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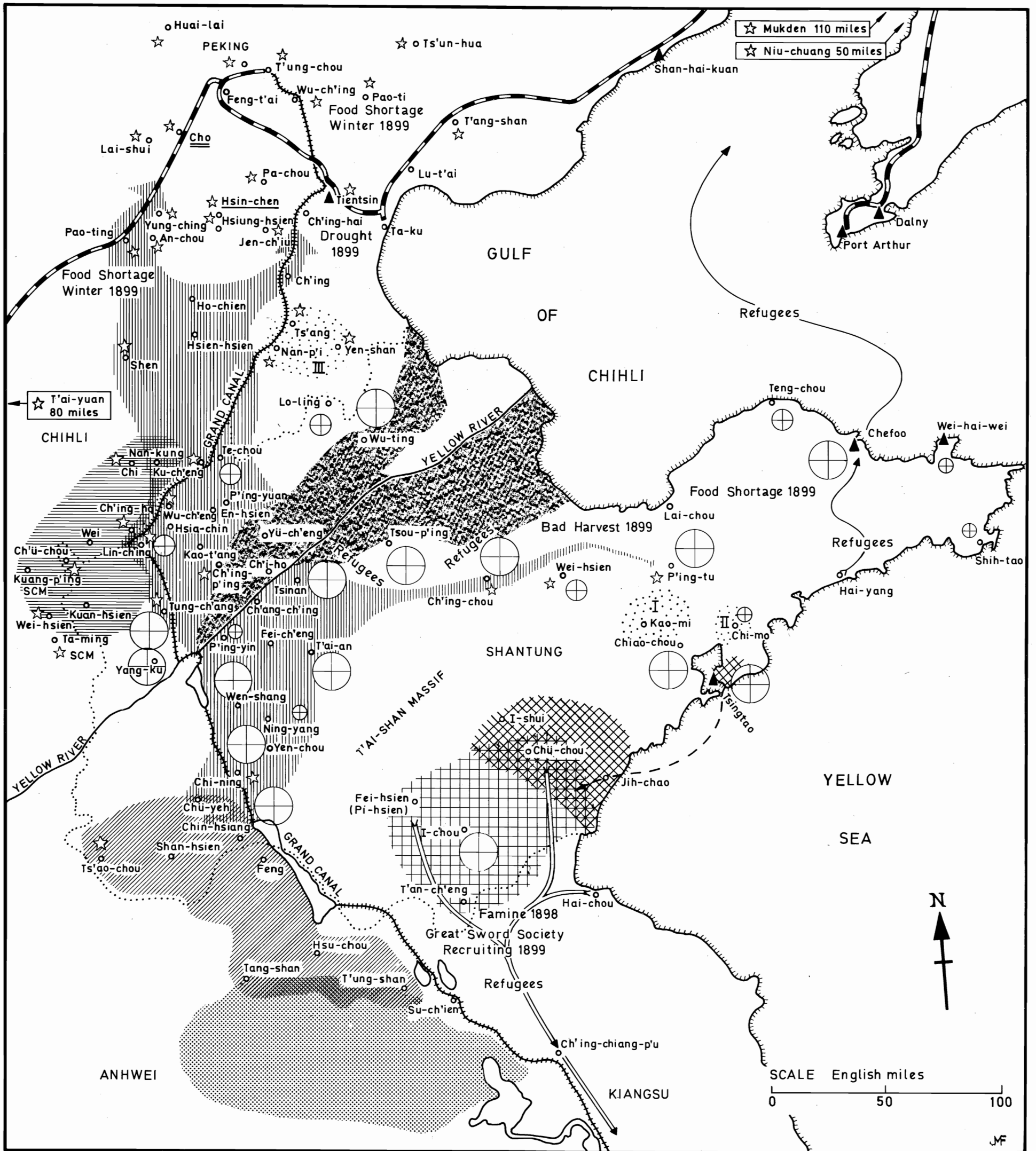
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THE ORIGINS OF THE BOXERS 1898-1900

Map accompanying Elvin, *Mandarin and Millenarians...* © J.A.S.O. 1979



KEY

- PROTO-BOXER HEARTLAND
- GREAT SWORD SOCIETY, 1896-97
- BOXER ACTIVITY, AUGUST 1899 TO FEBRUARY 1900
- REBELLION, JANUARY-MAY 1899
- ANTI-CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT, JANUARY-JUNE 1899
- ANTI-FOREIGN MOVEMENTS, 1899
- ANTI-RAILWAY MOVEMENT, 1899
- ANTI-CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT, APRIL 1899
- ANTI-CHRISTIAN PROPAGANDA, 1898
- AREA FLOODED 1892-98

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES IN SHANTUNG

- LESS THAN 400
- 400-2,000
- 2,000 TO 6,000
- SCM SOUTH CHIH LI MISSION

- COUNTY CAPITALS AND HIGHER-RANKED CITIES MENTIONED IN THE TEXT
- CENTRES OF BOXER ACTIVITIES, MARCH-JULY 1900
- TREATY PORT OR FOREIGN LEASED AREA
- RAILWAYS
- PROVINCIAL FRONTIER OF SHANTUNG (OMITTING ENCLAVE OF LI-YUAN-T'UN)
- GERMAN MILITARY EXPEDITION, MAY-JUNE 1899
- REFUGEES MOVING SOUTH 1898, RETURNING 1899
- REFUGEES MOVING NORTH, MARCH 1900
- Hsin-chen BOXER HQ., MARCH 1900
- Cho BOXER HQ., EARLY JULY 1900

JASO

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Elizabeth Munday

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The journal is published three times a year. Contributions relating to topics in social anthropology are invited from students and established scholars in any discipline. While no strict limit of length is imposed, articles not exceeding 5000 words are preferred. Comments and correspondence concerning published articles are particularly welcome. The journal now also includes a Commentary section. This is designed to include papers that are not necessarily articles in the conventional sense - those, for example, which draw attention to a particular author or book, or which comment informally on a current issue in social anthropology.

All communications should be addressed to the Editors, JASO, 51 Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 6PF, England.

S U B S C R I P T I O N S

Readers will note that this issue contains certain technical improvements on the previous format of the journal. The editors aim to continue this process of improvement; it is hoped that it will not cause inconvenience to our readers. However the price of the journal must unfortunately be raised, to cover both these new production expenses and the continual rise in costs generally. Subscriptions for 1980 will accordingly be as follows:

Individuals: £3.00 (or US \$7.50) for one year.

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MANDARINS AND MILLENARIANS:
REFLECTIONS ON THE BOXER UPRISING OF 1899-1900

*A lecture delivered at the School of Oriental and African Studies on
June 6, 1979, in memory of Professor Maurice Freedman*

I was delighted when Dr. Watson asked me to give the first lecture in the new series planned by the Contemporary China Institute. — Delighted and surprised. I am after all a historian, not a specialist on current affairs. This afternoon's subject, the Boxers, only just falls within the confines of the present century; but it has been chosen in the hope that it may prove of interest not only to historians of politics but also to those whose concern is with the contemporary scene. 'Le vrai historien,' said Febvre, 'a deux patries: le passé et le présent.'

The executive committee of the Institute have decided to dedicate this lecture to the memory of the late Professor Maurice Freedman.* This is an act of homage to one of the greatest authorities on Chinese society and a gesture that touches me very deeply, since Maurice was both a colleague and a friend of mine during his tenure of the professorship of social anthropology at the University of Oxford. It is also an honour that, to speak honestly, causes me some apprehension since I know very well how far what you are about to hear will fall short of the exacting standards that he set.

One of Maurice's most striking gifts, and one much in evidence at his seminars at All Souls, was his ability to reconsider familiar data

* For a perceptive intellectual biography and a comprehensive bibliography of Freedman's writings, see G.W. Skinner's obituary in *American Anthropologist* LXXVIII, no. 4, 1976, pp. 871-885. *The Jewish Journal of Sociology* XVII, no. 2, 1975, contains a subtle psychological portrait by P. Cohen (pp. 121-123) and a discerning account by J.S. Gould of Freedman's institutional life and commitments. A fine description of Freedman's character and intellectual originality may also be found in Sir Raymond Firth's memorial address given at All Souls' Chapel on December 6, 1975 (privately printed, 15 pp.). Shorter notices are in *The Times* (July 22, 1975, p. 16); *The British Journal of Sociology* XXVI, no. 3, 1975, following p. 262, by D.G. Macrae; and *Man* (n.s.) X, no. 4, 1975, pp. 613-614, by Göran Aijmer.

and draw out of them new conclusions that seemed obvious enough once reached but which had somehow escaped the rest of us. It is in such a spirit of reconsideration that I would like to approach the Boxers, a hackneyed subject if ever there was one. In particular, I want to try to answer two simple but subversive questions, namely, why did they appear where they did and only there; and why were they able to grow and expand in a way not achieved by any other anti-Christian movement in China? In answering them, I hope to show that the rather general explanations for the Boxers given by most historians have to be supplemented by precise and particular considerations and, to some extent at least, replaced by them.

The Boxers of 1899 and 1900 had tenuous historical links with earlier movements bearing similar names as far back as the later eighteenth century.¹ The significance of these antecedents seems slight enough, however, to justify our concentrating entirely on the later 1890s for the purposes of the present discussion.

The Boxer movement of this period resulted from the convergence of two earlier and separate paramilitary forces. These were located in the two areas shown on the map as the 'Proto-Boxer Heartland' and the 'Great Sword Society, 1895-97'. These forces expanded, from different directions, into a region suffering from an unusual degree of economic dislocation, demoralization and, possibly, latent popular hysteria. This third region is approximately that shown in the map as the scene of Boxer activities from August 1899 up to and including February 1900.

The first of these two forces was composed of unofficial self-defence militia who were active in the lands that straddle the border between the provinces of Shantung and Chihli, and west of the city of Lin-ch'ing on the bend of the Grand Canal.² The area may be thought of as a triangle bounded by Kuang-p'ing, Nan-kung and Kuan-hsien.³ Thirty years previously it had been the scene of an uprising by leaders of the Eight Trigram Sect, who had been loosely allied with the Nien rebels. The sectaries were notable for their magical warfare whereby scattered beans were said to become soldiers and stools to turn into horses, for a female military leader, for 'troops and generals from Heaven', and for the assertion of a new imperial authority from a palace set up in a village.⁴ All but the last of these characteristics have obvious affinities with the later movement. As of 1898 these proto-Boxers (if I may so call them) regarded themselves as 'newly established', although they probably went back in some form at least to the middle of the nineteenth century.⁵ Bodies that the Shanghai newspaper the *North-China Herald* called 'village leagues' were not uncommon in western Shantung in the early 1890s for defence against robbers.⁶

They were not, therefore, anti-Christian from the beginning. They became so because of conflicts with mission converts. The best-known of these quarrels occurred at Li-yuan-t'un in an isolated enclave of Kuan-hsien that was in fact inside Chihli province,⁷ where the Roman Catholics acquired and then pulled down a temple sacred to the Jade Emperor some time around 1887. In 1897 the villagers counter-attacked, led or assisted by a group called the Plum Blossom Fists. A second attack, launched in the spring of 1898, was big enough to be described by the *North-China Herald* as 'open rebellion'. It was suppressed by the troops of Governor Chang Ju-mei.⁸

Popular hatred of the converts was sharpened in 1898 by the influx of anti-Christian broadsheets from Ts'ang-chou, further north up the Grand Canal. The proto-Boxers encountered this propaganda at the markets

where they gave displays of their martial arts.⁹ Mendacious anti-foreign propaganda had of course a general circulation in the province. An example is the set of coloured prints, pasted up in places like inns, showing the war of 1894 not as a national humiliation but as a Chinese victory not just over Japan but all the other powers as well.¹⁰ Several Shantung officials wrote denunciations of the foreigners, including Governor Li Ping-heng and the magistrate of Hsia-chin county, which lies just east of Lin-ch'ing.¹¹

Finally, some time early in 1899, the proto-Boxer movement advanced east and north out of its heartland, in the directions of En-hsien and Pao-ting respectively.¹²

The second force was the Great Sword Society. More precisely, it was that part of it that was active between Ts'ao-chou, Hsu-chou, and Chi-ning.¹³ This area lies to the south of the proto-Boxer heartland, and is separated from it by the Yellow River. The Society first appeared in Ts'ao-chou in 1895, and much of its early appeal was to the better-off as a form of partly practical, partly magical self-defence against brigands, whose depredations had reached a climax in the preceding years. In 1896 and 1897 it led uprisings here that were ostensibly anti-Christian, although their motive may in part have been resistance to the increased tax on opium, which was grown widely in the region.¹⁴ Their opposition to Christians was intermittent, and punctuated by periods of friendship. They made opportunistic use of popular dislike of Christian refusal to participate in the customary social rituals. They took advantage of the hostility among landlords aroused by the Church's protection of tenants who were converts. They capitalized on the help sometimes inadvertently given by missionaries to criminals, and on the claims made by some bandits and sectaries in south-western Shantung to be Christians, in order to benefit from the Church's prestige. But they also plundered non-Christians, and flirted with the idea of rebellion. Anti-Christianity was not their only, or even essential, reason for existence.¹⁵ It may also be of significance that the Great Sword Society rebels were organized in *t'uan* or 'militia-bands', each of a thousand men.¹⁶ Claims of invulnerability to weapons, and the sponsoring of theatrical performances to attract new members were part of their stock-in-trade.¹⁷

In the next year, 1898, anti-Christian boxing societies began to be formed in this southern area.¹⁸ Most observers identified them with the Great Sword Society.¹⁹ The comment of the censor Huang Kuei at the end of 1899 is typical. 'Broadly speaking,' he wrote, 'the Sword Societies, the Boxing Associations, and the Militia are different aspects of the same phenomenon. When they break the law, they are bandits. When they behave themselves, they are ordinary commoners.'²⁰

Nonetheless, the identification was not complete. During 1899 the northernmost part of Kiangsu was filled with famine refugees, and the Great Sword Society vigorously recruited members there. Its objectives were at least as much self-defence as opposition to the foreigners; and it remained quiet here in 1900 at the time when the Boxers in Chihli were fighting the Powers and occupying the cities of Peking and Tientsin.²¹

In the middle of 1899 there were anti-Christian outbreaks in Chi-ning and then Ts'ao-chou,²² and some of the Society also began to move northwards.²³ In August the Boxer leader Ch'en Chao led a rising in the area that spans Chu-yeh, Chi-ning, and Wen-shang. Disturbances by so-called 'Sword bandits' occurred in the same month in Fei-ch'eng and P'ing-yin.²⁴

The point at which the two original forces joined was probably the outbreak at En-hsien and P'ing-yuan in September and October led by

Chu Hung-teng. Chu was a rich man either from Chih-p'ing²⁵ or from Ch'ang-ch'ing, slightly to the east,²⁶ but there is some evidence that some of his forces came from the south, though his newest recruits were levied in Ch'ang-ch'ing. His training grounds certainly featured the trademark of the Society, a long sword hung up horizontally. But he had entered an area in which boxing societies had already been established, and it is a reasonable guess that these came from or were inspired by the proto-Boxer heartland to the west.²⁷

The region where this suggested convergence took place had several distinguishing characteristics.

First, it was full of refugees made homeless by the repeated flooding of the Yellow River between 1892 and 1898.²⁸ The areas affected by floods are shown on the map. Of course, to some extent seasonal migrations from the flooded river plain were institutionalized. The *North-China Herald* observed that 'the stronger members of the family ... will deliberately ... set off for a winter's campaign of respectable beggary ... conducting themselves in an orderly manner.'²⁹ There were also large numbers of refugees in substantially missionized areas such as Tsou-p'ing³⁰ that were virtually untouched by Boxerism. For both of these reasons, the contribution made by refugees to anti-Christian violence should not be overestimated.

Second, the increasing transfer of the yearly shipments of tax rice that was sent from the Yangtze valley to Peking away from the Grand Canal and on to sea-going steamships had led to unemployment among Canal boatmen and service-workers.³¹ Private shipments of private goods tended to avoid the Canal because of the heavy transit dues.³² At the northern terminus of the Canal, the water and road links between T'ung-chou and Peking had been superseded by a railway in 1897, a development that had destroyed T'ung-chou's traditional transport industries.³³ Over the winter of 1899 to 1900 the water in the Canal was too low to permit large boats to move, and the tax rice vessels were stranded in Shantung.³⁴

The Canal was the economic artery of the area in which the Boxers were first active. For example, the four hundred ships that carried the Shantung quota of tax grain customarily brought large quantities of illegal, duty-free goods back on the return journey from Tientsin. These were sold at fairs at Te-chou and other cities around the end of the lunar year.³⁵ Economic decline also seems to have made parts of the Canal zone dangerous. Both Su-ch'ien in northern Kiangsu and Lin-ch'ing in western Shantung were famous for the sale of rifles and revolvers for personal protection.³⁶ (We may note in passing that military primitivism, sometimes ascribed to the Boxers, was usually a symbolic act on the part of anti-foreign officials rather than the result of popular taboos.³⁷)

Third, the area was full of *déclassé* elements, marginal and violent men many of whom became Boxers. There were village bullies and thieves,³⁸ and probably professional gamblers, seeing that Lin-ch'ing was a centre of organized gambling.³⁹ Others were disbanded soldiers, for large numbers of demobilized troops had passed through Lin-ch'ing on their way back south after the Sino-Japanese war of 1894/5, many of them from western Shantung.⁴⁰ A few deserters may also have come from Yuan Shih-k'ai's forces when he marched briefly into Shantung in May 1899, enforcing an unpopular degree of discipline on his men. He took the route that the Boxers were to take, in reverse, to Tientsin six months later.⁴¹ The two Boxer leaders in Tientsin, Ts'ao Fu-t'ien and Chang Te-ch'eng, were, appropriately, an ex-soldier turned bandit and an out-of-work Canal boatman, both of them from Ching-hai.⁴²

Fourth, the people of the area in which the Boxers were most active

in the later part of 1899 and early 1900 seem to have been unusually prone to mass hysteria.⁴³ An early illustration of this is the flood scare of 1872 in the localities south of Pao-ting. The Sheng-hsien sect proclaimed that 'on a certain date a flood of waters would devastate the country, and only the faithful few who prepared themselves for its coming by building boats could escape — like another Noah — from the ruin that would overtake the land.' And so, as the *North-China Herald* reported, 'boats were built in immense numbers [T]he fated day ... came and passed, to the confusion of those whose arks, ready provisioned for a voyage, stood unconcealed before their doors. Many broke up their boats at once, but every here and there in that district you will come across them half-decayed and used for all sorts of purposes.'⁴⁴ A later example is the kidnapping panic in the summer of 1897. This was a rehearsal in miniature for the anti-Christian pogrom two-and-a-half years later. It covered a region lying between Tientsin and T'ung-chou in Chihli and Ch'ing-chou and Wei-hsien in Shantung that was almost exactly that subsequently affected by the Boxers. In Tientsin, if not elsewhere, there was some rational basis for fearing the theft of children. In the summer, when the grain-ships passed through, boys and girls were stolen and smuggled south. Some of them were deliberately deformed, so that they could serve their owners as beggars. With apprehension of this sort in the background, rumours began to circulate that the foreigners were sending out hypnotists who lured away children and cut out their vital organs. In view of the later use of hypnotism on teenagers by the Boxers, this phobia may have been based on Chinese practices current in the area. County magistrates reacted by issuing proclamations, some of which the *North-China Herald* thought were 'phrased in such a way as to inflame the people to madness.' Popular frenzy led to false accusations, judicial murders, lynchings, and assaults on alleged kidnappers and on those simply thought to have connections with foreigners. It was over by early October, with the abruptness characteristic of Chinese panics.⁴⁵ From cases like these it might be surmised that the foreigners were apt to be incorporated, as new demonic agents, in the system of popular beliefs already existing in this area and characterized by fears of malevolent magic and general destruction. The oddest twist to the theme of the invisible troublemaker came during the Boxer movement itself. The Governor-General of Chihli reported, presumably following popular opinion, that Chinese Christians had put on red or yellow turbans and actually disguised themselves as Boxers. They had secretly buried explosive mines in Tientsin and its environs but there was, he said, 'no means of detecting who they were'.⁴⁶

This spatial analysis of the Boxer movement clarifies to some extent why it occurred where it did, but difficult questions remain about its probable causes. Information is available on the approximate numbers and distribution of both Roman Catholic and Protestant Christian converts in Shantung in 1901,⁴⁷ and these are shown on the map. On the assumption that the situation was not drastically different from that obtaining in 1899, it is clear that neither the proto-Boxer heartland, not the area of the Great Sword Society uprisings, was exceptionally heavily missionized. The map is, however, misleading in that it does not adequately show the presence of the Catholic Christians whom we know to have been present in Ts'ao-chou, Shan-hsien, and Ch'eng-wu in the Shantung sector of the Great Sword Society region (or, of course, those in the northern Kiangsu sector).⁴⁸ Furthermore, both core areas were about 150 miles away from the nearest non-missionary foreigners, those who lived in the ports of Tientsin and Tsingtao. Unlike the coastal districts, parts of which had suffered from the Sino-

Japanese war of 1894 and the German punitive expedition by ship to Jih-chao in 1899,⁴⁹ they had never been entered by foreign soldiers. The areas of foreign occupation in Shantung, and about half of the missionized areas, were untouched by Boxerism. The region of maximum Christian concentration, which was Ch'ing-chou, with more than 6,000 converts, was only moderately affected, and mostly in the flood-stricken areas to its north.⁵⁰ Comparable figures on the quantitative extent of missionary penetration in southern Chihli are not available. Kuang-p'ing and Ta-ming were only served by the Protestant South Chihli Mission, which does not suggest numerous converts.⁵¹ It therefore appears that the link between Boxerism and the religious and foreign irritant usually supposed to have caused it is nothing like as strong as it should be to serve as a convincing sufficient explanation.

So far as it is possible to tell, the Boxer movement had no direct connection with the anti-Christian movement led by the gentry of I-chou in the first half of 1899,⁵² or with the anti-German outbreaks in this year along the southeastern coast of Shantung.⁵³ They were separated from it by the T'ai-shan massif.

