emphasise prior
knowledge, of social relations, village reality, the rumbusticus real life
with its 'deviation from the norm' -- without a prior knowledge of all that
is immediately accessible and complete in itself, open to the discerning
gaze. Just how a social relation can be apprehended other than through some
knowledge, limited or otherwise, of the system of categories by which it is
constituted, just how it can be 'expressed' to the anthropologist (I employ
the same idiom) or expressed to his reading public, without this idealist
pollutant, we are not told. And supposing that we are not told because there
is no telling, then what priority can we possibly give to the 'social relation'
in such a situation? And the answer must be -- none.

Staying with Mediterranean anthropology for the moment, we can take
another example of what is essentially the same confusion from Juliet du
Boulay's Greek Mountain Village. She renders this confusion as a historicist
tragedy for all Western society rather than as a method for gathering a sound
ethnography -- nevertheless the idea is basically the same. She describes
an isolated community where the old ways, religion and custom are still
maintained, and she speaks of its gradual absorption into the larger society
of modern Greece as the:

...change from traditional and symbolic thinking to
modern and secular thinking (1974: 6).

It is a conventional rhetoric that we can readily recognise that lines up
the opposition of traditional to modern with the oppositions of the symbolic
to the literal and of the sacred to the secular. This in itself invokes a
host of misrepresentations, in my opinion, but it is recognisable. Du Boulay
goes a step further, however, and collapses the second pair of dualities into
one. The term literal is dropped from the pair symbolic/literal, and the
term sacred from the pair sacred/secular, and the two remaining terms are
brought together as an opposition of the symbolic to the secular. This
opposition is then rendered historical flesh, and the whole of the history
of Western thought is generalised as the decline of symbolic mystery into a
creeping and meaningless secularity. It might seem unfair to take so
seriously what is, after all, a rather casual usage -- usage that does not,
for example, see itself as a contribution to a theoretical debate on the
nature of symbolism as such. It is this casual ease, however, that is of
interest.

I have drawn the implication that the change from symbolic to secular
thinking necessarily invokes a loss of meaning. If this seems to be reading
in too much, let me quote du Boulay once more. She says of her Greek
mountain village that:

> ...whatever may have been its limitations and its defects,
> there is no doubt that when it was integrated to a living
> tradition it gave to life both dignity and meaning --
> qualities which are conspicuously lacking in the type of
> society that threatens to succeed it (ibid:258).

We do, after all, know what she means, and the sentiment is one that it is
not difficult to sympathise with. Nevertheless I think that most of us would
agree that the opposition of the symbolic to the secular as of meaning to
non-meaning is not properly exhaustive or divisive of any society or any
historical development. We can all, for example, reasonably allow that
language, say, is in some sense 'symbolic', but that it is still 'secular',
and at the same time avoids meaninglessness. Nevertheless, this deft
elision of epistemological dualities, which I have illustrated through du
Boulay's otherwise excellent ethnography, is extraordinarily common. It is,
indeed, constitutive of the field of folklore studies, and of many aspects
of Celtic studies. This system of overtly analytical dualities pervades
also, in more and less subtle ways, the works of many of those whom we might
see as founding fathers (e.g. Arnold, Renan, Tönnies, Weber, Nutt, Lang,
Durkheim, Frazer, Tylor, Eliade, Lévy-Bruhl, and so on). Throughout their
works, and throughout Celtic studies and Folklore studies, the peasant, the
savage, the traditional, the artistic, the folk, and the community are
credited with a metaphorical competence which puts their statements into
a realm where they gain a rich wealth of mystery and meaning missing for
those who, as it were, perceive the world direct: we poor benighted moderns,
in a secular world that is literal, non-symbolic, immediately accessible --
meaningless. I have not space to enlarge upon the extraordinary ability
that this kind of thinking has to order the world around it and conjure up
its own validations. If we look to the radical symbolism contained in
McDonald's article elsewhere in his journal (see M. McDonald 1978), it is
perhaps no surprise that the more florid produc̈tions of Scottish Nationalist
propaganda invoke such concerns, measuring a distance from the empiricist
Anglo-Saxon to invoke a community redolent with meaning.

We can also profitably remember the historical depth which this kind
of thinking has in the consideration of other peoples, times, and places --
thinking wherein language in its infancy becomes figurative, metaphorical,
deriving from the movement of the passions, and only in its maturity becomes
a function of the rational intellect, a reliable system of nomenclature.
Adam Ferguson, in An Essay on the History of Civil Society, said of the
savage:

> Whether at first obliged by the mere defects of
> his tongue, and the scantiness of proper expressions, or
> seduced by a pleasure of the fancy in stating the analogy
> of its objects, he clothes every conception in image and
> metaphor (1767:264).

The savage:

> ... delivers the emotions of the heart, in words suggested
> by the heart, for he knows no other (ibid:266).

Dr. Hugh Blair, who was instrumental in putting the muse of the Scottish
Highlander before the eye of educated Europe, in the form of Macpherson's
Ossian, said of the people who inhabited 'those times which we call
barbarous' (1765:4) that:

> Prone to exaggerate, they describe every thing in the
> strongest colours; which of course renders their speech
> picturesque and figurative. Figurative language owes
> its rise chiefly to two causes; to the want of proper
> names for objects, and to the influence of imagination
> and passion over the forms of expression (ibid).

He says further that:

> As the world advances, the understanding gains ground
> upon the imagination; the understanding is more
> exercised; the imagination less (ibid:5).

And from this we must conclude, as does du Boulay, that metaphor and figurative
speech -- meaning -- will slip away from us into the past, if they do not
elude us, as Loizos warns, by floating away into the sky.

The point, I hope, is beginning to be made, that there is a depth of
historical and conventional coherence to an epistemology which sees the
symbolic as: the religious, the passionate, the imaginative, the primitive,
the expressive, the figurative, the representative, the metaphorical, the
classificatory, the analogue, the image, the ritual, the mythical. This
range of concepts is opposed to and thus defined by: literality, knowledge,
understanding, scientific awareness, reality, social structure, the self-
evident, the secular, the modern, language as nomenclature, and so on.
Each one of these conjures up its own opposition, and they are not in any
sense a system of simply congruent dualities, referring as they variously do
to modes of enquiry, modes of expression, historicist necessities, professional
specialisations, and so on. It may, indeed, seem strained to link, say, the
metaphorical and the primitive in this way, and oppose them to logic and
modernity. We might say, for example, that 'metaphorical' was a technical
term concerning a vertical axis of substitution in linguistic analysis, defined

in opposition to the horizontal metonymic axis of linearity and contiguity, and that it had nothing to do with ways of life. The spatial metaphors of linguistic analysis are thoroughly incorporated, however, in the following assessment of Gaelic life by J.L. Campbell, one of the foremost of Scottish Gaelic scholars:

> The consciousness of the Gaelic mind may be described as
> possessing historic continuity and religious sense; it
> may be said to exist in a vertical plane. The consciousness
> of the Western world, on the other hand, may be said to
> exist in a horizontal plane, possessing breadth and extent,
> dominated by scientific materialism and a concern with
> purely contemporary happenings (Campbell 1968:7).

The linearity of logic and the modern mind, and the metaphorical nature of the folk tradition, are expressed by Sanderson, who says of the 'fairy faith' in Gaelic Scotland that:

> ...its major function is to afford an explanation of the
> inexplicable and the unknown, for those whose modes of
> thought operate more by patterns of association than by
> logic and the verifiable sequence of cause and effect
> (Sanderson 1976:46).

It is within the pervasive fabric of this system of epistemological dualities, within which the symbolic has its conventional place, that we articulate problems of ethnocentricity, of objectivity versus subjectivity, of rationality, of facts and values, and other social-science chestnuts of this order. It is in our interest, therefore, to examine the space in which these arguments exist, not perhaps to secure any theoretical advance, but merely to prevent ourselves from making endless journeys whose only destination is the starting point for the journey back.

We can perhaps go back to the ambiguities that I noted in the possible interpretation of the structuralist project, and invoke Saussure in order to link this to the question of the nature of the symbolic.

The concept of _la langue_, a system in which signs acquire their value by their location in a system of opposition, a system of relations, can be variously subjected to moral judgement. For Bourdieu it becomes a static trap, where meaning is divorced from the domestic comfort of its context, and cruelly rendered subject to an alien and intellectualist objectivity. The system defined by its own internal structure becomes, as such, necessarily incapable of change and thus inadequate to an essentially human creation. This is certainly one well established way of looking at it. The stasis and restorative equilibrium of a system defined by the opposition of its parts was, of course, central to the functionalist conception of the necessary stability of a society, with its inevitable 'integration'. On the other hand, there is no necessary reason to equate the structure of a system defined by the opposition of its parts with stability, as anyone who has built a card house must know. For those who seized on the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign, its divorce at last from the tiresome constraints of the real world, _la langue_ became a shimmering ideality, where reality suffered no violation but the ever-changing, ever-open, ever-exuberant motion of its own ever-indefinite self-definition.

Which of these pictures seems immediately the more obvious is a matter, perhaps, for individual taste. It is clear, however, that the pictures are mutually opposed in interesting ways. In particular, the one will put structuralism back among the heartless and reductive sciences, along with mentalism, intellectualism, and the fundamental structures of the human mind, and the other will preserve la langue for us as a guardian of the inalienable human spirit, of the world in which myth, ritual, and symbolism will be answerable only to themselves. The arbitrariness of the linguistic sign becomes, by the same token, both its divorce from a rich meaningful world into scholastic abstraction, and conversely its blessed release from the crudities of empiricism.

Both of these interpretations, however, carve out their security within a traditional metaphysical space -- a space that the object of their inter-pretation, in this case, was introduced to reconstruct. And I would be disposed to argue that the reason that we now seem to be having the same debate with structuralism that first established the claims to attention of structuralism vis-a-vis functionalism is that the ideology of representation, the 'metaphysics of presence' (Derrida 1976:49), the theory of symbolism which Saussure wished to deny, is still present at all levels in our intellectual discourse. Having spent our holidays pursuing with relief our studies in myth, ritual and symbolism, we have begun to feel the need of an access of hard reality -- back to school and the three R's. Having studied for a time the representation, the ideology, the symbolic, the false-consciousness, the metaphorical, we can return to the ground, the literal, and the self-evident. Hence, I think, the persistent appeal of a Marxist anthropology, to put back the stern and responsible reality that was purged, along with functionalist anthropology, during the cultural revolution. It is not, I think, defence against this to argue that Marxism is aiming to grasp the reality which is precisely not self-evident -- the dualisms of fact and fancy, and the inadequacies of a theory of symbolism as representa-tion, are fully present in any possible version of a theory which invokes the science/ideology couple, or the infrastructure/superstructure relation. Having given our minds to the study of 'categories', we are urged as well to consider their underlying 'social relations'.

I think that this misguided notion of what 'symbolism' is has allowed us to locate in the structuralist project all the sentiments appropriate to an artistic enterprise in the pursuit of the ineffable. Equally, beneath this structuralist ideality, we have contrived to retain our grip on the 'real' world. Symbolic anthropology becomes thereby a sub-field of anthropological endeavour, and the sumbolic becomes a gloss of the exotic that otherwise mundane reality is permitted to clothe itself with on special occasions. Journals devoted to the symbolic flourish, courses are taught, Roland Barthes commits us to the study of trivia. Europeanists, if they cannot find the wholesome wholeness of a peasant community to englobe, leave the study of the 'real', 'serious' aspects of their subject societies to the economist, the political scientist, the sociologist, and take as their sphere of competence the expressive ephemera that nobody else wants. We study customs, ideologies, systems of representation, conceptual systems, attitudes, and so forth, leaving the trenchant and the tangible to others. Facts and values, action and attitudes, behaviour and norms, history and myth, actual and ideal and all their homologues march through our work, spawning the problems whose answer they become. Those who should have helped us sometimes fail to do so. Lévi-Strauss tells us that:

> I do not at all mean to suggest that ideological
> transformations gave rise to social ones. Only the
> reverse is in fact true. Men's conception of the
> relation between nature and culture is a function of
> modifications of their own social relations...We are
> ...merely studying the shadows on the wall of the cave
> without forgetting that it is only the attention we
> give them which lends them a semblance of reality
> (1966:117).