If it is permissible to judge from the statistics collected by Cochrane for 1912, Shantung was less heavily missionized than Chihli, having at this later date about 10 missionaries per million population as against 25 per million for the latter province. Converts numbered about 0.6 per cent in Shantung and about 2.0 per cent in Chihli.⁵⁴ The 1901 figures were much lower. The 62,000 converts in Shantung in this year were perhaps 0.2 per cent of the province's total population. How did such a small stimulus produce such a violent reaction in the zone linking the proto-Boxer heartland and the Great Sword Society area? And why was there no comparable reaction in more heavily missionized places such as Tsou-p'ing, Wu-ting,⁵⁵ and Chefoo? The most plausible answer is that only in western Shantung, especially northwestern Shantung, and the adjacent part of Chihli, was there a convergence of all the factors making for social instability that have so far been mentioned. This having been said, it is necessary to dispose of three alternative but unsatisfactory hypotheses.

First, it is tempting to suppose that Boxer claims of invulnerability to foreign weapons, and the belief in the demonic nature of foreigners and Christians, would have gained credence most easily where people had only a slight knowledge of what foreigners and Christians were really like.⁵⁶ This hypothesis is put out of court by the enthusiasm with which the Boxer ideology was greeted in the treaty port of Tientsin when it arrived there.⁵⁷

Second, it might be supposed that there was some pre-existing, underlying pattern of differential propensities to hostility towards foreigners. The Wei-hsien correspondent of the *Herald* observed in 1895 that 'the attitude of the people differs greatly throughout the province'.⁵⁸ Certain areas in western Shantung were notoriously nasty for missionaries, Yen-chou for example.⁵⁹ But this approach does not help us to understand 1899 and 1900. Some places where the Boxers were active had periods of good relationships between converts and non-Christians, Lin-ch'ing and Chi-nan for instance.⁶⁰ Some places where there was anti-Christian trouble earlier in the 1890s were untouched by Boxerism. An example is Wei-hai-wei.⁶¹

Third, it might be conjectured that it was the novelty of the missionary presence, rather than its weight, that was provocative.⁶² The general movement of missionary work in Shantung and northern Kiangsu seems to have been from east to west.⁶³ Thus the first missions only reached Hsu-chou in 1897,⁶⁴ at a time when the missionary college in Teng-chou was almost thirty years old.⁶⁵ The rate of expansion of Catholicism in south Shantung was also at its highest in the decade of the 1890s in the year between

1898 and 1899: about 40 per cent per annum for baptised Christians and 36 per cent for catechumens.⁶⁶ The assumption that, after an initial period of confrontation, converts and non-Christians settled into a more-or-less stable symbiosis seems to be refuted, however, by the case of the long-established American station at En-hsien, an early focus of Boxer activity.⁶⁷

Thus far we have been looking at the Boxer movement from the outside. What did it look like from the inside?

In the first place, it was an anti-Christian pogrom. It sought the physical elimination of scapegoats who were regarded as the source of ill-fortune. In this respect it had something in common with late mediaeval millenarian movements. As Professor Cohn has shown, these flourished not so much among peasants and artisans as among what he calls 'an unorganized, atomized population ... on the margin of society ... people who were not simply poor but who could find no assured or recognized place in society at all.'⁶⁸ Outbreaks typically took place against a background of natural disaster. The more extreme ideologies prescribed the killing of the ungodly as the believer's duty.⁶⁹ The kinship of Boxerism with such movements is evident from a poster put up in Peking:⁷⁰

The supernaturally assisted Boxers ... have only arisen because devils have plagued the North China plain. They have urged people to believe in Christianity, which is to usurp Heaven. They do not respect the Gods or Buddhas, and are forgetful of their ancestors. These men have no principles in their human relationships. Few of the women are chaste. These demons are not the children of human beings. If you don't believe what we say, look at them carefully: the devils' eyes all emit blue light. The rain does not fall. The ground has dried up. All this has happened because the Christian churches have put a stop to [the workings of] Heaven. The Gods are angry and the Immortals vexed If you want to drive away the devils, it will not take much effort. Pull up the railway lines! Cut the telegraph wires! Smash the great steamships! ... Once all the devils have been slaughtered, the great Ch'ing dynasty will enjoy a peaceful ascendancy.

Other posters declared that the Christians had offended the Jade Emperor and so brought about epidemics, drought, and poor harvests.⁷¹ One or two spoke of an imminent day of disaster on which only the good would be spared, and of a coming 'year of destruction'.⁷² This sort of prophecy had been characteristic of the White Lotus sectaries a century earlier.⁷³ Once again we find the Christians and foreigners being worked into a pre-existing framework of ideas.

There was a morbid fear of spies,⁷⁴ imagined undercover agents analogous to the imagined hypnotists of three years earlier. Anyone who wore unpadded clothing, studied foreign books, or simply seemed suspicious was likely to be declared a spy and butchered.⁷⁵ The search for spies was a common pretext for robbery.⁷⁶ The detection and killing of Christians and alleged Christians was almost as capricious. Some of the Boxer masters claimed to be able to see a cross on the forehead of converts that was invisible to ordinary eyes.⁷⁷ So many were killed in Tientsin that the Grand Canal is said to have changed colour,⁷⁸ and many of those put to death were indisputably not Christians.⁷⁹

Rumours of the poisoning of wells by Christians were widespread;⁸⁰ and the popular sense of insecurity was heightened by such Boxer tricks

as the stage-managed discovery of iron objects alleged to be land-mines and bombs that would otherwise have blown the city of Tientsin to smithereens.⁸¹ These fears were offset by belief in an instantaneous, virtually magical, regeneration and prosperity if the devils were done away with and Boxer rituals followed. 'Once the foreigners are swept away,' said a popular slogan, 'the rain will fall of its own accord and the disasters disappear.'⁸² According to the anonymous work *A Month in Tientsin*: 'The foolish people told each other that ... in the [Boxers'] militia they cooked their rice in a copper cauldron holding about two pints, from which thousands and tens of thousands of people were served without it ever becoming empty.'⁸³ Liu Meng-yang's account of Tientsin under Boxer rule describes how believers were told to extinguish their fires, seal their chimneys with red paper, and offer five loaves of steamed bread at midnight, together with a bowl of cold water and a hundred copper cash.* Thereafter, it was asserted, 'the steamed bread and cold water could be eaten and drunk without their ever being exhausted, and the more cash was spent, the more there would be.'⁸⁴

The ease with which the ordinary people believed even the most exaggerated Boxer claims is as surprising as the speed with which this credulity vanished. Here is how Wu Yung, the anti-Boxer magistrate of Huai-lai in Chihli, described the initial welcome given to them:⁸⁵

The masses believed that the Heavenly Gods had come down to earth. The supernatural techniques of the Boxers were taught everywhere It was said that they could swallow swords, spit fire, call down winds, and command the rains. They were just like characters from the novel *The Enfeoffment of the Gods*. Women and children in all the villages chattered away, hoping to see them soon There was a very warm sentiment in favour of driving the foreigners out For this reason, educated scholars and gentry in the county also spoke of their doings with delight.

By June, 1900, Boxer practices were all the rage in Peking. According to Ch'ai O:⁸⁶

Training-grounds were set up everywhere. One saw them wherever one turned one's eyes. Previously there had only been one altar to each street ... but now there were three or four ... or even five or six. Altars were first set up by the followers of the bandits. Later on, wealthy folk did the same. From princes and nobles at the top to singers and actors and yamen lictors at the bottom, almost everyone was enrolled in a militia band.

As is well known, the Boxers claimed invulnerability to bullets and swords, the ability to fly, become invisible, multiply their bodies, and kill at a distance as well as the powers of healing and bringing the dead back to life. Within a few months, their failure to substantiate these assertions provoked popular anger. According to *A Month in Tientsin*:⁸⁷

* The term 'cash' is conventionally used in Western writings on China to designate the lowest denomination of traditional copper coin, and is a Pidgin English word derived from the Sanskrit *kārsha* 'copper'.

If there were dead and wounded in the Boxer militias, the Masters would not permit people to weep for them, nor to burn paper money ... "So-and-so has become a spirit," they would say. "What is the use of weeping?" At first, people obediently did as they were told, but, as the deaths and injuries increased, many disobeyed and cursed the Masters for their lack of magic, which had merely destroyed men's lives.

When the sceptical asked how it was that so many supposedly invulnerable Boxers had been killed by gunfire, the leaders sometimes replied that 'these were persons who were greedy for wealth, and for this reason the gods did not descend to take possession of them.' This brought the retort: 'If those who desire money are vulnerable to firearms, why aren't the Masters and Chief Disciples dead, since they have pillaged more than anyone else?'⁸⁸ Disbelief in Boxer magic led to desertions, a crime for which the punishment was the cutting off of the culprit's ears, the burning of his home, and sometimes death.⁸⁹ Dislike of Boxer looting caused fighting between Boxers and genuine village militia forces, and the formation of anti-Boxer trainbands.⁹⁰ Overall there was a curious combination of simple-minded gullibility followed by a swift reassertion of common sense.⁹¹

Previous writers have mentioned the prevalence of teenagers among the Boxer forces.⁹² Even so, they have underestimated the extent to which the movement was a children's crusade, in which the young were manipulated by their elders.⁹³ According to *A Month in Tientsin*:⁹⁴

There were numerous boys in the militia, some of them only eight or nine years of age, who held swords and went to battle. They themselves declared that after they had practised the magic they were no longer the masters of their own bodies, but felt only the urgency of the [divine] inspiration, and so rushed forward When the militia fought the foreigners, most of those who were wounded and killed were these boys.

The basis of the Boxer technique may have been hypnosis, possibly induced by eating a small amount of mercuric sulphide, since they were described as having 'staring red eyes and foaming mouths'.⁹⁵ The hypnotic aspect is evident from a passage in a work called *A Miscellaneous Record of the Boxers*:⁹⁶

The teacher first draws a circle on the ground. He orders those who wish to receive instruction to step inside it They stand with their eyes closed, and the Teacher murmurs spells into their ears Before long some fall prostrate on the ground. These he teaches. Those who do not so fall are regarded as unteachable When they practise boxing ... the instructor holds a boy's right ear with his hand and makes the boy himself recite the spell three times When the spell is completed, the boy lies supine on the ground, almost lifeless. He is then slowly urged to rise and dance about Pairs of such boys will fight together as if facing a mighty enemy. In truth, they are like people drunk, or in a dream. After a time, the Teacher will slap the boy in the middle of the back and ... he will wake up, and stand there like a wooden chicken, having entirely forgotten the art of boxing.

The famous Red Lanterns of Tientsin were mostly unmarried girls under seventeen years of age, often thought to have been controlled by a fortune-teller known as the Sacred Mother of the Yellow Lotus.⁹⁷ They were reputed to travel through the air by waving fans or riding on copper bowls full of water. Their speciality was leaving their homes at night to burn the houses in the foreigners' own countries, and they defied parents who tried to remonstrate with them.⁹⁸

Many Boxer operations were political theatre. A number of the gods whom they worshipped, or by whom they claimed to be possessed, were heroes from operas and novels. Their speech was often declaimed in operatic fashion. Their costumes were modelled on the military characters of the stage.⁹⁹ Carefully contrived happenings were performed by their leaders before the marvelling multitudes. Thus, after firewood and kerosene and accomplices had been hidden inside a church, the Boxer masters would arrive and ignite it from outside by seeming magic with a wave of the hand and the cry of 'Burn!'.¹⁰⁰

The taboo placed on foreign articles extended even to names. Rickshaws, or 'Eastern Ocean Carriages' (*tung-yang ch'e*), had to be renamed 'Great Peace Carriages' to avoid the word *yang* meaning foreign, and to carry red labels to that effect.¹⁰¹ New ideographs were created. The character for *yang* itself, which has a water radical on its left-hand side, was given a fire radical on its right to show that the foreigners were now between fire and water.¹⁰² Only on the foreign rifle was the taboo, in practice, lifted.¹⁰³

The Boxers would have been no more than a local nuisance if they had not received a measure of official approval and sponsorship. Some well-informed observers suspected that Li Ping-heng, who was Governor of Shantung between 1894 and 1898, and Yü-hsien, who governed the province from 1898 to 1899, covertly played a part in actually creating the movement.¹⁰⁴ Since the Great Sword Society openly proclaimed that its authority came from Yü-hsien, the most likely hypothesis is that late in 1898 he prompted the Society to pursue what was in a sense a moderate course: namely to harass and rob Chinese Christians, but not to kill them, so that they would break off relations with the Europeans. He probably thought that foreign governments would only intervene to protect Westerners. This was quite an astute conception, and might have had some success if the masses had not escaped from his control.¹⁰⁵

What is certain is that Boxer determination to kill or drive out the foreigners in China, and to eliminate the foreign religion, touched a chord of sympathy in a number of ultra-conservative officials.¹⁰⁶ Most of them were members of the nobility, the Grand Secretariat, and the Han-lin Academy, men with little exposure to the responsibilities of regional administration.¹⁰⁷ They were allured by the vision of taking advantage of this upsurge of popular enthusiasm, of manipulating it, and of ridding China of treaty ports, foreign trade, and Christianity. They dreamed of returning international relations to the golden age of the Ch'ien-lung reign. The conflict between this vision and the more reliable assessment of the Boxers provided by other officials, namely that they were impossible to depend upon, heterodox, and basically rebellious,¹⁰⁸ remained unresolved for many months, and this led to a period of indecisive policy at the top.¹⁰⁹ The limp formula adopted by the Empress Dowager during the spring of 1900 was that the authorities should only suppress the bad elements among the Boxers who behaved like bandits. Membership of a boxing society was in itself acceptable, even praiseworthy.¹¹⁰ This irresolute attitude allowed the movement to grow in the metropolitan

province of Chihli, to occupy Peking, and in the end to become so dangerous that direct repression would have been hazardous.¹¹¹ The crucial difficulty was that not only notables, like Prince Tsai-lien who had been told to put down the Boxers, but many of the capital's constabulary and regular troops soon became sympathetic to the Boxers.¹¹² As Sheng Hsuan-huai said on June 5th, the loss of government control was the result 'of no decision being taken as to whether to exterminate them or to conciliate them.'¹¹³

The attacks made on the thinly-defended diplomatic legations in Peking¹¹⁴ by the Boxers and by regular troops under General Tung Fu-hsiang obliged the six foreign powers with naval forces off the north China coast¹¹⁵ to organize an expedition for their relief. This expedition captured the Ta-ku forts down-river from Tientsin on June 17th, and by so doing transformed the Chinese internal political situation.¹¹⁶ China had been attacked, and was now at war. The ultra-conservatives soon had the better of the argument at Court, even if they did not win explicit imperial endorsement for all their views. Chinese Christians were designated 'religious bandits', potential allies of the invader who should either recant or be killed.¹¹⁷ Foreigners in China should be exterminated, including those in the legations.¹¹⁸ The Boxers were indispensable allies of the official army, representatives of the people's will who could form an invincible rampart against aggression.¹¹⁹ Officials who advocated peace negotiations, and the protection of foreigners and Christians, were traitors.¹²⁰ Denunciations of military officers who had been trying to suppress the Boxers grew more vociferous.¹²¹ As a result of this political shift at the centre, the controversy within the Chihli bureaucracy over the Boxers turned into a virtual civil war. Anti-Boxer officials were murdered legally by decrees, and illegally by Boxer assassins, either at their own whim or at the urging of pro-Boxer officials.¹²² Regular troops from pro- and anti-Boxer factions fought with each other as well as with the foreigners.¹²³

Once the Court had given its backing to the Boxers in late June, and told governors and governors-general to levy and arm Boxer militias,¹²⁴ the authorities in Honan and Manchuria, who had hitherto been suppressing the movement,¹²⁵ observed a limited compliance.¹²⁶ A sceptical note can sometimes be detected beneath their dutiful expressions of enthusiasm.¹²⁷ Yü-ch'ang, the Governor of Honan, observed that 'those who only have the ability to be unscathed by sword-blades, and still find it hard to resist gunfire, do not have the pure art; and should be encouraged to train further.'¹²⁸ From Kirin, General Ch'ang-shun confessed to being 'startled' at the Court's change of policy. He criticized the backing given to the Boxers by General Tseng-ch'i at Mukden as 'rash'.¹²⁹ He had taken a personal look at the art of a few of the boxing masters and it did 'not appear to be entirely supernatural'. He added tactfully that no doubt the real experts were still in Chihli and Shantung and too busy to come north.¹³⁰ Nonetheless, he and a colleague set up altars.¹³¹ The only unqualified enthusiast for butchering foreigners and converts was Yü-hsien, new Governor of Shansi.¹³²

The other provincial authorities, in Shensi, Kansu, Shantung, Anhwei and all of the South, simply refused, with varying degrees of suavity, to sponsor Boxerism.¹³³ From the Yangtze valley Governors-general Liu K'un-i and Chang Chih-tung spoke to the Throne with severe realism: the Boxers were unreliable; the Powers could best be controlled by exploiting their mutual rivalries; China was ill-prepared to fight a war; external hostilities could easily create the conditions for an internal rebellion.¹³⁴ Taking advantage of a decree of June 21 telling each province to 'make its own plans' to block the foreigners,¹³⁵ they signed an independent agreement with the powers, providing protection for foreigners and Christians in the

areas under their jurisdiction in return for military non-intervention.¹³⁶ This bold disobedience presumably saved China from dismemberment.

Our next task is to try to understand the conservative radicalism that nearly brought China to this latter condition.

The ultra-conservatives believed that the will-power of the mobilized masses, under suitable control, and a heightened ideological consciousness could together overcome adverse objective circumstances. Yü-hsien argued at Court that 'the position of our country is continually declining because the will of the people is not being developed. If we go on killing the boxing folk it is no different from cutting off our own wings, or opening the door and bowing politely to robbers.'¹³⁷ T'an Chi, Tutor to the Heir-Apparent, urged the moderates with whom he disagreed to 'think of China's overall situation, which relies wholly upon the resolution in men's minds. The spirit of righteous anger is sufficient to repress insults.'¹³⁸ 'The foreigners,' declared the Throne, 'depend on cruel strength. We depend on the people's minds.' With more than four hundred million people all willing to die, 'what difficulty can there be,' it asked, 'in extinguishing the blazing fire of their evil-doing?'¹³⁹

There was the vision of a nation in arms, of 'the will of the masses' as a rampart.¹⁴⁰ 'The Righteous and Harmonious Militia who have helped in the fighting,' said one decree, 'have not cost the state one soldier, nor consumed one ration of food. Even young lads have grasped weapons to defend their homeland.'¹⁴¹ In the eyes of such ardent pro-Boxer officials as Kang-i, Chao Shu-ch'iao, and Wang Hui-li the Boxers were 'knights of righteousness' who had 'the spirit of the knights-errant of old'.¹⁴² The supernatural aspects were rationalized. Censor Lu Chia-mo averred that 'the mind is man's spiritual part. When spirits act through men, they affect them through the mind. The completely sincere can have a reciprocal influence [upon spirits].'¹⁴³ Prince Tuan was more pragmatic. When Li-shan objected that most of the Boxers' magic did not work, the prince retorted: 'It is only a matter of using their feelings. Why do you talk about their magic?'¹⁴⁴ The first attempt at mass mobilization in modern Chinese history was thus the work of reactionaries.

The logic of extremism envisaged a final solution to the problem of Christians and foreigners. Censor Hsu Tao-k'un argued that missionary activity was designed 'to lure away our people', and foreign trade 'to seize our wealth'. 'Inevitably,' he went on to say, 'they will coerce all the people of the Empire into being their soldiers.'¹⁴⁵ Converts were therefore potential rebels.¹⁴⁶ Their efforts at self-defence against the Boxers and, in some cases, official troops, made it easy to brand them as 'religious bandits'.¹⁴⁷ This justified extermination, but the Censor Ch'en Pi objected that there were too many Chinese Christians 'for them all to be killed'. He proposed creating what he called Self-Renewal Offices where converts who trampled on the cross and denied their faith would be allowed to live. Only those who refused to recant would be put to death.¹⁴⁸ This idea was adopted in a decree of July 1st. How can it be, the Throne asked rhetorically, that all the converts 'are really enamoured of alien races, and take death upon themselves of their own accord? If they can change their faces and wash their hearts, there is no reason why they should not be released from the net.'¹⁴⁹

P'u-liang, Vice-President of the Board of Finances, wanted to exterminate the foreigners in the treaty ports, for fear that they might stir up the converts and even march on the capital.¹⁵⁰ Grand Secretary Hsu T'ung and others called on the Throne to 'root out evil races' and 'alien breeds', in other words to order a massacre of Westerners and Japanese.¹⁵¹ Two Han-lin compilers wanted to abolish international law, treaties, foreign trade, concession areas, loans, and indemnities, and to kill all barbarians in China, so that 'not a single one is left'.¹⁵² Their proposals were often infused with a nostalgia for the technology of the past. They demanded the destruction of

railways, the restoration of the traditional system of communications by relays of horses and riders, and the renewed manufacture of antiquated weapons like 'cloud ladders' (in other words, scaling ladders) and 'fire eggs'.¹⁵³ But perhaps the most faithful guide to the wishful thinking of the educated classes is the considerably less bloodthirsty and archaic fake treaty published by the Boxers as a propaganda measure, probably somewhere in the Yangtze valley. Among the many provisions to which the foreigners had allegedly agreed are the following: the Powers to pay indemnities to China, Japan to present tribute, foreigners and missionaries banned from the interior, doubled rental for treaty ports, Chinese control of the Imperial Maritime Customs, Westerners to kowtow to Chinese officials, and the demolition of the Trans-Siberian railway.¹⁵⁴ The temptation before these impatient patriots was the prospect of immediately reversing China's painful international situation.

But the Boxers would not submit to official control. What occurred instead was a political saturnalia in which the roles of ruler and ruled were momentarily reversed. In Tientsin, and probably several other cities such as Cho-chou, they took over the administration. The city was divided up into sectors each ruled by different bands of militia under a unified command.¹⁵⁵ Officials in sedan-chairs, or on horseback, had to dismount and stand respectfully to one side when the Boxers went by.¹⁵⁶ They smashed down many of the government offices, and released the criminals from the county jail.¹⁵⁷ In Peking they looted the houses of senior officials, and shot or stabbed to death lesser officials and army officers in retaliation for fancied insults or treason.¹⁵⁸ One of their vows followed the promise to uphold the dynasty's laws with a pledge 'to kill corrupt officials'.¹⁵⁹ According to a contemporary Japanese account the Boxers referred to the Peking mandarins as 'the three hundred sheep', and thought only eighteen of them did not deserve death.¹⁶⁰

The powerlessness of the high-ranking pro-Boxer officials to exercise effective influence over their protégés was evident as early as mid-June, when Grand Secretary Kang-i went to Liang-hsing and Cho-chou to try — quite vainly — to stop the unauthorized killing of foreigners and converts, and the destruction of government property.¹⁶¹ Once large numbers of Boxers had entered Peking, partly owing to the help of Prince Tsai-lan,¹⁶² there was carnage and confusion there. Many non-Christians were killed,¹⁶³ and business life came almost to a standstill because of the destruction or closure of the money-shops.¹⁶⁴ On June 23 Prince Chuang, Kang-i and others were appointed to lead the Boxers in the area between Peking and Tientsin.¹⁶⁵ This had no beneficial effect on the situation.¹⁶⁶ As Ch'ai O, the chronicler of Peking's agony, tells it, 'corpses were piled up like mountains', outrages of unmentionable obscenity were practised on Christian women, and the Han-lin Academy was burned so that, in Ch'ai's phrase, 'the old books and documents flew off like butterflies'.¹⁶⁷

Ch'ang-tsu, Vice-President of the Board of Finance in charge of granaries, wrote a sceptical appraisal of his own efforts to organize the Boxers at T'ung-chou:¹⁶⁸

The militia people use spiritual means to establish their teaching, and so basically do not accept official control. When one begins to recruit them and win them over, one has also to restrain the mob to be sure that nothing untoward happens. They come and go as they please; and rough behaviour has become a habit with them. All that I could do was to go in person to the various militia and in complete sincerity make known to them what loyalty and righteousness were. I gave them as effective a lead as was possible under

the circumstances, in the hope that they might come under our jurisdiction. I have now set up a General Militia Defence Board, and deputed officials and gentry to have joint charge of it, the intention being that [the Boxers] may be joined to us in a spirit of unity. But their attitudes are deeply ingrained, and I do not dare to expect that they can be transformed.

Liu En-p'u, another granary official, who was trying to organize the Boxers near Peking, observed that less than half of the militia leaders would cooperate with him merely to the extent of reporting their men's names.¹⁶⁹ Perhaps the only effective official leadership of the Boxers was that given by Circuit Intendant T'an Wen-huan at Tientsin.¹⁷⁰ In Tsun-hua department the Boxers under the Han-lin Bachelor Yang Hsi-lin engaged in robbing and killing;¹⁷¹ and the private Boxer militias set up by two members of the imperial clan had to be suppressed by Prince Chuang for indiscipline.¹⁷² And, as numerous memorials reported, many so-called Boxers were only ordinary criminals taking the chance to give their crimes the cover of legitimacy.¹⁷³

Let us draw the threads together. Our survey hints at a certain bimodality in Chinese political behaviour whereby long periods of tough but flexible pragmatism alternate with occasional intense moments of radicalism and irrational excitation.¹⁷⁴ The Boxer uprising is an unusually clear case of such a moment. Examples of other moments, the Cultural Revolution perhaps, will occur to anyone familiar with modern Chinese history. To make it easier to draw comparisons between such episodes, and to define contrasts, it is useful to list the particular characteristics of the Boxer period as follows:

1. Hatred was used as the basis of mass mobilization.
2. Scapegoats for misfortune and suffering were invented and then killed.
3. There was a morbid fear of spies and other, all-but-invisible enemies.
4. The leaders had faith in the effectiveness of the will-power of the mobilized masses, and discounted the importance of superior technology.
5. Ordinary people believed in a more-or-less magical ideology that promised the accomplishment of superhuman feats.
6. Activists were obsessed with the symbolic purification of words, dress and objects.
7. There was a general desire for ideological unity, and the government sponsored a crude programme for compelling deviants to reform their thoughts.
8. People tended to expect an instant, almost miraculous, restoration of well-being once evil-doers had been destroyed.
9. Theatrical devices were used to arouse the emotions, and drama and real life flowed into each other.
10. The enthusiastic young were the most numerous recruits to the cause, and possibly those who eventually suffered most.
11. The mass movement only developed as the result of a measure of encouragement from a part of the government apparatus.
12. The civil and military bureaucracies split into two factions, one for and one against the mass movement, and deadly feuds arose from this antagonism.

13. The mass movement was ostensibly loyal to the Throne, but in practice resisted official attempts to control it, and even created a skeletal administration of its own at the local level.
14. The criminal underworld used the mass movement as a cover.
15. Popular support was widespread but shallow, and collapsed under pressure as initial credulousness gave way to common-sense.

With this checklist we must take our leave of the Boxers. Whether Maurice Freedman would have approved or not of the arguments offered here under his auspices, I do not know. I miss, and the profession misses, his kindly but incisive criticism.

MARK ELVIN

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My former student Mr. K. Wei, of the University of Cambridge, has made a number of studies of the Boxer uprising in specific localities. Although our interpretations differ on some points, I have found his work extremely stimulating and would like to acknowledge it here. The comments made by Professor G.W. Skinner on an earlier version of the argument presented in a paper at the Australian National University in 1978 have also proved most fruitful.

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Elvin, 'Mandarins and Millenarians ...'

NOTES

1. One problem lies in tracing the connections between the earlier movements using the words *i* and *ho* in their titles and the later *i ho ch'uan* or *i ho t'uan*, which is to say the Boxers. For three contemporary views on this see Chien Po-tsan *et al.* (eds.), *I ho t'uan* (The Boxers), (hereafter cited as IHT), Shanghai: Shen-chou kuo-kuang she 1951 (4 vols.), I, 237 (Sawara Tokusake); III, 373 (Wu Yung); and IV, 433 (Lao Nai-hsuan). Later analyses are to be found in R.B. Sheeks, 'A Re-examination of the *I ho ch'uan* and its Role in the Boxer Movement', *Papers on China* I, Dec. 1947; C.C. Tan, *The Boxer Catastrophe*, New York: Columbia University Faculty of Political Science 1955, p. 45; Tai Hsuan-chih, *I ho t'uan yen-chiu* (The Boxers), Taipei: Chung-kuo hsueh-shu chu-tso chiang chu wei-yuan-hui 1963, p. 11; V. Purcell, *The Boxer Uprising: A Background Study*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1963, ch. 7; G. Dunstheimer, 'Religion et magie dans le mouvement des Boxeurs d'après les textes chinois', *T'oung pao* XLVII, 1959. On the meanings of *i* and *ho* see J. Chen, 'The Nature and Characteristics of the Boxer Movement - a Morphological Study', BSOAS XXIII, 1960, p. 296. There is a reference to a Boxer leader in the middle of the nineteenth century in S.T. Chiang, *The Nien Rebellion*, Seattle: University of Washington 1954, pp. 45-47. IHT IV, 437 has a reference to the same man, Wang San-lo.

Another problem is defining the relationship of the Boxers and the Great Sword Society to the other secret societies, sects, associations, and militia forces with which they were sometimes said to be connected, such as the Golden Bells, Iron Shirts, and Shadowless Whips. E.g. Chung-kuo shih-hsueh-hui Chi-nan fen-hui (ed.), *Shan-tung chin-tai-shih tzu-liao* (Materials on the Modern History of Shantung), (hereafter cited as STCTS), Chi-nan: Shan-tung jen-min ch'u-pan-she 1957 (Daian reprint, 1968) (3 vols.), III, 183; and J.J.A.M. Kuepers, *China und die Katholische Mission in sud-Shantung 1882-1900: Die Geschichte einer Konfrontation*, Steyl: Drukkerij van het Missiehuys 1977, pp. 117-119. Yuan Shih-k'ai regarded the Boxers as part of the Li Trigram sect, and from the same source as the White Lotus. See Ming and Ch'ing Archives Office (ed.), *I ho t'uan tang-an shih-liao* (Historical Materials on the Boxers from the State Archives), (hereafter cited as IHTTA), Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü 1959 (2 vols.), I, 93. I have not yet attempted to unravel either of these problems.

2. *North-China Herald* (hereafter cited as NCH) 1900, May 23, 966. Cp. Tai, *I ho t'uan*, p. 10. One source in STCTS, III, 184, puts the origin of Boxers in T'ang-i county, just north-east of Kuan-hsien.

3. IHTTA I, 19.
4. *Kuan-hsien hsien-chih* (Kuan-hsien County Gazetteer) 1934 edition, reprinted Taipei: Ch'eng-wen ch'u-pan-she 1968 (3 vols.), III, 1565-1568.
5. IHTTA I, 14-15.
6. NCH 1892, Sept. 2, 340.
7. *Kuan-hsien hsien-chih* I, 103; III, 1574.
8. *Kuan-hsien hsien-chih* III, 1574-76; Tai, *I ho t'uan*, pp. 24-5; NCH 1897, May 14, 863; Oct. 8, 654; Dec. 24, 1129; 1898, May 14, 410; May 21, 464; April 4, 570. Cp. IHT IV, 438.
9. IHTTA I, 15.
10. NCH 1895, Oct. 4, 567. Cp. Kuepers, *Mission*, p. 98.
11. NCH 1898, Mar. 7, 364; Mar. 14, 409; 1899, Feb. 20, 289.
12. NCH 1899, Dec. 4, 1121.
13. There was a non-active part in eastern Honan province. STCTS III, 183. The best description of the Great Swords is in Kuepers, *Mission*, esp. pp. 106-132.
14. Opium began to be grown in large quantities in Ts'ao-chou around 1890. The withdrawal of land from ordinary crops drove up the prices of food-stuffs and forced numerous poor people into robbery. Kuepers, *Mission*, pp. 106-07.
15. Kuepers, *Mission*, pp. 40-42, 44-45, 50-52, 54-57, 74, 81, 83-86, 94, 113-14, 117, 120, 124, 128-29, 132, 171, 175.
16. IHTTA I, 1-5; 9, 13, 38-9. NCH 1896, July 24, 142, 145; July 31, Oct. 31, 748; Nov. 30, 831; 1897, May 7, 816.
17. STCTS III, 183.
18. IHTTA I, 39.
19. E.g. Public Record Office (London), F.O. 17/1412 *passim*, esp. Campbell to McDonald, Feb. 4, 1900; NCH 1899, Dec. 27, 1263; 1900, June 20, 1111. Governor YU-hsien was the exception. See IHTTA I, 38.
20. IHTTA I, 45.
21. NCH 1899, July 3, 16; 1900, Mar. 21, 498.
22. IHTTA I, 59; Kuepers, *Mission*, pp. 171, 174. Some time earlier, in December 1898, an unnamed 'secret society' had led anti-missionary outbreaks in Yen-chou and Tung-lu. See NCH 1899, Jan. 23, 105.
23. Compare the pattern of movement northwards sketched by Yuan Shih-k'ai in IHTTA I, 94. He does not, however, mention the proto-Boxer heartland.
24. IHTTA I, 39, 50. Cp. Kuepers, *Mission*, pp. 172-73.
25. STCTS III, 191-92.
26. IHT IV, 504.
27. IHTTA I, 35, 39. IHT I, 353-55.
28. NCH 1898, Dec. 24, 1200-01; 1899, May 8, 814; June 26, 1155. Imperial Maritime Customs, *Decennial Reports ... 1892-1901*, Shanghai: Tsung shai-wu ssu shu, T'ung-chik'o 1904 (2 vols.), I, map.

29. NCH 1898, Dec. 12, 1081.
30. NCH 1898, Dec. 24, 1200-01; 1899, May 8, 814 (on Ch'ing-chou).
31. NCH 1897, June 25, 1137; Oct. 1, 617; 1899, Feb. 27, 336.
32. NCH 1898, Mar. 14, 411.
33. NCH 1898, Feb. 17, 175; May 16, 842; 1900, June 6, 1022. One of the railway bridges was too low to allow most boats to pass through at high water. See NCH 1897, June 25, 1135.
34. NCH 1900, May 2, 773.
35. NCH 1892, Sept. 2, 340.
36. NCH 1897, Jan. 29, 161; 1898, April 18, 660. Cp. NCH 1899, Jan. 23, 125 on the carrying of arms in the Canal zone in Kiangsu.
37. An example is Governor Yü-hsien's purchase of bamboo shields and spears in June 1899. See NCH 1899, June 26, 1155. As Yuan Shih-k'ai pointed out, the Boxers used both muskets and portable guns. See IHTTA I, 93. Li Ping-heng's loathing of foreign clocks is a good example of ultra-conservative official technological xenophobia. See NCH 1897, June 18, 1091. The Golden Bell Screen sect, which appeared in south-western Shantung in 1895, and is said to have used only short spears decorated with a tuft of red hair, may be an example of popular military primitivism. Kuepers, *Mission*, p. 118. The closely-related Great Sword Society acquired firearms in 1896 when it was joined by robbers and turned from self-defence to plundering. Ibid, p. 128.
38. NCH 1899, Oct. 9, 710. IHT III, 374. Cp. NCH 1899, Nov. 20, 1011 on the role of this class in fomenting disorders.
39. NCH 1896, July 3, 15. Cp. NCH 1892, Apr. 8, 457.
40. NCH 1895, Feb. 8, 185; May 22, 434.
41. NCH 1899, June 19, 1093. On the presence of ex-soldiers, see NCH 1900, June 6, 1022; and IHT I, 355.
42. IHTTA I, 210. IHT II, 17, 25-26. Dunstheimer, 'Religion', p. 351.
43. The Kuan-hsien gazetteer emphasizes the very suggestible nature of the people of that county, in response to both good and evil influences. *Kuan-hsien hsien-chih* I, 132-33.
44. NCH 1893, Jan. 6, 10.
45. NCH 1897, June 25, 1136; Sept. 3, 448; Sept. 10, 486-87; Sept. 24, 580; Oct. 8, 654; 1898, Dec. 19, 1147.
46. IHTTA I, 366. IHTTA I, 398 gives a case of a Christian in Shansi who pretended to be a Boxer.
47. Imperial Maritime Customs, *Decennial Reports*, I, 125. 'Wen-chan' has been tentatively identified as Wen-shang. P'o-li-chuang is in Yang-ku county. Kuepers, *Mission*, map (p. 208), pp. 21, 22, 28, 59, etc.
48. STCTS III, 183. Catholic missionary activities in south-west Shantung started in the 1880s. The majority of converts were in the countryside, rather than the cities; and many of them were former members of Chinese heterodox sects, whose beliefs and practices (such as auricular confession) often had something in common with Christianity. Kuepers,

Mission, pp. 29-32, 90. Baptised Christians and catechumens together in the Catholic south Shantung area are given by Kuepers, *Mission*, p. 209, as just over 53,000 in 1899, whereas Imperial Maritime Customs, *Decennial Reports*, gives only 16,531.

49. J.E. Schrecker, *Imperialism and Chinese Nationalism: Germany in Shantung*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1971, pp. 91-124; A. Hummel (ed.), *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office 1943-4 (2 vols.), I, 407.

50. NCH 1899, Jan. 10, 49; 1900, Mar. 28, 554. Imperial Maritime Customs, *Decennial Reports* I, 125.

51. NCH 1899, Sept. 4, 485.

52. NCH 1899, Jan. 23, 115; Jan. 30, 169; Feb. 20, 299; Mar. 20, 478; Mar. 27, 530; Apr. 3, 575; Apr. 10, 199; May 29, 961; June 26, 1156; July 24, 170; Oct. 23, 812. Ch'ai O (in IHT I, 304) puts the Boxers in I-chou but he was writing in Peking. Chi Pi-hu says the Boxers began in I-chou. See IHT IV, 448.

53. On Chi-mo see NCH 1899, Apr. 24, 718. On Germans see NCH 1899, May 1, 764; May 8, 801-02; May 15, 862; June 5, 1013. On anti-railway activities see NCH 1899, June 26, 1159; July 10, 71; Aug. 14, 326. Schrecker, *Imperialism*, p. 132, also makes the point that the renewed attacks on missionaries and railway workers at Kao-mi, Wei-hsien, and Chiao-chou in 1900 were not connected with the Boxers.

54. T. Cochrane, *A Survey of the Missionary Occupation of China*, Shanghai: Christian Literature Society for China 1913, esp. pp. 278-291, 304-315. Protestant 'enquirers' and Roman Catholic catechumens have both been included. For the sake of comparison, it is interesting to note that in 1912 Shansi's figures were 16 missionaries per million and 0.6 per cent converted; Kiangsu's (heavily weighted by the concentration of missionaries in Shanghai) were 26 missionaries per million and 1.4 per cent; and Kwangtung's were 18 per million and 0.5 per cent.

55. There was a slight Boxer backwash from Ts'ang-chou, Ch'ing-hai, and Yen-shan into north-central Shantung, notably Lo-ling and Hai-feng (modern Wu-tai) in the northern part of Wu-ting prefecture. STCTS III, 230.

56. As the Kuan-hsien gazetteer said, the people were 'boxed off in a corner and unversed in outside matters.' *Kuan-hsien hsien-chih* I, 132.

57. IHT II, p. 7 ff. Cities were often more hostile to foreigners than was the countryside. Kuepers, *Mission*, pp. 79-81.

58. NCH 1895, Apr. 11, 550. The Wei-hsien referred to here is that in central Shantung not south-eastern Chihli.

59. NCH 1892, Mar. 25, 276; 1897, Dec. 3, 992. Kuepers, *Mission*, pp. 59-105, and especially p. 94 which describes the 'Committee for the Annihilation of Europeans' set up in Tsou county in 1894.

60. NCH 1895, Mar. 8, 352; Apr. 11, 545.

61. NCH 1897, Apr. 2, 587.

62. The missionary Freinademetz, writing in the 1880s, stressed the difficulty of starting a new mission. Kuepers, *Mission*, p. 50. Attempts to enforce a total social boycott of foreigners characteristically appeared when missionaries first arrived. See *ibid*, pp. 57-58 (Ts'ao-chou, 1883), and pp. 60-63 (Wen-shang, 1886).

63. NCH 1892, Oct. 28, 637; 1895, Sept. 6, 398; NCH 1896, Nov. 13, 831; Dec. 11, 1011; Dec. 24, 1100; 1897, Jan. 22, 104; Feb. 5, 201; Oct. 15, 696-97; 1898, Feb. 7, 176.
64. NCH 1897, Feb. 5, 201.
65. NCH 1898, Feb. 7, 176.
66. Kuepers, *Mission*, p. 209. The author's note suggests part of this apparent increase may be a statistical effect produced by a more complete inclusion of children.
67. NCH 1897, Oct. 15, 696-97.
68. N. Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, London: Paladin 1970 (revised edition), p. 281.
69. Ibid, p. 212.
70. IHT I, 112.
71. IHT IV, 147. Cp. Tai, *I ho t'uan*, p. 8, which gives the text of another poster in which the Jade Emperor stated that the coming of disaster was due to foreign devils 'who ought to be decapitated'. Accusations that Christians were responsible for natural disasters pre-date the Boxers. Kuepers, *Mission*, p. 38.
72. IHT IV, 151; I, 354.
73. Suzuki Chūsei, *Shinchō chūkishī kenkyū* (A Historical Study of the Mid-Ch'ing Period), Toyohashi: Aichi daigaku 1952, esp. pp. 24, 86, 98, 102, 105, 110.
74. The Chinese term is *chien-hsi*.
75. IHT II, 10, 14.
76. One source reports some bystanders as saying, ironically, to the Boxers: 'There are a lot of rich people in Tientsin. Are you going to label all of them as spies [or 'traitors'], loot their households, and go home rich gentlemen?'. IHT II, 151. See also IHT II, 26.
77. IHT II, 15.
78. IHT II, 18.
79. IHT II, 14.
80. E.g. IHTTA I, 91. For officially echoed accusations see IHTTA I, 193, 263, 281. In Ts'ao-chou in 1899 these rumours gained credence because of the prevalence of typhus and 'a certain sort of plague'. Kuepers, *Mission*, p. 174.
81. E.g. IHT II, 12, 15, 33.
82. IHT II, 8. Cp. Kuepers, *Mission*, p. 174.
83. IHT II, 141. On the magical ability of the so-called Cooking-pot Lanterns to feed large numbers, see also STCTS III, 187.
84. IHT II, 11.
85. IHT III, 385.
86. IHT I, 306. Cp. IHT III, 376 on nobles and eunuchs practising Boxer arts.

87. IHT II, 153.
88. IHT II, 149.
89. On desertions see, for example, IHT II, 39; IHTTA I, 342-3, 366. On punishment for desertion, at least in the early days, see IHTTA I, 94.
90. IHTTA I, 94, 288; IHT II, 16, 151.
91. Commented on by Yuan Shih-k'ai. See IHTTA I, 94.
92. A.H. Smith, *China in Convulsion*, Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier 1901 (2 vols.), I, 172; Sheeks, 'Origins', p. 63; Dunstheimer, 'Religion', p. 342, 345; Purcell, *Uprising*, p. 235; Chen, 'Study', p. 296; Fei-ling Davis, *Primitive Revolutionaries of China*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1977, pp. 96-97.
93. IHTTA I, 91, 94. IHT II, 161.
94. IHT II, 145 and 148.
95. Tai Hsuan-chih, *I ho t'uan*, p. 25; Smith, *Convulsion*, I, 169.
96. IHT I, 238-39; Tai Hsuan-chih, *I ho t'uan*, p. 26; Dunstheimer, 'Religion', p. 362.
97. IHT I, 241; II, 36-37. Cp. Purcell, *Uprising*, p. 238; Chen, 'Study', p. 298. Both of these authors are perhaps a little over-confident in the certainty with which they assert her leadership. IHT II, 488 ascribes leadership to a 'Lin Mei-erh'. See also IHT II, 144 which mentions General Tung Fu-hsiang's younger sister as a Red Lantern leader. Whether she was a fortune-teller or, as some say, the proprietor of a brothel (IHT II, 146), the Sacred Mother had a style of her own: 'One day a turtle put its head out of the water near her boat. The Yellow Lotus Witch said to it: "You have come to be enfeoffed. I bestow upon you the five-hundredth circuit. Go quickly to the estuary to take control. Be sure you make no mistake!" After this the word went round: "The Holy Mother really comes from somewhere! Even the turtles come to her to get their official positions. You can imagine what rank she must have!"' IHT II, 37.
98. IHT II, 9, 19-20, 37, 141.
99. IHT I, 238, 243, 299, 307, 354; II, 8, 19, 142, 485; III, 373-74, 385. Dunstheimer, 'Religion'; Purcell, *Uprising*, p. 223 ff.
100. IHT II, 12.
101. IHT II, 10. Cp. IHT II, 18.
102. IHT I, 308.
103. IHT II, 15.
104. IHT III, 373, and I, 353, 360-61, are blunt statements by anti-Boxer county magistrates in Chihli and Shantung. Sawara Tokusake thought that Li's and YU-hsien's ineffectual attempts to control bandits by conciliation had been at the root of the trouble. See IHT I, 237, 262. Although Li was worshipped by the Boxers (IHT III, 373), and sometimes dressed like one (IHT III, 382), his real influence over them seems to have been slight (IHT I, 21). Sir Robert Hart, *These from the Land of Sinim: Essays on the Chinese Question*, London: Chapman and Hall 1901, p. 6, says the movement was 'carefully nurtured and fostered' by Li Ping-heng. Cp. also STCTS III, 207-211; Smith, *Convulsion*, I, 168; Schrecker, *Imperialism*, p. 93.