And Leach, doubtless wearing his functionalist hat, tells us that:

> The student of social structure must never forget
> that the constraints of economics are prior to the
> constraints of morality and law (1961:9).

We can go back to the Saussurean sign, and to the system of signs wherein meaning is a function of elements in their mutual opposition rather than being a quality of the signs 'in themselves'. I have tried to give some idea of the potential for ambiguity contained in the 'now fashionable anthropological view that elements in the system define themselves in opposition to all other elements in the system' (E. Ardener 1971:xxxvi): it can become at once the essential ingredient of Derrida's arch and winsome 'differance', and of Bourdieu's tyrannical 'objectivism'. We can give these possibilities another expression by examining the internal architecture of Saussure's sign, its signifier and signified. Saussure's contribution:

> ... was to stress that language is not a simple labelling
> device...:as if there were only objects in the real world
> waiting to be given 'names'. He did this by talking of a
> linguistic sign as consisting of two components: the
> 'signifier' and the 'signified'. Saussure's 'signified'
> is, however, not reality but a 'concept' (ibid:xxxiii).

Reality, then, at least for the purposes of language, has been thoroughly drawn into the sign: the world of signs is one whose relation to the 'real' world is in a vital sense 'arbitrary'. The only 'significant' reality resides in the sign. The only world is that of the level of signification, already and inalienably incorporated in a system without which it is nothing.

This is readily interpretable as a philosophical terror, a dangerous relativism that 'sets language free of any important social action', an idealist anarchism not to be tolerated. Saussure was himself concerned to refute charges that arbitrary meant 'random', saying:

> The word arbitrary...must not give the idea that the
> signifier depends on the free choice of the speaking
> subject...; We mean that it is unmotivated, that is to
> say 'arbitrary' in relation to the signified, with which
> it has no natural attachment in reality' (1949:101).

Cherishing as we do the solidity of our world, we can remember the patients that Douglas described in <u>Purity and Danger</u>:

Mrs. Abercrombie put a group of medical students through
a course of experiments designed to show them the high
degree of selection we use in the simplest observations.
'But you can't have all the world a jelly,' one protested.
'It is as though my world has been cracked open,' said
another. Others reacted in a more hostile way (1966:50).

We might find ourselves 'dreading that we are living in a philosophically
"idealist" universe' (Ardener 1975:12).

The arbitrariness of the linguistic sign is clearly strong poison,
particularly so when taken within the philosophical conditions of the
everyday, where language is in very deed a system of nomenclature, reality
instantly accessible, fact and fiction clearly separable, and so on. Yet it
is within this everyday world, whose depth of imagery I earlier invoked, that
structuralism, in spite of the arbitrariness of its sign, has been permitted
its existence. Hence the roundabout of problems on which we ride. We have
quietly allowed Saussure's duality signifier/signified to elide with precisely
those dualities it sought to undermine, with the epistemological tyrannies
contained in the sign as a representation of its other.

As students of the social, we have tended to treat language, vocal noises,
as the signifier of a social signified; and we have left the social lying in
its mute reality, for the 'categories' variously and distortively to express.
Even when we have stretched ourselves to permit the linguistic sign its
arbitrariness, we have found great difficulty in doing the same for the ritual
sign, the social sign, the 'symbolic' sign.

Within language itself we have permitted the maintenance of a system
of, so to speak, relative arbitrariness, with some signs (the literal) having
a direct and unproblemtical relationship to reality, and others (the meta-
phorical, the impressionistic) a relationship to this same reality of a
different order -- and this difference is contained as a difference of type
within the various possibilities of the relationship of a sign to the 'real'
world. Arbitrariness is not, however, something that one can have more or
less of, in this context. There is no room for a discrete 'metaphoric', any
more than there is for a discrete 'symbolic'. We can perhaps accept, now,
the proposition that 'all' language is metaphorical. This is an appealing
way out of certain of our problems. Any 'metaphorical' use of language
contains the echo and remembrance of all the possibilities of substitution,
as does all literal use -- there is no literal ground, susceptible to keen
and secure definition. 'Metaphor is the very movement of language', and
'language is its own hermeneutic' (McDonald 1978: 17).

Arbitrariness and the system defined by the oppositions of its parts
have done us good enough service to warrant their thorough application to
the many overlapping systems that we might choose to drawn under the aegis
of semiology. If we invoke arbitrariness in ritual semiotics, however, we
are crediting them with their own inviolable capacity for statement, that
is neither simply derivative from any other system nor susceptible to inter-
pretation through it. And that is where we start.

We have many ways of creating the dependence of one system on another, --
of the metaphor on the literal, of the symbolic on the real, of the parasitio
on the serious, of writing on speech. This last can serve as a general
illustration, since it has an obvious and common-sense validity that it is
paradox to provoke. Derrida is concerned, in Of Grammatology, to assert that

writing is not in some sense a merely inadequate and derivative representation
of speech (a view that Saussure held), but that it is rather, in its aspect
of permanence, a better model for the generality of signification than is the
phonic system. He says:

> The thesis of the arbitrariness of the sign... forbids
> that (the grapheme) be an 'image' of (the phoneme).
> Now it was indispensable to the exclusion of writing as
> 'external system', that it come to impose an 'image', a
> 'representation', or a 'figuration', an exterior reflection
> of the reality of language (1976:45).

Which is to say, I think, that to treat writing as a system of a different,
derivative excluded order from the phonic system, to treat writing as merely
representative of speech, is to contradict the essential theoretical insight
involved in the invocation of arbitrariness. Saussure says:

> Language and writing are two distinct systems of signs:
> the only raison d'être of the second is to represent
> the first (1949:45).

To which Derrida can be quoted in reply:

> One must therefore challenge, in the very name of the
> arbitrariness of the sign, the Saussurian definition of
> writing as 'image' -- hence as natural symbol -- of language.
> Not to mention the fact that the phoneme is the unimaginable
> itself, and no visibility can resemble it, it suffices to
> take into account what Saussure says about the difference
> between the symbol and the sign...in order to be completely
> baffled as to how he can at the same time say of writing
> that it is an 'image' or 'figuration' of language and
> (nevertheless (my addition)) define language and writing
> elsewhere as 'two distinct systems of signs'...For the
> property of the sign is not to be an image. ...In fact,
> even within so-called phonetic writing, the 'graphic'
> signifier refers to the phoneme through a web of many
> dimensions which binds it, like all signifiers, to other
> written and oral signifiers, within a 'total' system open,
> let us say, to all possible investments of sense (ibid).

We are therefore asked to engage in: '...the deconstruction of the transcen-
dental signified' (1976:49).

Derrida's opacity is often rather French, but there is justification in
his claim that to achieve this 'deconstruction' involves a running fight with
forms of expression that will conventionally take the argument into their own
hands and assert the opposite of what is intended (although Derrida does not
phrase the problem quite like that). Hence the prevalence of grammatical,
lexical, and orthographic conceits, hence the necessity of 'impressionistic'
language.

We can leave Derrida and writing, and go back to the ritual, mythical,
and symbolic. The problem facing us here is that in order to express these
systems we are obliged to unpack them into our verbal categories, a process
which often merely leaves us 'knee deep in polarities' (Ardener 1971:xliii).

What sort of meta-semiotic we should be dreaming of here is not clear, and it is perhaps not even to be expected that we could achieve a general theory of the non-linguistic, in other than the most general terms. We can at least do the non-linguistic semiotic the justice of granting it its autonomy, before we steal it again.

In this context it is perhaps worth mentioning some of the work in Oxford anthropology that effected the shift from 'function to meaning'. In Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic (1937), Nuer Religion (1956), and Divinity and Experience (1961), we find Evans-Pritchard and Lienhardt tackling the problem of expressing the meaning of ritual and symbolic systems in a manner that does not involve their reduction to other systems, -- to social structure, to needs, to emotions, to linguistic common ground -- nor, on the other hand, to the mysteries of subjectivity. Evans-Pritchard finally invoked the theologian, and Lienhardt encapsulated the problem as 'experience'. We have not gone much further in the method of expression of a non-linguistic semiotic than this -- drawing as many symbolic parallels as possible, shifting ground continually, and finally calling in the ineffable.

The most important point that I wish to make in this context is not that we can clean up our formulation of the problem of the non-linguistic, but that we can get some idea of the importance of the claim that 'society is like a language'. Reality is not, in the social anymore than in language, resident in an 'external' and objectively accessible world. It resides, rather, in the categories of its realisation, in the events that constitute the meaning of the social. What is abundantly clear is that ordinary language is not a simple expression of the social, the signifier of the signified represented by the social.

It is within this problem that we find the use of a concept like 'world structure' (see Ardener 1973 and 1975). It is not solely that we wish to render to each world its autonomy in order to guarantee a philosophical and social relativism. It is rather that we wish to express the reality of a social world in such a way as to secure the argument away from the persistencies of determination by the meaningless, the extra-structural, the 'real' -- away from the dialectics of myth and history, fiction and fact, value and action, and all their children. Far from being an attempt to structure in a reductive and static way, the concept of world-structure is an attempt designed precisely to lift the social, as it were, into the Saussurean sign -- to prevent it from becoming enmeshed within analytical dualities that will prejudice the disposition of significant reality within the system whose reality-defining specificities we are concerned to understand. This is not easy ground on which to exercise the imagination, and we cannot hope to do without 'language' in approaching world-structural performance, any more than can the performance itself. We cannot suppose that the relationship will be any more than indicative, however. Ardener expresses the problem as follows:

> ...the study of language is not on its own the key to these
> problems. ...Language...at one level 'expresses' the system.
> Yet language becomes a manipulable feature in the system,
> and introduces arabesques into it, which are due to auto-
> matisms in language itself. ...what we are discussing is
> not founded in language, but in a language-like but sluggishly
> moving continuum of social perceptions,...with language both
> expressing them and intruding into them through its own
> independent propensity towards change and restructuring (1975:11).

Bearing all the previous argument in mind, the crucial point is that 'A world structure is neither empiricist nor idealist' (ibid:16). It is rather that 'the social as world-structure is reality-defining' (ibid). We have therefore come some distance from a structuralist project that could allow a comfortable and complementary co-existence with ostensibly more materialist modes of enquiry. It should perhaps be made clear here that Saussure is not invoked in order to secure the scriptural purity of a source to which we could return to solve our problems. The problems that created the inadequacies of structuralism, and at the same time allowed the responsibility for those inadequacies to be located elsewhere, derive from very general intellectual concerns. We cannot expect, therefore, to rewrite them by a simple invocation of, say, the Saussurean sign. We should not try to solve all our problems merely through their insertion into this technical and experimental, albeit highly successful device. If we looked, say, for the signifier and signified of the social, we would perhaps be making an error very like that made by Lévi-Strauss in his early attempts to recruit linguistics to the cause of anthropology, mistaking data-laden technicalities for essential insights (cf. Levi-Strauss 1969:ch II, Ardener 1971:xlvii). When we say, therefore, that the concept of world structure lifts reality into the Saussurean sign, this is not simply to begin again on the road towards a better structuralism. Through this use of Saussure as a crucial proto-structuralist source we can, however, express the potential generality of the structuralist project, and thus point all the more clearly to the failure of structuralism to take up the ground that was offered. At the same time by staying with Saussure in this way we do not, even while making such criticisms of structuralism, thereby lay ourselves open to all the dismissive materialisms and empiricisms that wait for the lowering of the guard.