105. Kuepers, *Mission*, pp. 170-179.
106. Prince Tuan also had a personal motive for hating the foreigners. They had intervened to prevent the deposition of the Kuang-hsu Emperor and the assumption by Tuan's fourteen-year-old son of the imperial dignity, having been declared heir-apparent on February 23, 1900. STCTS III, 227. Cp. also Smith, *Convulsion* I, 186-7.
107. The 6 strongly pro-Boxer memorials before June 19, 1900, in IHTTA I are (in one case jointly) by a Prince, a Grand Secretary, a Board President and prefect of the Metropolitan prefecture, and three Censors.
108. E.g. Yü-lu on May 17 (IHTTA I, 90-92) and Yuan Shih-k'ai on May 19 (IHTTA I, 93-95).
109. Echoes of the debate in Peking may be heard in the memorials of Hu Fu-chen on April 28 (IHTTA I, 83) and T'an Chi on June 12 (IHTTA I, 131).
110. The formula 'pay attention only to whether they are or are not bandits, not to whether or not they are members of a society' occurs in IHTTA I, 82, 118. Typical decrees distinguishing 'good' and 'bad' elements are in IHTTA I, 106, 132, 167, and 206-07.
111. This is stated bluntly in a decree of June 26 (IHTTA I, 187). On the problem of maintaining order in Peking during the Boxer occupation see IHTTA I, 97-98, 121-22, 126, 127-28, 134, 136-37, 140-41, 150.
112. IHTTA I, 122, 146, 160-61, 187.
113. IHTTA I, 117. The Dowager admitted as much herself. See IHTTA I, 186-87.
114. On June 16 a decree belatedly ordered Jung-lu to organize military protection for the legations. See IHTTA I, 144.
115. Britain, Germany, Japan, Russia, Italy and Austria.
116. Hart, *Sinim*, p. 133: 'We were terribly taken aback when we heard the news in Peking, for we saw it would precipitate matters, and push the military into line with the Boxers, and it did so.' On June 19 the Dowager told Yü-lu, Governor-General of Chihli and up to then an opponent of the Boxers: 'Hostilities have started. You should enlist righteous braves as a matter of urgency.' On June 21 a previous decree to General Ma Yü-k'un to suppress the Boxers was explicitly rescinded. See IHTTA I, 153, 157, 164.
117. IHTTA I, 193, 196, 206, 215, 239-40, 260, 264-65, 281, 463. The counter-argument that converts had taken up arms in self-defence because they had been attacked was little-heard (e.g. IHTTA I, 253).
118. IHTTA I, 180, 188, 196, 217, 245, 248, 255.
119. IHTTA I, 160-61, 163, 176, 178.
120. IHTTA I, 181, 216, 255-56, 257, 266-67, 394, 396.
121. E.g. IHTTA I, 245.
122. IHTTA I, 392, 399, 439-40, 468. IHT I, 15-21, 252, 257-59, 311-314; II, 10, 11, 22, 24-25, 162, 483-84, 489-90, 492, 495-96; III, 376, 378. Among the odder episodes in this factional struggle was the religious kangaroo court held at the General Altar of the Boxers in Peking, under the guidance of Prince Chuang. Spirits allegedly descended and found Li-shan, president of the Board of Finance, guilty of 'having had relationships with the foreigners'. IHTTA I, 312.

123. IHTTA I, 396.
124. IHTTA I, 161-63, 176, 215.
125. IHTTA I, 171-72, 175, 183, 192.
126. IHTTA I, 192, 200, 236, 295-96.
127. Ch'ing-jui, in Mukden, was still openly hostile to the Boxers in early July. See IHTTA I, 220-21.
128. IHTTA I, 193.
129. IHTTA I, 248.
130. IHTTA I, 251. Cp. IHTTA I, 401-02.
131. IHTTA I, 410.
132. IHTTA I, 281; Smith, *Convulsion*, II, 611.
133. IHTTA I, 211, 231, 257, 258, 261.
134. IHTTA I, 194-95.
135. IHTTA I, 156.
136. IHTTA I, 356. Tan, *Catastrophe*, pp. 76-92; Purcell, *Uprising*, pp. 255-56.
137. IHT I, 262.
138. IHTTA I, 131.
139. IHTTA I, 163.
140. IHTTA I, 176, 192.
141. IHTTA I, 161. Cp. IHTTA I, 156.
142. IHTTA I, 109-10, 140, 266; IHT II, 10.
143. IHTTA I, 177. He continued: 'Perhaps these events are Heaven's help to the common people, who have assembled the strength of their multitudes in order to encompass their revenge?' IHTTA I, 178.
144. IHT I, 14. Chao Shu-ch'iao spoke of 'making use of their spirit of daring to act.' IHTTA I, 110.
145. IHTTA I, 255.
146. IHTTA I, 81.
147. IHTTA I, 193, 196, 234, 239, 260, 263, 264, 268, 283, etc.
148. IHTTA I, 206.
149. IHTTA I, 215. YU-hsien tried to persuade converts to become 'commoners' again in this way, but without success (IHTTA I, 225). Cp. IHTTA I, 240, 242, 253, 265.
150. IHTTA I, 181.
151. IHTTA I, 196. The decree of July 6 to the Governor-General of Chihli calling for 'the total extermination of foreign bandits' should be seen in the context of the war in that province. See IHTTA I, 248. On efforts to massacre foreigners see Smith, *Convulsion*, II, 594-5.
152. IHTTA I, 216.
153. IHTTA I, 217-18. Cp. IHTTA I, 169 on destroying railways.

154. IHT I, 259-60.
155. IHT II, 143. On Cho-chou see IHTTA I, 113, 138; and Smith, *Convulsion*, I, 208.
156. IHT II, 10.
157. IHT II, 14; IHTTA I, 366.
158. IHT I, 311-312, 307.
159. IHT II, 142. The full text of the oath was: 'Do not covet wealth, do not lust after sex, do not disobey the commands of your father and mother, do not violate the laws of the dynasty, destroy the foreigners, and kill corrupt officials. When you go about in the markets, bow your head and look neither to left or right. If you meet a companion in the way, join hands.' The famous Boxer slogan 'Support the Ch'ing and destroy the foreigners' seems to have been borrowed from the anti-Christian movement in Hupei in 1898. See NCH 1898, Dec. 31, 1235; 1899, Jan. 16, 49. A. Ying (ed.), *Keng-tzu shih-pien wen-hsueh chi* (A Collection of Literary Writings on the Crisis of 1900), Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü 1959 (Revision of 1938 edition), (2 vols.), I, 5, says that the original Boxer slogan was 'Exterminate foreigners, kill corrupt officials'. For a Boxer placard attacking corrupt officials and even the Emperor, see Smith, *Convulsion*, I, 201-3.
160. IHT I, 261.
161. IHT I, 306.
162. IHTTA I, 153.
163. IHTTA I, 197, 240, 244.
164. IHTTA I, 140, 143.
165. IHTTA I, 140, 150.
166. IHTTA I, 176.
167. IHT I, 307.
168. IHTTA I, 269. Cp. IHTTA I, 418.
169. IHTTA I, 279. Prince Chuang claimed some positive results. See IHTTA I, 348.
170. IHTTA I, 279; IHT II, 9, 16, 17-18.
171. IHTTA I, 656.
172. IHTTA I, 392.
173. E.g. IHTTA I, 90-91, 93, 106, 206-7, 293, 294, 366, 398.
174. T.A. Metzger has suggested a somewhat similar distinction between 'realistic' and 'radical' types of official personality in his *The Internal Organization of the Ch'ing Bureaucracy: Legal, Normative, and Communication Aspects*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1973, pp. 74-80.

ANTHROPOLOGISTS' WITCHCRAFT:
SYMBOLICALLY DEFINED OR ANALYTICALLY UNDONE?

Standefer's recent paper in *J.A.S.O.* (vol. X, no. 1) on the symbolic attributes of the witch has tempted me to return to a field previously visited six years ago. Her paper does not refer to her earlier contribution to *J.A.S.O.* (Standefer 1970) nor to subsequent articles on witchcraft in this journal (Crick 1973; Price 1974). In my 1973 paper (later incorporated in Crick 1976: 109-27) I spoke of 'two traditions' in the anthropological analysis of witchcraft. These traditions were, briefly, the functionalist 'social strain' approach, and the semantic approach based on the general shift from 'function' to 'meaning' and concerned with an explanation of symbols, boundaries, categories, and the like. In that paper my basic criticism of the approach Standefer adopted in 1970 turned on the issue of how to define a problem or topic. Standefer's latest article, though not so explicitly about a definitional problem as was the earlier, is nonetheless still within the same framework. She is concerned with symbolic attributes, that is, with the image which defines the witch. I am not aware of whether Standefer has read my contribution to *J.A.S.O.*; I had hoped in 1973 to make some suggestions for a rather new approach, but these do not appear to have affected how Standefer approaches the problem nine years after her first analysis. It may therefore be useful if I here reiterate certain points.

My disagreement is not on the importance of symbolism or meaning as such; rather, my argument is with the dimensions or scale of the framework within which we can most profitably approach a phenomenon. Standefer is concerned to use symbols to define the witch. I have endeavoured to use semantics to define away a phenomenon, that is, analytically to dissolve it. Standefer has claimed (1970: 11) that it is very important for anthropologists, especially before attempting a comparison, to define their terms. In her view the analysis of witchcraft has suffered because of inadequate attention to the matter of definition. She went on:

It is not possible to define witchcraft until it is recognized that the definitional problem is a problem in symbolic classification. Witchcraft beliefs form a special category of classification to which a great many varying elements or components may be assigned. The solution to the definitional problem is implicit in the literature; the problem has not been solved because no one has ever thought to ask the right questions. The main question we must ask ourselves is why does the *image*

of the witch take the form it does from society to society throughout Africa and indeed throughout the world.

(Standefer 1970: 12)

Standefer's stress on 'image' and her statement that 'the definition-al problem is a problem in symbolic classification' are important. Of course, in one sense the latter is tautologous, for what is a definition but an agreement to use symbols (normally linguistic) in a certain way? But what Standefer does not see and explore is that symbols are defined by semantic fields. Reading her latest article (1979) one has a strange sense of Victorian *déjà vu* as clusters of strange symbols are gathered around eyes, excrement, fire, necrophagy, and so on. Certainly these are rendered in modern discourse as 'inversion', 'reversal', and so on, but her approach takes it for granted that 'witchcraft' is a problem that can usefully be studied *per se*. Her symbolic approach merely reifies 'witchcraft' as a category, and I suggest that this is a case where analytical convenience falsely generates ethnographic 'realities'. I repeat: 'witchcraft' can perhaps best be understood by being defined away in a larger classificatory framework than simply being defined by the symbols that supposedly constitute it as a category.

This remark about definition is relevant because Standefer in her first paper (1970: 11) cites the work of Leach on marriage, Lévi-Strauss on totemism, and so on, as instances where advances are made by paying attention to the defining of a phenomenon. Marriage has since been analytically undone (Rivière 1971); indeed the brilliance of Lévi-Strauss's analysis of totemism (1964) lay in his dismantling of the phenomenon, not in constructing it — in fact in showing how it was conceptual naivety on the part of the anthropologist that had invented the phenomenon in the first place. Whether there is any temperamental nihilism involved here on either an individual or collective level, it is the lesson in several areas tackled in modern social anthropology that considerable advances in understanding can occur when a phenomenon disappears, to be seen in a new way in some very different framework. Some still argue that our first task is to define witchcraft, and then by comparison to see what the phenomenon really is. But it is vital to locate the nature and dimensions of the field by which 'witchcraft' is constituted. Such a location can then define the phenomenon away. Studies of witchcraft — let alone comparative studies — would then appear a semantic nonsense, and the mark of our better comprehension would be a decreasingly frequent employment of the term.

I am suggesting that witchcraft does not exist any more than totemism. This is not the positivistic stance 'there are no such things as witches'; it is a semantic perspective. I find Standefer's latest article as deficient as her first on this basic matter. It is my view that witchcraft has been treated in anthropology as a problem because of a conceptual laziness and an ill-conceived parallel drawn with the witchcraft of European history. This latter is the less excusable given that Evans-Pritchard claimed forty years ago (1937: 64) that the 'witchcraft' found in 'primitive' societies is not at all like that in our own past.¹

1. E-P accepted that the differences could perhaps be recognized by our not using the one word 'witch' for the two different types of culture, but in a comment to me on my 1973 paper he put it that he had to find a term for the Zande witch and since he was writing the book in English he chose the word 'witch'.

My proposal to dissolve the problem of 'witchcraft' is not a purely negative one. The suggestion is to put in its place a larger analytic framework which would consist of an articulated moral space of two dimensions: a system of concepts of human action and its evaluation; and a system of person categories, that is, a classification of person-types with attributes. This model was derived from Strawson's ideas on individuals, Austin's ideas on performative utterances, and de Saussure's structural ideas, especially his use of the chess-board analogy. These may not be the 'right' questions, but I feel these notions combined have considerable explanatory power.¹ I admit however that they cannot easily be put into operation at the ethnographic level, although this is ultimately the criterion which would establish whether the framework is fruitful or not. I would point to Price's paper in *J.A.S.O.* (1974), in which he gives a detailed ethnological and linguistic analysis of Konkomba data; he concludes that what ethnographers have previously said about Konkomba sorcerers has falsely unified concepts round an imposed category and has therefore done semantic violence to the conceptual fabric of the culture the ethnographers set out to describe

I shall now turn to criticise Standefer's 1979 analysis of witchcraft:

(1) Standefer begins her 1979 statement by quoting Jean Buxton's remark, "'The witch' is largely a symbolic personality'. One is tempted to ask whether there is a personality which is not largely symbolic? Is not any ordinary person a symbolic construct, generated by self - and other - perception? Nothing is strange here about either 'primitive cultures' or the 'witch' within such a culture. The U.K. is now governed by Mrs. Thatcher - an 'Iron Maiden'. To spell out the definition in long-hand would yield the proposal that the first woman to be elevated to this position refrained from sex and had an abnormal ferrous content in her make-up. What is the essential difference between this and saying of a Zande witch that he has abnormal sexual practices and has *mangu* in his stomach? Anyone could be regarded as a walking 'symbolic cluster'. The point is that to define the 'witch' we need to constitute all the persons in the field who are 'non-witch'.

(2) Standefer's 1970 paper advocated the symbolic definition of the 'witch' because among other things she complained (quite rightly) that anthropologists had gone witch- and sorcerers-mad (1970: 12). Evans-Pritchard's Zande distinction between the psychic injurer and the manipulation of material had been elevated to a universal mould, though early on (Evans-Pritchard 1929: 1-2) he had tried to warn against such a development. The distinction was used (Middleton & Winter (eds.) 1963) even where the ethnography showed it did not exist.

It is a pity in view of her earlier attitude to this matter that in 1979 Standefer begins by presenting us (p. 31) with a table based on the witch/sorcerer distinction. The difficulties we then get into are many. Item 1 of her table speaks of the Zande witch whose 'power to do evil lies in innate physical substance'. Above on the same page (and quoting from Evans-Pritchard) we have 'An act of witchcraft is a psychic act' (1937: 21). A table similar to that used by Standefer is presented by Pocock in his introductory book on anthropology (1975: 204). But he begins by drawing the reader's attention to a 'tireless point of terminology'. This tireless point (ibid: 193-5) is that the terms 'witch' and 'sorcerer' are

1. Full bibliographical references are in both Crick 1973 & 1976.

being used in exactly the reverse way to that employed by Evans-Pritchard. He proposes a series of opposed characteristics (motivation, victim, method, etc.) but his attitude seems to be that whether you call a witch a witch or a sorcerer and a sorcerer a sorcerer or a witch, it does not matter provided that you distinguish and remain consistent. So much for any argument which speaks about universal symbolic attributes of the witch!

I do not deny that the kinds of distinctions both Standefer and Pocock list are often found. If you take our classifications of crime, for instance, we have a distinction between premeditated murder and the activities of a homicidal maniac. The conception both outside and within prison of an embezzler and a child molester are not the same. So some of the witch/sorcerer distinctions — such as unconscious/deliberate, sub-human characteristics/social motivation — are evidently of wide application. The trouble is that in drawing up such a chart we are only presenting some of the performers. Talking of just witch and sorcerer is like trying to describe a game of football only in terms of forwards and goal-keepers. Those persons only make sense in the context of the other positions and 'the rules', and the point of the rules which make up the game.

The most curious feature of Standefer's chart is the distinction she regards as most common 'in societies with two types of evil practitioner' (are there any?), the distinction between a witch, who is 'characterized by an image of inverted symbolic attributes', and a sorcerer, who is 'not characterized by symbolic attributes'. I confess I am unable to grasp what it means for a person not to be characterized by symbolic attributes. Actions, emotions and motivations are all cultural classifications, so everyone is a symbolic entity. Granted, witches are spectacularly defined, but even the mediocrity is no less defined by symbolic attributes than the witch. Freud reminded us in his psychoanalytic studies that the neurotic is not 'other', he is our brother; or alternatively, we are all, to some degree, neurotic. Similarly, with witchcraft, if we mapped out a full field of person types and their characters we should see the relationships between the witch and everyone else more clearly, for the continuities as well as the contrasts which such a field would establish. One of the commonest characterisations of the witch (or sorcerer) is one who acts out of greed, envy, malice, spite. Who is this except all of us?

Standefer claims you can define witchcraft when you have recognised that it is a problem of symbolic classification. She goes on to say that witchcraft beliefs 'are united around the *image* of the witch' (1979: 31). The image is made of attributes and these attributes define witchcraft. But again — to use the classical Saussurean analogy — if you want to understand chess you cannot do it by telling someone a queen can go sideways, diagonally, backwards and forwards. Even an ability to map out all the possible moves of *all* the pieces still would not enable one to understand. For this one has to grasp the point of the whole rule-cluster. No analysis of the symbolic attributes of certain chess-pieces would make the game intelligible.

(3) Standefer claims (p. 32) that witchcraft beliefs 'constitute a system for the personification of *power* and *evil*', and she goes on to define a witch as 'a person who is thought capable of harming others supernaturally through the use of innate mystic power, medicines or familiars, and who is symbolized by inverted characteristics that are a reversal of social and physical norms'.

There are several points, basically of an ethnographic nature, that should be made here. First, by specifying the use of psychic power *or* medicines, her 'witch' now includes both witch and sorcerer as normally

defined. She also speaks (ibid) of the heat symbolism of the Dobuan sorcerer, having on the previous page claimed that sorcerers are not symbolically defined. On the matter of reversals and inversions, of course these are common, but it is not always clear-cut for ambiguous symbols are also found, as are many symbolic traits no different from the elements which define non-witches. As for 'evil', if one looks at some ethnography, for instance the case of mystical male aggression among the Gonja (Goody 1970), what one finds is that what the ethnographer labels witchcraft is not evil or disapproved of but one of the accepted moves in political struggles.

One last point: Standefer uses the concept of supernatural and extraordinary powers (1979: 32). Again we must ask, what is the system in which such power is not natural or ordinary? How are these terms defined in any culture? How are human powers and attributes characterised, and how are they distributed? It does not make any sense to talk of 'extraordinary' unless we are informed about the rest of the system.

(4) Under 'Symbols of Power - Fire and Heat Symbolism' (ibid) Standefer makes a number of dubious assertions about symbols of different kinds. Heat and light are said to be not separate symbols but aspects of each other. Yellow tends to be classified with red. No consideration of these symbols outside the witchcraft context is made. No doubt Standefer is interested in universals, and there may well be some good grounds for thinking that not all in the symbolic world is arbitrary in Saussure's sense. Certain person specifications or articulations of moral space may well be common to a vast range of cultures. However, in her remarks which seem to point the way to symbols which reveal 'natural associations' of the human mind, there is no reference to the literature seeking ethnological justifications for such assertions (for instance Needham 1964 & 1967) nor to well-known psychological analyses of symbols like fire (for instance Bachelard 1964).

It is not clear in any case what are the direct manifestations of fundamental structures in the human mind; certainly Standefer does not adduce any of the literature one would have thought relevant in talking about images found in a vast number of cultures. Moreover, some patterns seem far less than 'universal'. Flying/heat/light elements are common, but there are ethnographies of witchcraft where they do not appear.

(5) The bulk of Standefer's paper is taken up with ethnographic citations of symbols of evil - all the inversions and reversals with which we are now very familiar in our studies of symbolic classification. Witches walk on their heads, act at night, are sexually perverse, have familiars, are motivated by envy, crave for excessive power, and so on. In his famous study of inversion in Lugbara thought, Middleton (1954) made it clear that inversion was a character of the whole spatial and temporal dimensions of the native cosmology. There is, then, nothing very peculiar in using reversals to define witches. The Lugbara scheme can in fact without much trouble be used to structure our own experience. Tories have no hearts; Socialists crawl on their bellies; etc.

Anthropologists have an ability to make the strange very familiar, and it is an ability to which they should perhaps pay more attention. To illustrate the point that witchcraft should be dismantled and seen in a larger context; I shall now take the familiar symbolism of witchcraft and suggest some parallels with any university department or a situation where anthropologists gather to discuss witchcraft. Corridors of academe are often tunnels of spite and malice, and places for the exercise of illegitimate power. Just as some witches remain fat while other villagers grow lean, so it often happens that some academics work their fingers to the

bone while others seem to get on very well without doing very much. Perhaps, say their colleagues, it is because they have a way of tapping secret powers that no-one else knows about. Competitiveness and backstabbing are daily fare. There is wizardry enough, fratricide is common in the cause of promotion. Malcolm Bradbury entitles his satire on university life *Eating People is Wrong*. How often, indeed, has a gathering in the tea-room been little more than an opportunity to stick pins in the ones not present? Abnormal is the word one uses for witches; eccentric is the one normally chosen for academics. Witches physically cut a pretty strange figure — if not deformed, they are often strange, shabbily dressed or remarkable; many an absent-minded professor fits such a mould very well. For years, and often through the night, the initiate plods away on some D. Phil. paying abnormal attention to minutiae, concentrating all his psychic powers, only, after a strange ceremonial with hats and gowns resembling women's night attire, to bury the monstrosity in some dark library vault or to bring it to public notice with a vain hope that the spell will transform the world.