One last point. I have argued that structuralism has gained itself a spurious but conventionally strongly coherent place as the 'signs and symbols' department of anthropology. I have also pointed to the different moral reactions that the Saussurean langue can provoke. Empricist reactions to the study of ephemera and outrage in the face of the nihilism of arbitrariness can help us to understand the fervour with which the attempt to renounce the old positivisms was greeted -- a fervour of violent denunciation on one side and near-mysticism on the other. We can think of Lévi-Strauss, Lacan, Derrida, and, closer to home, Ardener, and realise how their publicity has flourished within the traditional dualities wherein the positivisms and artistries of our intellectual world are constituted. Indeed, the ability of the positivist world to find mystery in these intellectuals is a parable of the capacity of a dominant rationality to delimit its boundaries, and experience everything coming from outside or across those boundaries as if through a thick fog -- a perception that in this case served to emphasise the rectitude of the epistemological structure that brought it about, the positivism that was prudishly shy of uncertainties, ambiguities, and the like. This inevitable bipolarity in the reaction to 'the new anthropology' finds an analogous expression in the various reactions that an exercise in deconstruction can generate. We have seen how the world can become a jelly, dangerously random, flying off into space, and inhabiting an idealist universe. We can imagine criticisms of 'impressionism', 'subjectivism', 'poetic language', and charges of triviality, of playing with 'mere words'.

It seems that we are happy enough, as anthropologists, to see the strange made strange to itself, in order that it be rendered familiar to us, but we are less happy to see the familiar made strange to us, in order that we can know it better. Faced with an enterprise in deconstruction, we are all of us familiar, in different ways, with the reaction that retreats with narrowed

eyes, levelling charges of nihilism, negativism, and generally improper conduct. We are willing to make fools of other peoples by bringing home tidy ethnographies. We are less happy to make fools of ourselves.

It is, I think, both inevitable and strategically useful that one of the most popular readings of an exercise in deconstruction will be as an 'artistic', 'non-serious', essentially ephemeral enterprise, more proper to, say, a department of English literature than to a department of social anthropology. This is a theme whose traditional conventions I have tried to spell out. The T.L.S. recently told us that the social sciences now appear 'like a rather fragile art form'. We can remember Evans-Pritchard's wistful conclusion at the end of a prolific life that he would better have been a poet in order properly to have expressed and interpreted one world to another. Martin Thom says:

> If we are to think about other cultures it is obviously
> vital that we understand the Unconscious rules of formation
> that delimit the terrain upon which our knowledge claims
> scientificity for itself. I am thinking here of the work
> of such thinkers as Foucault and Derrida, who in their
> attempt to 'make strange' the very categories that are
> the scaffolding of our social being, necessarily resort
> to the shimmering surface of a poetics (1975:79).

Whether or not we need to dub this shimmering surface a 'poetics', it certainly seems to be the case that one of the most effective and economical ways of asking questions of our rationality that it will not ask of itself is through the use of modes of expression that will appear as 'comic' or 'artistic' or both.

Anthropology has reluctantly suffered a loss of ambition, no longer claiming either the status of natural science, or the status of neutral medium wherein widely disparate cultures could meet without prejudice to one another's position in the world. This loss of ambition would, however, be thoroughly misinterpreted within the conventional scheme to whose breakdown it has contributed if it were to be read as an abandonment of 'rigour', leaving us only with a fluffy and lightweight 'fragile art form'. If there is 'art' there, it partakes of all the devious pragmatism of the artful, and if there is reckless, headlong metaphor, it arises from an attempt to understand the motion of the roundabout whose movement intoxicates us all. This intoxication, at its most total when we are least aware of it, is not of course something that we can shake off by good intentions. Sobriety will continue to elude us. 'We are caught up in the world and we do not succeed in extricating ourselves from it in order to achieve consciousness of the world' (Merleau-Ponty 1976:5), and when Merleau-Ponty tells us that 'we are condemned to meaning' (ibid:xix) we are not to take this to mean that we are condemned to insubstantiality, or to an existence in the glimmering surface of a poetics, or to a condition that history might suddenly decide to annul.

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MEN AND WOMEN IN MATAPUQUIO

This paper has two aims: first, to illustrate how spatial distribution in the village of Matapuquio defines the woman's role and how symbolically it represents or encompasses the ideal expression of this role; second, to analyse how the Peruvian land reform is affecting the woman's role complex as represented in the spatial distribution of the woman's domain.

The paper is written after eighteen months fieldwork in 1976 and 1977 in Peru's southern sierra or high mountain region. The objective was to study the impact of Peruvian land reform on the traditional Indian community of the sierra. In Latin America, this land reform is second only to that of Cuba in its scope. The reform legislation was first passed in 1968; it was first implemented on the sugar and rice plantations of the coast and has only come into effect in the sierra in the last three or four years. The final land expropriation took place in June 1976. The hacienda at Pincos with which this paper will be concerned, was not expropriated until 1974. (A hacienda is a large landed estate owned, though rarely operated, by a white hacendado.)

We chose the village of Matapuquio for study because it lies in a very remote area of the southern sierra, an area with virtually no ethnographic documentation. Matapuquio lies in the Department of Apurimac, a department known for its peasant uprisings and land occupations. The area seemed to present an example of an independent peasant character existing within an area of many unsolved land tenure problems. On closer examination we found that of all the haciendas in the Department of Apurimac, the one at Pincos was the most lucrative. Pincos also provided us with a relatively uncomplicated one-to-one relationship where the Indians of one community provide the entire work force for one hacienda, or as it is now, one co-operative. Though reality did not prove to be as simple as this, it was convenient for us to try to limit the variables involved.

The status of Matapuquio as an independent village is also important to the analysis. Though surrounded by hacienda-owned land the actual village does not lie within the boundaries of the territory owned by the hacendado, Hans Duda. Consequently, labourers at the former hacienda worked more or less by choice. (They were not among the colonos class who were forced to work at the haciendas because their homes were situated on hacienda lands.) The communeros from Matapuquio worked at the hacienda at Pincos for two reasons: to secure rights to pasture lands which did lie within the hacienda's boundaries and to earn money, the wages at Pincos being some of the highest in the sierra.

The setting

The village of Matapuquio is located between Andahuaylas and Abancay in the valley of Pincos. There are four former haciendas situated in the valley bottom, one of which is Pincos. All four of these haciendas were owned previously by one family, the Trelles family who, before the land reform, owned virtually all of the province of Abancay and much of the province of Andahuaylas. Matapuquio is situated on the mountain side one thousand metres above Pincos straight up. Pincos lies at 2000 metres above sea level (6000 feet) while the village is spread over the mountain side between three and four thousand metres above sea level (9000-12000 feet). Because of the extreme slope of the valley, horizontal distance is not great but obviously vertical distance is.

The extreme variation in altitude has a great effect on the existing agriculture. Pincos, in the valley bottom, lies within a semi-tropical climate. Here the fields are relatively flat and can be irrigated all year round from the Pincos River. The crops are sugar cane and citrus fruits, neither of which are traditional Indian crops. Production is concentrated on the sugar cane which is planted so as to ensure a steady

work-load of constant planting and harvesting in rotation from field to field.
Labour needs are thus constant.

A thousand metres up, in the village, the agricultural situation is
quite different. From about 3000-3700 metres corn, which is the most highly
valued crop in the village, can be grown along with wheat and barley. Corn
requires irrigation, the irrigation system being based on a number of springs
or puquios located high up in the village. Because of warmer temperatures
the corn grown in the lower regions of the village requires almost four
months less to mature than does the corn grown in the higher regions of the
village. This will be seen to have a definite influence on the women living
in the different parts of the village. The region from about 3700 metres up
to 4000 metres is the potato belt, an unirrigated region partially located
on hacienda lands. A great variety of potatoes are grown. They form a sub-
stantial part of the diet but do not have as great a value as corn simply
because corn has barter value. It is used in exchange for onions, beans and
supplementary grains, and occassionally is sold for cash.

So far we have a picture without contour; a village lying flat up a
vertical slope. However the image of a valley bottom, a mountain top, and a
village situated on the connecting slope is far too simple to describe
adequately the spatial distribution of the village. Matapuquio is cut diag-
onally by a deep gorge. This gorge is continually deepening due to erosion,
especially evident during the rainy season. Since early colonial times the
Andean slopes have been deforested, and there is nothing to hold back the
soil which is washed down to the Pincos River and from there to the Amazon
and the sea. The gorge divides the village in two and is a physical mani-
festation of the dual social organization existing in the village. About
half the village population lives above the gorge in the part known as
Antaccasa and about half lives below in the part called Matapuquio. Each
half has its own school, its own magistrates and its own separate pasture
lands. The principle of exogamy is operative in both parts. The degree of
intermarriage between the two sectors is limited largely to the bordering
barrios or wards.

As most of the literature on the Incan state and on the present day
Quechua Indians discusses the existence of moieties within the traditional
Indian communities, it was not surprising to find such a principle of organ-
ization present in Matapuquio. What did stand out however was the clarity
with which the terrain reflected this principle. Locality here is always
expressed in terms of higher and lower; a little bit higher, arribita (or
yanan in Quechua), a little bit lower, abajito (or urin in Quechua). It is
never expressed in terms of right and left, of horizontal contiguity, or of
points of the compass, but always in terms of relative altitude.

Paralleling this are markedly different characterisations of those
living above in Antaccasa, and of those living below in Matapuquio. Those
from Antaccasa are stereotyped as being much more old-fashioned, as inclined
to stick together, as having a greater sense of community spirit; those in
the lower village as being more progressive, more independent and much more
suspicious.

The Woman's Domain Within the Spatial Setting

Up to this point I have attempted to construct the framework within
which the woman's role is played. The woman's position in relation to man is
influenced first and foremost by the bilateral kinship system of the Quechua.
The basic principles of bilateral kinship emphasize both father's and mother's
family as being of equal importance; both family lines are perceived to be on

equal footing when an individual considers his relative genealogical position. Residence may be patrilocal or matrilocal in the first years of marriage but the ideal is neo-locality after the first few years of married life. Most important of all is that men and women inherit equally from both their parents, which means that a woman enters marriage with cattle and fields that are her private property. The husband-wife relationship is often coloured by how much material wealth each brings to the partnership. This seems to have some influence on residence patterns.

The division of labour between the sexes underlines the principles inherent in the bilateral kinship system. Though individual ownership of land and animals is always present, agricultural work is considered a joint responsibility. Men and Women together prepare, irrigate, plough and finally plant the fields. Both the male and the female principle are necessary to planting. The man drives the oxen and steers the plough while the woman plants the seed. The symbolic implications need hardly be pointed out. Harvesting is a joint effort as well; the men dig up the potato plants, cut the corn stalks and the grains. The women gather the potatoes, shuck the corn, and winnow the grain. Most important of all however, the women store the produce in a room of the house which only they can enter. The produce is sorted into what should be used for consumption and for barter, and what should be stored for next year's seeds. This is the woman's job, the woman's priority. She has the ultimate control over the produce.

The need for complementary effort in agriculture is expressed in the gifts given to a newly married couple. Where the woman receives from her family two cups, two plates, and two spoons, one each for herself and her husband, the husband receives from his family two lampos or digging sticks and two picks, one for himself and one for his wife. The girl's mother, however provides corn, potatoes, wheat, chickens and cuye (guinea pig) sufficient for their first year's needs.

Whereas the greatest amount of agricultural activity shared equally by men and women occurs in the mid-latitude between valley bottom and mountain top, the pasturelands lie at the top of the spatial continuum and represent an area more specifically associated with the woman's domain. The herding of cattle is an occupation strongly associated with women and with children and young adults of both sexes. Every morning the women leave for the heights with their animals: cows, sheep, goats and pigs, which are grazing animals in Peru. In the evening they return to their homes in the village to prepare the evening meal. Only women are allowed to do the milking of the cows and the goats and it is their responsibility to make cheese from the milk. Cheese is a highly valued part of the diet. Through the management of her animals a woman has the possibility of acquiring money. Whereas agricultural crops are exchanged largely for other agricultural crops, with corn as the medium or barter, animals are sold for cash, either to neighbours or friends, to neighbouring villages or even to the more distant towns of Huancarama and Andahuaylas. It is through careful animal husbandry that widows fulfill their monetary needs, that mothers provide for the festivities of a marrying offspring, or that women are able to stand as padrinas (sponsors) for a village fiesta. The complementary male activity in this regard is working for wages in the hacienda/ co-operative. During summer holidays young boys work in Pincos to earn money for next term's clothing, while young girls herd with their mothers and receive clothing from their parents.

School holidays occur at the time of the yearly cycle when labour is most needed for herding. This is the rainy season. When the corn fields are planted in the village and have begun to sprout and grow, there is no room to keep the animals. Rules and regulations controlling conflicts over one family's

cows entering another family's corn are extensive. The solution to the problem has been a kind of transhumance, in which tiny grass huts are built higher up the mountain. In these huts, or _chosas_, the mothers and the children live for an extended period of time which varies from up to nine months for those from the upper regions of Antaccasa to five months for those from the lower regions of Matapuquio. The _chosas_ are grouped in specific areas traditionally prescribed. Some of these areas lie on the lands of the former hacienda at Pincos which has meant that the men of these families, in order to ensure pasture rights, have had to work at Pincos. Other pasturelands lie on land owned formerly by the neighbouring hacienda, Palmira, which has meant that men of these families have had to work at Palmira for a prescribed number of days every year in order to obtain pasture rights. All of the families in the lower village have their traditional pasture lands on Pincos territory and most of those in the upper village have their traditional pasture lands on territory owned by the hacienda at Palmira. The _chosas_ are arranged by the matrilineal principle in which sisters, mothers/daughters and mothers' sisters/ sisters' daughters group together. Looking up the mountainside at the _chosas_ matrilocal groups are laid out spatially. They help one another guard the animals and co-operate in cooking; they form an intimate social setting associated with _chosa_ living in contrast to the dangerous, spirit-inhabited mountain-tops which are here very close.

Turns are taken in staying over-night in the _chosas_. For fear of robbery in their houses, in the village and in their fields, it is deemed desirable to have someone always in the house to guard things as well as one staying in the _chosa_ to guard and care for the animals. For this reason older daughters are highly valued to share the burden. There is much to-ing and fro-ing between the _chosas_ and the actual village on the one hand as well as great traffic between the valley bottom and the village on the other. Though most men work at the hacienda for a week at a time, living in the quarters provided for them, there is no room there for the young boys who are nevertheless working as extra help. At the same time there is a significant number of men who either have not managed to find accomodation at Pincos or who do not care for the extremely crowded and insanitary conditions available. In the evening the women come down from the mountain tops and the men come up from the valley bottom. They meet in their shared domain, the village.

As is often the case in anthropological field work, by focusing on the exceptions, on the deviant, we can learn much about the ideal—that which is accepted as the proper woman's role. There were women from Matapuquio, these being without exception from the lower village, who had moved to Pincos with their husbands. They were looked down on with contempt by the community. Living in Pincos was considered an evil, slovenly, non-Indian way of life. This was seen to be manifested in the women who lived there. In Pincos life is more easier for the women. With no animals to take care of, no fields to plant, guard, and harvest, they are responsible only for the tiny room in the Pincos barrack, where they live, and for their children. These women have chosen to live outside what F.G.Bailey (1971) calls the 'moral community'. This concept can best be understood in opposition to the _mestizo_, the extra-community, the outside world which is integral to an understanding of the Indians' position, and of the Indian woman's role within that position.

In Latin American literature, a _mestizo_ is theoretically defined as a person with mixed Indian and white blood. In other words, the term is presented as a biological category. In reality, however, it is not the racial but the cultural manifestations that define the category. A person who appears white but lives in Indian style is an Indian while a person who appears Indian but who lives a white man's life style is considered a white. Culturally speaking a _mestizo_ is one who falls between the two categories

of Indian and white, though culturally trying to achieve 'whiteness'. Whereas
it is culturally Indian to speak Quechua, go barefoot, live in a village, hold
certain religious beliefs in addition to those present in Catholic doctrine
and to hold women in esteem, a mestizo will speak Spanish (most likely in
addition to Quechua),wear shoes and white trousers, will live in town, be more
or less literate, most likely not an agricultural worker, and will hold women
in contempt. A third category which might be set between the Indian and that
of the mestizo embraces those who wear shoes, speak some Spanish and are
literate, but who still live in an Indian community and are involved with
agricultural work. This is the category of the cholo. The three categories -
Indian, cholo, and mestizo-are not mutually exclusive but should rather be
seen as existing on a continuum. A single person can fall within more than
one category or rather can move between categories as the situation demands.
A mestizo is sometimes called a macho,a term which defines a particular kind
of male behaviour pattern stressing toughness, hard drinking, and male comrade-
ship, and within which woman is merely the source of satisfaction for male
sexuality. The macho behaviour pattern is one accepte. by mestizo women, but
it is not acceptable to Indian women. The cholo women living in Pincos speak
Spanish, wear shoes, buy all their clothes and most of their food. They are
much more mobile,having access to Pincos cars driving in and out of town.
They have a tendency to take produce from the co-operative, selling it in
Andahuaylas for their own cash needs.

In the specific case of Matapuquio we see the men acting as the
necessary intermediaries between the Indian moral community and the outside
mestizo world. The men act in two cultural contexts. They are Indians in the
village and cholos in the valley. Because the mestizanized form of male
behaviour as idealized in the macho is very degrading in the eyes of the Indian
woman, any woman choosing to live in such surroundings must be bad. In fact
life at Pincos-male life at Pincos-is characterized by tough drinking,brawls
and illicit sex. In this sense the Indian women can be seen as the guardians
of Indian culture.
They are the ones largely responsible for . ng the children and
they are the ones that would be forced to accept a degraded position in
relation to men by integrating with the outside world.

To summarize the spatial arrangement of the woman's domain, we can say
that greater altitude in the terrain represents a purer area of women's
activity. The valley bottom, the area of pure male activity, is conceptual-
ized as being opposed to the Indian woman's ideal of equal status with men
both materially and socially. The middle area in the spectrum is the actual
village shared by men and women. The upper village, Antaccasa, is associated
with more traditional Indian values and there is the lower village, Matapuquio,
where the women are perhaps less associated with the upper regions due to the
shorter period of transhumance necessary, and where the men have greater ties
to the hacienda at Pincos.

The Impact of the Peruvian Land Reform on the Woman's Role Complex

To begin a discussion of the impact of the land reform on women's roles,
we must underline a few basic differences between the two moieties existing in
the village of Matapuquio. These differences are based first and foremost on
the traditional life-style more present in Antaccasa than in Matapuquio. Here
I have in mind specifically the greater flexibility in division of labour.
Though it is most markedly the women of Antaccasa who arrange their chosas
year after year together with their matrilineal kin, the men from Antaccasa
have a greater role to play in maintaining the chosas. Men are present in
the chosas of Antaccasa. Because the pasturelands are generally closer to
home and because chosa life lasts for a greater part of the year for those

Antaccasa, the men have much easier access to this typically female domain.
Because Antaccasa has a prolonged herding period and, generally speaking,
more animals per family, men have a greater role to play simply to get the
work done. Though probably all men in the village know how to spin, it is
looked upon as a specifically female activity. When a woman dies, her
spindle is buried with her. A man from the lower village would be embarrassed
to be seen spinning, yet it was not uncommon to see an Antaccasa man sitting
in front of his wife's <u>chosa</u> spinning away, seemingly undisturbed by our
presence.

The traditional life-style present in Antaccasa is reinforced by the
fact that men are away from home less. Antaccasa has more land per family as
well as more animals. This means that there is simply more work to be done at
home. There are several examples of families moving from Antaccasa to
Matapuquio. Life in the lower village is considered to be easier. Fire wood
does not have to be hauled up so far, and travelling distances to work are not
so great. We should remember here the difference between the upper regions
of Antaccasa and the lower regions of Matapuquio of about a thousand metres.
When another thousand metres are added on to this to reach the valley bottom,
it is a considerable climb. In the lower village the interplay between man
and woman in doing a task is less evident simply because the men are not
around as much. Women have much greater responsibility over the fields and
take care of the animals almost exclusively. Work in Pincos has a much
stronger draw on the men.

The greater attraction that Pincos has for the men of the lower village
cannot be explained simply in terms of proximity. It is partially tied in
with factors present under the hacienda system, and partially it is a manifes-
tation of changes occuring within the village because of the land reform and
the transformation of the hacienda Pincos into a co-operative.

The factors present under the hacienda system have been touched upon
before. The haciendas in the valley of Pincos found it necessary, in order
to ensure a steady work force, to acquire ownership over the otherwise use-
less pasturelands high up in the mountains far from the haciendas themselves.
Access to pasturelands was exchanged for labour. If you did not work you had
to pay, and no one had the money. In actuality the work force living in
Matapuquio was split between the two haciendas of Pincos and Palmira. What
is important here is that under the land reform the newly formed co-operatives
both at Pincos and Palmira did not see fit to return the pasturelands to the
village but perpetuated the hacienda system. All those wishing to pasture
their animals on Pincos lands had to become members of the co-operative of
Pincos and all those wishing to pasture their animals on lands belonging to
Palmira had to become members of the co-operative of Palmira. This has meant
that most men in Antaccasa are members of Palmira, and most men in Matapuquio
are members of Pincos.

Under the land reform law the yearly profit is divided equally amongst
the members - and I emphasize members. Pincos is the only co-operative with
any profit to divide, and this has been quite considerable. Though members
of the co-operative of Palmira are allowed to work at Pincos for a set wage
equal to that of the members,they do not have rights to a cut in the profits.
Unfortunately Palmira, since it was established as a co-operative in 1974, has
had such financial difficulty that often it has not had the money even to pay
wages, much less to provide any profit. Consequently the members of Pincos,
largely living in Matapuquio, have the opportunity to bring home a large sum
of money at the end of each fiscal year. This possibility is closed to all
non-members, which includes most of the men from Antaccasa.

According to the philosophy of the land reform, the co-operative lands belong to the members. The administration and decision-making which takes place in the co-operative can only be carried out by the co-operative members. Thus, where a leadership vacuum existed before the reform, suddenly the member communeros have been given a whole range of leadership possibilities and a power base within the co-operative which directly affects the situation in the village. It is not surprising then that many of the projects spearheaded and financially supported by the co-operative have greater benefit for those in the lower village, for those members with the vote.

The increased possibilities of leadership and the increased access to capital are creating a virtual woman's sphere in the lower village where the men are absent for weeks at a time. Before the land reform the women in the lower village had equal (though different) access to money. Now with their men able to earn large sums of money in a sphere in which they are not allowed to operate, and with the increased absence of the men from life in the lower village, these women are being tied more and more to the house and the fields. The purely female domain in the lower village is undergoing a shift of emphasis to the area of activity in the village. Whereas herding is a co-operative woman's activity in which women sit together in groups spinning while their animals graze, life in the village is a much more isolated affair in which the women are cut off from their neighbours by the surrounding fields. This new emphasis on the home as the woman's sole responsibility fits in all too well with the mestizo image of women as docile, invisible and secluded in the home. With their new political and economic base emerging in the mestizo world, men from the lower village are bound to tend to adopt this image of woman.