I make no apology for this description. If anthropology cannot be related to one's own experience then it is hardly worth beginning. I have been parodying, of course, but as Standefer recognizes (1979: 41), many of the symbols of witchcraft are parodies of social life. That this is so makes inadequate her definition of the witch image (ibid: 32) in terms of inversions and reversals.

(6) In the final section of her paper, Standefer returns to some of the concerns of her 1970 paper. She states that 'the basis of anthropology is *comparison*' (1979: 44) and laments that not enough comparative work has been done: anthropologists should

look for recurring patterns in the phenomena they are studying and then just sit quietly for some time and think about it all. In this way, it may be possible to make some new and interesting discoveries, and, in the process, add to the "theoretical capital" of our discipline. (Ibid)

I must confess that if Standefer's article were multiplied a hundred times in length it would remind me somewhat of Frazer's volumes on totemism. There is something curiously nineteenth-century in this advocating of comparison and the collection of symbols of fire, eyes, excrement, men walking on their heads, etc. It is the sort of stuff that made the arm-chair a fascinating place to be. I return to the first point I made, that the rub really lies in the 'think about it *all*' (my emphasis). What is the 'all' in terms of which witchcraft becomes intelligible? The focus on symbolism is now very old hat. No doubt one could do a survey of witch images in all cultures but, in the light of Lévi-Strauss's demolition of totemism, do we regard Frazer's vast compilations as of any theoretical value? The problem with the nineteenth-century comparative method was that it ripped examples out of context and brought them together for generalisation. Comparing items which, because they were not originally understood, are incomparable, is a sure way of getting wrong the 'all' in the 'think about it all'. Standefer, unlike the Victorians, does think seriously about the problem of definition. But her energy goes to defining a category without examining whether it is a meaningful subject of study. Getting the 'units' right (or the framework) is important and no amount of compilation adds up to sense if the original framing of the scale of the inquiry was defective. It is not enough to concentrate on recurrent

patterns in the phenomena; one must also be aware of the degree to which the phenomena have themselves been constituted by unexamined patterns in the thinking we have applied to a problem. Comparative religion to a very large degree deals with entities created by the assumptions of those western academics practising the discipline. The history of anthropology contains many similar cases where our categories of thought have generated our anthropological problems. It is no doubt difficult to shed initial models, but if you define wrongly then comparative gymnastics do nothing to justify the starting point, as much of the history of nineteenth-century anthropological theory testifies.

The note on which I should like to end is, I think, relevant in the context of talk about new 'theoretical capital'. Standefer says:

What then has the analysis of witchcraft beliefs told us about the human mind and the way it works? It would seem that the main thing we have learned is the fact that man has the mental ability to create many diverse forms of "collective representations", selecting items from his social and physical environment, which he then combines according to a number of different possible patterns existing in potential at all times. (Ibid)

It remains merely to quote Chomsky, whose verdict on *The Savage Mind* was that all that Lévi-Strauss had shown us was that 'humans classify if they perform any mental acts at all' (1968: 65) — to which he had added nothing. I cannot envisage what kind of theoretical advance Standefer expects to emerge from her approach to witchcraft.

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STRAIGHTENING THE PATHS FROM WILDERNESS: THE CASE OF DIVINATORY SPEECH

I

Common to our understanding of so-called primitive and modern science is the idea that there is a problem already recognized and waiting to be solved: the cause of sickness must be divined and reversed. I want to consider in this paper the more fundamental assumption in intellectual discourse: that to clarify a problem is to solve it. We are used to the idea of psychoanalysis as resting on this assumption. I suggest that the style and narrative theme of divinatory speech is a parallel example of problem-specifying being also problem-solving. I am not, then, venturing into psychoanalysis but seeking the basis of common intellectual assumptions.

Let me begin with a biblical text, on John the Baptist: 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight' (Mark i, 3). The implication that the Lord's paths need to be straightened, and the opposition of this desired state to crying in the wilderness, represent two common archetypal ideas which we conventionally associate with religion and ritual.

The first archetype can be seen in the many expressions of tangled, crossed, or confused states: the sins of incest and some forms of adultery; the ritualization of breech and other abnormal births; the dangers of improperly-conducted rites of passage or of neglected relations between juniors and seniors; the use of key terms for witchcraft which turn on the idea of traps and ensnarement; and even the celebration of the Christian *Cross* (Easter) and the Jewish *Passover* as central events at about the same time of the year.

The second archetype may be thought of as an attribute of the broad contrast between nature and culture. It is the contrast between wilderness and wandering on the one hand, and fixed, secure, and clearly and narrowly-defined (often home) bases on the other. We have the biblical examples of Christ and John the Baptist going off into the wilderness, but returning new, 'straightened-out' men; the parable of the prodigal son forgiven and welcomed back from his aimless debauchery in the wastelands of the outside world; prophets coming into the small-scale society from a wider, alien, outside world; and, in at least some

societies, including the Giriama and Swahili of Kenya who are the subject of this paper, sick patients going off, sometimes in trances, to the forest or bush, impelled by an inner understanding to gather the correct medicines required for their return to the now legitimate i.e. 'straight', role of diviner.

First, then, tangled states become 'objects of the ritual attitude'. Like cases of boundary confusion, they may be thought of as sources of power, sometimes beneficial but sometimes so dangerous for the society and the transgressing individual that he has to withdraw from it. Second, victims are straightened out as a result of having wandered in the wilderness.

Linking the two archetypes we can say that the geographical transition from wilderness to straight paths parallels the individual's movement from social or mental confusion to clarity. As a metaphor of change between personal states, this characterizes shamanistic divination among the Giriama and Swahili of Kenya.

This movement is evident more from their speech than their actions. By concentrating on the spirit speech of diviners among the people I have studied, I am able to understand a little more about the thought processes associated with the two archetypes I have described.

A total look at speech in Giriama and Swahili spirit possession would need to include a consideration of exorcism, including its songs, as well as divination and cure. But I confine myself here to divination, for reasons of space.

Diagnosis is arrived at through divination; treatment (i.e. attempted cure) takes place after the divination and at a set place and time. Diviners may be of either sex, are paid between two and five Kenya shillings for their diagnosis, and usually recommend that the patient be treated by a specialist doctor. The treatment is more expensive and is much more profitable than divination alone.

There is a hierarchy within these occupations which is based on the (sometimes cross-cutting) criteria of sex, age, ethnic or religious group: doctors who provide only therapy but not divination are always men; men and women may be exclusively diviners, though women more so than men, but a few men and women diviners also exorcise spirits or reverse witchcraft. 'Arab' diviners and doctors (who are always men) are generally held to be the best and are the most expensive - they are regarded as having mixed Arab-Swahili-Mijikenda ancestry. 'Swahili' (e.g. Muslim Africans) are usually regarded as the next most efficacious; and 'Giriama' (i.e. non-Muslim Mijikenda) as the least. Oracular techniques vary between these categories, and patients try a range of practitioners so that, in fact, an individual Giriama may achieve exceptional renown. Complicating the matter still further is the fact that non-Muslims say that *all* diviners must be Muslims, for the spirits which possess them will include 'Arabic' (i.e. Muslim) ones. However claims to Muslim status are graded in East Africa, and those who are most widely acknowledged as 'full' Muslims do distinguish between Muslim and non-Muslim diviners. This practice of grading Muslim status and the inconsistency of the contrast between Muslim and non-Muslim is a result of shifts from partial to 'full' Muslim status which often take more than one generation, and it is reflected in the loose hierarchy of divinatory and medical prowess. That is to say the social is reflected in the ritual hierarchy.

Following this Durkheimian line, it might also be possible to show how changes in judgements made about diviners in terms of their

ethnic group, religion, sex, and age, amount to statements about wider changing social relations. But diviners of all kinds use the idea of moving from a boundless to bounded realm of existence in their diagnoses. Such archetypal usage seems unaffected by differences of rank and status among diviners. By investigating the diagnoses of a social range of such diviners I think we are able to understand their thematic logic and its relative imperviousness to variations in the social circumstances of diviners.

II

I will reproduce in condensed form, and comment on, the diagnoses of three diviners, an 'Arab', a 'Swahili', and a 'Giriama', as they are generally identified. First a few introductory remarks about them.

A client approaches a diviner without notice. The client is not necessarily the patient. Indeed it is often argued that he or she should not be. But some are. The late middle-aged 'Arab' diviner runs his profession like a true business. Clients sit around in his ample, well-stocked homestead waiting to be seen, the humbler receiving shorter divinations than the more influential, though the fees are the same (five shillings). He presses clients to agree to his carrying out the therapy on an appointed day after the divination. The 'Giriama' diviner, in this case a woman past child-bearing age, contrasts in a number of respects. She may be found sitting in her mud-and-wattle hut, unseen from the outside, and apparently withdrawn from the world. The client enters the hut, greets, and responds to her polite, euphemistic requests for tobacco by placing the two-shilling fee in front of her. The divination begins slowly, is punctuated by sweet refrains, gasps, and whistling, as the spirits pause in their reflections, and consists of dramatic use of voice-tone and vocabulary. The third diviner, the Muslim Digo (referred to by fellow African Muslims as 'Swahili') is a little less dramatic; his divination is punctuated by the spirits speaking in other ethnic tongues rather than in refrains of song. He accepts the same fee as the Giriama woman and, like her, puts time and effort into the divination. The range in style from the less to the more dramatic among these three diviners does not alter certain common themes covered in their divinations. The diviner is not expected to know anything of the victim's affliction nor indeed whether the person in front of him, the client, is the victim himself or a caring relative come to ask for a diagnosis on the victim's behalf.

*

Let me then begin with the 'Arab' diviner, who speaks in Swahili. His client has come on behalf of his 10-year-old son who talks to himself, whoops and yells as if possessed, plays on his own and not with other children, and

is easily angered.

1. The diviner's spirits make the following points:

(a) He [i.e. the victim] is troubled because of his trade - the trade carried out from his home - I mean the trade that results from a man marrying a wife and having a child by her. I mean that trade - for the wife is the investment and the child the profit. Women are the loads which we men trade with, feeding them, and hoping to trade further with.

(b) But the wife can't or won't get out of your body - she is the owner of it - it's your trade but she is the owner... and she can say I don't love you and she can leave you... but your child can't say that.

(c) That is why I say it is your business which is disturbing you [i.e. he refers to the victim by addressing the client].

By converting one metaphor into another (trade into domestic relations) and by using the metaphors inconsistently, the spirits, or perhaps we may now say the diviner, simultaneously link a number of possible sources of distress: i) the victim's occupation or trade; ii) the costs of running a family; iii) a dominant and unloving wife; and iv) the loss of a child through her desertion. Of particular note is the fact that the wife is locked in the victim's body, possessing it - perhaps even consuming it - and yet also leaving it. Bodily possession is also of course normally attributed to spirits though, as yet, spirits have not been mentioned. The implicit proposition, therefore, is that the victim's wife is a controlling spirit. This is combined with another proposition which states that the victim is troubled by his trade or occupation. Home and the outside are thus simultaneously linked as sources of distress. As yet, such propositions are only hinted at; they are not clear enough to be judged true or false by the client.

We see in the next section of paraphrase, however, that the diviner successfully locates a child as the victim. As usual, a positive response from the client has helped him. Clients do this by words of encouragement and agreement throughout the divination.

2. The diviner says:

(a) I am looking at the [victim's] head, circling around, going now to the stomach, to the joints, circling all the time ...and the child is suffering in all parts of the body - head, heart, stomach, but the stomach pain is ceasing, now it is the back which is troubling.

(b) And yet this child has been sent to hospital, but vomits. This is caused by the heart, for the disease is in the heart. And the head aches.

(c) He was given tablets but was sick on taking them.... He is constipated for two or three days. Isn't this so? [The client is asked, but the client courteously denies that the child is constipated.] He is constipated one day but not the next. He goes and then the stomach can be heard rumbling at his umbilicus.

Where do you live? [The question is addressed to the client, who tells the diviner.]

(d) You saw something astonishing in his house, didn't you - like a wild animal from the forest going in? Now that animal came up to the child, who fell asleep and went "Haw haw". [The noise of an animal.] And even the next day, when he's about to recover, the sickness goes away a little, but then comes right back. The disease then comes and goes every two days, with the child going "Haw haw" at its onset. For now there are spirits active there, which must be seen to quickly.

There is an interesting kind of two-part syllogism here, the first part of which uses metonym:

- i. The child is approached by the animal (which is understood to rasp);
The child is approached by the sickness (initiated by a rasp);
Therefore the animal is the sickness.
- ii. The animal is from outside (i.e. the forest);
Spirits are from outside;
Therefore the animal is the spirits.
(Therefore to treat the spirits is to treat the sickness.)
3. The diviner then follows up his admonition to treat the spirits with explicit instructions about the medicines needed for treatment. He says:

Get a cock, a hen of different colours, a white loin-cloth, and materials for making an Arabic charm which can be drunk.

The child has spirits, including the ape-spirit to which he is attracted. Get these spices: Ambari, Miski, Kafuri, Zafarani, Marashi, and also a sheep - a surrogate will do, even a sheep's hoof [here literally 'shoe'].

After further instructions and then some open discussion (with the spirits still talking through the diviner), a date, time, and place are set for the treatment for which these items will be needed.

Analysis

The first part of the divination links home and the-outside world as simultaneously producing a number of sometimes conflicting sources of distress. The second repeatedly probes different areas of the body, and the third focuses on the home, which is entered by a wild animal from the forest (perhaps echoing the equation of home with wife in the first part). Merged ideas are broken down into separate ones through the idiom of following separate parts of the body. This is followed by a specific statement of the cause of sickness: outside spirits intruding and requiring appeasement. The fourth part of the divination carries still further the ordered sequencing of ideas and actually spells out the list of medical requirements and the time and place of their application.

Other cases show more vividly the shift from conceptual simultaneity to sequencing.

I turn now to the 'Swahili' (a Muslim Digo) diviner. His client is a young unmarried man who has come on his own behalf. He would seem to have venereal disease. This diviner also begins with a complex linking of concepts: man, woman, sadness, sympathy, lust and longing, and includes also the supreme symbol of suffering, the shoe (*kirahu*). This word derives from the verb 'to go here and there' (*ku-kira-kira*). The reflexive *ku-dzi-kirira* means 'to walk about aimlessly' (see Deed 1964).¹ Here we may note that though the diviner may (in other contexts) be referred to as 'Swahili' he uses his native vernacular, Digo, in divination; but he is fluent in both languages.

1. He begins:

Why is there this need for sympathy, my friend? [Addressing the client.] There is a woman loving a man.... The love is puzzled. The man loves the woman. The man loves with longing/lust [using the word *thamaa*, which can also stand for 'penis']. There is longing and there is the shoe. You [i.e. the client] have even followed the shoe [i.e. 'you have really suffered'; suffering is implied by the notion of having wandered endlessly on foot]. Why is there sickness as well as longing here?

Here the interlinked notions of longing, lust and the metonymic penis are denoted by the one word, and shade into that of sickness. The use of the word 'shoe' and the verb 'followed' anticipate the following more extensive treatment of the theme of 'wandering', as in the 'Arab's' divination.

2.(a) He [i.e. the victim] is a man and is sick and wandering... this way and that.... He comes out quickly.... He can't cope [for which the verb *ku-kola* is used, which also means to penetrate].... He runs about here and there... struggling, but to no avail. He goes to doctors but to no avail.

(b) Why has he this disease of the shoe? He can't stay in bed with the sickness. He wanders with it. Why is it a disease of the top [i.e. of the head]. It has gripped his head, but why the head, my friend? The head goes round and round and becomes dizzy. And because of the dizziness it becomes senseless and loses its memory. His [senseless] mind tells him to cry and produce tears.

(c) The disease is in the chest...in the stomach... in the solar plexus [*chembe cha moyo*] ...and even his heart is bursting. It is worn out from beating at great speed. The heart goes fast yet it wanders. It [the disease] is in the arteries and veins [*mishipa*] and his legs are lazy.

(d) Now the sickness is descending. It's in the middle. It is a male's sickness... to do with [sexual] satisfaction.... It's between the kidneys. Now we find it in the veins of the penis [for which a more orthodox word is used, *kilume*]... and right beneath the umbilicus. Why is there fire burning there... like peppers...? The disease makes one mindless. When you urinate it's a war, and even injections have not helped.

1. The root verb is in fact *ku-kira*, meaning 'to cross' or 'to go too far'. From this is derived the noun *kirwa* which refers to a disease arising from a breach of certain sexual prohibitions. Morphological variations of *kirwa* abound in Bantu and Nilotic cultures as key concepts (Parkin 1978: 150-1, 327-30).

3. And now the diviner, having located the distressed part of the body, proceeds to itemize the causative agents as follows:

(a) You [i.e. the client now identified as the victim] are caught by the [witchcraft] trap [tego] which prevents you defecating [ya zindika], by the trap which prevents you urinating [tego ya mkufu], by the trap which causes irritation [ya lwambe], and by the traps called peppers [pilipili], laziness [munyegero], the needle [sindano], black ants [minyoy], and safari ants [tsalafu] [most of these indicate the sensations of itching, pricking and stinging].

(b) Have you [the victim] entered someone's house? [The victim answers no.] I don't really mean a house, I mean a human house [i.e. a woman] [and this the victim does not deny].... You have had this sickness a long time, not a long time but a long time, but you have been wandering around with this sickness, and you are surprised that it has stayed with you. But you must cure the first causes [i.e. the witchcraft traps which have physical effects].

(c) Also, my friend, you have the following [other kinds of] witchcraft. [Here the diviner uses the term *muhaso* but later uses *utsai* - these have mental rather than physical effects] These are : the witchcraft of self-hatred [utsai wa dzimene], of senseless babbling [mbayumbayu], of indecisiveness and lack of concentration [shula moyo], and of restlessness [mtango]. These witchcrafts want to turn you into a perpetual nomad, wandering unthinkingly around the world, never settling at home, with your heart burning... and feeling numb in your head. You also have the witchcraft [nzaiko] which makes you cry when combined with those that make you indecisive [shula moyo] and gibbering [mbayumbayu].

(d) The disease comes from the west.... You had a job there. Maybe you were learning there, but people are bad there and gave you these things.

4. The diviner next shifts from a focus on the causes of the affliction to a precise statement of the items needed for cure:

(a) Find me seven loaves made out of ashes, seven loaves of bread, seven sides of sand from a termite-mound, a chain, seven wild tomatoes [?], and with these we shall make you free.

The diviner shifts for a moment back to the focus on cause, and then reverts to the medical prescription:

(b) Your school absences and lack of concentration were due to bad people. You humans really are bad to each other.... Do you hear, my friend?

(c) Anyway, now also find a chicken [later called a cock] of mixed colours and a red hen; these are for the witchcraft traps. For reversing the mental effects of the second kind of witchcraft and getting your memory back from God, you need a chicken with frayed and tufted feathers [kuku wa kidemu], a newly-hatched chick, and an egg which never hatched.

(d) i. I could mention the names of those who wanted you to become a vagrant and who caused your apathy, while your friends forged ahead, but I [i.e. the spirit] am asked only to 'name' the sickness [i.e. to find its cause and remedy].

ii. Don't think that by going off to another country you will resist them - you *must* be cured - your body must be treated ... and then you will be somebody, settled with a job and money and able to face people.... The day for the treatment is next Tuesday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The divination ends.

Analysis

With this divination, then, we also have an initial lumping and overlapping of ideas: man and woman; loving and longing; following the shoe; getting sick. My translated abstract misses the polysemy of certain words used: *kimako* means sympathy, sorrow, and astonishment; *thamaa* means hope, longing, lust and penis; *ku-kola* means to overcome or penetrate; the word used in divination for 'woman' is a word (*figa*) which normally refers to one of three stones making up a stand for cooking-pots; the word used for 'man' is the normal word for 'five' (*tsano*) which admirably projects the five-limbed image of masculinity; the word for shoe (*kirahu*) carries the meaning also of wandering and therefore random sickness. Conflicting innuendos are created through such polysemy, which heightens the overall conceptual ambivalence. The listening client can try and judge for himself but may not be certain of what precisely is being proposed, while the diviner himself can always retreat from an unpromising lead and take up another through the use of the same words.

The theme of uncontrolled wandering follows on easily from such ambivalence: occurring first in undefined outside space, and then, through pursuit of different parts of the body, finally settling, in this case, on the genitals. But the young man is also clearly mentally as well as physically distressed, and so his mind's wanderings are described. The physical and mental troubles are each explained by a different kind of witchcraft.

Finally, there is a well-ordered list of requisites for cure, interspersed with more direct admonitions not to wander. The subject of wandering may at any one time have been the sickness, the pain, the victim, the aggrieved relative of the victim, or even the agent causing the distress. The admonition not to wander places these phenomena (the subjects of wandering) in fixed rather than indeterminate relations with each other.

*

In the final case of divination, which I will summarize even more briefly, a Giriama woman about ten years past child-bearing age, treats another young man, who has also come on his own behalf and who suffers from continual stomach pains which, the diviner comes to assume,

necessarily affect his sexuality.

1. The diviner opens with a short song in Giriama (which is mutually intelligible with Digo):

(a) The spirits are coming with sympathy, and we are travelling along with that sympathy, and with our human hope.

The spirit switches from song to talk.

(b) We [i.e. the spirits - though perhaps the plural pronoun is used to denote respect for the client, who is a member of an adjacent generation and therefore a 'father'] have stood with a female, but the sick person is a male.... Isn't that so? [The client agrees and the diviner responds with song:]

(c) We are swaying like an eagle; Kayumba [name given to the client] has come, yes, and the sick person is asking... I want to sleep, brothers. [The song ends.]

(d) We have gone with our male... he is small... and yet big... he can speak [i.e. is not a baby; the client assents to this]. He has problems sent by God [i.e. not caused by witchcraft, *utsai*]. He has the shoe. [The diviner repeats the previous refrain and then speaks of the journey through the body.]