It would be a mistake, however, to envisage the upper village as untouched by such drastic changed as have occurred under the land reform. The changes here are more subtle though, more elusive, and something of a matter for speculation on my part. The most important part of the changing world for the Quechua women of the upper village is the increasing encroachment by the co-operative on their pasture-lands. One of three goals of the land reform was to increase agricultural production. With increasing demand from the coastal populations in Lima, the potato has now become a profitable crop to grow. With more and more of the upper lands being cultivated, it is becoming difficult for the women of Antaccasa to find sufficient pasture. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that cattle have become so important a part of the economy of the upper village that the women are allowing their herds to grow too big. Overgrazing is the obvious result, causing friction within the upper village but, more important, a sense of frustration over the intrusion of events from the outside which they cannot control.

Up to this point I have outlined the differing impact the land reform is having on women from the upper and lower village of Matapuquio. It is a picture in which some of the women are being more and more tied to the home and in which all of the women are having their traditional access to money threatened by the co-operative, whether directly or indirectly. There are, however, several other areas in which the land reform is having an impact on the woman's role in a general sense.

As the co-operative are part of the man's domain, the impact of the land reform on the woman's role is best explained by first discussing changes within the predominantly male life at Pincos and Palmira. What I have specifically in mind here are new systems of leadership. The Quechuas have a basically acephalous social organization with very little village-wide decision-making going on. Through the co-operative system of elected officers, individuals are made leaders, leaders that can influence the lives of many, both at the co-operative level and the village level. They are made

leaders for a term of office of from one to two years and shifting support
has little effect on the power that they wield during their term of office.
It is a completely new system, and one which certainly will have far-reaching
consequences for village life all over Peru. What is of greatest interest
for us here is the sudden exclusion of women from the decision-making process.
Before the land reform, decisions made at the hacienda were law and they lay
completely outside the sphere of Indian influence, even though they often had
a great impact on Indian life. Village decisions were made in an open forum
in which men and women together reached a consensus. Even when official
decisions were taken, in which one vote was allowed for the head of each
family, it was a vote cast in consultation with and with the approval of the
women. The women had a definite part in deciding on how the vote would be
cast. But as the norms of the <u>mestizo</u> world invade the village more and more,
through the operation of the co-operatives, the women are losing their role
in the decision-making process. It is the men who gain the experience on how
to handle themselves in the election process, on how to debate an issue, on
how best to present their candidate. The women are left more and more on
the sidelines even in deciding village issues. Here the impact of the land
reform is similar for women from the upper and lower villages. They are being
pressured out of the political arena of village life.

I have attempted to present the Quechua Indian woman's domain in a spatial
context, and then to examine how her role is being changed within this domain
by the impact of the Peruvian land reform. I have tried to describe how the
ecological setting on the slopes of the Andes can be seen as a spatial image
of the actual social organization of the Quechua Indians. In discussing
the impact of the land reform, I have sought to indicate how the balance and
symmetry both within the spatial image and within the social organization of
the village is being altered drastically. Where before men and women stood
on an equal footing economically and politically, through the resources
available after the land reform, the men have suddenly been given the upper
hand. Where the spatial imagery once reflected a balance between man's
domain and woman's domain, with a neutral meeting ground in the village
proper, now the picture is unbalanced with the lower village becoming a
woman's domain and the upper village becoming more and more isolated from
the other moiety. Wolf summarizes the situation we have found in Matapuquio:

> Confronted by the contrasts between the mobile and the traditional,
> the nation-oriented and the community-oriented, village life is riven
> by contradictions and conflicts, conflicts not only between class
> groups but also between individual families or entire neighbour-
> hoods. Such a community will inevitably differentiate into a
> number of unstable groups with different orientations and interests
> (E.Wolf 1971).

Sarah Skar

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ANTHROPOLOGICAL FIELD WORK IN THE USSR

The first Ethnographical Society in Russia was founded around
1845, under the auspices of the Imperial Society of Geography,
followed by the publication of a journal, Etnograficheskoe Obosrenie.
Its character and aims were similar to those of the Royal Anthro-
pological Institute, as described by Edmund Leach:

> The Institute in its origins was a typical 19th c.
> learned society. Anthropology was not, as it is now,
> a 'subject' studied by undergraduates at universities
> with an appropriate cadre of professional and academic
> staff; it was a leisure-time pursuit for a small
> number of enthusiastic gentlemen amateurs. Most of
> them were possessed with substantial private means,
> and with one or two notable exceptions, they all rode
> hobby horses of the greatest eccentricity (Leach 1974).

The St. Petersburgh anthropologists were not, on the whole,
eccentrics, but rather an exceptionally liberal-minded group of
people. This was recognized by a Soviet hard-liner, whose atti-
tude nevertheless permitted the claim that:

> Russian ethnography of the 19th and (early) 20th
> centuries was never of an officious character, never
> offered its services to tsarism. The Russian ethno-
> graphic bodies of that period had an advanced social
> nature (Tolstov 1946).

The principle concern was to study the social life of various
peoples coming under the umbrella of the Tsarist empire. Although
speculative interest in man's prehistoric origins was not excessive,
anthropologists attempted to place each social phenomenon at a stage
along a scale of unilineal development, as was the general practice
of social scientists at the time. A few overseas expeditions were
made by Russians of the 19th century, the most outstanding figure
being Miklukho-Maclay, a Russian Scotsman, who travelled to Oceania
and lived there for seven years. He carried out some of the best
fieldwork done in his time (Lienhardt 1964). Unfortunately the
precedent set by Miklukho-Maclay has been neglected, and long-
term expeditions abroad have been abandoned; his revered name,
however, has been given to the central Ethnographic Institute of
the USSR.

The Kunst Kamera, established under Peter the Great, to this
day houses an impressive collection of exotic objects. It is
administered and is adjacent to the present-day Leningrad Branch
of the Institute of Ethnography. Throughout the Soviet Union there
is a network of local folk-art museums, many of them employing the
services of trained ethnographers.

The prominent Russian ethnographers of the late 19th and
early 20th century, Bogoraz-Tan, Shternberg, Maynov and others
did their field-work in Siberia when exiled there as political
dissidents by the Tsarist regime. As outcasts, their social
standing was lower than that of the natives themselves; Academician

Olderogge, the present director of the Leningrad Institute of
Ethnography, has pointed out to me that this brought about
different social relationships with the natives and therefore
a different quality of fieldwork than that done by Americans
among Indians on reservations or by the British anthropologists
in Colonial territories. I agree with him: they had no Euro-
pean goods to offer, they could not mediate in any way between
the indigenous population and those in authority, and often had
to depend entirely on the mercy of the former for subsistence,
shelter and medical care for indefinite periods, perhaps for the
rest of their lives. It would take a careful analysis, though,
to see how the differences in fieldwork results and writings
were direct manifestations of the contrasting position of the
British and the Russian exiled anthropologists.[1]

I would like to suggest that the close links with Museum
work on the one hand and the respectable anti-Tsarist history of
several pre-Revolutionary anthropologists on the other hand have
both been influential factors in allowing Anthropology (Etnografia)
to have had a less checkered, more smooth and continuous course as
a separate discipline than any other social science in the Soviet
Union. Admittedly, Etnografia was juggled around from faculty to
faculty and some ethnographers lost their lives in the purges
(notably Zinoviev's secretary)[2], but the career of anthropology
cannot be compared with, for example, that of Sociology. Sociology
as a separate discipline was disallowed and absorbed into the un-
specialised discipline of Historical Materialism until the 1960's
(Weinberg 1974), whereas a separate Department of Ethnography under
the auspices of the Academy of Sciences and University sub-departments
of Ethnography in the Faculty of History has been recognised and has
continued to exist throughout the Soviet period.

After the Revolution, the Leningrad Institute of Ethnography
came under the direction of the Academy of Sciences in 1925. In
World War II most of the seventy members of the Leningrad Institute
were tragically killed, and the main branch was moved to Moscow.

Shortly before Lenin's death, and in accordance with the
principles of the nationalities policy to be established in the
Soviet Union, a Research Unit for the study of the Far North
(Siberia) was set up to gather information on the many peoples
inhabiting the area. Similarly, a commission on Central Asia,
in which professional ethnographers participated, was set up for
the re-organization of the National republics. Ethnographic
research was therefore seen as 'useful'.

Most of this work was carried out by Russian scholars.
Simultaneously, however, Institutes of Education using native
languages were set up along with the establishment of Soviet
power in areas such as central Asia, and so local ethnographers
have been trained continuously, partly by Russians and partly by
other local scholars. In some other parts of the Soviet Union the
situation was different. In the Caucasus, for example, Georgia and
Armenia have a culture and a literary tradition much older than that
of Russia. They managed to survive the constant invasions of Turks,
Mongols and Persians, and local erudition had never been entirely
quelled by the anti-nationalist policy of the Tsarist regime. An
ethnographical society was founded in Georgia in the second half of

the 19th century and Caucasian scholars, following the absorption
of these areas into the Soviet Union, quickly redeveloped their
schools of ethnography, writing to this day works unexcelled by
foreign and particularly western scholarship. The Ukraine is a
similar case where mainly indigenous schools of ethnography were
created. When the Baltic states - where the ethnographic tradi-
tion had been predominantly German - became part of the Soviet
Union, Russian scholars were sent there to form cadres trained in
Marxism. Most indigenous Baltic ethnographers now write mainly
on material culture, and with a few exceptions - an outstanding
example being Vilve Kalits - social studies have been carried out
by Russian visitors, among whom Professor L. Terentyeva is promin-
ent. A dedicated specialist of Baltic culture, she now heads
the Baltic section in the Moscow Institute of Ethnography.

Most of the ethnographic publications in the outlying Union
republics have been in the local languages and the scholars'
dialogues have been mainly carried out among themselves. By and
large, they study their own societies, and their knowledge is
highly specialised. To the outsider, who has mastered neither
the background knowledge nor the language, the issues they discuss
occasionally seem somewhat obscure, but this is not to imply any
weakness on the part of the indigenous ethnographers.

Frequently, but certainly not always, local ethnographers do
fieldwork in the rural area they themselves originally come from.
They live in the capital and are members of the Academy of Sciences
Institutes or universities, but go on visits to the villages, some-
times just in the summer, sometimes for a week or so in the winter.
The annual, all-Union conference of Ethnographers takes place in a
different Soviet city each year, but it is organized from Moscow,
and the main journal, Sovyetskaya Etnografia, is published in
Moscow, in Russian with short English summaries. A majority of
articles and book reviews are by members of the Institute of the
main USSR Academy of Sciences based in Moscow and Leningrad. These
authors are by far the best known in the West. Works published in
the outlying republics are usually difficult to obtain - not only
for Western scholars but for Soviets as well, outside the given
republic.

It is significant that, during the reorganization of the
sciences in the early Soviet period, the study of Ethnography was
moved from the Geographical Departments to those of History. The
historical principle is the main analytical device used in all Soviet
anthropology today.

It is difficult to do justice to the complexity and length of
the debates on the nature of history and its role in the social
sciences, which have become increasingly sophisticated, by compari-
son with the neo-evolutionism of the immediate postwar period.
Ernest Gellner in his enlightening article 'The Soviet and the
Savage' (Gellner 1975), correctly demonstrated this most striking
difference between Western anthropologists and their Soviet
colleagues.

Gellner sees Western anthropology, in the main, as having a
functionalist-static vision of man and society which he contrasts

with the Soviet Evolutionist-historical approach. From British
studies, he says, we still have the impression that each examined
society merely trails its own past behind it as a comet trails its
tail; the interest of the tail is a function of the interest in a
particular comet, not the other way round. He writes:

> It is here that the contrast with the instinctive
> thought-style of a Soviet anthropologist is most
> marked. One might say that for the Soviet scholar
> the interest of a comet, generally speaking, is a
> function of the interest of its tail, and that all
> such tails fuse, at least in principle, in an all-
> embracing history of mankind (Gellner 1975).

In my view, the historicism of the Soviet approach has deeper
roots than can be simply traced to the adoption of Marxism in 1917.
Remembering that what can be called formal anthropology began in
Russia and some other parts of what is now the Soviet Union at about
the same time as in Britain, the transition to Marxism took place
before anthropologists anywhere had rejected the evolutionary, histor-
ical approach to the study of human society. Frazer and Westermarck,
busily tracing the development of human history and finding explana-
tions of contemporary social phenomena through interpretations of
the past, were still thriving around 1917. With the Revolution and
the commitment to Marxist-Leninist interpretive theory, Russian
ethnographers were cut off from Malinowskian and other later re-
jections of the historicist approach. They have never known anything
else, and I believe that their attitude to History, their trust in
retrospective reconstruction, are produced not only by Marxist piety,
but by a deeply rooted, uninterrupted cultural tradition (Dragadze 1975).

Historical and anthropological enquiry are more closely asso-
ciated in the Soviet Union than in the West, as is shown in the daily
concerns of fieldwork. I can best illustrate this through a con-
versation I once had with a Russian anthropologist studying shaman
seances among the Turkmen. He told me that when he returned to a
Turkmen village he had lived in previously he brought 100 wooden
spoons from Moscow as gifts. His host, the local schoolmaster,
spent three days dividing and redividing the spoons into groups,
according, it was explained, to the importance in the village of
each family. He would allocate, for example, seven spoons for one
family, only three for another, then change his mind and allocate
to them six and four spoons respectively. I said to the anthro-
pologist that this event could be considered a fascinating opportunity
to learn about prestige ranking and social relations in the village.
He replied, however, that this was not his concern. He had spent
the three days waiting anxiously because he only hoped the distri-
bution would be acceptable to the villagers so that the elders would
let him attend their seances; he had detected Indo-European elements
in the rites and only through repeated observation would he be able
to judge whether or not there were Indo-European influences in early
Turkmen religion.

Soviet anthropologists feel duty bound to record all traditions
and local customs before they die out. Information gathered from
old people is treasured as the key to understanding social history in
the past, the reconstruction of which is often seen to be their central
task.

I. Traditional Anthropology

G. Chitaia, in the main Soviet journal of anthropology, published
an article on 'The principles and methods of ethnographic field-
work'(1957), where he elaborated the 'complex-intensive method'.
Whether you study the shape of a plough or a ceremony of marriage,
you should endeavour to study it in all its inexhaustible aspects.
In fact, traditional Soviet fieldwork can be characterised by a
few main features, from which individual work varies to different
degrees:

1. Fieldwork is usually done by more than one person.
Typical is the 'complex expedition' formed of a group of anthro-
pologists, one studying religion, the other indigenous agricul-
tural techniques, the third marriage customs and so forth. Often
other experts participate - perhaps an architect and a botanist.
Some expeditions are organized in conjunction with an archaeology
project, with shared facilities. Anthropology group expeditions
have a leader, and on the occasions when they are not being
entertained by the local population, the members may report on
their day's work during and after a communal evening meal.
There are, however, many variations on this pattern of fieldwork.

2. For most areas of interest to the social anthropologist
(in the usual 'British' sense) the fieldworkers compile data based
on what informants tell them. The ear, not the eye, is their
tool. This is not to say that anthropologists do not place
tremendous value on being eye-witnesses at ceremonies and the like,
but since overriding interest is so often placed in past history,
an anthropologist may write a monograph on phenomena he or she has
never seen. Many monographs give the name, age and village of
informants from whom a particular piece of knowledge was obtained.
A fieldworker will visit as many villages and speak to as many
informants as possible in a region since it is thought that the
quantity of sources of information in itself adds substance to the
results obtained.

3. On the whole, there is a 'fieldwork season', namely the
summer months. The Institutes and Departments of Anthropology
organize and subsidize expeditions for students and staff alike,
and sanctions can be brought to bear on scholars not involved in
heavy administration who neglect the season.

In our evaluation of Soviet fieldwork, a straightforward
appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of the seasonal period
(three months or less is average) is useful. Soviet interests and
methods being what they are, the lengthy periods of fieldwork that
we consider necessary would not have the same status or importance
for our Soviet colleagues. On the other hand the most striking
advantage, to my mind, of their tradition is that fieldwork never
stops. I have accompanied one septagenarian and one octagenarian
anthropologist on fieldwork expeditions in the summer - expeditions
that are so much part of their lives that they would meet any
suggestion of missing a season with suspicion.

I sometimes imagine that such fieldwork expeditions must be
reminiscent of the Torres Straights expedition. An enthusiastic
group of various specialists sets out, suitably equipped, to study
all things curious, the anthropologists among them carrying many
notebooks to record oral information from the natives, and trying

to memorize a set of questions for interpreters to ask them. The
analogy, however, is misleading. Soviet anthropologists would not
expect to meet naked savages in plumed headresses, for example, in
a country where literacy is almost universal. Local party offic-
ials, who often play host to the expedition on arrival, will have
studied Russian and will display their knowledge of the ubiquitous
'party universe of discourse'. Although Russian anthropologists do
not hesitate as we would to work through interpreters, there are
several centres of learning where the languages of the Soviet Union
can be thoroughly studied.

The knowledge that local officials might receive any material
that is published about their district makes anthropologists oper-
ate under many of the constraints that we experience when doing
fieldwork in Western Europe and North America (cf. A. Sutherland
1975). It would be an oversimplification, however, to attribute
to problems of informants' confidentiality the lack of field studies
comparable to those familiar to us in 'the West'. For example, our
typical aim is to come slowly to a recognition of how people in a
given culture view their lives, or gingerly to penetrate the maze
of strategies and skillsthrough which they establish their places
in their social world - areas of knowledge which require long
periods of fieldwork and the establishment of intense social
relations with members of the community. These aims are not
relinquished as an impossible dream in the USSR, either because of
their country's political system or because of the brevity of
fieldwork periods. Rather, they do not figure as prominently in
the pantheon of aspirations as they do in ours; the study of
patron-client relations in a contemporary village, for example,
simply cannot be encompassed within their definition of anthropology.

Having established camp and co-ordinated their intended
activities through the expedition leader, they set off from house to
house, seeking out the elderly of whom to ask questions. It may be
that one of them is anxious to record legends and myths or to hear
accounts of weddings, festivals and the like. It will be taken for
granted that quaint customs and beliefs are typical of pre-
Revolutionary times, and they will therefore look for elderly eye-
witnesses of that period. It is a convention, when reporting, to
refer to 'olden times' or 'the past' - without precise dates - in
descriptions of customs and beliefs which might have been encoun-
tered during fieldwork done in the present. This, I am told,
protects the informants. Yet one meets with an ambiguity, espec-
ially among local ethnographers studying their own people, who on
the one hand are keen on demonstrating the liveliness and uniqueness
of their people's traditions but who on the other hand would like
them to be seen as 'progressive' rather than 'backward' citizens of
the USSR. Anthropologists study 'traditions' when doing fieldwork,
and coupling this with the use of documentary evidence (they are
well trained, on the whole, in archive work) they can work on
historical reconstruction, on the history of ethnic groups, or on
the history of their particular ethnic features. Studies of con-
temporary society however usually include favourable comparisons of
the present with past times.

In 1970, the Institute of Ethnography of the Academy of
Sciences in Moscow began publishing a series on annual results of
fieldwork expeditions (Basilov et al. eds. 1971). We can take a

selection of the 21 reports: 'Ornithomorphic designs in the ornamental headdresses in Yaroslav-Kostroma' (Middle Russia); 'Women's clothing in Russian village settlements in Altai at the end of the 19th century and beginning of 20th century'; 'A study of mountain irrigation in South Tadjikistan and the Western Pamirs'; 'Data on herding among the people of South Tadjikistan and the Western Pamirs'; 'On survivals of communal land use in the first quarter of the 20th century in Tashkent oases'; 'The study of the contemporary family among rural Armenians in Karabakh'; 'Ingush tales of ethnogenesis'; 'Survivals of sorcery among the Ingush'; 'The study of family customs among the Mordvians' and so forth. For 1970, the Institute members were given themes to work on by the directorate, for example 'The basic paths of development of the economy, culture and customs among the minority peoples of the North' (i.e. Siberia). So V. Tugolukov worked among the Evenks and Yukagirs in five districts; work was done among the Khants (the expedition leader was V.Vasiliev); A. Smolyak worked on the Nanai and Ulchi peoples, and so forth. Under the same rubric of studying paths of development, L. Monogarova led an expedition to the Tadjik Pamirs. Others went on expeditions to study aspects of ethnogenesis and ethnic history (the transition from one to the other is believed to take place when the given people become aware of themselves as a distinct ethnic group (see Dragadze 1978 and 1979)) in other parts of Central Asia. Others studied patterns of early settlement in the Northern Caucasus as well as in Central Asia, and traditional dwellings (or relics thereof) were studied in thirty two settlements in Daghestan. As a contribution to the theme 'History of religion and atheism' some members of the Ethnography Institute studied shamanism in various parts of the USSR.

There is no reference in this Moscow publication to fieldwork done outside the USSR in 1970, although occasionally anthropologists are allowed to join scientific research ships that are primarily used by oceanographers but which sometimes call in at various ports. The Leningrad branch of the Institute, which has more members studying foreign peoples than in Moscow, has occasionally been able to send anthropologists on such cruises to the Pacific Ocean. A few Moscow anthropologists, such as Kryukov, have done a month or so of visiting to Vietnam and other countries of South-East Asia. Their publications on peoples outside the USSR often, however, show considerable scholarship, and their mastery of documentary sources, as well as close readings of monographs by Western anthropologists, compensate generously for their almost total lack of fieldwork experience in these countries. It is, I think, their particular interests and their definition of the subject, rather than the difficulties of international political relations, which explain the neglect of fieldwork abroad.

II. Ethnosociology

This hybrid term has been created by Soviet scholars to describe an area of study which they claim combines the specialist concerns of those interested in 'ethnos' theory and those wanting to use 'sociological methods'. The latter basically means using mass questionnaires, a technique emphasised since the recent revival of Sociology. If anthropology is to survive as a discipline, it must study contemporary phenomena - so the argument goes - despite the persistence, among some anthropologists, of the traditional approach. With the unique training anthropologists have in studying traditions and

ethnic history, they can make a useful contribution both to social science and to the welfare of their country by studying ethnic processes, and the differences in attitudes to national culture among the peoples of the USSR who, we must remember, share the same political and economic system. With the politics of nationalism being as delicate as it is, great tact and skill must be employed in these studies, and the main researcher in ethnosociology, Y. V. Arutunyan, has been careful to limit his scope of study without falling into either dishonesty or sterility. Fieldwork consists of sending out teams to different republics and asking such questions as 'what would be your reaction to your daughter marrying a Russian?' This is one of about 150 questions in their standard set. Another issue studied, by examining internal passport records, is the preference children show in choosing between their mother's and father's nationality, when these are different. Attention is also paid to questions of religious preference, to differences in attitudes to family size, and to a host of other ethnic-specific particularities - to use the Soviet term. Discussion also concerns the methodology necessary to go through every street in a given urban district or set of villages. Interpreters are used, often local university students or Communist Youth cadres, and when the informants' answers have been read and coded, statisticians and computer programmers take over. Ethnosociologists insist that they are nevertheless anthropologists and not sociologists in the strict sense, because their field of interest - their object of study, in dialectical terminology - is ethnic specificity, the field of anthropology. They claim that only their methods of fieldwork differ from those habitually used by anthropologists.