2. (a) We have tried the head and left it. Now we are down in the chest, and now the heart. My mind [i.e. that of the spirit, standing as the patient] is confused, isn't that true? [The client agrees and the diviner repeats the refrain.] Now we are down to the stomach. [To which the client assents readily: "The stomach, yes, the stomach, that's it!" And the diviner continues:] It is constipated and burning, and something in it gets up and stands erect and clings to the heart.... My heart is being pulled. And now we travel down to my back. [The client assents.].... My back, my back. It is my loins/genitals [*thamaa*] isn't it, father? It affects my legs, my hips, my *thamaa*.

The client asks what has caused the affliction and the diviner then recounts a phase in the victim's childbirth when he was put in a lake and could not breathe; but he lived and has suffered ever since.

3. The spirit then suggests in detail three separate sets of causative agents: spirits; harmful exposure to a family tradition of the occult (the man's mother is also a diviner); and, as in the previous divination, witchcraft traps - which contradicts her earlier assertion that witchcraft was not involved. The diviner then spells out the curative plants, animals, and cloth which will be required, giving precise instructions as to the identification and whereabouts of the plants, indicating by which lake, in which area of bush, etc. One animal demanded is a 'horse', which is in fact rarely if ever seen in the area, and for which a goat or chicken is used.¹ A time for the exorcism of the spirits and reversal of the witchcraft is set for the same afternoon at the victim's home.

1. See Lewis (1971: 58) on the prevalence of the 'horse' in spirit possession.

Analysis

This Giriama diviner creates the same overlapping metaphors through use of the same polysemic vocabulary comprising sympathy, male, female, love, longing, lust, genitals, and the shoe of wandering, as does the Digo diviner. However, one expression used by the Giriama and not by the Digo is worth noting: it is a phrase for human being (*magulu mairi mudamu ludzere*), which literally means 'a two-legged human with hair'. The expression perhaps illustrates the underlying idea that though spirits are like humans in some aspects of their nature and in the forms some of them may assume, only 'real' humans are of 'real' flesh, blood and hair.

The Giriama diviner also at first refers to the spirits she talks to by the term used for 'ancestral spirit' (*koma*), but later uses the normal word for 'possession spirit' (*pepo*). The Giriama people stress (patri-)lineage relationships and ancestry more than the Digo, and this initial reference to dead ancestors is therefore consistent.

Otherwise, in both divinations there is the same idea of a wandering soul in distress who joins up with the equally nomadic but undistressed spirits, to search through the different parts of the body and locate the source of pain. Bodily and mental problems are eventually distinguished, as in the Digo's divination, but the bodily ones are emphasized.

The final stage of the Giriama's diagnosis distinguishes three sets of causative agents (spirits; having a diviner in the family; and witchcraft), which are further sub-divided in some descriptive detail, whereas the Digo diviner confines himself to two kinds of witchcraft, one producing physical and the other mental distress.

III

Such differences of detail in the diagnoses of the three diviners represent their individual creativity. It is, however, a creativity which operates within the successive frameworks I have suggested: jumbled ideas and metaphors which suggest various possible interpretations give way to their ordered sequencing and to more limited interpretations; they are finally superseded by an unambiguous classification of the causes of the sickness and the materials needed to cure it.

This process of semantic disentanglement and clarification runs parallel with the spatial idiom of movement from a wilderness to a set place and time. Taking the cases as a whole this spatial idiom can be expressed as follows:

The victim, or perhaps we would say his soul, wanders aimlessly outside his body and home. The spirits wander, too. They are always 'unsettled' as diviners say. But it is part of their nature to be so. The human patient, whose nature it is not to be disembodied but rather to be settled in time and place, joins up with the spirits and, with them, frantically travels from one part of the body to another. Though the journey is frantic, it does at least exhibit a rough sequence: it always starts from the head and moves downwards to the area of the genitals, and, in the intermediary area of the trunk alternates probably between heart, stomach, chest, solar plexus, back, joints, hips and legs, usually linking up again with the mind.

Once the victim's source of pain has been located, the spirits, through the mouth of the diviner, can advise on its cure. In concentrating their advice on a fixed bodily area the spirits are themselves settled, at least while the remedy is effective.

In advising on the curative materials and methods to be used, the spirits order and classify, and so are turned from wanderers into busy *bricoleurs*.

Indeed, the suggestion may by now have become clear from my summaries of the divinations that the unravelling of ideas and their ordered re-assembly as diagnosis and potential cure well fits the description of *bricolage* given by Lévi-Strauss (1966: 16-22).

It is true that it is the diviner (or his spirits), rather than the patient, who converts 'debris' and 'chaos' into 'order', or, we might properly say, jumbled thought into sequential thought. But the patient is not only figuratively carried along the paths from wilderness to settlement, he is also a point of reference and guidance along the way. That is to say, by his nods, cues, and statements of agreement, the patient helps the diviner, encouraging him to proceed from one possibility to another. So, while *we* may think of the patient being led to a cure by the diviner, the patient also guides the diviner in his attempt to reach a satisfactory diagnosis; or, to put it less ethnocentrically, to convert an unmanageably large number of interpretations into a more limited number.

This view that the patient guides the diviner, as well as being guided by him, suggests more than a mutual dependency of the two roles. It suggests that they be seen as mirror images of each other. The further implicit idea that each person is both doctor and patient is reinforced by the process through which diviners achieve their position in the first place. They first suffer severely as a patient, and then, as part of the cure, are instructed by a diviner's spirits to seek certain plants and medicines in the bush, thereby also coming to possess divinatory powers. Only a few patients become diviners, but all diviners were once patients. It is as if, in order to become a psychotherapist, one would first be, say, a schizophrenic patient and become a psychotherapist as part of one's 'cure'. Indeed, the parallel may be not without significance.

Just as divinatory diagnosis suggests *bricolage*, so also the idioms and language used to describe the patient's distressed state suggest at least some features of what we call schizophrenia: disembodiment, personal withdrawal into a 'private' world of spirits, the creation of a 'false self' which denies the diviner's 'real' identity, and what I continue for the moment to call jumbled speech. Yet, once again, these are features which are as much, if not more, the creation of the diviner as they are attributable to the patient. Both the patient and the diviner participate willingly in this diagnosis, with the patient allowing himself into the 'private' spirit world of the diviner. Also, both appear to be in control of the way in which the diagnosis proceeds. It may well be that cultures like those of the Swahili and the Giriama provide structured events and roles by which what we call schizophrenia is legitimized and thereby brought under the control of those who suffer from it. Be that as it may, it is not here my interest to claim that the diviner and/or patient are in some degree schizophrenic. What is interesting is that the diagnostic themes in the divinations appeal to thought and speech processes which, when very marked, we would label schizophrenic.

Does this mean, then, that divinatory diagnosis is both *bricolage* and schizophrenia? Or, to put the equation another way, that *bricolage*, or myth-making thought, as Lévi-Strauss alternatively calls it, and schizophrenic thought are basically the same thing? Since schizophrenic thought has, moreover, been viewed by some scholars as resting on a basis similar to that of artistic thought (Wilson 1978: 97), does this further mean that *bricolage*,

and schizophrenic *and* artistic thought are equivalent? This seems absurd and perhaps, in reaching this equation, I have merely allowed myself to be captured by the terms and have merged their respective referents. To be sure, each one is a slippery concept from its respective disciplinary viewpoint.

On the other hand, absurd though the equation might seem, the fact that it can be reached at all suggests some further consideration of Lévi-Strauss's three-fold distinction between *bricolage*, art, and modern science as modes of thought. Art, it will be remembered, is placed half-way between *bricolage* and modern science. The artist is said to partake of both. He is a *bricoleur* in creating a model or structure, a recognizable painting for example, out of pre-existing images. So does the myth-maker. But he also works by design, like the modern scientist or engineer in producing, as well as reproducing, structures. That is to say, the picture only exists as a painting on canvas and remains under his technological control as creator. He can, if he wants to, alter it so as to signify new directions, as would an impressionist (Lévi-Strauss 1966: 22, 25).

Likewise, we are told that intellectual *bricolage* in the form of myth-making has a poetic quality and can achieve brilliant intellectual results (ibid: 17, 21). Much the same could be said of divination which, as well as offering opportunities for dramatic and semantic creativity, solves the practical problem of mental as well as physical distress.

Part of the solution consists in allocating and legitimizing social roles: the patient always has the chance of becoming the diviner. Moreover, the method by which this is achieved is, as can be seen from my summaries of the divinatory diagnoses, broadly predictable but with scope for individual creativity. The Digo and Giriama diviners, it will be remembered, elaborated to a greater extent than the 'Arab' and in ways much more aesthetically pleasing. As well as being *bricolage*, then, and even touching on modern medical science in its diagnostic parallels with psychotherapy, the divination is also an art form.

Lévi-Strauss himself says that the difference between the myth-maker and the modern scientist, or the *bricoleur* and the engineer, with the artist in between, is not absolute, and the distinction remains an important general approach complementary to the recent discussion of whether 'primitive' thought is based on two- or three-valued logic, and whether it may be said to exist at all (Cooper 1975; Salmon 1978; Hallpike 1976, 1977; Williams 1977; & Warren 1978).

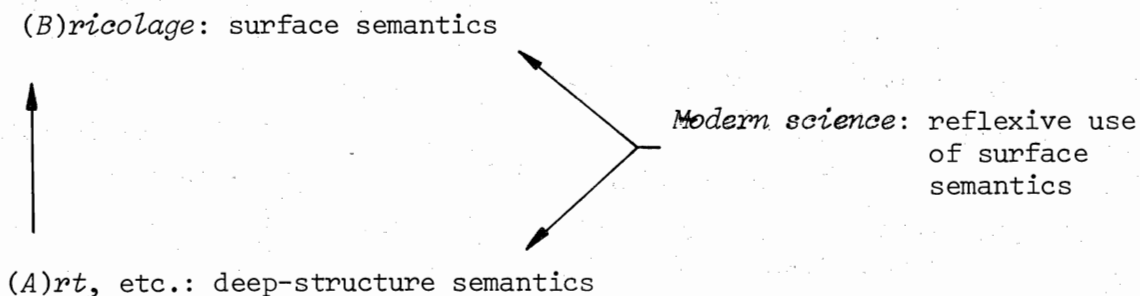
But there is another approach which, on the basis of my data, I would state as follows. Analysis of the diviner's speech reveals two parallel patterns: one to do with the language used, and the other with the narrative theme. To take the linguistic dimension first, the diviner starts with what I called jumbled speech, or what we may now refer to as inconsistent and mixed use of metaphor, false syllogism, some reversals, and an apparent lack of path control - i.e. straying from one concept to another and back again inconsequentially. Though intended (we assume) rather than involuntary, these are features common in some degree to the speech of all of us, but in excess may characterize so-called schizophrenic speech (Werner and Levis-Matichek 1975). These features are rectified as the divination proceeds. The speech and argument become clearer and culminate in perfectly precise instructions based on a crisp classification of causative agents and remedial plants, animals, and other substances.

The narrative theme starts with the idea of aimless wandering in an unspecified and we may assume empty area, which is alien and remote. Within it, paths criss-cross confusedly but eventually, through the idiom

of bodily exploration, lead to a settled point and prospective cure.

We can see that the shifts from jumbled to sequential speech and from aimless wandering to purposeful direction 'say' the same thing. But it would be difficult to conclude that one is an epiphenomenon of the other. The logic governing both may be said to lie in the contrast between deep-structure and surface semantics. Gerald Leech offers us a linguistic example with the sentence *I saw the girls cross the street* (1974: 288). At a deep semantic level the crossing and the seeing occur at the same time - they are 'a junction of two interacting events' (ibid). But the sentence orders them sequentially - the seeing comes before the crossing. It also subordinates the second clause (*crossing the street*) by embedding it in the main clause (*seeing the girls*). As Leech remarks, the truest 'copy of the structure of events and circumstances we recognize in the reality around us' (ibid) is in fact the synchronous picture, or what he calls the orderless network of deep semantics. Sentence order 'distorts' this 'true' picture by separating events in time and ranking them. Events do of course occur which, 'in reality', are indeed sequentially ordered and may be ranked in utterances by entailment and presupposition. But even here, sentences used to describe them can never fully overcome syntactic and phonological restraints and approach the semantic accuracy of personally rather than 'grammatically' ordered words. Like the painter and the poet, the schizophrenic speaker can say things with a shocking but brilliant poignancy that conventional sentences rarely attain. As with the initial jumbled speech of diviners, they operate more freely at a level closer to the orderless networks of deep-structure semantics.

The shift from deep-structure to surface (sentence) semantics seems, then, to underlie the parallel shift in the diviner's speech style and narrative theme. Deep-structure semantics would seem to be the area of the most creative, artistic, poetic, and schizophrenic thought, and surface semantics that of classification and taxonomy, i.e. of *bricolage*. To complete the model, modern science may be regarded as reflexive surface semantics, i.e. language used to refer to itself, including its deep structure (which is what I have attempted in this paper):



We see now the place of the two archetypes with which I began this paper. Categorical overlap, crossing, or confusion (i.e. orderless networks), belong in the area of deep-structure semantics and art (A). We are used to the idea of this archetype being an object of the ritual attitude. More properly we should say that it poses the intellectual puzzles which people seek to solve through aesthetically pleasing methods.

The second archetype takes off from here and, in depicting the return from random wandering in the wilderness to straight and narrow paths, represents the movement from deep-structure to surface semantics ($A \rightarrow B$), or, in the particular case of divination, from jumbled to clear speech.

We see, then, why the basic styles and themes of shamanistic divination, at least in the society I have studied, are the same, regardless of the social circumstances of diviners. For they are part of a wider logic by which we solve problems as puzzles: by untangling, and so clarifying and recognizing them.

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COMMENTARY

WHEN IS A CHILD A 'CHILD'? ALTERNATIVE SYSTEMS OF CLASSIFICATION

During the past decade it has become fashionable in social anthropology to treat certain sectors of society as 'muted groups'. This trend has found its principal focus in studies of women, the 'human group that forms about half of any population';¹ but there is a parallel, if as yet less widespread, interest in half of the population of society divided according to a different criterion: in this case the line is drawn between 'children' and 'adults'. The ensuing discussion is by way of a commentary on this latter focus of attention, referring in particular to articles published in this journal and elsewhere by Charlotte Hardman and Allison James.² These two anthropologists have pursued the study of that sector of British society which we designate as 'children'; my own interest extends to children in other cultures also, in particular, in Africa.

It has been suggested that most African women enjoy relative economic, political and sexual freedom, and that 'in Africa, south of the Sahara ... the "position of women" has a good deal to be said in its favour'.³ I wish to show that the position of children in this cultural region is likewise relatively favourable, and that the conclusions drawn by Charlotte Hardman and Allison James must be modified if they are to be applied to African data. Like Wendy James in her essay on African women,⁴ I take as my starting point 'intuition and generalised personal feeling' in my approach to children outside the British context, but this intuition is derived from discussions of the topic with African friends in Oxford⁵ and I believe that it can be substantiated by ethnographic data from many parts of Africa. I have yet to conduct my own field research; in any case I do not think that British and American anthropologists collecting field material on African children have realized the limitations of our own conceptual classifications of children. Certainly their theoretical interpretations do not always seem to be justified by the data they present.

In the recent works on children to which I have referred above children are treated as a 'muted group'; in fact it was Charlotte Hardman who coined the term.⁶ This approach can be traced back to Edwin Ardener's paper 'Belief and the Problem of Women', where he advocates that not only women but other categories of person, including children, should be studied, to counteract their present lack of articulateness.⁷ Children, like women, are 'muted' in relation to the dominant group of society, defined as adults or males respectively. Indeed, there are strong echoes of the Ardeners' work on women in Allison James's study of children's nicknames; we might compare:

... a society may be dominated or overdetermined by the model (or models) generated by one dominant group within the system. This dominant model may impede the free expression of alternative models of their world which sub-dominant groups may possess, and perhaps may even inhibit the very generation of such models. Groups dominated in this sense find it necessary to structure their world through the model (or models) of the dominant group, transforming their own models as best they can in terms of the received ones.⁸

as against:

In a culture where the rules and regulations stem from the adult world children possess an alternative cultural perspective which, while, being uniquely their own, is expressive of the child's conception of himself and his place in relationship to the adult world. This perspective is indeed inaudible to adults. Children actively deflect adult culture in order to create their own order within the limits and boundaries given to them by adults.⁹

The difficulties of adopting such an approach are two-fold, though they are, paradoxically, entailed by the very point which both writers are making. First, how can members of a society imbued with the ideology of the dominant group in their own society perceive the alternative models of sub-dominant groups? Indeed, how can they even be sure that they exist? And second, how could such alternative models be expressed in a language which embodies the dominant ideology?

The studies of children undertaken by Hardman and James in the past decade aptly illustrate these problems: the dichotomy adult/child is derived from the adult system of classification, and it is only because the distinction exists within the terminology adopted by adults that the category 'child' can be set apart as a subject worthy of study; in so far as children themselves recognize the division and incorporate it into their own models, it is because they have received it from adults. Both Hardman and James claim to have adopted the child's perspective, but is it really possible for an adult to see the world through a child's eyes? Each of these writers is explicit about the difficulties of field-work where their very physical appearance and size marked them off from the subjects of their studies; the acceptance of an adult into the child's group could only be temporary and unstable. The anthropological undertaking itself precludes the possibility of total assimilation into the society under study; the anthropologist is required to return to the world of adult academics in order to render an account of his or her findings. The physical reminder of the anthropologist's identity as an outsider is no less obtrusive for a Western anthropologist working in Africa, where a white skin is a marker of externality; but though many anthropologists might claim to have tried to understand, interpret, translate another culture, I wonder how many could honestly claim to have 'adopted the perspective' of that culture. To illustrate the difficulty, I would point to Hardman's article on children's games; the product of her avowed preference for considering children's games in terms of their own classification is noticeably sparse, amounting to no more than a single paragraph which even approximates to the putting into practice of such an ideal.¹⁰

In the same connection, Allison James suggests that adults or academics who do not acknowledge the child's perspective may make 'ethnocentric judgements' about children, 'precisely because they endeavour to understand one culture in terms of another'.¹¹ But her own work, though clearly acknowledging and recognizing what she calls the child's perspective, is no less free from ethnocentric judgements than approaches adopted by other adults and academics, because the very categories with which she works are the products of an adult (including academic) classificatory system. Whether or not it is possible to understand one culture in terms of another, I very much doubt whether it is feasible for a member of the dominant group within a society (in this case, adults) to understand a sub-dominant group within the same society (in this case, children) in the latter's *own* terms; and the undertaking is all the more fraught with danger when the 'muted group' is a sector of society which one has oneself emerged from and left behind. I doubt whether the intent to understand another group in its own idiom can ever issue in more than a perception and re-phrasing of that idiom in terms of, or at least intelligible to, one's own. The impossibility of shaking off completely our received cultural categories is nicely illustrated by the case of *Portnoy's Complaint*.¹²

If it is granted that the concept of childhood, as defined by the binary division of human beings in society into adults and children, is a product of adult classifications, the implications of this for the study of children in anthropology must be considered. To begin with, in the English language there are many, sometimes overlapping, sub-divisions of the single category 'child'. Allison James herself lists baby, mite, kid, toddler, juvenile, girl, teenager, minor, adolescent.¹³ I would suggest that other sub-divisions might also be considered: children in rural or urban areas, children of upper-class, middle-class or working-class parents, for example. If the list of terms based on a rough criterion of age were to be extended, it would include young people, the middle-aged, the elderly, old people. Each term might be regarded as classifying a sub-group of society, with its own modes of thought and action. The application of any one label to an individual, and therefore the group to which an individual belongs, varies according to context; it is because individuals can belong to several groups at different times, or even at once, that the groups subsumed under such terms cannot be treated as static or rigidly bounded. To treat children as a single category, by virtue of their being non-adults, obscures the different groups to which children belong and the distinctions which they themselves recognize (e.g. juniors and seniors, or big and little children, within a school).

So at the very least, it must be said that the dichotomy (which is fundamental to the recent anthropological work on children which I am here discussing) is rather limiting. This point leads me to draw a contrast between attitudes towards children in British and African society. Although one must be wary of generalizations about Africa as a cultural area in view of the vast diversity embraced by the continent, I think it is safe to say that there is a more positive evaluation of children in Africa than in Britain. Similarly, at the other end of the age spectrum, African elders are widely respected and esteemed, whereas in Britain an old person may be said to be passing through a second childhood; the old age of others is often a matter of jest or scorn, one's own old age is a source of fear.

Secondly, the validity of separating off children as a distinct group is to be questioned. One important objection to this approach is that it ignores the developmental aspect. All children become adults, but Hardman and James treat them as a static group, with no indication of how a child

becomes a member of his peer group and its culture, nor of how he grows out of it. In the work of these writers, as in the important books on school-children by the Opies to whom they owe so much, children are represented as manipulating the received system of adult categories. However there are two difficulties implied here. First, that children already know the system — but how are they supposed to have learnt it? And second, that they do not accept it — perhaps this is true, but what is it then that induces children to adopt such classifications as they grow and become adult? Both Hardman and James make a sweeping rejection of the study of 'socialization', caricaturing it as the view that children are the blank face onto which the image of society is stamped. Portrayed in such crude terms, the socialization approach is, to be sure, unacceptable, although I suspect that a more subtle reading of some studies within the tradition might yield something of value. But the preoccupation which underlies the study of socialization is in fact the same as that on which the studies of children as a separate category are based: it is the anthropologist's concern with the *social*. Anthropological studies of 'socialization' imply a view of society, or more precisely adult society, as a static entity into which children must be incorporated; the Opies, Hardman and James all proceed on the assumption that children have their own society with its own system of order and classification. It is perhaps because it would necessitate too great an interest in the individual that any idea of development or of progression across conceptual boundaries is omitted. In this connection, I would note that the above-mentioned anthropologists have treated children as forming a sub-culture, contained literally and intellectually within the adult world; psychology has treated the individual child as the father of the man, and psychoanalysis traces adult problems back to the experiences of childhood.