III. Fieldwork for Foreign Anthropologists

By now it must be clear that the training we are given in the West and the expectations we have when doing fieldwork are not the same as in the USSR. Foreigners are forbidden to travel without restriction in the USSR, which is in itself a notorious problem in international co-operation. Even if we could set this difficulty aside, however, we would find it difficult in anthropology institutes and university departments there to assert the necessity that we be allowed to do fieldwork of eighteen months' duration in a single rural community. They themselves go to the field for a maximum of three months at a time, and are perfectly satisfied with this arrangement; the arguments we would use, from Malinowski onwards, would seem irrelevant to them.

I myself had difficulty in convincing my local supervisor, when I was a guest of Tbilisi State University (Georgian SSR) that I would not be considered a bona fide anthropologist when I returned to England unless I were allowed to settle and actually take part in the life of a village for a considerable time. It was only because I then stayed three years in the USSR, and also because he is a flexible man, that I was able to do what we could consider here to be a 'respectable' period of fieldwork. Most other anthropologists have not been so fortunate and have only been allowed considerably shorter periods of fieldwork. Their visits to Leningrad or Moscow on Anglo-Soviet exchange schemes are usually never longer than a year, with only short visits to the rural areas during their stay. Either we must decide to study areas of social anthropology which do not require lengthy fieldwork, or else we

must finally persuade the Soviet authorities to be more tolerant of our own quirks and traditions of fieldwork, which they find somewhat bizarre. Otherwise we will be deprived of the opportunity of studying in the USSR some of the most fascinating peoples in the world.

Tamara Dragadze

NOTES

1. A discussion of this Russian ethnographic experience could have been fruitful for Talal Asad's examination of anthropology and colonialism (Asad ed. 1973).

2. His being an anthropologist had, of course, nothing to do with the reasons for his death.

3. Etnografia in Russia does not easily translate into the British understandi... of 'ethnography' or 'social anthropology', although I translate it with the second term whenever possible.

4. Elsewhere (Dragadze 1979), I have likened this idea to Ardener's early concept of 'templates' (Ardener 1970).

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BOOK REVIEWS

E. P. Thompson: <u>Whigs and Hunters; the origin of the Black Act</u>.
Peregrine, London. 1977; £3.25; 327pp.(orig.pub.Allen Lane: 1975).

D. Hay, P. Linebaugh, J. G. Rule, E. P. Thompson & C. Winslow:
<u>Albion's Fatal Tree; crime and society in 18th century England</u>.
Peregrine, London. 1977; £3.25; 352pp. (orig.pub.Allen Lane: 1975).

     The essays collected in <u>Albion's Fatal Tree</u> and in E. P.
Thompson's <u>Whigs and Hunters</u> (on the origin of the Black Act),
represent, in two ways, an important step forward in a particular
tradition of British historiography.

     Firstly, they provide a much-needed contribution to our
understanding of 'what happened' to the conflicts of the 17th
century, apparently resolved by the 'Glorious Revolution of 1688'.
In text-book liberal history we move thus from the massive social
upheavals of the Cromwellian era (conventionally only a 'Rebellion'
on the way to the 'Revolution') to the 'Settlement', which, albeit
based on a radical division of property, engendered the 'Good
Things' of 'Industry and Empire' a hundred years later. However
such analysis is made without reference to the mass of men and
women whose deference to such a project had to be maintained - how
was this done? It is on this point that the intervention of these
essays gains significance.

     Secondly, and as a direct consequence, these two books are
a challenge to the <u>method</u> of liberal history. Indeed, as
Linebaugh says in his essay on the Tyburn riots against the use
of the bodies of felons for 'medical' purposes -

> Few history books of eighteenth-century England
> fail to mention the spectacle of public hanging
> at Tyburn...A passing reference to the 'harshness
> of the criminal code', the 'brutal spectacle of
> public hangings' or the 'love of aggression of the
> London mob' and we are brought back to the civility
> of life in well-landscaped gardens, the Good Sense
> of the Hanoverian Compromise, and the quiet accumu-
> lation quantified in the account books of London
> and Bristol merchants. Undisturbed except by these
> minor shoals, eighteenth-century English history,
> slowly, inevitably, meanders on, a broad river
> spreading peace and bounty to adjoining fields,
> carrying forward those mighty vessels, 'Trade and
> Commerce' and the 'Constitution'. (AFT:68)

But if everything had been 'Settled' in 1688, why were riots
widespread and often extremely violent? Indeed as Winslow shows
us, in his essay on Sussex smugglers, we are not dealing with a
society whose masses slumbered peacefully in the arms of pater-
nalism but, on the contrary, with one where they were, in part,
prepared openly, violently and with some success to defy their
'betters'. Moreover he says:

> Eighteenth-century smuggling involved a mixture of
> social forms of resistance. Because most of the
> actual fighting was between the plebian gangs and
> the forces of the Government, and because the smugglers
> believed that they were protecting their 'rights', the
> conflict contained elements of class war. (AFT: 158)

However, in themselves perhaps such 'facts' and 'analysis' are
accessible to liberal historians and, after all, perhaps it is
only a question of concentrating a bit more on 'social' history
(with all the implications that this is a topic at least 'marginal'
to our understanding of 'important' events, i.e. the decisions of
'Great Men') in order to correct the balance of our analysis in
these 'democratic' times, much as anthropologists seek to
'historicise' the societies they study. I am disposed to think
not. Thus Thompson's analysis of the origins of the Black Act
differs strikingly from the received liberal view. As he says
in discussing Rogers' article on the Black Act:

> We appear to be describing the same episode, but within
> that episode we see different actors and different
> social relations. What Rogers sees...is the operation
> of 'gangs' of 'criminals'...The Blacks were engaged in
> a 'calculated form of crime', their members belong to
> the 'criminal subculture of Georgian England', they
> were 'extortionists and protection racketeers', and
> 'bully-boys with a certain swagger and professional
> confidence'. (W&H:192)

As Thompson so neatly expresses it:

> The confidence, and perhaps even swagger, are (one
> feels) less those of the Blacks than those of
> Professor Rogers. (ibid)

Thompson is not out to 'romanticise' crime; he clearly recognises
that such men were neither particularly gentle nor necessarily
the 'social bandits' of Hobsbawn. Rather, such moral questions
are out of place and he argues that if we are to understand the
significance of the Black Act then it must be from an understanding
of the basis of 18th century social relations. Thus he writes:

> In this context we can see the passage of the Black
> Act as a severe measure of government business, serving
> first of all the interests of Government's own closest
> supporters. It was a step upwards in the ascendancy of
> the hard Hanoverian Whigs, and in particular Walpole's
> own career. This is to see it in its contingent
> evolution. But such an Act would not have been
> possible without a prior consensus in the minds of those
> who drafted it - indeed a consensus in the minds of the
> ruling class as a whole. (W&H:206)

But a consensus as to what and over what? In short a consensus
as to the fact that they alone should rule, obviously; but also a
consensus as to the means that were to be employed, i.e. the
ideology of law backed by the example of terror. It is here
that we return to a question that the liberal historians have
dodged: precisely how did what was probably no more than 3% of
the population manage to get the rest of society to accept a
radically inequitable division of property in the absence of
massive standing armies or police forces? In order to answer
this question Hay argues that we must examine the law, not just
as a structure of authority embodying this division of property
but also as an ideology which legitimized the way in which the

division had been made.   For this to happen he rightly points
out that the law at times must actually have been just, that it
must at times have also upheld the 'rights' of the unpropertied:
otherwise it would have legitimized nothing, masked nothing and
so contributed nothing to the hegemony of the ruling class.
And this is a point that many Marxists as well as liberals
would do well to note.

Equally, however, the fact that a handful of aristocrats
went to the gallows does not change our assessment of an excep-
tionally bloody penal code overwhelmingly directed to the
defence of a particular way of dividing property;   such super-
ficiality has proved largely the reserve of bourgeois ideologues.
But this is not to say that the rich had need of law, the poor
none.   Thompson reminds us here that law often functioned as a
definition of agrarian practice, and that many class struggles
were over alternative definitions of property rights.   In
mediating class relations, law not only imposed its forms on the
poor, but also at times laid down what was and what was not
possible for a Walpole.   But as 'gentlemen' of that century
revelled in the glories of their constitution and the justice of
their legal institutions one must perforce conclude, faced with
the evidence of the discontent of the unpropertied, that class
relations were not mediated by an entirely neutral instrument!

But what has the history of 18th century England got to do
with the subject matter of anthropology?   What these books show
us above all perhaps is a society dominated by the 'idiom of law':
how many times must it have been said that the societies in which
anthropology traffics are dominated by the 'idiom of kinship'?
Can we expect then that the 'study' of kinship can take place
solely in terms of its own logic, much as a lawyer might seek
to represent the development of Law?   I think not.   This is
not to say that such study has no place;   it is merely a reminder
that the 'structures' such a study might uncover will have parti-
cular and changing application according to the life conditions
of the people who have to work out their social relations in
terms of them.   Of course, many people engaged in social anthro-
pology would think such statements entirely uncontentious:
genuflections to 'materialism' are common enough.   However, the
fact that the implications of such a view are frequently not worked
through in practice, inclines me to think that I am not being
entirely vacuous in restating it.   This collection of essays
offers us a timely re-statement of this order.

<div align="right">Neil Whitehead.</div>

Louis Dumont. Home aequalis: Genèse et épanouissement de l'idéologie
économique.
Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1977.
270 pages.

'The longest way round is the shortest way home' 'ist what Leopold Bloom
muses amidst his wanderings, what anthropologists must (should) some-
times muse during theirs. This rhythm of leavetaking to homecoming
appeals to some kernel in our sense of vocation, for between the
Scylla of ethnocentrism and the Charybdis of accused uncommitment it
is steadying to recall that we do anthropology for our own sakes:
we go out into the field to return (or first to turn) to ourselves.
Louis Dumont is the anthropologist who has treated the Joycean themes
of moral itineracy and self-discovery most seriously and extensively.
His work on India has increasingly stressed the necessity of returning
to the West with the insights gleaned from caste society: '...the
completion of our present task only sketches for us a new task', he
concludes in Homo Hierarchicus, 'to reverse the perspective and throw
light on egalitarian society by comparison with hierarchical society
of the pure type, in a work which could be called Homo aequalis'
(1972: 284). Now Dumont presents us with his sequel, tellingly
subtitled 'The Genesis and Flowering of the Economic Ideology'.

He had dressed his princely figure in modest robes, for rather
than a work of the same reach and totality as his India book, Homo
aequalis is more demure in its claims. It comprises a series of
monographs on some economic and social theorists—the Mercantilists,
Quesnay, Locke, Mandeville, Smith, and most extensively, Marx—which
attempts to trace the development of 'the economic' as a distinct
category in intellectual discourse, and to sketch the individualist
ideology with which Dumont claims 'the economic' to be bound up.
The modesty and locality of Dumont's project bespeak it well, but at
the same time cast doubt on its capacity to carry the burden of proof
he seeks. As the title intimates, after all, a whole species of man
is being elucidated here, the species evolved within modern, European,
industrial civilization; to presume to find the likeness of that man
in a few theoretical texts, without telling us how he came to be
located there, begs as many questions as it lays to rest. Dumont,
himself, as in Homo Hierarchicus, defines ideology totallistically,
calling it

> ...that which is socially thought, believed, enacted, starting
> from the hypothesis that, hidden beneath our habitual distinc-
> tion, there is a living unity to it all. Ideology is not a
> residue here, it is the unity of representation, a unity which
> does not rule out contradiction or conflict (1977:31)

but his 'great books' methodology seems to belie this structural
approach. How is the primacy of the economic in our 'unity of re-
presentation' demonstrated by invoking those writers who, whatever
the case, give it a quite conscious primacy? We are

unsure whether, beneath the modest garments of these explications des textes, there truly lurks the princely figure of modern man; we may find only the beggarly figure of the modern intellectual.