On the other hand, although the category of child is treated as a bounded entity, the precise age-group concerned tends to be loosely defined and fluid. The Opies make it clear in the titles of their books¹⁴ that their subject-matter is school-children, but they range between primary and early secondary school, sometimes referring to 'younger' and 'older' children, and occasionally specifying ages. Hardman states that the source-material of her work was derived from the Opies' books and from observations made in the playground of a primary school in Oxford, where the age-range was 5 - 11 years old.¹⁵ Allison James includes babies and toddlers in her theoretical discussion but the subjects of her examination of children's nicknames are aged between 10 and 17.¹⁶ Unfortunately, none of these authors pauses to consider the biases which might creep into their interpretations of the classification 'child' as a result of drawing the data from school-children alone. Nor does any of them incorporate material on pre-school children, although Hardman and James both generalize from their own data to the whole category of 'children', which, being defined in their terms as non-adults, should embrace younger children. There are, of course, two problems for the anthropologist who wishes to study children: first, in the British case, from which all these authors argue, almost without exception children between the ages of 5 and 16 are at school — school-age children are school-children. Second, pre-school-age children are not so amenable to study because they are dispersed in their homes, shielded by their nuclear families, and because they do not in themselves before going to school constitute a group, a society such as anthropologists love to study; rather, one would have to study the whole complex of intra-familial relations.

However, I would suggest that data drawn from school-children alone will yield misleading results if it is used as the basis of generalizations on the entire category of children, and that rather different conclusions might be drawn from information on children collected in areas where universal education remains at best an ideal, and where for those who are able to go to school, such education is regarded even by the children themselves as a privilege rather than an imposition. In a sense, the institution of the school provides somewhat artificial conditions by separating off children from the wider society for a considerable portion of their time. The age-gap between the oldest pupil and the youngest teacher is sufficient to emphasize the criterion of age as constituting the dividing-line between the categories child and adult; indeed, these two categories (child/pupil and adult/teacher) are effectively the only two classes of person relevant in the context of the school, and the whole concept of education rests on a relationship of domination between the teacher who imparts knowledge and the child who absorbs it. By contrast, in the wider society, or even in the family context, the child is (potentially, at least) in contact with people of all ages, from baby to old person. In a school there is a specially designated play area and play time, play in other spaces and at other times being frowned upon; in play, the child is conceptually outside the authority of adults and so the opportunities for it must be restricted within the school. For the child who is not attending school, whether in Africa or elsewhere, play is an integral part of life and occurs in the home, the cattle camp, or wherever the child happens to be, not in an adult-designated and bounded area. It is interesting that among the school-children studied by the Opies, among whom academic competition was presumably intense, competitive games were unpopular when the children were left to their own devices.¹⁷ In contrast, games among Dinka children for example are predominantly competitive. If games in the British school playground become really rough, the teacher 'on duty' will intervene, whether of his own accord or at the request of the weaker child; the weak child is never forced to stand up for himself and so the relationship of dependence on adults is perpetuated. An African child however is encouraged to become independent at a much earlier age and this independence is fostered and enforced by letting a child do even difficult things on his own. To a British parent it would seem shocking that a seven-year-old child might walk 100 miles to boarding-school, as in one case I know of. The school system in Britain, then, provides institutional reinforcement for the separation of the conceptual categories 'adult' and 'child', the former being the dominant group and the latter being *ipso facto* muted.

Following on from this, I would postulate that the attitude towards children in a society is derived from the power structure of that society. I am not suggesting that children are not treated as children in, for example, African societies; rather that the attitudes and ideas attaching to the category 'child', and the delimitation of its boundaries, are different, and that this results from the different nature of the distribution of power and authority and the relative values placed on other categories of person.¹⁸

To stay, for the time being, with the British school and the nuclear family, the authority of the teacher derives from the delegation of authority from the parent (we speak of the teacher being *in loco parentis*); the school system depends on the teacher retaining authority — without it, the educational process could not be sustained — but the teacher depends on the school to provide institutional backing for his authority. In such

a self-implicating system, the teacher's authority is rather precarious; in case of confrontation, the teacher must use power to maintain authority, and his only sanction is the use of force (though not necessarily physical force). The authority of the parent is less subject to the wielding of power, by virtue of the child's physical dependence on his parents and also, in most cases, by virtue of the relationship of affection which prevails. It is not until the child goes to school that the dichotomy adult/child is brought to the fore, with the accompanying implications of power as well as authority; before that time, the prominent relationship is parent/child in which *interaction* inheres, and the relation of dependence is not so much one of domination. This point shows again why a consideration of pre-school-age children would not fit neatly into the framework of analysis employed by Hardman and James.¹⁹

Not, however, that the relationship between parents and children in British society is not also partly responsible for the concepts adhering to the adult/child dichotomy. The child is constantly protected and shielded from the outside world, being told that he is 'too young' to play outside after dark, travel alone on a bus, read adult books, etc. He is provided with books, toys, TV and radio programmes etc. which have been specially designed by adults to comply with their conceptions of what a child ought (or is expected) to be interested in.²⁰ If a girl helps her mother with the housework or a boy helps his father with handiwork, it is as *helper* and the help tends to be spasmodically accepted; the child is rarely entrusted with any responsibility. If a child ventures into the adult world of work to any considerable degree it is regarded as exploitation,²¹ and the parents of such a child would be considered opportunistic or negligent. Many parents are openly reluctant to let their children leave home; I wonder whether the expression 'to be tied to the mother's apron strings' would be intelligible in an African context?

To a large extent, I think, the power structure of our society is inter-connected with the economic structure. Just as many men feel threatened when their wives go out to work because their authority over women is no longer backed by recourse to the sanction of withdrawing material support, so children who are economically independent undermine the authority of their parents, particularly their fathers, in so far as this authority is based on their position as providers for the children's material needs. Similarly, the achievement of independence by children hastens the time when the parents will be, in their old age, economically dependent on their children with the concomitant reversal of the relationship of authority.

I want to elaborate on this point by adopting an approach which has been gaining currency in anthropology, that is, of considering any one conceptual category in the light of all other similar categories.²² By this I mean that I find the approach to children which is based on the bare dichotomy adult/child unsatisfactory; even if all the sub-divisions of these broad categories are to be ignored, I think we must consider a third category, that of old people. An examination of the relationship between members of the categories 'middle-aged' and 'elderly' people (or 'adults' and 'old people') may shed some light on the interaction between adults and children.

Just as children are sent off to school, so old people in Britain are frequently grouped together in nursing homes or old people's homes; conceptual separation is reinforced by spatial separation. Although we have an awed admiration for those who reach the advanced age of 100 (or even 90), the 'collective representation' of old people in British society is

of people infirm in body and mind, a burden on their offspring and/or the State, and certainly not of much use in the administration of our affairs. In many African societies, even if it is the middle-aged who hold the power, the elders command respect and authority. To quote one example (which concerns the people I am studying, the Abaluyia of Kenya): 'A man's assumption of grandparenthood coincides with that time in his life when he is expected to take an active part in the judicial affairs of the clan and community and also to assume an increasingly important part in the ritual aspects of clan and community life.'²³ Although the elders may require material support, they are otherwise indispensable: 'members of the grandparental generation ... are growing more and more dependent economically upon their middle-aged sons. The sons, however, are dependent upon their ageing fathers for leadership in the ritual sphere.'²⁴ This situation contrasts with the state of affairs in British society where loss of material independence entails loss of authority also.

I want to suggest that the categorization 'child' embraces two different concepts: non-adult and offspring of parent; and that it is the relative emphasis placed on each of these which explains the different attitudes to children in Britain (and perhaps one might generalize to 'the West') and Africa. In order to attempt to understand the contrast, it is necessary to consider the sources of power and authority in inter-personal relations, which in turn colour the perceptions of person-categories. A fuller understanding would require the examination of other aspects of society; I have chosen here to confine myself to kinship structure and its relationship to economic structure, but I believe that data on religious and political formations, for example, would yield similar results.

In Britain, where recognized kinship extends only to a very limited circle and the nuclear family is the predominant unit of kinship, the emphasis in conceptions of children is on the child as the non-adult. The birth of children is not always welcomed, as is clear from the prevalence of abortion, and it is accepted that some married couples may decide not to have children. The not-yet-fully-socialized behaviour of children once born renders them a nuisance: 'children should be seen and not heard'. By contrast, in a society where kinship is an important principle of social organization, the birth of a child ensures the continuity of the lineage; the evaluation of the child in this context is not negative (*non-adult*) but positive: as the offspring of its parents a child is an indispensable link in the succession of members in the lineage or clan.

The British 'grown-up' has the status, and consequently the power and authority, of adulthood by the mere fact of age. In societies in Africa where age-sets rank people into groups according to age, with culturally-defined relations between each, there is a *series* of such groups and this precludes the *binary* division between adults and children. Even in those African societies which have ceremonies of initiation in which the individual is said to pass from childhood to adulthood and which might therefore be thought to exemplify the stark dichotomy between adult and child, marriage and the bearing of children are linked with the attaining of *full* adult status. Among the Abaluyia, for instance, though the examples could be multiplied, 'The matrimonial relationship becomes fully established only after the birth of one or several children From now on the pair are regarded as "really" husband and wife, and no longer as "boy" and "girl".'²⁵

The average family in Britain comprises two or three children, but a family of this size would be regarded in many parts of Africa as small. 'A numerous offspring is desired by both parents. A prolific wife will command more respect from her husband and his kinsmen than a wife who is barren.'²⁶ Without positing a *causal* connection (in either direction),

I would suggest that the importance of children is certainly *linked* with the positive evaluation of women in Africa: 'In a varied range of African societies ... we can discern a common cluster of ideas about the wider importance of women's child-bearing capacity, their creative role in bringing up a new generation.'²⁷

At least two reasons for the desire for many children may be postulated: one is that a man with a large family commands greater respect in the eyes of society; another is that a family frequently constitutes an economic unit. The latter point shows why the idea is precluded that African children should be excluded from economic activity. Again we find in the ethnographic material on the Abaluyia that the family is economically self-sufficient and 'the individual family constitutes the basic social group that co-operates most widely and intensely in the activities of everyday life.'²⁸

The authority of the father and mother over the child is undisputed, but the possible conflict of wills is mitigated by the fact that children have a role to play in the life of the society and, further, that from the beginning the upbringing of the child is the responsibility of a wider kin-group. In this context the type of possessive emotional involvement of parent with child which underlies the saying 'to be tied to the mother's apron strings' is pre-empted. This helps us to understand statements such as the following: 'A father's authority over his children ... is considerable, even though many fathers make little practical use of their rights Theoretically, however, a father has almost absolute rights over his children'²⁹

In a society where kinship is lineage-based, the principles of continuity and seniority are inherent. There is no loss of authority with the approach of old age or the maturation of children: 'the ties between parents and children tend to be strong, and parental authority as well as filial obedience and devotion continue far beyond the time of the children's physical maturity.'³⁰ If elders retain authority and respect, adults do not need to cling to their privileged position through fear of losing it, nor attempt to fend off old age; and if their children can attain authority (over their own offspring) without challenging their parents' authority over themselves, then there is no necessity for a denial of parental authority in order to gain adult status.

It is possible, however, that in the face of the rapid economic and material change which is taking place in Africa at present, the attitudes I have discussed no longer hold true. The works from which I have quoted on the Abaluyia are based on field-work conducted in the 1930s (Günter Wagner) and the 1950s (Walter Sangree). Already in the 'thirties circumstances were changing for the Abaluyia: Wagner comments that a large number of children was no longer an unqualified benefit, for both economic and kinship reasons; the cost of upbringing, especially education, was high and it was becoming increasingly difficult to sustain a large family in view of the scarcity of land and the insecurity of tenure; the clan was declining in political and ritual importance, with the functions of government taken over by the British, and Christianity spreading at the expense of the traditional religion. And yet, we read, there was not at that time any widespread desire to restrict the size of families. 'It appears ... that the valuation of children and accordingly the size of families is one of those factors which do not readily adjust themselves to new conditions'³¹ Conditions have certainly changed a great deal since then, but David Parkin's recent work on the neighbouring Luo³² provides a good illustration of the way in which traditional values can

be retained, albeit expressed in different forms, in altered circumstances. 'Changing historical circumstances may affect the socio-economic features of a people's existence But it is not so easy for the fundamental elements of a people's moral culture to disappear or to be turned upside down.'³³

It is perhaps because attitudes to children constitute one of the fundamental elements of moral culture that an ethnocentric approach to children appears to have such a strong foothold in even the most recent of anthropological studies on this topic. To be sure, neither Hardman nor James have attempted to apply their analytical framework to data from outside Britain, but on the other hand the idea that anthropology is a comparative discipline has perhaps an even stronger foothold in anthropological circles. I hope to have shown that if nicknames are a test case for a mode of thought³⁴ the application of that mode of thought is restricted to the context from which the data underlying the argument are drawn, and that there do exist alternative modes of thought. It is ironical that in a society which is reputed to embody the principle of individualism, the attitude towards children appears to allow them relatively little scope for acting or thinking as individuals; they are herded together in the school, classified by adults as a group and treated by anthropologists as a society with its own sub-culture; they are for a long time denied the responsibility and independence which is granted to many an African child.

Malcolm Crick has commented above in this issue of *J.A.S.O.* that anthropologists have the ability to make the strange very familiar; I wonder whether, particularly now that anthropologists are no longer immune from having their works read by the subjects of their studies, anthropologists do not also have a capacity for making the familiar very strange?

ELIZABETH MUNDAY

NOTES

1. Edwin Ardener, 'Belief and the Problem of Women', in Shirley Ardener (ed.), *Perceiving Women*, London: J.M. Dent & Sons [1975] 1977, pp. 1-18; at p. 1.

2. Charlotte Hardman, 'Can There be an Anthropology of Children?', *J.A.S.O.* IV, 1973, pp. 85-99; 'Fact and Fantasy in the Playground', *New Society* XXIX, no. 625, September 19, 1974, pp. 801-3; 'Children in the Playground', *J.A.S.O.* V, 1974, pp. 173-88; *The Study of Children in Social Anthropology*, B. Litt. thesis, Oxford University 1974.

Allison James, 'When is a Child not a Child? Nicknames: A Test Case for a Mode of Thought', *Durham University Working Papers* no. 3, February 1979, pp. 1-66; 'Confections, Concoctions and Conceptions', *J.A.S.O.* X, 1979, pp. 83-95.

3. Wendy James, 'Matrifocus on African Women', in Shirley Ardener (ed.), *Defining Females: The Nature of Women in Society*, London: Croom Helm 1978, pp. 140-62; at p. 140.
4. Ibid.
5. I would like to thank in particular: Francis Binayo (Kenya), Joseph Kamugisha (Tanzania), Mohamed Mahmoud (Sudan), Bona Malwal (Sudan) and Martin Uhomoibhi (Nigeria).
6. See Edwin Ardener, 'The "Problem" Revisited', in Ardener (ed.), *Perceiving Women*, pp. 19-27; at p. 22.
7. Ibid.
8. Shirley Ardener, 'Introduction', in Ardener (ed.), *Perceiving Women*, pp. vii-xxiii; at p. xii.
9. James, 'When is a Child not a Child?', p. 4. Cf. also Iona and Peter Opie, *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1959, p. 320: 'By using slang, local dialect, a multiplicity of technical terms, word-twistings, codes and sign language, children communicate with each other in ways which outsiders are unable to understand, and thus satisfy an impulse common to all underdogs.'
10. Hardman, 'Children in the Playground', p. 186.
11. James, 'When is a Child not a Child?', p. 62.
12. See A. Segal, 'Breach of One Rule Breaches the System of Rules' [1971], in Mary Douglas (ed.), *Rules and Meanings: The Anthropology of Everyday Knowledge*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1973, pp. 257-65; esp. p. 264.
13. James, 'When is a Child not a Child?', p. 5.
14. Thus Opie, *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*, op. cit., and also their *Children's Games in Street and Playground*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1969.
15. See for example Hardman, 'Can There be an Anthropology of Children?', p. 95.
16. James, 'When is a Child not a Child?', pp. 5 & 23.
17. The Opies state that children prefer games with a considerable element of luck, so that individual abilities are not directly compared (*Children's Games*, p. 2). Cf. *ibid*, p. 185: 'it is our impression that children do not really enjoy competitive athletics The races they have when they are on their own are noticeably ones in which their respective running abilities are not too finely matched.'
18. Here, and later in my discussion, I use the terms 'power' and 'authority' with approximately the sense given to them by J.H.M. Beattie in his 'Checks on the Abuse of Political Power in Some African States: A Preliminary Framework for Analysis', *Sociologus* IX, 1959, pp. 97-114. Thus 'a man has power in so far as he can do what he wants to do, and he has social power where in any human relationship he can make others do as he wants them to do.' (p. 98) 'Social authority may ... be defined as the right, vested in a certain person or persons by the consensus of society, to make decisions, issue orders and apply sanctions in matters affecting other members of the society.' (p. 99)

19. A striking number of the children's games reported by the Opies in *Children's Games* involve experimentation with relations of authority. See for example 'Daddy Whacker' (p. 72); the game played with coke 'because it is against the rule of the school to throw coke about in the playground' (p. 74); dares (p. 263); acting games in which parental authority is flouted or 'when children get spanked (there is much glee in this)' (p. 304); 'Mothers and Fathers', reversing the roles of authoritarian parent and protesting offspring (p. 331); 'Cops and Robbers' (pp. 304-1); 'playing "Schools" is a way to turn the tables on real school: a child can become a teacher, pupils can be naughty, and fun can be made of punishments' (p. 333); etc. Cf. also Hardman, 'Fact and Fantasy in the Playground', p. 802: 'When a child was playing "teacher", the role was invariably seen as authoritarian, as a dispenser of discipline rather than learning.'
20. James, 'When is a Child not a Child?', p. 8, comments on the institutionalization of the 'myth of childhood', a term used by S. Firestone in *The Dialectics of Sex*, St. Albans: Paladin 1972.
21. A recent newspaper report quotes the organizer of an exhibition of tapestries made by Egyptian village children, reassuring any potential objectors: 'This isn't child exploitation. Most Egyptian country children don't go to school, and by learning weaving they get a skill and a living often better than a university graduate would get.' (Charlotte Simpson, *The Observer* (London), colour supplement, November 25, 1979, p. 21.)
22. See Malcolm Crick on witchcraft in this issue of *J.A.S.O.* and his citations of Lévi-Strauss on totemism and Rivière on marriage.
23. Walter H. Sangree, *Age, Prayer and Politics in Tiriki, Kenya*, London: Oxford University Press, for the East African Institute of Social Research 1966, p. 32.
24. Ibid, p. 46. Cf. Günter Wagner, *The Bantu of Western Kenya*, London: Oxford University Press, for the International African Institute [1949] 1970, p. 77: 'Generally speaking, it is always the oldest member of a group of kinsmen whose opinion carries the greatest weight in matters concerning that group.'
25. Ibid, p. 42.
26. Ibid, p. 43.
27. James, 'Matrifocus on African Women', p. 157.
28. Günter Wagner, 'The Changing Family among the Bantu Kavirondo', *Africa* XXII, supplement, p. 6. Cf. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Kinship and Marriage among the Nuer*, Oxford: Clarendon Press [1951] 1970, p. 130: 'A Nuer home is run by the combined efforts of all its members and the labour of running it is fairly distributed among them. One cannot but be struck by the camaraderie of the family as they assist one another in daily and seasonal tasks, either by direct aid or by co-ordination of activities. No work is considered degrading, no one is a drudge, all have leisure for rest and recreation, and all are content with their roles in the economy of the home. Indeed, the division of labour between sexes and ages accords with the social and personal freedom of women and children in Nuerland and with the recognition, so striking among the Nuer, of the independence and dignity of the individual.'
29. Wagner, *The Bantu of Western Kenya*, p. 46. Cf. Evans-Pritchard, *Kinship and Marriage*, pp. 135-6: '... it is, I think, important to recognize

that a Nuer child is not born into the family alone and then slowly extends his awareness to members of the household and kin, but is born into a wider circle than the family, in the sense that all those who share the homestead of the father and adjacent homesteads take an interest in the child from the time the mother leaves her hut after bearing him.'

30. Wagner, *The Bantu of Western Kenya*, p. 48.

31. Ibid, p. 48.

32. David Parkin, *The Cultural Definition of Political Response: Lineal Destiny among the Luo*, London: Academic Press 1978.

33. James, 'Matrifocus on African Women', p. 158.

34. James, 'When is a Child not a Child? Nicknames: A Test Case for a Mode of Thought'.

BOOK REVIEWS

JEAN CUSENIER (ed.), *Europe as a Cultural Area*, Mouton: The Hague, Paris & New York 1979. World Anthropology Series (General Editor Sol Tax). x, 281 pp. £18.70.

Advance notices of this volume, one of the latest in the World Anthropology Series, must have raised the expectations of many anthropologists interested in Europe. For one thing, it has a suggestive title. The notion of 'culture area' has been part of anthropological and geographical traditions in Europe and in North America. Despite its well-known limitations, there could be scope for discussion in the context of Europe, itself an area impossible to delimit with geographical precision (see Terry G. Jordan, *The European Culture Area*, New York 1973). It is surprising therefore that nowhere in this volume are these issues discussed — or even mentioned. One is left wondering what relationship the title of the book has with its contents. Certainly the present volume suggests none.

During the 9th International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences more than 240 communications relating to Europe were issued. What criteria determined the choice of the ten published here? The answer is far from clear since the resulting volume lacks intellectual unity, is most uneven in geographical coverage and the papers vary considerably in standard of analysis and of presentation. The additional weakness of obscure and incorrect English in several articles is doubly unfortunate. Apparently only four writers are native English-speakers. Surely, therefore, specific attention should have been paid to the careful correction of grammatical and stylistic errors, often so obtrusive as to obscure the meaning, before publishing such a costly volume? If the book aims at acquainting English-speaking anthropologists with the work of scholars in other European traditions, linguistic accuracy should have been an elementary priority. This raises another question — what is the role of the editor in the production of a book? Cusenier has chosen to be self-effacing: he does not contribute a paper of his own and his scant three-page Introduction barely indicates his intentions. Indeed it puzzles rather than clarifies. With only one page directly addressed to the contents the reader is inadequately prepared for the diversity of the papers which follow.

The book is divided into two parts, but contains what the editor calls 'three kinds of texts' (though he does not explain the distinctions between them). Two writers contribute to Part One, 'Time and Space', a historian and an ethnologist.