These are doubts about the book's first assumptions, however, and we must lay them aside if we are to enter into its argument. The argument is well worth this suspension of disbelief, for while not over-subtle, it is unembarrassedly direct and fundamental; its lack of subtlety is in fact its virtue, since what the home-coming wanderer, or the non-specialist, can sometimes point out is exactly the common sense of things too common to demand elaboration. If Dumont sometimes protests too much historical assertions that seem obvious, we can be grateful for the moral subtlety involved, the risks taken in strange fields to raise the issue of comparison at all.

His argument stands on two contrasting views of what consti- tutes humanity and two concomitant views of society, which Dumont names holism and individualism:

> ...most societies valorise in the first place order,
> then conformity of each element to its role in the
> whole—in a word, society as a totality; I call this
> general orientation of values 'holism'.... Other
> societies, our own anyway, valorise the individual
> human being in the first place; for us each man is
> an incarnation of humanity as a whole, and as such
> is equal to all other men, as well as free. I call
> this 'individualism'....Now we find that, among
> the great civilisations which the world has known,
> the holistic type of society has predominated. Every-
> thing happens as if it had been the rule, with the
> sole exception of our modern civilisation (1977: 12).

Two fundamental assumptions are being made here. First, there is the division of humanity into two sub-species—a division based, we should note, not upon the titular concepts of hierarchy and equality, but on the more basic dichotomy of holism and individualism. This new dichotomy, to which hierarchy/equality relates as an implicit distinction (1977: 12), signals a theoretical advance over Homo Hierarchicus, whose emphasis on hierarchy tended to ignore traditional societies which lacked a strongly marked ranking system. At the same time, this conceptual advance heightens the risks in Dumont's enterprise. The former concentration on hierarchy had particularised his analysis; he was considering not the nature of social life in general, but the discrete version of it based on caste; and in fact, Dumont had invoked this particularity as crucial to the legitimacy of his method, criticising

...the mere consideration of <u>similarities</u> which
allow phenomena taken from different types of society
to be grouped together under a common label.... In the
last analysis, it is by humbly inspecting the most
minute particulars that the route to the universal
is kept open (1972: 37-8).

<u>Homo aequalis</u> abandons this route and the legitimacy of local analysis.
Its recourse to holism not only allows, but demands 'phenomena taken
from different types to be grouped together under a common label',
for as the end of the long passage given above makes clear, Dumont's
claims concern the nature of social life itself. This is the book's
second fundamental assumption: modern, Western man is not being
set against one particular society's alternative to himself and his
egalitarianism; rather he is set against the rule of human society.
He is exceptional, aberrant.

The risk which this claim to generality entails is not at
all political, or ideological in the vulgar sense. As with the
political theorist Leo Strauss, Dumont's anti-modernism is the
cutting edge of his insight, and not a blunt tool; his conservatism
gives his approach a clarity and stature to be reckoned with; so if
we disapprove of his commitments (as I do), still <u>Homo aequalis</u> has
compelled us to think them through. The danger of the book's
generalising thesis is, however, to be found elsewhere, in the
sort of intellectual legitimacy which the argument must claim for
itself. Disavowing particularity, Dumont must disavow as well the
intuitive and protean criteria by which we judge particular inter-
pretations (say, his structuralist interpretation of caste in <u>Homo
Hierarchicus</u>). Embracing generality, Dumont must lay claim to an
explicit and quite un-protean vocabulary by which to describe social
life categorically, by which to compare. He himself understands this,
and he ties his dualistic thesis about social types to the possib-
ility of an overall comparative model for society:

We are separated from traditional societies by what
I call the modern revolution, a <u>revolution of values</u>
which seems to have been produced over the centuries
in the Christian West. This fact contitutes the
axis of all comparison of civilisations...The central
task of comparison consists in giving an account of the
modern type <u>vis-à-vis</u> the traditional type. For this
reason the greater part of our modern vocabulary is
inadequate for the ends of comparison, and the fundamental
comparative model must be non-modern (1977: 16).

The possibility of comparison depends on the anthropologist's eman-
cipation from the terms of the modern: 'Only someone who holds

himself without can attempt to understand how this particular
point of view came into being' (1977: 35). Indeed his engagement
in a particular alien society such as India may be understood as
just the first step toward disengagement from any locale, the first
step into what Dumont calls 'sociological apperception'. In claim
if not in stature, then, Homo aequalis may be though to have surpassed
Homo Hierarchicus. With all traditional societies wedded in a theory
of the whole, the critic can turn toward 'the central task of com-
parison....giving an account of the modern type vis-à-vis the
traditional type'. Like the angel Michael brandishing his sword at
the gate to Eden, he looks back (and down) upon the solitary
renegades.

The security of Dumont's vantage-point thus depends on what he
can actually show us about our own renegade selves. He locates
our 'revolution in values' in 'an unprecedented innovation: the
radical separation of the economic aspects of the social tissue,
and their construction into an autonomous domain' (1977: 15).
This secession of the economic as an intelligible category is the
ideological dondition for our apotheosis of the individual:

> ...it is under the aspect of possession or property
> that individualism rears its head, removing every-
> thing left behind by an obedience to...social hier-
> archy, and installing itself upon the throne thus
> emptied. I need not insist: the economic, taken
> as the major category, represents the summit of
> individualism and, as such, tends in our universe
> to be supreme (1977: 75).

We recognize here the complement of Dumont's analysis of Hindu
ideology, whereby sacral order (dharma) encompasses rule (artha)
ecompasses self-interested pleasure (kama): in the West, on the
contrary, politics has encompassed religion (the rise of the city-
and the Reformation nation-states), and economics has encompassed
politics (the rise of modern, liberal states and of contract social
theory).

Now this is where the sort of obviousness I mentioned above at
once makes and mars the argument. Makes it, because this notion of
the scissiparity of domains does gives a good account of the atomism
and fragmentary unity of our 'native sociology'; mars it, because
it takes for granted exactly what it should demonstrate, the real
status of these domains in social life. Dumont is surely right in
asserting that our commonsensical, as well as our theoretical, idea
of the economic involves a substantial Individual prior to society,
for whom society is a means to self-directed ends—involves, in
Dumont's terminology, the primacy of relations to things and the
instrumentality of human relations. But this primacy is, par

excellence, the thing which needs to be accounted for. Does he mean
that individualism gives rise to a certain object-directed realm of
action which we call the economic? If so the argument---that 'the
economic, taken as a major category, represents the summit of individ-
ualism'---is a mere tautology, a definitional slaight-of-hand. Or is
it rather that the self-evident distinctness of economic action gives
rise to an individualist psychology?

But then we still do not know what exactly constitutes the economic
'as a major category,' nor can Dumont, within the exigencies of his
argument, ever tell us; for the argument is self-fulfilling. Certainly
the economic has something to do with the primacy of relations between
men and things; yet Dumont wants this to carry the implication of
subjecting all social relations to individual ends. This last is, of
course, the self-definition of bourgeois economics, but is it an
exhaustive sociological description of the domain, if the domain can
be said to exist at all? Marx, for one, offers a rival analysis,
calling illusory the radical distinction between social relations and
relations to objects, and constituting the economic as just that realm
of action where each implicates the other. He develops the concepts
of labour and production precisely to demonstrate this common
foundation. Thus in direct contrast to Dumont's dictum that 'needs,
labour, production all belong to economy, that is to say, essentially
to individual man in his relation with nature' (1977:207), Marx
writes of pre-capitalist societies:

> The earth is the great laboratory, the arsenal which
> provides both the means and the materials of labour,
> and also the location, the basis of the community.
> Men's relation to it is naïve: they regard themselves
> as its communal proprietors, and as those of the
> community which produces and reproduces itself by
> living labour. Only insofar as the individual is a
> member...of such a community, does he regard himself
> as an owner or possessor. In reality appropriation
> by means of the process of labour takes place under
> these preconditions, which are not the product of
> labour...(Marx 1964: 69).

Marx's argument here--as well as in the class analysis of
capitalism--subsumes the very antinomies upon which Dumont stakes
his description of the economic; this is indeed why Dumont's monograph
on Marx, which occupies the last half of Homo aequalis, is at once
its most provocative and most disappointing section. In the face of
Marx' triadic (or as one says, dialectical) schema, the book's
prolific dualisms commit some fundamental distortions. Marx,
asserts Dumont, is essentially an individualist, the rebellious young
son of Adam Smith who, despite abhorring his own society, cannot
(nostalgically) embrace holistic communities such as feudal Europe

because he 'has been to the school of the bourgeoisie' (1977:211).
There is a germ of rightness in this polemic, but as the above
quotation might suggest, it is so little right as to be obstructively
wrong.

Dumont goes wrong on Marx just where his whole project goes
wrong, in the Procrustean reductions of its typological dualisms:
human relations vs. relations to things, sociology vs. economics,
holism vs. individualism, the West vs. everyone else. We have seen
how 'the economic' and 'individualism' have a circular, mutually
supporting relation to each other; this is what I meant in calling
Dumont's argument self-fulfilling. The only way out of this circle
is to define the economic through the radical opposition between
traditional and modern ideology; but this opposision is what the
emergence of the category was supposed to explain; the consequence is
only to push the circularity one step back in the argument. This is
what I meant in calling attention to the 'legitimation crisis' in-
volved in Dumont's twofold classification of social types.

There is, to be sure, a venerable tradition of such dualistic
models in social theory, starting from Tönnies and Maine, passing
down to Weber and Mauss, and finding its way even into such an
universalist as Lévi-Strauss. Were we to trace the tradition back-
wards, we would find it in Rousseau, in Bacon, in the 17th century
'Battle of the Books,' even in Paradise Lost. We cannot deny that
we share its intuitions ourselves, share with Dumont and Rousseau
and especially Milton the sense of a fall into modernity and a
radically new, broken way of life. Indeed the cleft between the modern
and the traditional is implicit in the activity of anthropology, and
even more so in the homeward movement of the anthropologist which
furnishes the occasion for Homo aequalis.

But that is precisely why, especially for Homo aequalis, we
should suspect it so. To return home under the triumphal banner of
Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, already persuaded of the pathological
status of one's own society, is to beg every question which it is
the province of the anthropologist to examine. In particular, it
evades the most securely pathological fact of his society, which
is the presence of the anthropologist himself. For all our talk
about function and meaning, science and structure, leavetaking and
homecoming, this is a fact we have not even begun to make sense of.
As Dumont exemplifies, we have a firm sense that anthropology frees
us from our modernity, that it gives us access to the comparative
basis of society itself. Unlike Dumont, though, we might also
acknowledge what a thoroughly modern and Western calling it is,
acknowledge that we have no idea what a 'non-modern comparative
model' could look like. Anthropologists are at once implicated and
disengaged; the society to which they return must be at once privi-
leged and dismissed. Just when we thought to be most sure of our

vision, carrying our field-glasses home, we no longer know where to
stand. Inside seems outside; irony retreats into membership.

I must say that I have no insights into this paradox. But
reading Homo aequalis suggests to me ways not to go about coming
home--beginning with not fixing on the privileged character of the
West. I am not claiming that our society is unspecial, and even
destructively so; it is no less justified to say that than to say
that Marx 'has been to the school of the bourgeoisie,' But merely
to recognise this is sterile, and it does not help. It strikes me
that the task of the returning critic is not to show us what we are--
which he can do mainly at the cost of being obvious--but to show us
what we are not, to show us particular alternatives to ourselves. If
Dumont had lain aside his all-too-Western typologies, and had included
more of India, then Homo aequalis, as provocative as it is, would
have been a better book; as with any quest,the key is not what you
arrive at, but what you collect along the way. Or, to end with another
novelist of the comic journey (this time John Barth), 'The key to the
treasure is the treasure'.

David Scobey.

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