First comes William McNeill's 'Patterns of European History': in the grand style of universal history, he sweeps through some 4000 years in 94 undocumented pages (with only one bibliographic reference). It is both too long and too brief, taking up two-fifths of the book, yet so impressionistic and reductionist in approach that its scholarly value is dubious. Thus for example in the pre-Christian period 'waterways' are supposed to account for the location of cities and civilizations, 'climate and technical handicaps' for the lag in development of northern Europe, 'wine and oil exports' for the pre-eminence of Mediterranean trade. Certainly all of these were important factors — among others; but his presentation is monocausal and

deterministic. What is one to make of his view of the Late Hellenistic and early Roman period? He describes it (p. 20) as 'a milieu ... not conducive to bold and restless innovation of any kind. Moreover, the easy availability of superbly attractive models of art, literature, thought, not to mention the delights of elegant eating, drinking, and sex, as worked out by Greeks of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. inhibited innovation still further.'

Two papers by Branimir Bratanić, Director of the Ethnological Institute, University of Zagreb, and Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the Ethnological Atlas of Europe and its Bordering Countries (forthcoming) complete this section and introduce a different element, namely the Central European preoccupation with cultural diffusion. These papers provide a particularly topical illustration of a flourishing *Kulturkreis* school (on which cf. the contributions of Andriolo and Braukämper in *Man* XIV, 1979). Bratanić's major concern appears to be 'scientific accuracy' in the mapping of items of material culture. Techniques of mapping at different scales are crucial (pp. 103-4; 108; fig. 1), though the resulting pretty distribution maps rather resemble cross-stitch embroidery patterns. An essential feature of the activity is a construct called the 'ethnological present' (p. 104) where '... a "moment" in the course of cultural development ... can last for a hundred or two hundred years' (p. 106). For those interested in agricultural implements, however, Bratanić's maps will be useful especially for information on the distribution of 17 varieties of dual yoke in Yugoslavia (map 1), or of the nine types of *ard* found in pre-historic and contemporary Europe (map 9).

The second article of Bratanić, a brief discourse on Eurasian peasantry and culture elements, includes a passing note on the occurrence of 'Alpine' culture (map 8). We are offered the following elements as being characteristic: 'women as shepherdesses and dairy workers; wooden butter churns and the important role of butter in life and customs ... haymaking with special racks consisting of horizontal poles ... knee-breeches, small felt hats, and earrings (in one ear) in the male costume ... braids put about the head in women's costume' (p. 128). These elements characterise the European Alpine area, southeastern Tibet, the Himalayas, and '... are found elsewhere, *especially in high mountains*: Scandinavia, the Pyrenees ... the Caucasus ... the Hindu Kush, the Pamirs' (p. 128; emphasis added). Is it really suggested that ear-piercing and the wearing of braids offsets climatic effects at altitudes above 8000 feet? If not, what is the point? One is left wondering.

The seven papers in Part Two, 'Culture and Social Organization', fall more or less within the recognized compass of familiar social anthropology, but as a collection there is little to recommend it. All the papers could have been revised with profit, and some even need re-writing. For example the paper by the Halperns on five Yugoslav villages is again sketchy, covering areas of great ethnic, religious and historical diversity.

French material is provided in two articles. Segalen, on two Normandy communities, uses historical records and the notion of the 'population isolate' (as used in demography and genetics) to trace marriage patterns. This analysis shows the recent erosion of endogamy based on occupational category in one village and on religious affiliation in another village. Karnoouh analyses the inter-relationship of village politics in one Lorraine community with the manipulation of kinship networks and strategies relating to land distribution through marriage and inheritance.

Galli and Harrison, professors of cultural anthropology at the Universities of Bologna and Padua respectively, present a few interesting observa-

tions in their article on Lampedusa in Sicily, but the paper lacks organization and contains numerous side-issues. The stated aim 'to describe the concept of reality in Lampedusa and to explain it in terms of the conceptual conflicts present in an illiterate culture' (p. 222) is never quite achieved and indicates some of the conceptual and terminological problems. 'Illiterate culture', a curious formulation in itself, is defined as '... a "ghetto situation", unfair to those who have to submit to it' (p. 229). Yet the effects of 'modernization' brought to the island particularly through tourism are deplored: 'An entire world is lost, beyond repair, to a future world which may be or may not be. In the meantime, today, for the illiterate the different planes of reality are intermixed, confused' (p. 247). Must one then conclude that it is better to be trapped in the 'ghetto'?

Two papers on Romanian family and household organization are included, but they overlap considerably. Although interesting points emerge (for example, the popularity of 'sibling exchange' marriage), there is at least one major contradiction in content. Stahl describes the egalitarian basis of 'traditional' Romanian villages (from the 18th to the early 20th century) where access to resources (land, forests, water) is based on the 'assurance to all of equal conditions' (p. 212). Pop presents quite a different picture, however, claiming that 'Rumanian ethnological communities - the villages of free peasants - were not and are not today either, egalitarian associations of kinships [sic]' (p. 139). He goes even further, stating that from the Middle Ages a hierarchy was created based on family origin and title: '... village structure therefore acquired a caste organization' (p. 139). His choice of the term 'caste' without any further explanation is remarkable, particularly as his observations were purportedly based on two years' field-work in the contemporary Socialist state.

The last paper by Kiray examines business structure in Izmir. But to question the inclusion of Turkey in this volume is a mere quibble in view of its far more serious flaws.

For it is a task to find anything to recommend in this book. 'Europe is diversity itself', Braudel has noted succinctly (*The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, London 1972, p. 190). Certainly the volume does convey diversity; but even more it displays the disparity and incongruence of the intellectual approaches of those working in Europe - and even these are only partially represented (there are no Spanish or Dutch contributions, for example). Cusenier hopes that the book will succeed by showing that '... as regards European anthropology there is no need to sacrifice an intellectual tradition to another, but to study thoroughly each tradition by confronting one to another and building up what I would call a historical *anthropology*' (p. 4). The sentiment is admirable (though 'historical anthropology' is not explained), but the book does not succeed. It leaves a lasting impression of incoherence and careless preparation. Far more than a single paragraph is required to create some common ground for the 'study' and 'confrontation' of different traditions. Simple and thoughtless juxtaposition between two covers is not enough.

RENÉE HIRSCHON

J.W. ROGERSON, *Anthropology and the Old Testament*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1978. 127 pp. £7.95.

A theologian, but one with a long-standing interest in anthropology (see *J.A.S.O.* IV, 1973), John Rogerson is in a commanding position to review the impact which anthropology has made on Old Testament studies. As he observes, the later nineteenth-century was the period of greatest influence. Because Old Testament scholars have tended to be rather reticent about keeping abreast with anthropological enquiry, the impact since this period has in the main been unproductive. Thus, written primarily for a theological audience, *Anthropology and the Old Testament* is directed to displacing out-dated anthropological theories, in particular evolutionism, diffusionism, and those advocating a primitive mentality.

Some of this is of considerable interest (for example, the rather remarkable ways in which Lévy-Bruhl's ideas entered Old Testament studies), although many of the objections should be well-known. Accordingly, the most interesting sections of the book are those where Rogerson surveys recent theories — largely structuralist — such as Pocock's 'North and South in the Book of Genesis' and Leach's 'The Logic of Sacrifice'. In connection with the latter anthropologist, he notes that 'Leach's statement that he hopes to have shown how, "in the analysis of ethnography, attention to small details really matters" will ... produce a smile among Old Testament scholars, in the light of J.A. Emerton's articles on Leach's handling of Genesis 38, where Emerton points out numerous small details which Leach appears to have overlooked'. The theme here could easily be developed: it is not simply that modern anthropological theory can aid in the interpretation of the Old Testament; equally, as Emerton, Derrett, Needham and others have recently shown, those with expertise in Old Testament studies can refine or improve anthropological theorising.

Rogerson does not develop a number of other facets of the anthropology of the Old Testament. Some he discusses elsewhere, as in his *Myth in Old Testament Interpretation* and *The Supernatural in the Old Testament*. Of especial interest is what he has written on the fascinating and perplexing topic of Old Testament views on the nature of human nature (see e.g. 'The Hebrew Conception of Corporate Personality', *J.T.S.* XXI, 1970, pp. 1-16). The argument, summarised in the book under review, begins with Lévy-Bruhl and Robinson, the latter applying the idea of mystical participation to suggest that Old Testament conceptualisations reflect a fluidity about the limits to a person's individuality. The various ways in which the individual or self can be conceptualised have of course been widely studied; for example in the work of Fortes, Levine and Horton. In this domain there is considerable scope for examining the relevance of various aspects of individualism in the Old Testament, and, more broadly, for examining whether the Old Testament model of man shows a 'logic' similar to that found in other cultures.

There is one facet of the relationship between Old Testament and anthropological studies which, unfortunately, Rogerson does not touch on. It concerns the difficult topic of whether anthropological theorising can be combined with theological approaches. Naturally, most Old Testament scholars do not write as strict theologians: in other words, their investigations are guided by scholarly or empirical standards, not by what they believe. But the question remains whether some anthropological theories are not reductionist and therefore unacceptable. Bearing in mind the problems once faced by Robertson Smith, is there not today some tension between

applying the ideas of Lévi-Strauss and writing for the 'Growing Points in Theology' series? Many anthropologists in the past — in particular Frazer — have appeared to use Old Testament material to argue against religion. It would be interesting to know if Rogerson thinks this manoeuvre is still being made or whether it is not in fact entailed by the closer liaison which he himself is advocating.

PAUL HEELAS

SANDRA BURMAN (ed.), *Fit Work for Women*, London: Croom Helm; Canberra: Australian National University Press; 1979. In association with the Oxford University Women's Studies Committee. 201 pp. £8.50 (Cloth), £4.50 (Paper).

JEANNETTE KUPFERMANN, *The MsTaken Body*, London: Robson 1979. 159 pp. £5.25 (Cloth).

Fit Work for Women is the second volume in the interdisciplinary Oxford Women's series, following Shirley Ardener's *Defining Females* in 1978. All eight papers in this volume focus on and challenge assumptions concerning the stereotype of a woman's role as mother, wife, childbearer, unpaid domestic and low-grade wage-earner — in the context of women in a wide range of occupations.

Most of the writers adopt a feminist viewpoint which relies heavily on Marxist analysis. Thus the vocabulary is one of 'oppression', 'power', and 'exploitation'. Women, or rather their current status in society, are seen as a 'problem', and we are asked to start from the basic assumption that women are oppressed. Thus 'the key to the understanding of women's oppression [lies] ... in the understanding of the nature of the family' (Mary McIntosh, p. 154).

Catherine Hall's well-argued paper on 'The Early Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology' discusses the role of the Evangelical Clapham Sect in re-defining the role of women in an increasingly industrialised society. Women had clearly-defined roles and spheres in which to operate. They were regarded as naturally delicate, reserved, pure and simple. Men, on the other hand, had grandeur, dignity and force. Whilst a man's task was to act in the theatre of public life, it fell upon the woman at home to regenerate the nation morally. The home, Hall argues, was expected to provide a haven in which women were 'faithful repositories of the religious principle, for the benefit both of the present and the rising generation' (p. 26). The result was that 'The bourgeois family was seen as the proper family, and that meant that married women should not work' (p. 31). The consequent castigation of working-class women for being 'poor housewives and inadequate mothers' is still with us.

Maureen M. Mackintosh's paper on 'Domestic Labour and the Household' provides a clear example of Marxist feminist thinking. Her thesis is basically that 'The household, the location of women's domestic labour, is the mediating institution for these two sets of relations [within the family and within society at large]: women's position and work within the household traps her and forces her into a subordinate position also within the wider society' (p. 190). The emphasis on structures of power and

oppression, as exemplified in Mackintosh's conclusion that: 'One wishes to investigate, for any society, how the two kinds of oppressive or exploitative social relations manage to be maintained against the opposition of the oppressed or exploited' (p. 146), underlies the rather negative approach to women on which this book is based.

Shirley Ardener in her introduction to *Perceiving Women* pointed out that '... after we have located the model of women in the overall ideological framework of a dominant structure we are still left with many features requiring analysis, and not least of them is ... the often little defined and seemingly vague, possibly repressed, alternative ideas which women may have about the world, including those about themselves, which may easily be overlooked' (p. xxi). Jeannette Kupfermann in *The MsTaken Body* seeks to redress this balance by looking at the way women view their bodies and how they relate to the world at large.

As an anthropologist Kupfermann examines women not as objects but as sentient beings who form an integral part of society. She seeks to go beyond the model of the body often presented in feminist literature which treats it as a machine, but instead to see it as a potent symbol and model of society. Writers such as Germaine Greer and Shere Hite have tended to adopt a fragmented, mechanistic view of the body and fall into the trap of separating the mind from the body, psychology from physiology, emotion from sensation. Kupfermann locates much of the anxiety and frustration experienced by women in a breakdown of symbolic language. She accuses the Women's Movement of underestimating the value of symbols in giving meaning to experience and in linking individual experience to a universal schema. In her own words: 'A new mythology has sprung up which uses the language of the body; it has seduced many women who now use its vocabulary, but it has created its own problems. An attempt has been made to destroy the symbol of women's bodies, and we have been left with a physical husk and a lot of *angst* that has no outlet' (pp. 11-12).

Jeannette Kupfermann has spent many years working as a trained antenatal teacher, both privately and in a London hospital. She has worked as a model, in films, and with radio and television. Her anthropological training took place at the L.S.E. and University College, London and she has carried out field-work among an orthodox Jewish community in East London. This wide range of experience is apparent throughout the book, and enables Kupfermann to give us a balanced and well thought out view of women.

The MsTaken Body is described as 'an examination of the influence of technological consciousness on women and their bodies' (p. 11). Drawing on her own experience of preparing women for childbirth, and on a wide range of anthropological, medical and sociological literature, Kupfermann reaches the perhaps controversial conclusion that 'the increasing problems women experience with their bodies ... relate in some way to the blurring of the lines between the sexes, the loss of opposites, and its correlate, the inability to complement, or to achieve mutuality' (p. 31). Echoing Lévi-Strauss Kupfermann emphasises the importance of exchange in any relationship, particularly in a marital situation. Men as well as women suffer from the inability to fulfil themselves as spouses: 'Husbands and wives need well-defined boundaries. It is only with these well-defined boundaries that they will have anything to exchange, which is the basis of all good relationships. It is therefore meaningless to dwell on the number of hours a husband puts in with vacuuming, or whether he merely "helps" with the housework or does it. The important thing is that he does one thing and the wife another' (p. 33).

In her chapter on 'The Polluting Body' Kupfermann examines women's attitudes towards menstruation and bodily taboos. Many women in our society want to do away with all ideas of taboo or pollution surrounding menstruation, or to do away with menstruation altogether (as proposed by Germaine Greer in *The Female Eunuch*). This, says Kupfermann, is because taboos and symbols themselves have been emptied of meaning and only an outer husk of experience remains. Jewish women in East London, for example, do not regard menstruation as a cheap trick played on women, but invest it with meaning as a sign of regeneration and renewal.

Menstruation is a potent symbol, menstrual blood being ambiguously associated with both death and rebirth. 'Blood ... is the most powerful symbol of both life and death. Menstruation reminds us of both: but in a society where the woman cannot allow herself to give birth, and where Death, emptied of religious meaning, equals what Eliade has called "Anguish before Nothingness", it is no wonder that menstruation and its taboos have been emptied of all meaning too and only the physiological, mechanistic shell remains, emerging as a frightening array of pre-menstrual or para-menstrual *symptoms*. Without religious values, menstruation can have no value either; at most a few *ad hoc* cults might be resurrected, but they, too, cannot be vested with any true meaning, as they will not be able truly to *relate the individual to the universe*.' (p. 61)

Jeannette Kupfermann's book provides fascinating and provocative reading for all those interested in women's studies, feminism, or 'body language' in general.

FIONA BOWIE

KIRK ENDICOTT, *Batek Negrito Religion: the World-view and Rituals of a Hunting and Gathering People of Peninsular Malaysia*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press 1979. 234 pp. £12.

This book is a landmark in the ethnography of South East Asia in general, and Malay aborigines in particular. Though books and papers have appeared on these aborigines as far back as the mid-nineteenth century, they were all the results of brief encounters by Europeans who did not speak the native languages. One exception is the work by Father Schebesta who in the 1920s spent more than a year travelling with the Negritos of the northern states of the Malay peninsula, but he was on a mission supported by the Pope and his main purpose was to prove the thesis of the *Kulturkreislehre* that the chief feature of early religion is the concept of a 'Supreme Being' or 'higher god'. His presentation of the material is therefore highly tendentious. In recent times several anthropologists have conducted intensive field-work among the various aboriginal groups, but very little of their findings is available. No full-scale ethnographic study of any one group has been published until the appearance of Endicott's book. Endicott spent almost two years living with the Batek, a group of about 350 people. Altogether there are no more than about 2000 Negritos and they form the smallest of the ethnic groups in the Peninsula. They are one of the last nomadic hunting and gathering peoples of South East Asia.

Endicott's analytical position in his discussion of the Batek religion

is, in his own words, the 'literalist' one. That is, he describes their religion as much as possible in terms of their own concepts, and claims that, 'properly understood, Batek ideas make sense in their own right' (p. 28). He then goes on to say, 'I do not think the Batek need an anthropologist to tell them what their beliefs "really mean". I take what the Batek say about things, the expressed ideas and feelings evoked by them, to be the meaning of the things for the people' (p. 29). As a result of this method, the material is largely left to speak for itself and at first sight his presentation is deceptively simple. Personally, I would have preferred on occasion more interpretations by the author, but on the whole his arrangement of the material is such that the Batek modes of thought emerge into a coherent whole. By the end of the book the reader is left with a strong impression of the Batek as human beings whose religious and symbolic concepts help them to understand the world in which they live.

Only in the chapter on the Negrito deities does he embark upon a detailed interpretation and analysis of the concepts. To a large extent his approach is dictated by the data themselves. There has been a lot of confusion in the past as to the 'true nature' of the various Negrito deities and supernatural beings, arising out of the conflicting information given by the people. Endicott solves the problem in an original and interesting way by insisting that 'What I am calling the deities of the Negritos, are, I suggest, ideas built up and out of imagined actions, corporal images, and names' (p. 199). He divides the vast amount of information on the deities into three sets of attributes in the following way: the part played by the deities in the working of the universe he calls their 'function'; the actions by which they achieve their functions he calls their 'role'; and the form the being is supposed to take he calls their 'image'. By doing this he overcomes the problem of definition by one feature only, and he shows that by treating the deities as polythetic classes (see Needham's article in *Man* 1975) there are many ways that the elements in any one 'function-role-image' set can be combined.

Although Endicott does not discuss the problem of cross-cultural comparisons, his framework of analysis as applied to Negrito deities opens new possibilities for meaningful comparisons to be undertaken across cultures without falling into the pitfalls of 'Frazerism'. His book is therefore important both in terms of the ethnography of Malay aborigines, and of the problem of definition and classification.

SIGNE HOWELL

P.C. BURNHAM & R.F. ELLEN (eds.), *Social and Ecological Systems*, London & New York: Academic Press 1979. A.S.A. Monograph, No. 18. 188 pp. £8.80.

The twelve papers in this volume are drawn from the 1978 A.S.A. conference and provide a very useful introduction to a growing 'British' tradition in a hitherto American field. It is a field in which no single 'ecological methodology' is apparent, and Roy Ellen's Introduction is a much-needed guide for the perplexed in search of what constitutes the discipline.

Ten of the papers make use of specific ethnographic analyses to

touch upon two main themes of theoretical interest: the problem of controlled comparison and the boundary of explanatory units; and the difficulties surrounding the concepts of adaptation and 'environmental fit'. With regard to the former, a paper by James Fox on the utilisation of lontar palm sugar as the basis of economic and social variation in the historical development of two Rotinese States, well illustrates the problem of boundaries. Papers by Roy Ellen on Moluccan sago and spice economy, Paula Brown on New Guinea highland regional systems, David Harris on Torres Straits, and David Riches on the American North West, also address themselves to the difficulties of defining 'systems' and reproductive units. Variation and the possibilities of controlled comparison are the subject of papers by Alan Barnard on Bushmen groups in the Kalahari, and by Pierre Bonte on variation in segmentary lineage organisation under differing ecological conditions.

The emerging discipline is not without its academic battle-grounds. The paper of Philip Burnham on the Gbaya of Cameroon, and Jonathan Friedman's theoretical essay, lay siege to the bastion of American 'ecosystem' anthropology that explains the social in terms of negative feedback systems for the promotion of harmony with the environment. Doubt is cast upon the existence of simple equilibrium systems. Nicolas Peterson, on the other hand, takes cultural materialism even further by arguing the adaptive role of ideology, hitherto neglected in the emphasis on observed behaviour, with reference to Australian Bushmen groups. Pierre Van Leyneele's paper concentrates on the technical practices of the Libinza of the middle Congo flood-plain, describing how the knowledge necessary to sustain the system is reflected in classifications of environmental space, ecological successions and seasonal processes.

From the standpoint of a 'political ecologist' I find Friedman's 'Hegelian Ecology' the most rewarding piece. It lays bare the ideological content of Bateson's 'cybernetic harmonies' — as the strivings of those weary of the industrial, war-torn Western world to erect a new savage nobility. Like Rousseau the 'post-industrialists' see Western man as maladaptive, with his 'linear thinking' and 'conscious purpose' as the new evils that are contradictory to the self-maintaining circular nature of the ecosystem cybernetic. Tim Ingold, in an essay on evolutionary dynamics, follows this attack on harmony and equilibrium concepts with a self-confessedly contorted argument which presents the social system as a succession of phases and transformations, where limits are reached, equilibrium is dissipated and where discontinuous structural change, bifurcation or catastrophe occurs.

The British School thus emerges as critical of what is termed, perhaps rightly, a naive ecosystem approach. It is interesting in a historical perspective that the traditional reaction to materialist environmentalism is maintained, yet in this case the leading reactionaries are Marxist. Herein should lie fruitful ground for the sociologist of science. Ellen comments, 'the British School's ... intransigent position is no doubt partly due to the necessity of establishing a set of distinctive intellectual credentials' (p. 3), and he highlights the 'internalising circular explanations' drawn from French sociology as its main barrier. But the 'necessity' of 'credentials' must also reflect the wider political milieu in which anthropological institutions survive. It will be interesting to watch as the social movements of 'political ecologists' with their new religion of cybernetic harmony approach the foundations of industrial society, and observe the creation of explanations of the social that fend off the advancing ecological ideology.

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